HIGHER EDUCATION DISRUPTION: AN INTRINSIC CASE STUDY EXAMINING THE
CHANGE RESPONSE OF MULTIPLE CONSTITUENCIES TO A MANDATED CHANGE
AT A SMALL, PRIVATE, LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE

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Abstract

Small, private, liberal arts colleges are in a time of crisis. Many of these colleges are undergoing significant changes as a result of the external forces driving declining enrollment and increasing operating costs. At the same time, the average age of college presidents is increasing and average tenure is decreasing. In response, this intrinsic single-site case study engaged 12 individuals across multiple constituencies at a small, private liberal arts college and examined their change response to change initiatives mandated by a new college president in her first year. Findings indicated the president played a substantial role in the planning, implementation, and ongoing outcomes of the change initiative. The key factors determined to influence change response were alignment of the change initiatives with the organizational culture and norms, the communication and engagement of constituents in the process, the alignment of the president’s vision with the organizational culture and norms, and the willingness of the president to make strategic decisions and act on them to increase the changes to organizational viability.

*Keywords*: leadership, change response, change management, vision, trust, communication, engagement, change process, dimensions of change.
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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the change response of multiple constituencies to mandated change initiatives implemented by a new college president to increase enrollment to improve financial sustainability and stability at a small, private, liberal arts college. Financial sustainability and stability, defined by the goals of the institution, are increased enrollment and retention, a balanced budget sheet, and increased philanthropic support. For the purpose of this study, the researcher focused on initiatives implemented by the new president to increase enrollment. Knowledge generated from this study could inform future change management practices conducted by leadership at small, private, liberal arts colleges.

Statement of the Problem

Small, private, liberal arts colleges are experiencing significant changes in enrollment and funding due to shifting external pressures (Chabotar, 2010). These pressures include a decrease in the number of high school graduates, an increase in the number of postsecondary education options, a reduction in enrollment, inadequate endowments to support operational funding shortfalls, and overall increased costs of operation (Gansemer-Topf, Zhang, Beatty, & Paja, 2014; Hartocollis, 2016; Mitchell, 2015; Saturen, 2010; Tierney, 2015; Weissman, 2014). In addition to changing external pressures, presidents of these colleges are expected to meet facility needs, faculty demands, and the requirements imposed by the governing board of the school—all in a fiscally feasible way (Tekniepe, 2014). The average age of a college president is on the rise and the average tenure is on the decline, generating a significant transition in leadership in the next three years (ACE, 2017). Change is often difficult to embrace at any level, and each individual’s reaction to change can affect the leader’s ability to move the organization
through the change process (Piderit, 2000). For the purpose of this study, a small college in the United States is a college with enrollment under 1,000 students.

In 2016, 800 small colleges faced critical strategic challenges that could result in a merger or closure. Declining enrollments are due to a downturn in the number of high school graduates, reduced state and federal spending, and the tighter personal income of students. All of these factors push small colleges to demonstrate increased accountability through outcomes, specifically through graduate employment rates (Ernst & Young, 2016). One strategy taken by small colleges to fight the decrease in enrollment is increasing the discount rate. According to Ernst and Young (2016), the average freshman discount rate in 2014 to 2105 was approximately 50%, and from 2007 to 2016, 72 colleges closed their doors, most of which had enrollments of fewer than 1,000 students. From 2016 to 2019, 21 small colleges closed their doors (Busta, 2019). The question that came to surface was if there are new leadership transitions happening during a financial crisis, how are these new leaders best able to lead these organizations through change with successful outcomes?

A gap in literature showed that further study is needed to determine what specific actions and behaviors made by the president of a small, private, liberal arts college will generate positive change response to mandated change initiatives in times of crisis. The problem, then, was to explore the phenomenon of employee change response to change initiatives to increase enrollment at a small college with new leadership. Therefore, the change response of multiple constituents to a mandated change by a new president warranted further study as a method to generate deeper understanding of the president’s role in generating change. To do this, the study focused on how the board, administration, faculty, and staff at the research site responded to a change initiative intended to increase financial sustainability and stability through increased
enrollment. The change response of the college’s constituents was examined through the conceptual framework based in Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory. This problem led to a further understanding of purpose and the creation of a research question.

**Research Question and its Significance**

The following research problem guided the study: How did multiple constituents of a small, private, liberal arts college respond to change as key decisions were made during a change process? More specifically, what was the change response of key constituents: board, administration, faculty, and staff to a specific change initiative, made in the first year of a new president’s tenure, intended to increase enrollment.

The significance of the research question is substantial for several audiences. At the micro level, there is significance in the findings for students of leadership and higher education administration studies, as well as for the faculty who teach these subjects. For those students who hope to lead a college or university, knowledge of the complexity of change response, as well as how different actions taken by the leadership may alter a change response, may create future and current generation educational leaders who will successfully lead organizations through transformational change. These findings may help drive curriculum for both organizational leadership and higher education administration. At a macro level, as individuals move into leadership roles at small colleges or organizations facing critical changes, the navigation of the change and the effect of actions taken by the leadership on change response may assist in a more positive outcome and an increase in organizational morale. This could also have a positive effect on organizational culture.

**Theoretical Framework**
Small, private, liberal arts colleges are facing external and internal pressures resulting in a greater need for financial stability and sustainability (Tekniepe, 2014). As pressures increase and the call for change becomes unavoidable, presidents of these colleges will be called upon to implement organizational change to address the financial crisis that many of these schools face (Chabotar, 2010). This study examines the human factor in organizational change through the lens of Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory and the multidimensional view (cognitive, emotional, and intentional responses) of how mandated change initiatives, implemented by a new college president, to increase enrollment affect the change response of key constituents within a single higher educational institution. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory.

![Figure 1. Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory](image)
Response to Change Theory

The literature on response to organizational change prior to Piderit’s (2000) theory of change response indicated that individuals responded to change in either a negative or positive manner. Piderit (2000) found that the study of ambivalence as a change response was a valid response to change and should be considered. Piderit (2000) also concluded that a tripartite approach to the study of change response, including ambivalence, would result in a more complete understanding of the complexity of change response by examining cognition, emotion, and intended behavior.

**Cognition.** Piderit (2000) described the cognitive dimension as one centered around an individual’s beliefs about what change is occurring, how it will affect the organization and those within the organization, and if the change is perceived as needed. Piderit (2000) stated that a change response in the cognitive dimension may run the spectrum from strong positive beliefs to strong negative beliefs.

**Emotion.** Piderit (2000) stated that the emotional dimension is one of feelings toward and about the change. These feelings drive positive, negative, or neutral reactions. Piderit (2000) stated that a change response in the emotional dimension may run the spectrum from strong positive emotions to strong negative emotions.

**Intention.** Piderit (2000) described the intentional dimension as a dimension based in intended actions in response to change initiatives. Piderit (2000) stated that there is a distinction between intention and behavior, and there is often a connection between the two as well as a connection between an individual’s intention and the cognitive and emotional response. Piderit (2000) stated that a change response in the intentional dimension may run the spectrum from positive intentions of support to negative intentions of support.
**Ambivalence.** Piderit (2000) found that a significant benefit to using a multidimensional approach to change response was the ability to study a wide range of responses across several dimensions, leading to greater insight into ambivalence as a result of the push and pull of conflicting change responses in two or more dimensions at the same time. Piderit (2000) stated that positive and negative attitudes can coexist and may be experienced as ambivalence, when in reality, the subject may feel one way about the change but act with intention in another way because of concern for management’s reactions to dissent.

The study of resistance to change has largely simplified the understanding of change response (Piderit, 2000). Piderit (2000) argues that some positive intentions result in negative change response and that some cognitive, emotional, or intention ambivalence are actually anything but ambivalent, and that the formation of attitude may start with ambivalence. It is clear, from Piderit’s (2000) theory, represented in Figure 1, that change response is complex and must be studied using a multidimensional approach as an individual’s response to change may result in strong positive intentions and strong negative emotions, indicating that change response cannot be studied in a vacuum.

**Critics of Response to Change Theory**

Pardo del Val and Fuentes (2003) found that resistance to change is most often found when there is a conflict of values, especially in organizations where loyalty and a lack of innovation are emphasized. Similarly, Kegan and Lahey (2001) found that resistance to change is rooted in what they refer to as “competing commitments,” whereas change is resisted because an underlying reason causes the individual to fear the change based on deeply rooted beliefs and assumptions. Pieterse, Caniëls, and Homan (2012) brought in a focus on linguistics and communication when considering culture and resistance to change. Pieterse et al. (2012) stated
that resistance to change stems from a misalignment of professional cultures and lack of effective articulation of discourse. Although many studies focus on vertical cultural alignment, Pieterse et al. (2012) focused on horizontal alignment among peers. However, Piderit (2000) argued that resistance to change is much more complicated, and that what may be interpreted as resistance in intention, may also be excitement in emotion.

Pardo del Val and Fuentes (2003) stated that resistance to change is inertia and stops change from occurring. Kegan and Lahey (2001) stated that value and belief assumptions drive employee behavior motivated by keeping the status quo. Pieterse et al. (2012) shared the belief that resistance to change comes from inertia, but they found that inertia derives from a lack of effective peer communication. Piderit (2000) argued that beliefs and values may play a role in resistance but that there are additional factors that complete the understanding of resistance and that an individual may demonstrate resistance in one dimension but acceptance in another.

**Rationale for Response to Change Theory**

This study focused on the change response of key stakeholders at the college as they were led through an organizational change by the new college president with the purpose of increasing financial sustainability and stability. For the purpose of this study, the increased financial sustainability and stability is measured by increased enrollment.

Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory provides a framework for study focused on the change response of those implementing the organizational change, not those leading it. However, the way in which the change is led may impact how change is perceived and carried out. The ability to understand the response to change of those implementing the change means that the concerns of employees about a proposed change may not be ignored or dismissed as resistance to change. Instead, the multidimensional view of change response creates more
accountability for those leading a change initiative (Piderit, 2000). Piderit (2000) stated that individual feelings and responses to authority may directly impact one or multiple dimensions of his or her change response. For instance, an employee who places value in obedience to authority may have positive, negative, or ambivalent change responses as the desire to be obedient conflicts with the individual’s ethics and principles (Piderit, 2000). To gain a holistic understanding of change response, there was a need to incorporate not only the multidimensional attitudes held by those implementing the change initiative and of the individual or groups leading it.

Application of Response to Change Theory

Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory provided a framework ideal for a qualitative study—and specifically, a single organization case study. A case study examines the interrelationships of a smaller number of interactions or situations, just as is found in Piderit’s (2000) theory. Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory was based on multidimensional attitudes that can result from the combination of cognitive, emotional, and intention responses to change. In addition to the multidimensional attitudes, Piderit (2000) also indicated the need to study the employee’s response to the leader of the change initiative.

After the creation of questions that align with Piderit’s (2000) theory, interviews took place with key institutional leaders, faculty, and board members at the college. A focus group was conducted with faculty and staff to gain a broad understanding of the change response of different constituencies as initiatives to increase enrollment were implemented. The interview and focus group questions were open ended and tied to the three-dimensional attitudes resulting from cognitive, emotional and intention responses to the change initiative.

Conceptual Framework
Piderit’s (2000) theoretical framework is a tested, broad framework that reflects the relationship between the dimensions and overall change response. Upon completion of the literature review, the researcher found additional considerations to factor into data collection and analysis to inform the results, which would be aided by a conceptual framework. The conceptual framework used was formed around Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory and considered the same dimensions and responses to change, however, it added in high impact factors not already addressed by Piderit (2000), but supported by the literature that would help generate rich data. The high impact factors discussed in Piderit’s (2000) theory and supported by the literature were beliefs and values, organizational readiness, and time. The literature showed that additional high impact factors were components of change, organizational leadership, and organizational culture and norms. A visual of the conceptual framework is found in Figure 2.

Piderit’s (2000) Response to Change Theory

Figure 2. Conceptual framework based in Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory.
Conclusion

The research discussed in the previous pages demonstrates the complexity of change response and the need to better understand change response in college and university setting to inform leadership and higher education administration. When one considers the fragile state in which many small, private, liberal arts colleges exist today and the heavy reliance on tuition in a time when enrollment is declining, the importance of successful organizational change may mean the difference between remaining open and thriving or closing the college’s doors. The success of organizational change relies upon understanding change response and the ways in which leadership can positively influence change response across constituencies (Dasborough, Lamb, & Suseno, 2015; Hannay, Jaafar, & Earl, 2013; van der Voet, 2014).

The culture of educational organizations depends upon the internal and external audiences (Tierney, 1988). This study focused on the internal audience: faculty, staff, administration, and board. The research has shown that a number of factors drive trust with this audience and, in turn, rally employees around a shared vision. These factors included: transparent communication, engagement of employees in the process, passionate sharing of the vision, focus on the end goal and not simply the profit and loss statement, and the creation of understanding of the changes and the impact they will have on effected individuals (Bass, 1985; Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003; Egri & Herman, 2016; Raman, Mey, Don, Daud, & Khalid, 2015). Trust, vision, and organizational culture, including mission alignment, have a direct correlation to change response (Zilber, 2006). The research has also shown that an individual’s change response is critical to the change outcome and is driven by cognitive, emotional, and intention responses (Piderit, 2000).

Definition of Key Terminology
The following terms and definitions were used in this study:

- Ambivalence for change: A response to change that is neither consistently negative nor positive (Piderit, 2000).

- Change response: A multifaceted attitude that derives from three dimensions: cognition, emotion, and intention. Change response may be positive, ambivalent, or negative within each dimension.

- Cognitive response: Cognitive response is an individual’s beliefs about the organizational change (Piderit, 2000).

- Constituent: A category of study participants that may include college administration, faculty department heads, professional staff, and board members.

- Emotional response: An individual’s feelings about the organizational change.

- Intentional response: An individual’s intended actions in response to an organizational change (Piderit, 2000).

- Resistance to change: A negative change response across all three dimensions (Piderit, 2000).

- Support for change: A positive change response across all three dimensions (Piderit, 2000).

- Transformational leadership: A style of leadership in which the leader influences follower performance through inspiration, trust, and shared vision (Burns, 1978; Lin & Hsiao, 2014).

- Small college: Colleges with enrollments of under 1,000 students (Ernst & Young, 2016).
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Small, private, liberal arts colleges are facing, perhaps, one of the most challenging times in their history with many struggling to remain open as the funding is in decline due to external pressures affecting enrollment and endowment funding (Chabotar, 2010). These colleges are facing external forces over which they have no control such as the decrease in the number of high school graduates and the increase in the number of postsecondary education options. However, they are also facing internal forces over which they do have control: a reduction in enrollment, inadequate endowments to support the gap between funding generated and funding needed for operations, and overall increased costs of operation (Gansemertopf, Zang, Beatty, & Paja, 2014; Hartocollis, 2016; Mitchell, 2015; Saturen, 2010; Tierney, 2015; Weissman, 2014).

Organizational Change

Ninety-three small colleges have closed their doors over the last 13 years, and approximately 800 small colleges are currently considered to be in a critical position (Ernst & Young, 2016; Busta, 2019). If these colleges remain on their current paths with no organizational change, they are not expected to see increased financial sustainability and viability. Therefore, successful organizational change is the only path forward if these colleges wish to remain open. Regardless of whether school administrators use top-down or bottom-up leadership, the colleges are run by the president, which means that the change initiatives, although perhaps directed by others within the organization, are ultimately decided upon by the organizational leader. Thus, the way in which the president leads the organization through change will factor into the change response of the constituencies (Hearld & Alexander, 2014; Hechanova & Cementina-Olpoc, 2013)

Components of Change
Within any organizational change, there are different factors which play into a change response: origin of change, order of change, driver of change, and change implementation. The origin of change will be either due to external forces or internal forces. At times, both forces will play a role, such as when an external force results in an internal force (Baker & Baldwin, 2014; Kezar, 2001). There are two orders of change: first-order and second-order change. First-order change is transactional change that happens continuously over time within the existing structure and system. Second-order change is transformational and is rooted in changing the system qualitatively (Levy, 1986; Liu & Perrewe, 2005). The way in which the change is driven plays a role in change response. A change initiative may be mandated or it may be collaborative. A mandated change is a top-down approach and a collaborative change tends to be a bottom-up approach (Hechanova & Cementina-Olpoc, 2013; Kezar, 2012; Seo et al., 2012). And, finally, the way in which change is implemented will affect change response. A change can be a planned or unplanned. A planned change is intentionally implemented and an unplanned change comes out of a need for immediate action (Lines, 2005). Each of these factors will affect change response, and therefore, it is important to consider each factor when examining the change response of multiple constituencies to a mandated change made by new leadership.

**Origin of change.** When an organization finds itself in the midst of a change or planning for a change, the need for change can usually be attributed to either an internal or external factor; however, there are times when there are external factors that create such pressing internal factors that the organization is forced to change quickly or dissolve (Kezar, 2001). If an organization goes through a change that is driven from internal factors, it is usually a slower process and may include a more grassroots effort of shared governance instead of a mandated initiative. These changes tend to go through a more evolutionary process that shifts as personnel changes or
newer visions of a path forward come to light (Baker & Baldwin, 2014). Baker and Baldwin (2014) provided four tenants of evolutionary change: the interaction between environment and institution; open relationships between the internal transformation and the environment, which is driven from the external environment; self-regulation, which is a driver of institutional stability; and evolution. Baker and Baldwin (2014) stated that there is a lack of regard for the importance of how internal factors influence change in the evolutionary model of organizational change. However, when considering that liberal arts colleges are more dependent on external forces such as competition and economy, and that these colleges are much more vulnerable when the market shifts or when the inclinations of students and parents change due to their need for tuition dollars, the evolutionary model and these four tenants are more applicable to the study of change in liberal arts colleges.

Even though Baker and Baldwin (2014) stated that an evolutionary model of change is appropriate for studying liberal arts colleges, Kezar (2001) recognized that internal forces are powerful in and of themselves and may be greatly influenced by external forces, thus creating a need for more dramatic and revolutionary change. The typical change initiative driven by an internal force is created over time and more slowly. It has more buy-in due to the, more often than not, bottom-up approach, and even when the external forces play a role in the change of internal forces, the change stays within the system (Kezar, 2001; Lewis, 2006).

When the external forces are the main driver for change, then the change tends to be more revolutionary and acute. When an externally driven change occurs in a liberal arts college, it increases the need for homeostasis, which was found to be more successfully created through second-order change than first-order change, hence the need for revolution more than evolution. An externally driven change may cause the internal constituency to resist due to a lack of
knowledge about, especially if it results from mandated changes rather than those based on shared governance (Lewis, 2006). Interestingly, Gumport and Snydman (2002) stated that larger, more complex organizations are more resistant to change and have a harder time responding to shifts, and smaller, more adaptive organizations are able to be more malleable.

It is clear from the literature that the why factor of change derives from internal and external forces of change. Small liberal arts colleges tend to be more adaptive and flexible but are more vulnerable to external forces (Gumport & Snydman, 2002). These organizations also respond more successfully to revolutionary change instead of a slow and steady, internally driven, evolutionary change when striving for homeostasis. Thus, it becomes important to understand the what of change by examining first-order and second-order change.

**Orders of change.** As the forces of change are the why behind change, the orders of change are the what behind change. There are two orders of change: first-order change and second-order change. First-order change occurs slowly over an extended period of time and often aligns with a predictable pattern within the organizational system (Boyce, 2003; van de Ven & Poole, 1995). It is unusual for first-order change to have an impact on the entire institution and is often contained within a single department or branch (Gersick, 1991; Kezar, 2001). An organization undergoes first-order change when there are ongoing evolutionary changes that occur instead of larger more revolutionary changes (Levy, 1986; Liu and Perrewé, 2005; Pettigrew, Woodman, & Cameron, 2001; Watzlawick, Weakland, & Fisch, 2011). Although first-order change may seem smaller and to have less significant impact on an organization, the reality is that this type of change, because it is most often led in a bottom-up approach, creates a larger amount of constituent buy-in and understanding. This type of buy-in may lead to more monumental shifts than originally expected (Boyce, 2003; Kezar, 2005).
Interestingly, first-order change does not tend to challenge the organizational culture, beliefs, or values of the organization, which lends to an easier adjustment to the change and a greater level of acceptance and support. If the change is not successful, it is also reversible as a first-order change (Levy, 1986; Watzlawick et al., 2011). This type of change creates an environment where individuals may not feel threatened as there is alignment in beliefs and values and it is not necessarily a permanent change.

Where first-order change may feel more comfortable for multiple constituencies within an organization, second-order change is often a bit more of a shock to the system. Second-order change challenges the organizational culture and values system. It is a transformational process that happens at a faster pace than first-order change and brings significant shifts across the institution at a foundational level (Boyce, 2003; Kezar, 2001; Levy, 1986). Due to the rapid movement of a second-order change, there is likely to be less constituent buy-in, which may result in increased levels of anxiety and discomfort around the change (Liu & Perrewe, 2005). The adaptability of the organization is critical during a second-order change. For organizations that are more adaptable and flexible, a second-order change is more likely to be successful (Gumport & Snydman, 2002). The order of change has a direct impact on change response across constituencies as each order of change is implemented differently and creates an opportunity for different levels of participation, understanding, and buy-in. Table 1 shows the fundamental differences of first and second-order change according to Levy (1986).
Table 1

*The Characteristics of First- and Second-Order Change in Organizations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First-Order Change</th>
<th>Second-Order Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change in one or a few dimensions, components, or aspects</td>
<td>Multidimensional, multicomponent change and aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in one or a few levels (individual, group)</td>
<td>Multilevel change (individuals, groups, and the whole organization)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in one or two behavioral aspects (attitudes, values)</td>
<td>Change in all the behavioral aspects (attitudes, norms, values, perceptions, beliefs, world view, behaviors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative change</td>
<td>Qualitative change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in content</td>
<td>Change in context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity, improvements, and development in the same direction</td>
<td>Discontinuity, taking a new direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incremental change</td>
<td>Revolutionary jumps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reversible change</td>
<td>Irreversible change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical and rational change</td>
<td>Seemingly irrational change based on different logic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change that does not alter the worldview or paradigm</td>
<td>Change that results in a new worldview or paradigm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change within the old state of being (thinking, acting)</td>
<td>Change that results in a new state of being (thinking, acting)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Drivers of change.** The way in which a change initiative is driven has an impact on buy-in, understanding, and knowledge of the change. A change that is driven from the bottom-
up is initiated by non-leadership level employees and is then moved up through the hierarchy of the organization. This type of change is more often first-order change and is kept to a specific department or branch of the organization (Kezar, 2012; Shults, 2008). A change that is driven from the top down is often referred to as a mandated change and is driven from leadership-level positions down through the hierarchy. This type of change is more often second-order change and has an impact across the organization. There may be more resistance to this type of change as it is not a change that is approached through the lens of shared governance and may collide with organizational culture, beliefs, and values (Avey, Wernsing, & Luthans, 2008; Craig, 2004; Kezar, 2012; Shults, 2008). The driver of a change process sets the tone for the entire change initiative as the change response of the constituents inside of the organization correlates to the way in which a change initiative is implemented.

**Implementation of change.** The origin of change, the way in which the initiatives are rolled out, and the role individuals play in the implementation ultimately influence how effective the change initiative becomes (Buckley, 1998; Parker, 1980; Pettigrew et al., 2001). A planned change is one that is intentional, strategic, and typically focused on an organization’s structure or systems in order to meet an organizational objective (Lines, 2005) Although most types of organizational change are planned, many result from external factors that are not planned, and if organizations have not paid attention to the coming need for change, then individuals within the organization may feel that planned changes are abrupt and may be met with more resistance or ambivalence (Kezar 2001; Liu & Perrewé, 2005).

The way in which a planned change is implemented plays a significant role in change response. Organizational readiness is a key factor in the outcome of a change initiative and directly influences change response in organizational constituents. These change responses
affect the sustainability of the change and the way in which the initiatives are executed across the organization (Boyce, 2003). The factors considered in this study are the time taken for implementation—the effects of change that are quickly implemented and may continue to be implemented over a long period of time—organizational readiness, and organizational culture and norms.

Summary

The organizational change process contains a why, what, and how. The why is the force of change—external or internal. The what is the order of change, and, according to Craig (2004), is also the timing, focus, degree, and scale. The how refers to whether it is a planned or unplanned change based on if it is proactive or reactive or adaptive or generative. Each aspect of the change process will play a role in change response across constituencies (Baker & Baldwin, 2014; Craig, 2004).

A small, private, liberal arts college is a traditional organization rooted in beliefs and structure. The beliefs and structure make change, at times, more difficult. However, the smallness of the organization typically allows more room for flexibility and adaptation without a higher level of negative change response (Baker & Baldwin, 2014; Kezar & Eckel, 2002b). A more flexible organization may be able to weather a second-order change better than a larger, more inflexible organization, as second-order change may amount to a cultural shift, which is significant within an organization.

Organizational change is complex, and each factor is influential in the change response among different constituencies. The way in which change is received and the actions, emotions, and beliefs of those affected by the change will determine if the initiative is effective and sustainable. Once the factors within a change process are understood, it is important to then
study the different elements of change response and how the change process plays a role in the response across organizational constituencies.

**Change in Small, Private, Liberal Arts Colleges**

In 2002, Kezar and Eckel published a study about change strategies in higher education. Kezar and Eckel stated that there were numerous factors that were critically affecting higher education in the United States. That was in 2002. The challenges facing higher education today are similar to but even more critical than those in 2002.

These colleges face challenges over which they have no control, such as the decrease in the number of high school graduates, the increase in the number of postsecondary education options, increases in cost of living while salaries remain the same, and the increasing costs of services and goods. However, they also face challenges over which they do have some control: a reduction in enrollment, inadequate endowments to support earned funding shortfalls, and overall increased costs of operation (Gansemer-Topf, et al., 2014; Hartocollis, 2016; Mitchell, 2015; Saturen, 2010; Tierney, 2015; Weissman, 2014). The vast majority of small, private, liberal arts colleges are under severe financial stress and uncertainty. With funding declining and costs increasing, a dramatic shift in operations and, at times, organizational focus, must occur to become and remain solvent.

The reality that small, private, liberal arts colleges need to change and how they change was studied by Baker and Baldwin (2014). The research showed that because tuition dependence makes these small colleges so vulnerable to shifts in enrollment, homeostasis is essential for survival. The ability to self-regulate may be achieved through first-order change in some institutions, but many times, there is a need for second-order change as well. However, with second-order change, institutions may feel a shift in organizational culture and direction,
which may be perceived as going against cultural norms. This could create resistance to organizational change (Kezar & Eckel, 2002b).

**Dimensional Perspectives of Change**

Change response was traditionally thought to contain either a positive or a negative response to change. This is a very confined view of a multifaceted concept. Piderit (2000) brought the idea of ambivalence into the framework of studying change response. The way in which someone responds to change has much to do with the force, order, and implementation of change (Baker & Baldwin, 2014; Craig, 2004; Hazy & Boyatzis, 2015; Liu & Perrewe, 2005). For example, if a faculty member logically believes that the change is necessary and in the best interest of the organization, but emotionally feels negatively toward the change, then the intention of that faculty member may be mired in ambivalence because their emotional perspective is at war with their cognitive perspective, resulting in something resembling neutrality (Piderit, 2000). Although ambivalence may be the initial change response in such a situation, there is room and ability to move the individual to a positive or negative change response from ambivalence, hence it is important to understand the role of each dimension of change response and how they interact.

According to Piderit (2000), the three dimensions of change response are: cognitive, emotional, intention. An individual’s readiness for change will be seen in each of these dimensions, but readiness is determined not only by the responses but also by how willing an individual is to think, believe, and behave differently (Woodman & Dewett, 2004). Therefore, even if it is a necessary organizational change, a change initiative may not be effective if the organizational constituents are not motivated and empowered to support its implementation (Armenakis & Harris, 2009). Each dimension of change is different but correlates with another
to create a complex change response. As organizational readiness and change response are so closely aligned, consideration of how the factors that play into beliefs, attitudes, and actions affect the cognitive, emotional, intention, and ambivalent change response is important.

**Organizational readiness.** Organizational readiness and individual readiness directly correlate to change response (Armenakis, Harris, & Mossholder, 1993; Hechanova & Cementina-Olpoc, 2013; Kezar, 2001). According to Armenakis et al. (1993), organizational readiness refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of organizational constituents as they relate to the perceived need for change and the organization’s ability to move through the change process successfully. Although organizations that have a strong level of readiness will likely move through the change process with positive change response, resistance will come into play when there is a lack of understanding and knowledge around the change, a lack of control in the change process, and anxiety related to a poor understanding of what the change means for the constituent or the organization (Kezar, 2005; Lewis, 2006).

**Beliefs.** Cognitive change response is based on how an individual thinks about the change. This dimension includes the level of belief that the organizational change is necessary, the perception of what organizational outcomes will be generated, and perceptions of the impact on affected individuals and the self (Piderit, 2000). An individual’s commitment to the change initiative is often correlated to the change beliefs. Individuals who have a greater understanding of the need for the change, the outcomes of the change, and how it will affect them and those with whom they work have a higher commitment to the change (Walker, Armenakis, & Bernerth 2007). These individuals will also become champions for the change and are likely to be advocates, working to build positive response to change among their peers (Bardati, 2006; Barlett & Chase, 2004; Eisen & Barlett, 2006).
As beliefs are affected by the perceived need for change and how it will or will not benefit the organization, then beliefs will often be driven by organizational cultures and norms, which may reflect and align with the organization’s or the individual’s value system. According to Amis, Slack, and Hinings (2002), values comprise the foundation upon which organizational systems and structures are formed. When a change initiative creates any adjustment—perceived or actual—to the organizational systems or structures, then it pulls the organizational values into the change equation. Likewise, if a change is a larger, more significant change, such as a second-order change, then not only do values and beliefs become part of the equation, but they may also experience a shift. If there is a strong value commitment to and alignment with the change, and there is a strong belief in the organizational values, then the change occurs more swiftly and with more positive outcomes (Amis et al., 2002).

**Attitudes.** Emotional change response is based on how the individual feels about the change. An emotional response is, at times, more complex and unpredictable than the cognitive or intention responses (Piderit, 2000). Attitude is often affected by perceptions of justice occurring within the change initiative (Foster, 2010; Kernan & Hanges, 2002). Justice is seen as the fair or unfair treatment of employees, which can lead to a positive or negative change response. A perception of unfair treatment or injustice within the organization often results in a resistance to change and a negative attitude and emotional response as well as a negative behavioral change response (Fuchs & Edwards, 2011).

The outcome of the change may influence not only the feeling of justice within the change initiative but also the attitude and belief associated with the change after the initial implementation. A positive change outcome that results in a positive benefit for the organization and the individuals within the organization will reflect a positive change response, whereas an
outcome that was not seen as beneficial for the organization or the individuals will reflect a negative or ambivalent change response (Dashborough, Lamb, & Suseno, 2015). Attitudes and emotions have a strong impact on the individual’s behavior in change response, therefore it is key to consider the factors that affect beliefs and attitudes prior to implementing change initiatives (Liu & Perrewe, 2005).

**Actions.** Intention change response is based on the intended actions and behaviors about the change, which are often viewed as supporting or resisting the initiative. An individual’s beliefs, emotions, and attitudes will result in an intended behavior. This intended behavior is made up of actions taken in support of or in resistance to the organizational change (Piderit, 2000). The organizational culture and norms are often a basis for behaviors and actions in response to a planned change. If traditions and the organization’s cultural system are not considered when implementing and planning for a change initiative, then the behavior and intended actions may be resistance instead of support for the initiative (Townley, 1999). In addition to organizational culture and norms, there is also the factor of self-interest that plays into supportive or resistant intentions. If the change initiative is seen as something that will be beneficial for the individual, then supportive intention will ensue. If it is not seen as beneficial, then the initiative will be met with resistant behavior (Trader-Leigh, 2002). We know from Piderit (2000) that positive and negative change responses are not the only course for cognitive, emotional, and intention responses. Within each dimension, an individual may have a different change response. Prior to Piderit (2000), change response theory focused on positive and negative responses. Piderit (2000) examined the role of ambivalence in addition to and in correlation with positive and negative responses. The role of ambivalence should be considered when studying organizational change and change response.
**Ambivalence.** Ambivalence is neither a negative or positive change response, but one that may be a combination of each. Within an ambivalent change response lies the ability to have a positive emotional reaction as well as a negative cognitive reaction. It is also possible to have a negative emotional reaction but a positive intention response (Piderit, 2000). Ambivalence may occur when organizational leadership emphasizes the need for supportive and positive behaviors for the change initiative, but the individual within the organization does not believe this is in the best interest of the organization, and therefore the individual may demonstrate the necessary actions to implement the change without truly supporting the change (Lines, 2005).

Ambivalence is a more desired response than resistance as it provides the opportunity for the individual to move more easily into a positive response if the areas of resistance are identified and overcome. This is especially true if the ambivalence is seen early in the change cycle, as it is often due to the lack of understanding of the change; how it fits into the vision for the organization; and what it means for that individual, the department, and the organization as a whole (Hazy & Boyatzis, 2015; Seo et al., 2012; Shults, 2008). The ability of the leader to build trust around the vision and direction of the change and articulate what it means for the organization as well as finding a way to involve the constituents in the change process will aid in moving an individual from ambivalence into a positive change response (Lewis, 2006; Lines, 2005; Liu & Perrewe, 2005; Sultz, 2013). Ambivalence is not the only point at which the dimensions interact. Each of the additional three dimensions has an impact on the other (Lines, 2005; Liu & Perrewe, 2005; Seo et al., 2012).

**Interaction of dimensions.** An individual’s overall attitude toward change is comprised of the interplay between the dimensions of one’s response to change (Lines, 2005; Liu &
Perrewe, 2005; Seo et al., 2012). The way a response plays out in one dimension, such as cognition, will alter the emotional response, and so on. Interestingly, a great deal of research has been completed on the interplay between emotional and cognitive change response, but intention and intended action responses have not been looked at as closely. When considering the role employees have in implementing the change initiative and the research that has shown how closely tied the organizational cultural system is with employee behavior, the recognition of the importance of interplay between all dimensions, including behavior is critical (Townley, 1999).

Seo et al. (2012) discussed the emotional response as the driving force of the overall attitude toward change in that the intense emotional response that often comes with an organizational change will create the vision of the change cognitively, which results in a supportive or resistant intention response. The complexity does not end there, however. An individual’s emotional response to change may evolve over time, especially during second-order changes that are more likely to last a significant amount of time (Sonenshein, 2010). As the individual’s overall response may evolve over time, the emotional and cognitive dimensions play a critical role and must be considered if the wish is to have a positive intention response, ultimately leading to successful organizational change.

**Summary**

Each of the three dimensions, in addition to the role of ambivalence, are critical to understanding the overall attitude toward change (Piderit, 2000). The examination of a successful change initiative must start with the emotional and cognitive change responses as they are reciprocal with each other, thus affecting the intention response. The interplay among each of these three dimensions may lead to positive, negative, and ambivalent change responses. The role of ambivalence must not be underplayed as it may be viewed as a guide for adjusting
actions, communications, or implementation strategies to create a positive change response (Lewis, 2006; Lines, 2005; Liu & Perrewe, 2005; Sultz, 2013). The understanding of the dimensions of change response combined with the understanding how the components, origin, order, driver, and implementation of change affect change response is critical when examining the overall attitude toward change and what is causing that attitude. As with any complex analysis, each of the main factors will have underlying factors to consider. This is also true with change response. It is not only important to understand the dimensions of change response and the strategic planning and implementation of the change initiative, but also the role of time and organizational culture and norms on change response.

Response to Change

The study of change response is focused over three dimensions, however, there are multiple other factors to consider. Organizational readiness and length of time relating to the change initiative and organizational culture and norms all play into change response at different times during the change process. Organizational and individual readiness has been discussed; however, this study also examined the correlation of the effects of time, organizational culture and norms, and organizational readiness on change response.

Time. The length of time over which a change initiative unfolds affects change response. The way in which different constituents construct meaning and experience organizational change may evolve throughout the process (Sonenshein, 2010). In some change processes, a change response to a strategic change initiative may be better understood as discussions with individuals in higher and lower level positions occur; however, in another instance, change response to a long and complicated change that creates substantial shifts in organizational structures and systems, thus affecting organizational cultures and norms, may be initially positive but turn to
resistance after initial implementation (Balogun, Bartunek, & Do, 2015; Engler, Jones, & Van de Ven, 2013; Huy, Corley, & Kraatz, 2014). Engler, Jones, and Van de Ven (2016) found that if resistance to change is not understood and leadership does not address that resistance, it will continue to strengthen over time. They also found that supportive leadership was an important factor in reducing resistance at a later point in the change process. Conversely, organization fairness was important in limiting resistance in the early stages of the change process. When considering organization fairness, Jones and Van de Ven (2016) found that constituents are more likely to have a positive change response if they perceive that individuals are treated fairly, including the distribution of resources is perceived as fair and organizational procedures are followed, particularly in the beginning of the change process. Once affected individuals see and experience fairness, supportive leadership plays a critical role in creating a positive change response as the change process continues to unfold (Jones & Van de Ven, 2016). Again, change response is complex and multifaceted. Organizational culture and norms create a unique atmosphere for change within the individual institutions.

**Organizational culture and norms.** An individual’s beliefs, worldviews, and knowledge play a key role in the change response to organizational change in higher education. The views and knowledge of the constituents within a higher education organization will assist in forming the practices and structures within the organization, both short and long term (Bartlett, 2008; James & Card, 2012; Wright & Wilton, 2012). An individual’s beliefs and worldviews play into the characteristics that drive them to be committed to the change initiative. Research shows that if there are “champions” for the change—those who are committed, vocal, and positive about the change initiative, especially individuals who are viewed as influential
members of the community and who foster strong relationships, the change response is usually more positive (Barlett & Chase, 2004; Bardati, 2006; Eisen & Barlett, 2006).

The role of champions brings into light the role of power and influence in an organization and within the change process. How power is perceived, used, and distributed plays an important role in the change response. Where power sits, whether at the top, within a shared governance model, or somewhere in between, it serves as a keystone in the makeup of organizational culture, including behaviors, dialogue, and system dynamics, each of which play a role in the cognitive, emotional, and intention change response (Hoover & Harder, 2014). Power may also be played out through internal competition. This type of power play may lead to intention resistance by those who perceived the change as unjust. If the organizational culture and norms support this type of competition, then the individuals who feel it is unjust do not personally align with the organizational culture. If the organizational culture and norms do not support this type of competition, there will be strong resistance to the initiative (Gayle, Tewarie, & White, 2003). According to Craig (2004), the adaptability of the organization’s constituency to the integration of the needed changes is an indicator of the strength of the organizational culture. Therefore, even if the change initiative does not completely align with the culture and norms, if there is a strong organizational culture, the individuals are able to move past the misalignment if they understand the need for the initiative.

Organizational culture may inhibit or bolster a planned change initiative based on conflicting understandings and narratives around organizational vision and identity, including values and beliefs (Zilber, 2006). An individual’s ability to understand how the change plays a role in the organizational culture and mission plays a significant role in producing a positive change response. This understanding often comes down to organizational readiness. Hence,
understanding organizational readiness is critical to understanding change response as an organization’s vision, identity, and values plays into an individual’s cognitive, emotional, and intention responses to the change.

**Positive response and resistance to change.** An individual’s change response and overall attitude to change will either support a successful change initiative or resist the initiative to the point of failure. The change response, therefore, is perhaps one of the most important factors in the outcomes of the change initiative. Craig (2004) stated, “Change jeopardizes the comfort of the group and a change to its shared beliefs is considered a threat to existence. There is fear of losing power and resources” (p. 84). Fear of the unknown within a change initiative may be paralyzing to the individuals at the heart of the change. Research has shown that when constituents within an organization see the change initiated by a shared vision, directed by someone they trust, and aligned with their beliefs and values, then the change response has an increased likelihood of success (Craig, 2004; Dasborough et al., 2015; Harold & Alexander, 2014; van der Voet, 2014). Beliefs and values of committed employees often align with the organizational culture and norms—even through change—as the core values are reflected in the mission of the organization (Baker & Baldwin, 2014).

The role of trust in leadership and the importance of having a shared vision that creates buy-in are both worth noting. Research shows that open, effective, and ongoing communication that engages affected individuals in the process results in trust of both the leadership and the change initiative. This trust is apt to lead to constituent buy-in. This trust and buy-in often translates into motivation and inspiration around a shared vision (Cooper, Nieberding, & Wanek, 2013; Dasborough et al., 2015; Harold & Alexander, 2014). Beliefs and values, trust, and vision are all linked to organizational culture and norms, attitudes, and behaviors, thus creating a strong
link to change response (Ford, Ford, & D’Amelio, 2008). Therefore, it is important that a greater understanding is developed of beliefs and values, trust, and vision in organizational change and change response.

**Beliefs and values.** Change is a difficult process even in the best of times. Change that is driven by forces outside of the control of those experiencing it is even more difficult. The alignment of beliefs and values of the organization and its constituents with the change initiative is of critical importance (Craig, 2004; Kezar & Eckel, 2002a). Baker and Baldwin (2014) lent a valuable perspective to the realities of needed change when they stated that even when change creates a demographic or environmental shift, successful colleges will remain rooted in their core mission. The question then becomes how to stay rooted in the mission of the organization while adapting to the changes needed to help the organization survive and thrive?

Small, private, liberal arts colleges are usually made up of individuals with staunch ideas about mission, cultural norms, organizational and individual purpose, and organizational systems and processes. These ideas contribute to an understanding of just and legitimate practices. Change initiatives that are mandated and felt to be forced by factors such as economy, parents, donors, and regulations are often met with resistance as there is not a feeling of alignment and justice (Morphew, 2009). The beliefs and values of the constituents is not only solely aligned with the organization but also may differ from department to department. Although individuals in some departments, who may feel more secure in their position on campus, are more adaptable to change and see the change initiative as an alignment with the mission and cultural norms, others may be fearful of their department’s place in the organizational mission as change initiatives are implemented (Armenakis et al., 1993; Kezar, 2001; Kezar, 2012).
The alignment of beliefs and values not only of the school culture but also of the individuals that work within the school to the change initiative is critical to a positive change response. If the constituency does not understand how the change initiative supports and protects the organizational mission, a sense of distrust and fear will ensue. Effective communication of the need for change and how it will work to enhance the organizational mission will increase the positive emotional and cognitive response, thus prompting supportive behavior and actions (Kezar, 2001; Lines, 2005). This positive response is aided by trust in the organization, its leadership, and the change process itself.

**Organizational Leadership**

The role of the president of a small, private, liberal arts college is very different today than it was 20 years ago. Today, presidents of these colleges must focus first on funding and the governing board and then on legal battles, faculty needs, and facility issues (Tekniepe, 2014). This shift in focus and responsibility over the past few decades from the historical role of working with faculty and overseeing and managing academic policies and process has changed the way in which a college president leads an organization (Cowen, 2008).

According to Morris and Miller (2013), the primary focuses of the president in the current environment are increasing fiscal resources, maintaining facilities, and increasing enrollment. Eaker and Kuk (2011) stated that small colleges are different from larger institutions as they tend to have fewer disciplines and a more familial feel due to smaller numbers of students and faculty. These differences as well as the school’s core disciplines mandate specific leadership needs.

Puglisi (2011) stated that the president must also prioritize building a positive relationship with the board of trustees. Chait (2006) discussed the challenges of board
management and noted the effects positive and negative board–president relationships can have on the outcomes of change initiatives. Without the board’s support and encouragement, the president could be hard pressed to lead the organization through change with positive outcomes. Cook (2015) stated that the board must trust the president and feel that there is adequate transparency and communication to build and maintain that trust through times of change. Cook (2015) also argued that the leadership style best suited to lead a higher education organization through change is transformational leadership. Cook stated that “A transformational leader (possessing charisma and providing inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized attention and consideration) is well-positioned to align all stakeholders in a common vision required for organizational change” (p. 38).

It is clear that many small, private, liberal arts colleges are in a position where the institutions go through change initiatives to increase enrollment and funding or they close their doors (Busta, 2019). The research has shown that the college president is key in leading these organizations through change. Cowan (1993) stated that when small colleges have moved through changes needed to increase viability, the determining factor was a transformative president who was capable of acknowledging the reality of the state of the school prepared to lead it through organizational change with positive outcomes, and willing to implement the change initiatives through collaboration.

To make small, private, liberal arts colleges viable, school presidents must be able to increase funding through enrollment and philanthropic support. To do this, these leaders must be transformative leaders who have a positive relationship with the board of trustees based on transparency and trust, a collaborative environment that builds and maintains trust, and change initiatives that lead to stability and sustainability.
**Trust.** The research shows a connection between organizational trust and support for change. Organizational leaders who increase change recipient involvement in the change process create a greater sense of trust by encouraging participation and establishing a just process. An individual’s sense that the process is inclusive and just increases the support and positive change response to the change initiative. In addition to the important role of trust and commitment, organizational leaders who invest time and commitment to create a just and trusting organizational culture will encounter support and cooperation from employees in times of change (Oreg, Vakola, & Armenakis, 2011). This is especially true in a small college. Small colleges, being more familial, feel the need for collaboration and leadership in a different way than their colleagues at larger institutions (Eaker & Kuk, 2011).

The research shows the relationship of the organizational leadership and the employees is a strong factor in the outcome of the change process. If there is a strong relationship with open communication and employee engagement in the change process, then trust is developed and employees will buy in and support the organizational change, which, when done correctly, creates trust through knowledge and leads to inspiration and motivation around a shared vision (Altunay & Arli, 2012; Cooper, Nieberding, & Wanek, 2013; Dasborough et al., 2015; Harold & Alexander, 2014; Khachian, Pazargadie, & Manoochehri, 2013; Mckinnon-Russell, 2015; Morgan & Zeffane, 2003; Sorensen, Hasle, & Pejtersen, 2011; Sucozhanay, Siguenza-Guzman, & Zhimnay, 2014; van der Voet, 2014).

The level of trust in organizational leadership depends on the organizational culture and is a key component to organizational success. The method by which organizational change is managed may corrode that trust. The organization’s leader has the ability to enhance and build trust during organizational change by creating relationships with employees and by adopting
strategic human resource strategies. This trust creates buy-in for change initiatives and reduces the skepticism and criticism of employees and stakeholders to those initiatives of change (Morgan & Zeffeane, 2003). Research shows that employee buy-in is critical to successful change implementation and positive change response (Altunay & Arli, 2012; Cooper et al., 2013; Dasborough et al., 2015; Hechanova & Clementina-Olpoc, 2013; Morgan & Zeffane, 2003).

Ford et al. (2008) stated that trust in the change agent is essential in overcoming resistance to change. Change is often difficult to embrace at any level, and each individual’s reaction to change can affect the leader’s ability to move the organization through the change process (Piderit, 2000). Trust is a key component in successful change management implementation and is built through engagement, buy-in, communication, and understanding (Hechanova & Clementina-Olpoc, 2013; Cooper et al., 2013; Dasborough et al., 2015). The positive feelings created through trust affect individual feelings during times of change. Dasborough et al. (2015) found that change and emotions are inseparable and are created through lived experience. The more individuals understand about the organizational change and what it means for them, the more positive their responses tend to be and the more progress made toward fulfilling the change. Through knowledge and understanding, levels of anxiety decreased and excitement increased (Dasborough et al., 2015). Trust of the organizational leader and the change initiative and buy-in to the leadership’s vision are interlinked in positive change response.

**Vision.** Hord (1989) found that to create change in schools, there must be a vision around which people can and will rally and act. Inclusive, transparent, and empowering leadership inspires buy-in of vision and change initiatives (Hechanova & Clementina-Olpoc, 2013; Hearld & Alexander, 2014). Hechanova and Clementina-Olpoc (2013) found that
leadership and the leader’s vision in times of change directly influence employee commitment to change. Hannay, Jaafar, Ben, & Earl, (2013) found that through the use of knowledge management practices, senior educational leaders were able to create a learning organization by shifting their roles from managers to knowledge leaders. Knowledge leaders are able to inspire and motivate others around a shared vision due to their understanding and buy-in to the organizational leader’s vision and alignment with the organizational mission. This shift led to an increase in trust and continually positive response in the face of change situations.

In times of change, organizational culture plays a critical role in buy-in to the vision, the change process, and the change response of the internal constituency. McKinnon-Russell (2015) found that open communication; promoting a flexible and pleasant work environment; cooperative goal setting; and consistently seeking to enhance, inspire, and motivate employees creates an environment open to and able to create change successfully. To create an organizational culture that is conducive to successful change management by means of motivating and inspiring others around a shared vision, there must be an alignment between vision, work processes, and accountability. To create this alignment, employees and the community need to understand the vision, the change initiative, and the change process to get to the other side of change implementation (Pike & Paul, 2011).

The understanding of vision, process, and change starts with the organizational leader. According to Sucozhanay et al. (2014), the most successful change agents used transformational leadership to create high levels of follower trust, admiration, motivation, commitment, loyalty, and performance through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Research shows that there is a high correlation between idealized influence and inspirational motivation and between inspiring motivation around a
shared vision and faculty commitment (Raman et al., 2015). In implementing change management, leadership behavior around vision, modeling the way, and individual employee attention influences and motivates employees’ intended actions and behaviors in change response (van der Voet, 2014).

Conclusion

Small, private, liberal arts colleges are in a time of crisis. More of these schools are closing their doors each year. A decline in enrollment, smaller endowments, and increasing costs have put these colleges in a precarious situation that calls for a change in the model of operation (Gansemer-Topf, et al., 2014; Hartocollis, 2016; Mitchell, 2015; Saturen, 2010; Tierney, 2015; Weissman, 2014). Although small colleges are viewed as more flexible and adaptable than their larger counterparts, change is difficult for any institution that is made up of individuals who feel strongly about the cultural systems and organizational beliefs that are at the heart of the organization and those who work within it (Gumport & Snydman, 2002). There can be no doubt that change needs to occur, however, how the change process takes place will determine the success and outcomes of the change process.

Change response is made up of three dimensions: cognitive, emotional, and intention. Within these dimensions, change responses that are positive, negative, or ambivalent can occur. Each one of these responses has a reciprocal relationship with the other and, although independent, the dimensions have significant influence on each other. Ambivalence can be the result of the interplay between any of the first three dimensions and is important when considering the overall attitude and response to change (Piderit, 2000). Change response is influenced by multiple factors of the change process. These factors include origin of change, order of change, driver of change, and change implementation. If a change initiative is a second-
order change brought about by external factors, is driven from the top down, and is seen as an unplanned change by the internal constituency, the change responses of those closest to the change and most informed will be different than those who are feeling the effects with little information.

The role of trust and inspiration and motivation around a shared vision as well as buy-in of the constituencies cannot be underestimated in the change response. The literature shows that trust in the organizational leader who communicates and shares the vision will increase the chances for a positive change response (Altunay & Arli, 2012; Cooper et al., 2013; Dasborough et al., 2015; Hechanova & Clementina-Olpec, 2013; Morgan & Zeffane, 2003). However, change response continues in its complexity. A trusted leader may receive a positive change response on initial merit; however, time has a way of altering change response. A mandated change may be understood in the beginning when communication is more active and the employees are more engaged. Over time, however, that positive response may erode as communication drops off and individuals become uncertain about how to cope with the outcomes of the change or about what the change means for them over the long term (Sonenshein, 2010). The actions and processes that lead to a sustained positive change response are many and evolving. As leadership moves an organization through change, considering and understanding each of the influencers of change response is critical to a positive outcome.

The literature in this chapter showed that there were influential factors to consider when considering change response to change initiatives mandated by a new college president in their first year at a small, private, liberal arts college. These influential factors were shown to be the components of change, organizational readiness, time, organizational leadership, organizational
and individual beliefs and values, and organizational culture and norms. These influential factors, aligned with Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory is shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3. Influential factors and Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory**

This study examined the gap in literature regarding the role of the president in successfully leading an organization through change in higher education. Specifically, this research studied the specific actions and behaviors needed by the president of a small, private, liberal arts college to generate positive change response to mandated change initiatives in times of crisis.
Chapter 3: Research Design

As the literature review has shown, a gap in the literature exists regarding the specific actions and behaviors needed by the president of a small, private, liberal arts college to generate positive change response to mandated change initiatives in times of crisis. The purpose of this study was to explore the change response of multiple constituencies to mandated change initiatives implemented by the new president to increase student enrollment at a small, private, liberal arts college. The intrinsic single site case study (Merriam, 1989) was utilized to examine the change response of key constituents to change initiatives at the research site, hereafter referred to as the College. This chapter provides the rationale for using a qualitative methodology and a description of the participant sampling procedures, data collection and analysis methods, ethical considerations, measures to assure trustworthiness and validity, and limitations.

Qualitative Research Approach

Qualitative research began long before it was so named to examine the cultural and social aspects of people’s lives, including how these individuals and groups understood the world and their communities (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Works by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Guba (1978) began to define qualitative research based on the study of life experiences within real-life scenarios and settings. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) discussed different types of orientations within qualitative research: positivist, postpositivist, interpretive, and critical. The most traditionally used orientation of qualitative research, according to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), was interpretive research as it is based in the assumption that “reality is socially constructed…[and] there is no single, observable reality. Rather there are multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event” (p. 9).
This study was an expanded qualitative research study to understand how lived experiences of individuals and groups affect their change response through a case study approach. The qualitative approach used in this study is best aligned with the interpretive research orientation as each person or groups change response is based in their own reality and interpretation of an event or multiple events.

**Research Paradigm**

Butin (2010), Ponterotto (2005), and Merriam (1991) discussed the constructive–interpretive paradigm. If constructivism–interpretivism were a sign, it would say, “there is more than one truth.” In this paradigm, the researcher gains insight through reflection often ignited by the conversation between the researcher and the participants (Ponterotto, 2005). This paradigm aligned with this researcher’s philosophical viewpoint that our lived experiences create our truths, therefore, there is no singular truth as there is no singular interpretation of all lived experiences.

The story developed through the relationship and dialogue between the researcher and participant creates meaning. Thus constructivism–interpretivism is a qualitative research paradigm. Unlike (post)positivism, constructivism–interpretivism is "subjective and influenced by the context of the situation, namely the individual's experience and perceptions, the social environment, and the interaction between the individual and the researcher" (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 130). According to Ponterotto (2005), our experiences create realities, and there are different ways to interpret those realities. The researcher, instead of trying to find one truth, tried to uncover and tell the story. The purpose of this study is to explore the change response of multiple constituencies to mandated change initiatives implemented by the new president of the College to increase student enrollment. An individual’s response to change is based on a lived
experience and the interpretation of how the change initiative took place. The role of the researcher in this study was, through qualitative methods, to explore and understand the individual’s experience, perception, and interpretation within the environment of the College. To do so, face-to-face conversations between the participant and the researcher took place.

Merriam’s (1998) approach to case study was based in constructivist methodology. This approach differs from Yin’s (2009) positivist method, but was more similar to Stake (1995), as he too worked with a constructivist method. When considering the philosophical underpinnings of the case study, one must also consider which case study approach best aligns with the researcher’s style and problem of practice. For the purposes of this study, Merriam’s (1998) approach best aligns as it is a single entity with set boundaries.

Much like the scholar–practitioner, the constructivists–interpretivists have biases and values that can influence the research. Consequently, both must understand their biases and values and how they may affect the research, and then put them away. Butin (2010) summarized this aspect of the constructivist–interpretivist researcher by stating that they are “already part of the story about the truth because [they are] the one[s] examining it and describing it” (p. 60). This researcher was a part of the story as she was examining and describing the lived experience and interpretations of the participants. Therefore, it was important that the researcher understood her biases and values and how they could have influenced the research if not understood and set aside.

**Research Tradition**

The researcher considered several different options limited only by the bounds of inductive study. The researcher did not test a hypothesis, but explored and examined a research question by asking participants open-ended questions and gaining insight from their responses
that would lead to significant findings. The research designs considered were phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study. Through research of the seminal authors case study was selected as it was the best approach as to an in-depth analysis of people, events, and relationships bounded by a common factor and system fostering rich details about the perspectives and lived experiences of the participants to reveal the overall change response, the response within each dimension, and the influencing factors woven into both.

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), “A case study is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system” (p. 37). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) broke the case study into three categories: particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. A case study falls into the particularistic category if it focuses on a particular phenomenon, event, program, or situation. The descriptive category applies if there is a thick description of the phenomenon, and heuristic is the category of choice if the researcher attempts to create an understanding of phenomenon (Yazan, 2015). Like Merriam (1998), and unlike Yin (2009), Stake (1995) had four categories for case study: holistic, empirical, interpretive, and empathic. Holistic is based on the interrelationship between the context and the phenomenon. Empirical is based on field observations. Interpretive is a reflection of the researcher–subject interaction, and empathic uses an emic perspective to show the experiences of the participants (Yazan, 2015).

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that for case study research, the greatest characteristic is defining the case. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) goes on to explain that the unit of analysis should be the basis for what characterizes a study. In order for the research question being studied to be a case, it must be intrinsically bounded. In this research study, a single site was used to examine the change response of individuals across the College as a result of change initiatives led by a new president in the first year of presidency. A case study was an ideal
method for this research as it allowed participants to provide their responses and reactions to the change initiatives. The case study was beneficial in this research as the limited number of interviews gave breadth and depth of scope and understanding of change response across constituencies under the same president.

The selection of a single-site case study was based in Gerring (2004). Gerring (2004) stated that case study research is a method to undertake a deep study of one unit with the purpose of generalization. Gerring (2004) provided three supporting arguments for a single-site case study: (1) It is easier to collect data in one place than multiple places, (2) A case study makes it easier to observe multiple segments, and (3) In fields that more often use cross-unit research or other methodologies, case study often lends a new and needed perspective to findings.

The purpose of the study was to understand a phenomenon related to a specific environment; the context of the study lends to the results. The individuals that make up a higher education institution create a unique setting, as does the leader of that institution. As leadership changes, so does the institution and the change response of those within the institution. A case study approach allowed for a thorough examination of the unique change responses based on the implementation of change initiatives to increase enrollment.

Three seminal authors were considered as a path of the research design: Yin, Stake, and Merriam. To determine the research design that aligned best with the research question and the conceptual framework, the researcher reviewed how each author represented the process of data collection, data analysis, and data validation. The researcher found that Yin (2009) is very specific, which may have been helpful, but was a very intense and inflexible process. Yin (2009) was a proponent of mixed-methods and theoretical propositions. Yin’s (2009) research design
did not align with the framework or research question in that this study was an inductive, not a deductive study.

While Stake (1995) was supportive of a qualitative approach, there is very little direction and a strong focus on impressions taken from formal and informal data collection. This viewpoint was a little too flexible and felt as though the study may develop themes difficult to validate or generalize. Merriam (1998) was a wonderful combination of the two. Merriam (1998) provided guidance with flexibility, supported qualitative study, focused on interpretation, encouraged a dynamic process of data collection and analysis, and provided multiple avenues for data validation. For the purpose of this study, Merriam’s (1998) design for case study was used.

**Key Scholars**

There are three main approaches to a case study derived from three seminal authors: Yin (2009), Merriam (1998), and Stake (1995). Each of these authors describe case study as a bounded phenomenon within a real-life context. Yazan (2015) provided an in-depth look at each seminal author and their approaches, similarities, and differences as well as their research design, data collection, data analysis, and data validation.

Baxter and Jack (2008) described the different types of case study designs and the steps in the process of conducting case study research. Baxter and Jack (2008) examined the case study approaches developed by both Stake (1995) and Yin (2009). Baxter and Jack (2008) differ from Boblin, Ireland, Kirkpatrick, & Robertson (2013) by stating that both Yin and Stake used a constructivist paradigm. Baxter and Jack (2008) stated that a case study methodology best fits research when context matters. These authors discuss the importance of defining and binding the case as well as determining the type of case study best suited for the researcher’s study. Baxter and Jack (2008) outlined Yin’s categories as explanatory, exploratory, or descriptive. They then
showed Stake’s categories as intrinsic, instrumental, or collective. Baxter and Jack (2008) discussed single- and multiple-case studies and the benefits of each as well as methods of reporting a case study: linear, comparative, chronological, theory building, suspense, and unsequenced.

Boblin et al. (2013) focused on Stake’s approach to case study research. These authors argue that most researchers focus on Yin’s case study approach, but that Stake offered a constructivist view, which is often better suited for researching different phenomenon. For the purpose of this study, the main take away from Boblin et al. (2013) was that Yin and Stake both offered a comprehensive understanding of case study research, but that Yin’s approach was more postpositivist and Stake’s was more constructivist. It is important to determine which approach works best with the researcher’s study when deciding on the category of case study to use. Zainal (2007) described the basis of case study research and the advantages and disadvantages of using case study. At the heart of Zainal’s (2007) article, he outlined the different types of case studies as well as the multiple categories established by Yin, McDonough and McDonough, and Stake.

**Scholarly Debate**

Flyvbjerg (2006) took five recurring arguments against the validity of single case study in research and provided in-depth examples of how and why these five arguments are false. He then rewrote each “myth” of the case study to reflect the true statement that, in the end, infers that single case study research is a significant method through which to gain cumulative knowledge. Flyvbjerg (2006) argued that a single case study should be read as a narrative and in its entirety, not summarized. He also stated that although there is an argument that case study contains greater bias toward verification of preconceived notions, the true argument is that single case study research shows a greater bias toward falsification rather than verification of the
researcher’s preconceived bias. Eckstein (1975) stated that case study is better for testing hypotheses, but not for producing them. Flyvbjerg (2006) contradicted Eckstein when he argued through example that case study may be used to both produce and test hypotheses, but that it should not be limited to either or both. Flyvbjerg (2006) argued two final points of case study research: case study should be seen as a strong example and not as a generalization, and case study provides context-dependent knowledge, which, he argues, is of greater value than predictive theories.

Bennett and Elman (2006) presented arguments both for and against case study research. These authors conclude that the best method of case study research should be combined with statistical analysis to provide a stronger foundation of research. Bennett and Elman (2006) argued that case study methods develop context-sensitive measures of concepts and identify new variables; however, they also argue that case study research has a challenge of underdetermination. Bennett and Elman (2006) argued that case selection in case study research can lead to poor results as can overgeneralization. To avoid these pitfalls, Bennett and Elman (2006) stated that by using statistical study to determine outliers and then using case study to find new or unseen variables will eliminate the challenges that arise when using case study in research alone.

Gerring (2004) described case study research as “an intensive study of a single unit with an aim to generalize across a larger set of units” (p. 341). Gerring (2004) stated that there is often confusion about the role of case study research, but that once examined, it is clear that there is a strong argument for case study across disciplines. Gerring (2004) provided three main arguments for case study research instead of cross-unit research: it is easier to collect data in one place than multiple places; a case study makes it easier to observe multiple segments; and in
fields that more often use cross-unit research or other methodologies, case study often lends a new and needed perspective to findings.

Noor (2008) described case study research as most appropriate when conducting an in-depth examination or exploration of a process or complex real-life activities. Noor (2008) discusses a common critique of case study as well as areas of strength. Like Flyvbjerg (2006) and Bennett and Elman (2006), Noor (2008) brought up the common critique of case study research that there is a perceived lack of scientific rigor and reliability and issues with generalization. However, Noor (2008) also stated that case study provides a holistic view of events and phenomena, which lends to a comprehensive picture of the researcher’s question. He also argued that case study captures the ebb and flow of an organization’s activity, which is helpful in times of change.

When discussing the advantages and disadvantages of case study, Zainal (2007) stated that the advantages are: context-based data, space for both qualitative and quantitative data collection, and the ability to explore and describe data in real-life context and show the complexities of real time and real-life situations. Zainal (2007) also described three disadvantages to case study research: the opportunity for bias and equivocal evidence in the findings, reduced basis for scientific generalization, and their length and quantity of documentation.

**Alignment**

A qualitative case study methodology provides the platform for exploration and examination of transformational change in a single setting by way of data collection methods from multiple sources to lend insight into why systemic change was successful (Merriam, 1998). Numerous 4-year, small, private, liberal arts colleges have closed their doors in the past 5 years,
many more are struggling to remain open (Ernst & Young, 2016). The external environment is shifting and creating the need for second-order change to increase organizational viability and stability (Hartocollis, 2016; Mitchell, 2015).

To create such a significant shift, leadership at these colleges must generate a positive change response to change initiatives intended to improve the opportunity for successful outcomes. To move through change initiatives toward the desired outcome, the leadership should consider the change response of those implementing the change and those affected by the change. This study examined and explored a small, private, liberal arts college that underwent second-order change to increase financial viability through increased enrollment. The ability to examine a single institution bound by specific dates provided the opportunity for in-depth examination and exploration of the research problem.

**Data Collection**

Yazan (2015) presented the data collection process for each of the three seminal authors. According to Yazan (2015), Yin stated that data gathering is determined by six factors: the investigator’s skills, training for a specific case study, the development of a protocol for the investigation, the screening of the case study nominations, and the conduct of a pilot study. Yazan (2015) also noted Yin’s six tools of data gathering: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observation, and physical artifacts. Yazan (2015) showed that Stake uses observation, interview, and document review when gathering data. When describing Merriam’s process of data gathering, Yazan (2015) stated that Merriam used interviews, observing, and analyzing documents. In this research study, the researcher was the only individual collecting data. Data collection included analyzing documents and reviewing archival records and focus group and interview transcripts. The documents and archival records
informed the interviews and focus group session. This followed Merriam and Tisdell’s (2016) recommended guidelines for case study data collection.

**Analytic Methods**

Once the data was collected, the researcher proceeded into analysis. Yazan (2015) laid out the analysis process according to each seminal author. According to Yazan (2015), Yin used examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing, and recombining when necessary. The techniques used by Yin (2009) included pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, program logic, models, and cross-case synthesis. Stake, according to Yazan (2015), analyzed data to give meaning to initial impressions and final observations. Stake’s method of case study analysis was to simultaneously gather and analyze the data using categorical aggregation and direct interpretation. Yazan (2015) reviewed Merriam’s method of data analysis showing that she also focused on making sense of the data, but does so through consolidating, reducing, and interpreting the conversations and findings. Like Stake (1995), Merriam (1998) analyzed data as it was collected, however, Merriam (1998) did so through ethnographic analysis, narrative analysis, phenomenological analysis, constant comparative method, content analysis, and analytic induction. For the purpose of this study, the qualitative data was analyzed as it was collected using Merriam’s (1998) method of data analysis: consolidating, reducing, interpreting, and narrative analysis.

**Presentation of Findings**

According to Baxter and Jack (2008), there is no one preferred way to present the findings of a case study. However, researchers suggest three main presentation styles of case study research: telling the reader a story, providing a chronological report, or addressing each proposition (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2015). Creswell (2015) stated that findings may be
presented as a description, a combination of description and themes, and a generalization. It is important to note that generalization is usually only used in multicase study research. This research study presented findings through a thematic approach. According to Creswell (2015), the thematic approach is based in major themes resulting from data analysis. This approach uses quotations and rich details to back themes.

**Research Site**

The College was originally founded in 1894 as a farm school. Over the course of its growth, the college became a junior college in 1942 and then a 4-year institution in the mid-1960s. Over the past decade, the school has seen several presidential transitions, a decline in enrollment, and diminishing endowments and philanthropic funding. In May, 2017, the college announced the selection for the new president. The new president began service at the College during a time of the lowest enrollment in decades and rising costs of facilities and human resources. In October, 2017, under the leadership of the new president, the College announced two free tuition plans: the first to provide free tuition for in-state students meeting the requirements for admission and the second, 25, full scholarships to those qualified students with household incomes equal to or below $125,000 per year. In November, 2017, the College announced partnerships with three leading institutions for a 5-year, combined, undergraduate and graduate program. These students complete undergraduate work at the college and move into a graduate program at one of the other institutions. In addition to these partnerships, the new president began an effort to increase focus on international students to diversify the student body and increase enrollment. In continued efforts to attract new students and retain current students, the president worked with the faculty to expand academic programs, introducing three new majors. In April of 2018, the new president hired a new director of athletics to enhance the
athletic program at the College. Following many of these major change initiatives, the school received $2,000,000 in philanthropic commitments, which the director of advancement noted was due to the leadership of the new president and the new direction of the College. In July, 2018, the College became one of Fiske’s 20 “best buy” colleges. In the fall of 2018, the College saw the largest enrollment in the College’s history. That October, the College opened the new academic building—a much needed facility upgrade. Under the leadership of this new college president, the College has undergone significant change which has led to increased financial resources, both earned and given.

In February of 2019, the researcher sought to uncover the change response of key administrators, faculty, board members, and staff at the College. The researcher reviewed historical and recent documents beginning in the Fall of 2016 to the Spring of 2019, conducted interviews, and held a focus group that proved helpful in gaining a full and in-depth picture of the change response of different constituents prior to the change, as the change was occurring, and once the change had been completed.

Participants

To examine the change response during the first year of a new president’s tenure, consideration was given to the broad spectrum of individuals affected by the changes and the variety of responses based on the role each plays within the College. To obtain a wide enough data sample with an appropriate scope, a set group of participants for the interviews was determined through a purposive sampling method. The inclusion criteria for participants for interviews consisted of individuals in leadership positions within their domains at the College who were employed or active within the College during the period of the change initiatives. These individuals assisted the president in not only carrying out the strategic change initiatives
but also in explaining them to the groups within their domain. Creswell (2015) stated that when selecting the number of individuals to interview, the ability to provide a more in-depth picture is reduced as the researcher adds individuals into the research. Creswell (2015) also stated that with the use of purposeful sampling, the researcher conducting a single site case study will intentionally select individuals within the site to examine a specific phenomenon. O’Reilly and Parker (2012) and Walker (2012) stated that data saturation is reached when the data collected enables the researcher to replicate the study. Crouch and McKenzie (2006) provided an upper limit of twenty participants in a qualitative study to gain in-depth and rich data. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) stated that twelve participants were the minimum required for saturation. Creswell (2015) and Yin (2009) stated that focus groups are a form of interviews. This research study used a purposeful sampling for one-on-one interviews with nine individuals and one focus group session with three individuals, for a total of twelve participants. Interviewees and focus group session attendees represented multiple segments of the school community who were participants and leaders of the president-led change initiatives.

Those chosen for the interviews included the board chair of the board of trustees, members of the president’s cabinet, academic department heads, faculty, and additional staff members. When factoring in the role of enrollment into financial sustainability and stability, it was important to consider the change response of faculty in the study. The sampling size for individual interviews was nine personal interviews across multiple constituencies to gain a comprehensive view of change response within the site. Prior to beginning the interviews, the researcher obtained permission from the College president.

**Procedures**

This study was conducted in three sequential phases: document and archival review;
interviews with key administrators, faculty, the board chair, and staff; and triangulation of data. This section will focus on the research design. To complete the study, Institutional Review Board approval was obtained. Once this approval was received from both the researcher’s institution and the case study site, the researcher worked with the college administration to collect documents for review. These included emails, the College’s strategic plan, internal documents, website, video, the College magazine, and a presentation. The researcher analyzed the collected items and used them to gain insight into key themes that arose during the change initiatives. These themes and understandings helped inform the interview questions. Upon completion of the review and analysis of documents, interview questions were created and dates were set for the interview schedule and focus group session. On the interview days, the researcher interviewed nine individuals across board, administration, faculty, and staff populations.

Interviews were one-on-one discussions based on a set of interview questions created using Piderit’s (2000) response to change survey and the information gathered from the document review. The researcher used Seidman’s (2013) interview protocol of listening as the most important aptitude in interviewing, asking exploratory rather than probing follow up questions, avoiding leading questions, keeping the participant focused, and asking for concrete details (Seidman, 2013),

The interview questions were created to measure change response within the dimensions of cognition, emotion, and intention. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes to an hour and a half and was held in a private setting. The privacy aided in the comfort level of the participant and decreased the chances of disruption (Creswell, 2015). The duration of the interview allowed for continued conversation if needed, but remained manageable for busy individuals their work day.
The researcher held one focus group session with three constituents. Questions and discussion prompts for this session resembled those used in the one-on-one interviews, but the session was longer than the interviews in duration to allow for a higher volume of responses and to encourage dialogue. After assuring all needed data was in hand, the researcher worked to triangulate the data based on Merriam’s (1998) guide to validation to form a more comprehensive understanding of the change response of each constituency group. Upon completion of data analysis, the researcher composed the findings.

**Data Analysis**

All data collected in this study was analyzed using MAXQDA. In Phase 1 of the data analysis, the researcher reviewed the documents provided by individuals within the College. These documents provided insight into the implementation of, communication about, and reaction to the change initiatives.

In Phase II of the data analysis, the researcher conducted, recorded, and transcribed one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with select participants across multiple constituencies within the College. According to Creswell (2015), one-on-one, semi-structured interviews are popular in educational research and allow for the participant to respond in a way that is unrestrained and personal, lending to a greater understanding of the personal experiences of change response. The data was transcribed initially using the transcription software, Temi, and then reviewed and corrected through playback and personal transcription.

In Phase III of data analysis, the researcher used memos and codes to note keywords, phrases, themes, categories, and patterns within the transcripts. These memos and codes helped turn the transcripts into usable data. The researcher used MAXQDA for data analysis and coding of the qualitative data. Saldana (2013) stated that coding is a way of identifying categories. Two
types of coding were used: deductive coding and descriptive coding. Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014) argued that codes and frequencies create quantifiable data, which lends itself to the discovery of themes among change response in different change initiatives. Additional coding was determined once the data was analyzed.

In Phase IV, the researcher used the codes created in Phase III to create categories to inform the findings. The categories were segmented into themes that led to positive, negative, or ambivalent change responses. Once the categories and themes were created and the data was aligned, the researcher revisited the research question, framework, and literature review to assure congruency. Once the themes were generated, the researcher conducted member check with each interviewee and focus group attendee. In the final phase of data analysis, Phase V, the researcher finalized interpretations, document findings, results, and implications for future research.

Criteria for Quality Qualitative Research

Within other industries such as law and medicine, there are standards of practice that assist professionals with guidelines meant to elevate a profession and create trust in process and product. The same is true in research. Tracy (2010) stated that flexible and thoughtful criteria in qualitative research will bolster outcomes meant to drive trust, respect, higher quality research, collaboration, and unification. Tracy (2010) argued that there are eight criteria for quality qualitative research. For the purpose of this study, the criteria considered for quality qualitative research were ethical considerations, credibility, transferability, internal audit, self-reflexivity, and transparency.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical consideration of the participants and of the study information was vital to the
credibility and trustworthiness of the research. To maintain ethical standards throughout the research process, each interview record was kept anonymous and confidential. Only the researcher could access to the interview notes and any information related to the participant. The only data point that served as an identifier for participants was the position or role in the College (faculty or staff) and length of employment with the College. Utmost care was taken to protect the security of any documents produced. Each document was uploaded in two places for security and safety: a cloud-based drive and a project management software system. Any information loaded into MAXQDA was secured through password protection and was not shared.

Credibility

Tracy (2010) identified triangulation as a method of establishing credibility in a research study. Triangulation is the use of different data collection methods that produce the same findings within one research subject. The use of documents, archival records, a focus group, and interviews related to one research question aided in credibility through triangulation.

Tracy (2010) stated that multivocality may also be used to increase study credibility. Multivocality is the use of a variety of voices within the study. This study used participants who serve in a variety of roles across the College and, therefore, provided a variety of lenses through which the researcher could view the change initiatives. A faculty experience will be very different than that of a board chair. In addition to triangulation and multivocality, member reflection lends to credibility (Tracy, 2010). Member reflection creates an atmosphere of collaboration and elaboration. Throughout the study, the researcher incorporated member reflection where appropriate.

The researcher employed ongoing member check. Member checking can help validate data by relating specific information and findings back to participants. After theme
development, the researcher sent the themes to the participants to make sure they accurately represented what was communicated by the participant about their experiences, responses to change, and feelings about the change initiatives discussed during the interview process.

**Transferability**

Geertz (2005) described thick description as a way of presenting meaning and context, which people attribute to actions, words, and items. Thick description is essential in the study of organizational culture, especially those cultures that the researcher has not experienced. Our experiences are the base of our understanding, therefore, the ability to have context around foreign ideas is critical when analyzing organizational culture.

The researcher was not a member of the College’s current internal community and has not worked within a higher education institution in many years—nor has the researcher held a leadership position within a higher education institution. The experiences of the interviewees exist within a context that was not the researcher’s own. The actions, words, and items related to those with whom the researcher worked at the College provided meaning and context to assist in understanding the organizational culture and provided a more comprehensive understanding of the change response.

**Internal Audit**

Through the research process, the researcher maintained notes and accounts of each step, interview, observation, and consideration. After completion of each interview, the researcher typed up interview notes and created a memo describing the overall outcome of the interview. The information was uploaded into MAXQDA to keep track of the notes and assist in identifying themes, codes, and categories. After any conversation conducted that was applicable to the research, the researcher created an audio file or a field note. Draft reports were saved and
labeled with the correct date to be easily placed together in chronological order. Each of these pieces of information was kept in a project management software system and in a cloud drive to assure no loss of information would occur. The singular location also provided ease of access for pulling any information needed.

**Positionality, Self-reflexivity, and Transparency**

Over the past 14 years, I have worked in and with numerous nonprofit organizations across the United States and abroad. During this time, I have realized that each experience from childhood to now has helped shape the lens through which I view future experiences. Takacs (2002) expressed it well when he discussed his thoughts on understanding our differences, our worldview, and those around us in order to better understand our own positionality. Takacs (2002) stated that, “Rather than ‘tolerating’ difference, we move to respect difference, as difference helps us understand our own worldview—and thus the world itself—better . . . To understand our own place in the world requires us to listen to and understand those around us” (p. 170). In considering my positionality, I am reminded that it is an honor to do research at this level, and with that honor comes obligation and commitment. The obligation is to those about whom I am researching and to those who my research will affect. The commitment is to do the research with a solid and open understanding of my positionality, bias, assumptions, and experiences while truly hearing and absorbing the same from others. As Takacs (2002) said, “Only by truly listening to others can I see how I am constrained and how I can become aware of the conceptual shackles imposed by my own identity and experiences” (p. 170).

**Personal.** My positionality continues to develop through my experiences and through listening to others, but my upbringing, experiences, and culture play a tremendous role in shaping my identity, biases, and assumptions. I was raised with clear expectations that education
and drive are what separate those who do and those who do not. I grew up believing that if you are not educated, you are not intelligent. If you are not consistently striving to be better and do more, you have a lack of ability or desire, and are therefore, “less than.” As Franklin (2014) states, “[it is] the problem of an ideal of an educated person that thinks, acts, and learns in a male way” (p. 25). As an educated white female, I was taught to think, act, and learn like a white male. Although this takes power away from thinking, acting, and learning like a female, it does lend power to working in a predominantly male culture. I often want to help other females “succeed” or “move up,” but find it difficult to do so when our “femaleness” gets in the way: females find it challenging to ask for a raise or promotion. I have come to realize that I developed a bias against the presentation of certain “female” traits in leadership. I spend quite a bit of time understanding and neutralizing this bias as much as possible over the past year, however, as I move forward in the study of leadership in change management, it becomes critical that I keep my awareness of this bias in the forefront of my mind. This bias could potentially influence the way I perceive interviews and findings, especially when analyzing results about qualities and traits, such as trust and motivation and inspiration, that I have more often seen from female leaders.

**Organizational Leader.** As a child, I was vocal and impatient. As an adult, I am much the same way, but I have learned to listen more and have more tact. My natural tendency is to drive action, and this has created a bias in my view of leadership. We all have different leadership styles, even if we come to leadership through the same perspective. I understand that leadership takes many shapes and sizes. Great leaders are also great followers; however, my bias is that great leadership is also vocal. I do not mean that I equate loud with leading, but I do believe that a leader needs to articulate the mission and vision often and with passion (Bradham,
According to Kouzes and Posner (2007), a leader should encourage the heart, lead the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, and enable others to act. However, other research points to predispositions, skills, competencies, traits, and more as important aspects of leadership. As I move forward in my research, it is important that I remain aware of my bias of what makes an effective leader and what others desire from their leaders. Although my experience and study push me to believe that leadership comes primarily from ability, traits, or predisposition, I am able to acknowledge and understand that leadership may also be taught. I struggle with the idea that an individual with very few, if any, personality traits and predisposition for transformative, political, charismatic, strategic, or visionary leadership is able to learn the skills and competencies that will overcome their lack of natural tendencies. This belief that natural leadership ability is more desirable than learned leadership ability is one that I paid attention to as I moved through this research study, specifically as it related to how others perceive the skills and traits of a leader guiding the change initiative.

Employee. I have been an employee who has reported to many different types of leaders. My perspective on each leader’s style has been that each is strong in some areas and weak in others. I feel that this is a strong possibility of truth for most, if not all, leaders. However, there are certain aspects of leadership that I, as an employee, need from my supervisor, and each leader has fallen short. Is this because my expectations are too high? Is this because I am a challenging employee whose style does not mesh well with others? These are all questions I need to ask myself for my own growth as well as for this research study.

I recently conducted a review with my staff about my leadership style, and I was surprised at the results. In the areas where I thought I would be strong, I was weak. What does this say about how we view ourselves as leaders and how we view those who lead us? The idea
that my experiences and frustrations as an employee have affected my view of leadership is one
that needs attention. Each leader has strengths, and each leader has weaknesses. It cannot be
expected that any one leader will be perfect in every situation. This is why I am interested in
studying the role of the leader and leadership in change management. These organizations
usually have traditional leadership styles in place, yet our education system and the expectations
and environment of private education is rapidly changing. Is traditional leadership capable and
needed to lead these colleges through this change process? My experience as an employee says
that it is a mix of yes and no, leading me to create a bias regarding what skills and traits that
make up strong leadership. This study showed me that my bias is indeed that, and that different
skills and traits may be needed at different organizations, at different times, and within different
organizational cultures.

**Consultant.** I am a strategic planning and fundraising consultant. I have the privilege of
working with many organizations across the United States and overseas. These organizations
consist of hospitals, schools, universities, colleges, community organizations, and startups.
When I reflect on my time as a consultant who works with various types of leaders in many
positions, there are a few that truly stand out. These leaders were willing to take risks; knew
how to maneuver the political atmosphere; and had great communication skills, empathy, vision,
humility, and emotional intelligence. These leaders were willing to roll up their sleeves and do
the hard work, but they rarely had to, as others were excited to do it for them.

My privilege of seeing and working with so many different leaders has created a bias of
leadership style. I am intellectually aware that there are situations in which an authoritative
leader is the best answer to handle a given situation, however, it is hard for me to imagine that
this type of leadership is the answer to change management. My consulting experiences also
create the question of true differences in leadership needs across sectors. Is the leadership of a college different than that of a hospital? A college has faculty and a hospital has physicians. A hospital’s board may be appointed or elected, each of which comes with its own set of complications and positives. College boards are appointed, but, at times, the appointments are very political. Does this create similar issues? There are leadership structures and dynamics, boards, staff, and a great deal of work to be done in change management. Although my research project is focused on a small, private, liberal arts college, I find that I often feel it may be applicable to all nonprofit organizations. The findings of this study showed that the unique nature of higher education does create its own niche issues and challenges, and while the needs and action steps may be transferable to other sectors, additional studies would be needed to make that determination.

**Limitations**

A noted limitation of qualitative research is said to be a lack of quantitative data to support the qualitative data. Walford (2007) stated that interviews do not generate sufficient data when studying social life due to incomplete knowledge or altered memory. Based on this research, to strengthen the variability and trustworthiness of the data, multiple data collection methods were used. These included interviews, a focus group, archival records, and document reviews. The trustworthiness of the data was increased through member check and in-depth interviews with the participants resulting in detailed transcripts with rich description informing coding to ensure validity.

The use of purposive sampling was a limitation because it is a nonrandom sampling method. This type of sampling limits the generalization of the sample. The small sample size of the interviews and focus group members generated data that may lead to different findings than
with a larger sample size. In addition to the sampling method and size, a single site case study approach was a limitation in that the results may not be transferable to other institutions of higher education.
Chapter Four: Research Findings

The purpose of this study is to explore the change response of multiple constituencies to mandated change initiatives implemented by the new president of the College to increase student enrollment. From the research findings, three overarching themes and ten sub-themes developed. These three themes are discussed in the following chapter as aligned with Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory: (1) Organizational culture and norms dictate the processes needed for a positive change response, (2) Trust, vision, and willingness to act generate respect for and buy-in to the change initiative, and (3) Change initiatives linked to organizational survival generate an overall positive change response. According to Piderit (2000), there are three dimensions to change response: cognitive, emotional, and intention. The interplay of each of these dimensions and the change response associated with each result in an overall positive, ambivalent, or negative change response. The literature pointed to additional high impact factors that influenced change response within and in coordination with each of the three dimensions of Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory: components of change, organizational readiness, time, organizational leadership, beliefs and values, and organizational culture and norms. The findings showed that each of the three dimensions of Piderit’s (2000) theory, the additional high impact factors that emerged from the literature, and one additional high impact factor discovered during data analysis, organizational viability, influenced the overall change response to each of the three change initiatives reviewed in document review and discussed by the study participants. Piderit’s (2000) three dimensions and all high impact factors are seen to play a role in overall change response, thus generating a deeper understanding of the change response of multiple constituents to change initiatives mandated by a new college president of a small, private, liberal arts college in their first year.
The data for this study was analyzed in five phases. In Phase I of data analysis, the researcher collected, reviewed, and analyzed documents provided by the College. These documents were uploaded into MAXQDA. Once in MAXQDA, the researcher coded the documents and noted keywords, phrases, themes, categories, and patterns within the documents. In Phase II, the researcher conducted, recorded, and transcribed one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with participants across multiple constituencies within the College. The data was transcribed initially using Temi, a professional transcription service, and then reviewed and corrected, where needed, through playback, personal transcription, and member check.

In Phase III of data analysis, the researcher used memos and codes to note keywords, phrases, themes, categories, and patterns within the transcripts. These memos and codes helped turn the transcripts into usable data. The researcher used MAXQDA for data analysis and coding of the qualitative data.

In Phase IV, the researcher used the codes created in Phase II and Phase III to create initial themes to inform the findings. The initial themes were segmented into dominant themes that led to positive, negative, or ambivalent change responses. Once the dominant themes emerged and linked to the data, the researcher revisited the research question, framework, and literature review to assure alignment. In the final phase of data analysis, Phase V, the researcher finalized interpretations, document findings, results, and implications for future research. This chapter reviews the qualitative findings and the process laid out in Phases I-IV to answer the research question: How did multiple constituents of a small, private, liberal arts college respond to change as key decisions were made during a change process?

The first section of this chapter presents the analysis and initial discoveries of phase I: document review, interviews, the focus group session, and the change initiatives. The next
section presents the first part of phase II, the inductive analysis of the data and the initial themes based on the codes and sub-codes that emerged during the first level of data analysis. The third section presents the second part of phase II, the deductive analysis of the data as it aligns with Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory. The fourth section presents the data and the dominant themes and subthemes that emerged during the second level of data analysis. In conclusion, the study findings are presented that correlate to the research question.

**Phase I: Data Collection and Discovery**

Data collection was conducted at a small, private, liberal arts college in the United States, the College. The data collection process was outlined in Chapter Three of this study. Three forms of data were collected in relation to the initiation, implementation, or outcomes of three change initiatives implemented to increase enrollment beginning in the Fall of 2017: document review, nine one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with, and one focus group session with three participants. Due to the iterative process of this case study research, each phase of data collection informed the next, thus data analysis was initiated at the start of data collection and continued through the process. The first phase of data collection was document review, followed by the semi-structured interviews, and finalized with the focus group session.

The data collection was based on Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory and the three multiview dimensions of change response: cognitive, emotional, and intentional. In the initial phase of data collection, the conceptual framework used was based in Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory. This conceptual framework focused on the three dimensions of change response, but also considered six high impact factors identified by Piderit (2000) and the literature: components of change, organizational readiness, time, organizational leadership, beliefs and values, and organizational culture and norms. In addition to the conceptual
framework, the data collection was framed by Merriam’s (1998) case study research design which encouraged a dynamic process of data collection and data analysis. Upon data collection of the documents, the researcher reviewed and analyzed the documents, which led to the creation of the interview questions. The interview transcripts were reviewed and the focus group questions were created and reviewed. Then all data was analyzed simultaneously and over a total of four rounds: one round for first level-analysis and three rounds for second-level analysis. The data was validated through triangulation of multiple sources, member check, participatory research, and disclosure of researcher bias.

The following sections will discuss the data collected and initial discoveries of document review, individual interviews, and a focus group session. These initial discoveries informed the initial analysis of the change initiatives, also presented in this section.

**Document Review**

To assess the roll out, communications, and basis for the change initiatives, a document review was completed. The intent of the document review was for the researcher to gain an understanding of the intention of the change initiatives, how the change initiatives were rolled out and communicated to the internal and external audiences, who was involved in the initiatives, and in what way the initiatives were a part of the mission and vision of the organization. Thus, the intention of the document review guided the selection of items included:

- **Emails** – internal letters written by employees, specifically, admissions, faculty, staff, board, and administration and a letter written to students from the president highlighting the scholarship programs
- **The 2022 strategic plan** – An updated plan created by the current administration
- **Internal Documents** – Draft of the public announcement of the two scholarship programs
and documents for each department associated with Enrollment Ambassadors provided by the admissions office

- Website – public announcements, news stories, and information specifically related to the two scholarship initiatives
- Video – overview and impact of MP One
- Magazine – college magazine articles related to scholarship initiatives
- Presentation – PDF of information provided by Ruffalo Noel Levitz

Documents reviewed were uploaded into MAXQDA software for review and analysis. All documents were first analyzed based on type and source to segment the data based on point of origin. A total of 44 documents were reviewed. Table 2 details the origin and types of the documents reviewed.

Table 2

*List of Document Origin and Type*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Free Tuition and MP One</th>
<th>Enrollment Ambassadors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Document Type</strong></td>
<td>****</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Plan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal Documents</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Initial document review discoveries. Throughout the initial review of the documents provided by the College and found online, the influence of these documents on the change response of participants based in Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory was considered. The cognitive dimension of change response is rooted in beliefs. According to Piderit (2000), these beliefs are the beliefs that the change is in the best interest of the organization. The documents provided demonstrate an alignment between the strategic plan and the core values and organizational culture of the organization through a focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, sustainability, and growth. The analysis of document review revealed a strong sense of beliefs and values, organizational culture and norms, addressed several components of change: order, origin, driver, and implementation of change. These high impact factors were supported by the literature and were observed in relation to Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory.

The primary sources of document review were emails. These emails were all internal documents and discussed Enrollment Ambassadors 71% of the time. One externally produced document aligned with Enrollment Ambassadors, however, that document was not published outside of the College. The sections of the 2022 strategic plan to which the researcher had access provided insight into the main strategies and objectives of the strategic plan, but not the tactics. The four strategic imperatives laid out in the 2022 strategic plan were (1) college identity and
mission, (2) academic excellence, (3) diversity, equity, and inclusion, (4) land and environmental sustainability, including land stewardship and just and sustainable practices (5) co-curricular programs, and (6) foundation for growth. This strategic plan aligned with the information on the website, the email communication, the video and marketing materials, and the online news stories. The website invites students to “Think deeply. Care fiercely. Work hard.” The website discusses the integration of on-campus work programs, community engagement and serving the community to do good, and academics. The website also shares inclusion initiatives such as WIDE, which focuses on:

Intentional and varied learning opportunities for all [College] students, faculty, and staff to:

- Develop consciousness around issues of racial and ethnic diversity.
- Engage multicultural perspectives through critical dialogue and programs.
- Promote universal love and intercultural competency.
- Create inclusive and equitable spaces in appreciation of difference.

The student organizations, listed on the website, include, but are not limited to:

- ACLU
- Black Student Union
- College Democrats
- College Republicans
- Conservation Biology Club
- Fellowship of Christian Athletes
- Indigenous Student Association
- Kehila Hillel
• Merry Pagans

• Showing up for Racial Justice

These student organizations show a strong commitment to equity, inclusion, and justice.

The video, internal documents, and emails were all related to the three change initiatives: Free Tuition, MP One, and Enrollment Ambassadors. The video was a recruitment video for MP One. The internal documents were for planning and record keeping purposes for Enrollment Ambassadors, noting the compensation formula for each department that participated in this initiative. The emails were a mix of communications about all three change initiatives from the administration, board, and between the admissions office and departments that participated in Enrollment Ambassadors. The email communication the board laid out the results of board meetings, during which all three change initiatives were discussed, and the board stated:

We left the [board] meeting impressed with the enthusiasm and initiatives of [the President] and her administrative team, grateful for the many contributions of all members of the greater community, sobered by the tasks that lay ahead of all of us, amazed at the quality and dedication of faculty and staff and their focus on the students, honored to be trustees, and committed to the long-term trajectory of [the College’s] unique educational model.

Some email communication from the administration promoted the initiatives as a part of the strategic imperative: foundation for growth.

1) Enrollment Champions and Pipelines. We have identified several areas that we feel are particularly attractive to prospective and current students and that have faculty and staff “champions” who will work with admissions staff to recruit students. Several of these areas are in environmental sustainability and our farm
and forest…. If this strategy proves successful, we will expand the pipeline areas year after year so that all of the great programs we offer can become enrollment pipelines with strong advocates across the campus. It’s about getting the word out!

2) New Scholarship Programs. [College’s] history as the [initial name of the College] and as a [college with a work component] shows our institutional commitment to making college more affordable. It makes sense, then, that we would put scholarship dollars where our values have traditionally been -- making higher education more accessible. We have waived the application fee for all prospective students and, in addition to our existing scholarships, have developed two new programs -- [Tuition Free], which offers free tuition to [in-state] residents applying to our traditional undergraduate programs if they qualify for federal and/or state financial aid, and [MP One], a competitive scholarship which is available to students whose families make $125,000 or less. While we can only afford to offer these new opportunities to freshmen and transfer students who have never attended [the College], multiple scholarship opportunities currently exist, and we are actively fundraising to increase scholarship endowments. We will also specify previously unnamed scholarships as athletics scholarships for student athletes.

The overarching discoveries from document review was a renewed focus on equity and justice, a dedication to revenue generation through enrollment, philanthropy, and alternative revenue sources, and a desire to return to the “roots” of the College’s focus on sustainability, inclusion, access, and academics. According to Piderit (2000), the College’s renewed focus lends
to a positive cognitive and emotional response and positive intentions if the participants believe and feel that the College is heading in the strategic direction for the organization, thus resulting in positive intentions and an overall positive change response.

**Semi-structured Interviews**

The researcher conducted nine individual, semi-structured interviews. The interviewees were a cross section of faculty, staff, administrators, and a board member. The faculty, staff, and administrators represented Deans, Vice Presidents, Directors, Associate Deans, and Department Chairs. In the interest of confidentiality, the researcher did not associate any names or pseudonyms with direct quotations. Each participant was open in their responses to the questions and subsequent follow-up questions. Each interview created rich data as it related to each individual’s change response to the change initiatives. The initial phases of this study were based in an inductive approach, which used open ended questions that allowed the participants to bring data to the surface to be analyzed. To discover which change initiatives to increase enrollment were most salient in the small, private, liberal arts college where the research was conducted, the researcher did not ask about specific change initiatives, but instead asked about any initiatives that were implemented to increase enrollment in 2017. As a result of the data collection, three initiatives were discussed by the majority of the interviewees. The two scholarships, Free Tuition and MP One, were discussed by all interview participants. Of the 9 interview participants, 8 of the interview participants discussed Enrollment Ambassadors. The data collected from the 9 interview participants was analyzed in MAXQDA.

**Initial individual interview discoveries.** The initial discoveries from the semi-structured, individual interviews supported the discoveries from document review that the organizational culture is based in equity and justice, the leadership is providing opportunities for
the College to move forward while staying integrated with the foundation upon which the College was founded and has existed for decades, and to increase organizational viability. These initial discoveries were examined through the lens of the conceptual framework based in Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory and the six high impact factors of influence on the three dimensions of change and overall change response as supported by Piderit (2000) and the literature: components of change, organizational readiness, time, organizational leadership, beliefs and values, and organizational culture and norms. During analysis, the researcher found that the data supported the conceptual framework on the cognitive, emotional, and intentional change response. However, the researcher also found that there was an additional high impact factor that influenced each dimension of change response as well as the overall change response: organizational viability.

**Organizational culture and norms.** The interviews supported the initial discoveries of document review on organizational culture through statements made by participants such participant B stated, “We're, we're attracting students are drawn to the mission, the values….” Participant A discussed the organizational culture based in equity when they stated that the College has a very strong egalitarian culture. The initial discovery of staying true to the College’s roots and foundation of core values, Participant G stated, “… [as an organizational leader, I’m always saying] what are our values? Are we living those values? Let's go back to the values.” Participant F stated, “We want to make sure people know that we believe in access…”.

The increase in a wide swath of students put pressure on the current systems and challenged the cultural values and norms and therefore may also be considered a second-order change. Participant H stated:

So, for example, with the new [Tuition Free] scholarship, we have many more [in-state]
applicants than we've had in the past. That strikes to change the face of the college and the student body. We still draw students nationally, but now we have [in-state] students who are interested, who might not have looked at us before. And so that's going to change, it's really going to change the demographic…

Participant B discussed the perception of faculty and staff around what Free Tuition would do to change the more progressive organizational culture and norms, “But given the state of [state where the College resides] and in rural areas, there is a perception that we're gonna just go out and wrangle up conservative students and bring them to campus because that's what our charge has been.” While the Tuition Free scholarship created concern around changing the demographics and culture of the College, MP One was seen as a more selective scholarship that would increase access without changing the College’s culture. Focus group participant 1 stated, “from an access standpoint, um, it really reaches students who might not have gotten packaged enough to come.”

**Beliefs and Values.** According to documents and emails provided by the admissions office, Enrollment Ambassadors is a selective process with the organizers of the change located in the admissions office. Specific faculty were recruited to participate in the program, and if enrollment increased over the current averages for that faculty members areas of involvement, then that department received a monetary reward. These documents stated that successful departments received a reward of 3% of earned revenue per enrolled student above the average number of enrolled students in that department. The stronger academic departments saw a larger monetary reward and heightened success through Enrollment Ambassadors than did departments that saw less interest from incoming students. Participant A stated, “Uh, [admissions] targeted a
few key departments, the department chairs have a few key departments who they, admissions, they thought had a pretty good chance of growth.”

According to the 2022 strategic plan, one of the imperatives of the College is to increase diversity. Participant D stated:

They didn't totally expect one of them [benefits] on [MP One], to me, the interesting thing is the number of international applicants. So, you know, was an effort we've wanted to make is increasing, and it's very difficult financially, of course, with a global world, everything, you know, Visas are hard, everything's hard, but they did not expect, they weren't even thinking of international. And they got an amazing number of international, and they admitted several of them.

Participant G stated that this scholarship program brought the college “back to our values.” This initiative focused on a smaller more select group of prospective students who were more likely, in the eyes of the faculty and staff, to align in values with the College than perhaps the students in the Free Tuition program. Participant B stated:

[MP One] is competitive and it's accessible to first year students, transfer students, international students, DACA students, undocumented students. Um, um, there's a few qualifying factors for, for students, GPA requirement, family income requirement, because we really want to make sure that we're accessible to low and middle-class students. Um, socioeconomic class. So, that was a really compelling initiative.

Where the Free Tuition program increased enrollment substantially, the MP One program resulted in a more modest increase of 25 students, according to the number of MP One scholarships available, thus limiting the stress put on organizational resources and avoiding a dynamic shift in mission or organizational culture. Focus group participant 2 stated, “I would
say in general there was a lot of excitement about [scholarships] and yeah, I think in large part because I felt like a lot of people were like, yes, this gets us back to our roots of like caring about this.”

**Organizational viability.** Participants supported the initial discovery around organizational viability. Participant E stated, “We have to pay attention to the key issue here, which is getting more students...if there's no college, you know, I, I'm not real worried about tenure.” Participant I agreed with Participant’s E’s line of thought, “I haven't really, haven't been involved, but I'm a supporter; I'm trying to be as supportive of anything [that increases viability].” The Participants discussed the importance of survival first and worrying about resources and cultural alignment later. Participant H discussed the excitement of an increase in enrollment and the willingness to make it work, because the faculty understood that this was the model the College was now in:

And the thing that really hit us was suddenly we had this large class of freshmen, we were giddy with happiness, and then we had to make it work. And there was no bad feeling about it, it was just like, okay, how are we going to do this? It's a great problem to have. You don't have enough chairs in your classroom, great problem to have, but it's still, it's still something you have to deal with that, right?

**Organizational leadership.** With the assistance of the vice president of enrollment and marketing, the president implemented two scholarship programs with the intention of increasing enrollment and, as a result, revenue. Participant B stated, “...jump back to fall 2017, that class was a very, very small class.” According to information provided by the admissions office, the incoming class in the fall of 2017 was the smallest class in the history of the college.” The two scholarship initiatives were Free Tuition and MP One. In November, 2017, a third initiative was
implemented. According to documents provided by the admissions office and through data gathered during the interview process, this initiative, called Enrollment Ambassadors, was different than the two scholarships in that it was programmatically focused. Participant B shared the basis of Enrollment Ambassadors and stated, “…essentially if you know, these [academic departments] supported us, they helped us directly in a formal way [to recruit students], then we would increase their operating budget based on the number of students who increased enrollment in the program.” Based on data gathered during the interview process, the researcher discovered that the president worked in partnership with the vice president of enrollment and marketing to create and implement each initiative, however, two of the initiatives were mandated and the third took on a more collaborative shape. Participant B stated, “So, um, one other initiative that [the president] and [the VP of enrollment and marketing], our former vice president came up with was the [Enrollment Ambassadors] program we created.”

**Components of change.** The Free Tuition program targeted in-state students because the number of in-state applicants had fallen over recent years. According to Participant F, “We yielded really low in [in-state]. We were not getting as many, um, lower income students from the state applying.” The program also aimed to improve access to the College and increase diversity of the student population. Participant E stated, “…but I do feel like it's a more diverse class in terms of students of color that and I, I know for sure that it is in terms of socioeconomic diversity.” According to documents provided by the admissions office, through this initiative, enrollment of in-state students rose by 20% in 2018 over 2017. The initiative was launched in November 2017, which provided little time for the College’s admissions office to put the initiative into action. Participant B stated, “Those programs [NC Free and MP One] were announced slightly late for our purposes, you know, typically you want to at least, in an ideal
world, you'd have at least a year or two to start marketing it, to build energy for it.” Although this was a planned change, the initiative was launched suddenly for those who were not engaged in the process, and therefore, the change may have felt unplanned. Focus group participant 3 stated, “I didn't know about, um, [change initiatives] I think. I don't remember learning about until fairly late last year [2017].” The change initiative was both a first- and second-order change. It was a first-order change in that the work of implementation and the main effects were felt in the admissions department. Participant B stated:

So, we are really, like, over performing. It was a Herculean effort on our part. Um, we're in the top like, you know, that maybe don't quote me on this one, but you know, based on those benchmarks, we were at least in the top 90th percentile of performance in caseloads per admissions counselor, so a lot of heavy lifting.

This change initiative was a planned change, however, as with the Free Tuition program, it was initiated at a speed that may have made it feel unplanned to those who were asked to implement it. Participant B described their experience when the announcements of the two scholarship initiatives was delivered:

I was just, I was actually on the road when they were announced... [our department] were tasked with, rightly so, I didn’t question this decision at all, but it came out in, like, late October. I can still visualize the message in my head, the email that I think it was like October 28th or 29th, we were told about these two great initiatives. Now we've got to operate, as in how are we going to take this concept, how do we make postcards about it? How are we going to build email campaigns to go into our communication flow? Um, what's the message around these things? Or how are we going to have a unified message about these programs?
This change was a first-order change, although it had some second-order change implications. It was a first-order change in that the implementation mainly occurred within one department—admissions, as documents provided from the admissions office showed that admissions officers were the driver of the initiative. It did not put much pressure on organizational culture and norms or challenge the same beliefs and values as did the Free Tuition program.

**Organizational readiness.** Organizational readiness refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of organizational constituents as they relate to the perceived need for change and the organization’s ability to move through the change process successfully (Armenakis et al., 1993; Piderit, 2000). Participants noted the understanding and beliefs that change needed to occur to increase enrollment. This understanding and belief that a change needed to occur led to a shift in the way the faculty and staff viewed their “jobs” to include partnering with admissions to enhance the perspective student experience. The collaborate effort of Enrollment Ambassadors was supported by Participant A explained Enrollment Ambassadors as a collaborative effort:

> We also started a new program trying to engage faculty more in recruiting. And that was the [Enrollment Ambassadors] program. Uh, they targeted a few key departments, the department chairs have a few key departments who they, admissions, they thought had a pretty good chance of growth and they coached, the admissions people, coached the, uh, faculty members on a variety of follow through follow up things they could do to try to, um, actively recruit for departments.

The Enrollment Ambassadors program was designed to give prospective students a more personal experience while going through the admissions process. Participant H stated, “Faculty will get on the phone and call you and say, I really hope you come to my school and work with me, and I'm a full professor. I mean, that's what, that's what we have to offer.” According to
documents provided by the admissions office, faculty were recruited by the admissions office to serve as an Enrollment Ambassador. These individuals served as liaisons among the admissions staff, the student, and the college.

**Time.** The literature stated that an individual’s emotional response to change may evolve over time, especially during second-order changes that are more likely to last a significant amount of time (Sonenshein, 2010). As the individual’s overall response may evolve over time, the emotional and cognitive dimensions play a critical role and must be considered if the wish is to have a positive intention response, ultimately leading to successful organizational change (Piderit, 2000). When Participant C reflected on the implementation of a change initiative that was supported by the faculty and staff with an overall change positive change response, this participant noted that while there was initial support, and still an understanding of the need, there were some reflective thoughts on how it could have happened differently:

The strategic planning and implementation of, like, new initiatives [has] to really be thoughtful and to not be hasty or impulsive, and I don’t want to give the impression that I felt like those were. I think sometimes we have to react quickly, but um, if you have the luxury of time to really be thoughtful and think deeply about, um, okay, we have this vision of where we want to get to and what this is going to be [how does this fit in].

The semi-structured, individual interviews supported the initial discoveries from document review, but also added a richness to those discoveries. The document review provided concrete evidence of the components of change, the beliefs and values, organizational culture and norms, and organizational leadership. The interviews built on the understanding of the high impact factors of the conceptual framework and supported by the evidence as time, and
organizational readiness emerged from the data. One additional high impact factor emerged from the data: organizational viability.

According to Piderit (2000), change initiatives result in a change response based in three dimensions: cognitive, emotional, intention. Within each of these dimensions, an individual may have different change responses: positive, negative, or ambivalence. A change that is believed to be in the best interest of the organization (cognitive) and is in alignment with the organizational culture and norms (emotional) will likely have a positive change response and commitment from the individuals affected by the change (intention). This type of initiative will not likely see any ambivalence. However, if the change is believed to be in the best interest of the organization (cognitive) and is out of alignment with the organizational culture and norms (emotional), the commitment from those affected by the change may be negative or ambivalent (intention). It is also possible that the intention is still positive if the beliefs outweigh the emotional response (Piderit, 2000). In addition to the cognitive, emotional, and intention dimensions of Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory, seven high impact factors were seen throughout the change responses of the interview participants and those change responses aligned with one of the three dimensions and the overall change response to each change initiative. These initial discoveries informed the focus group session. The focus group session provided even more depth to the data by adding to the initial discoveries from document review and the individual interviews.

Focus Group Session

The researcher conducted one focus group session with three participants. The focus group participants were a cross section of faculty and staff, all in different departments, holding different levels of positions such as Associate Dean, Director, and Department Chair. As in the individual interviews, the researcher maintained confidentiality throughout the study and did not
initiate discussion on any of the three initiatives discovered in document review and individual interviews, but asked about change initiatives to increase enrollment implemented in 2017. Each of the three focus group participants mentioned the three initiatives: Free Tuition, MP One, and Enrollment Ambassadors. The data collected from the focus group participants was analyzed in MAXQDA, and in combination with the document review and interview data, codes and sub-codes were created.

**Initial focus group discoveries.** The initial discoveries from the focus group session were based on the interplay between the three participants and their statements. The three focus group members often agreed or disagreed with statements made by each other within the session. The focus group participants spoke of organizational culture, organizational leadership, and organizational viability. These findings support the conceptual framework based in Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory as the cognitive (beliefs), emotional (feelings), and intentional (behaviors) response led to an overall change response to each initiative and were influenced by high impact factors. The focus on organizational culture was based in a belief and feeling that the College’s mission and values were important and needed to remain a focus. The focus on organizational leadership was based in a belief that the organization needed someone to help move them forward toward viability and the feelings of trust that the organizational leadership’s vision aligned with the organizational culture. The focus on organizational viability was based in the beliefs and feelings that the actions taken were fundamental to increase organizational viability.

**Organizational leadership.** Focus group participant 1 discussed the new president guiding the College forward while remaining true to the core values and organizational culture, “I think now with [new President’s] leadership… I think we’re more just, like, sticking to what
we're good at and kind of going back to our roots of being an institution that's really focused on access.”

**Organizational culture.** Focus group participant 3 supported the initial discovery of organizational culture of equity and justice when they stated, “There are some right things about [Enrollment Ambassadors], but I think it needs some adjustment to really make it fair and equitable.” Focus group participant 1 supported the initial discovery of organizational culture and organizational leadership when they discussed the culture of shared governance. Shared governance was a topic often discussed in the focus group session. Participant 1 stated, “You know, that line between transparency and not? What's the line between shared governance and executive decision making that has to happen?”

**Organizational viability.** Organizational viability was discussed by the participants. Focus group participant 3 discussed the knowledge of the low enrollment, but the lack of awareness of a plan to do something about the issue during the last administration, “…well the enrollment is down, so we're going to tighten our belts, and we've got a plan and it's literally like, okay, what's the plan?” Focus group participant 1 stated, “…if all those [projections about an approaching national dip in college enrollment] are indeed true, then we have to be, we can't be an enrollment driven institution or we're going to perish.”

The initial discoveries of the focus group session supported the initial discoveries of document review and the individual interviews. The three consistent discoveries in all three areas of data collection were organizational culture, organizational leadership, and organizational viability and survival. The findings suggest that the core components of Piderit’s (2000) theory were present in the data resulting from the focus group. These three initial discoveries also support the six high impact variables that emerged from the literature: components of change,
organizational readiness, time, organizational leadership, beliefs and values, and organizational culture and norms.

In addition to the high impact factors discussed in the literature and Piderit’s (2000) three dimensions, a seventh high impact variable emerged from both the interview and focus group data: organizational viability. The data suggests that the seven high impact variables influence not only the three dimensions of change response (Piderit, 2000) but also overall change response. The individual participant’s overall change response varied based on the cognitive, emotional, and intention dimension as well as how the seven high impact factors were believed and felt to align with the organizational culture, beliefs, and values and align with the president’s vision and actions that support the core values of the College and move the college toward viability. The next section in this chapter discusses the inductive data analysis of phase II.

**Phase II: Part One, Inductive Data Analysis**

Phase II, data analysis, was conducted in two parts: inductive and deductive analysis. The first part of Phase II, inductive analysis, was based in methodology supported by Merriam (1998). During each form of data collection, the researcher analyzed observations to develop sub-codes and codes from the data. These codes were then developed further into generalized initial themes used in the deductive analysis of this phase. The second part of Phase II, deductive analysis, was based in methodology supported by Merriam (1998). The initial themes that emerged from the inductive analysis were examined through the lens of Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory. Through deductive analysis, three dominant themes and three to four subthemes for each dominant theme were developed.

**Categories of Codes and Initial Themes**
Piderit's (2000) response to change theory is rooted in three dimensions of change response: cognitive, emotion, and intention. These three dimensions formed the lens through which data collection and analysis was conducted. The researcher aimed to examine the change response of multiple constituents of a small, private, liberal arts college to change initiative(s) to increase enrollment mandated by a new college president in her first year. The desired outcome of the research was to determine what the overall change response was to the mandated initiative(s), what were the influencing factors of the cognitive, emotional, and intentional dimensions, and what were the influencing factors of the overall change response.

This section brings together the initial findings from data analysis in the form of sub-codes, codes, and initial themes. Through first and second-level data analysis of four sub-codes and nine codes led to three initial themes: organizational culture and norms, organizational survival, and organizational leadership. The codes and initial themes are presented with supporting evidence in the following section.

Table 3 displays the sixteen codes and three initial themes. Nested under each parent initial theme are codes and sub-codes. The table shows the number of coded segments for each initial theme, code, and sub-code analyzed through the MAXQDA software from all interview and focus group transcripts. Through the analysis of the data it became apparent that four codes were more frequently referenced than other codes. The code most referenced was belief and values \( (n = 38) \), second was communication \( (n = 30) \), third was buy-in \( (n = 26) \), fourth was vision and direction \( (n = 25) \), and fifth tied with trust (and understanding; \( n = 20 \)). Each initial theme, code, and sub-code, was then analyzed to determine the relationship of the code and coded segment to the change response of positive, negative, or ambivalent within the cognitive, emotional, and intention dimensions (Piderit, 2000). The initial themes, codes, and sub-codes
aided the analysis to determine three dominant themes when considering change response across multiple constituents to a change initiative mandated by a new college president to increase enrollment.

Table 3

*Overview of Initial Themes, Codes, and Sub-codes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Theme</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Sub-code</th>
<th>Coded Segments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Culture and Norms</td>
<td>Shared governance</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Buy-in</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Beliefs and values</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Survival</td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buy-in</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beliefs and values</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Morale</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Leadership</td>
<td>Vision and direction</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buy-in</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking action</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Organizational culture and norms.** The deterioration of trust and the evolution of a culture of fear became a part of the organizational culture and norms. Participant A stated,
“…there's just this sort of fear of everything.” However, the key beliefs and values held fast and were not eroded or changed through the leadership shifts and financial hardships. The College has a distinct organizational culture rooted in a strong system of beliefs and values. Participant E stated, “I mean for the most part there's a rich sense of wow, we have a really strong history that ties back to the farm school days of being mission driven and value driven.” Participant A stated, “…here at [the College] with our strong egalitarian, you know, kind of ethos and sort of anti-capitalistic ethos....” The core values of the college are rooted in equity across constituents, systems, and processes. The 2022 strategic plan of the College stated that, as a part of the first strategic imperative focused on identity and mission, a core focus would be graduating students who contribute to an equitable and sustainable world. This plan also stated that the College is dedicated to curiosity, empathy, and integrity. The third imperative in the 2022 strategic plan is focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The College instituted a process of shared governance where the community is involved in the governance of the school including decisions made for, by, and about the College. The 2022 strategic plan and as stated under Leadership and Governance on the College’s website, the mission is supported by the College leadership and through community governance. Focus group participant 1 stated, “…the College is this and of committees and shared governance....” This foundation of equity created values and beliefs based on justice. Participant G stated, “But folks know that know us as a place that has really deep values and roots. I think the sustainability piece is known far and wide. The social justice piece is known far and wide.” The individuals who make up the faculty, staff, and students who have weathered the storm of uncertain times with the College have personal beliefs and values that align with those of the College. Focus group participant 3 stated, “I have a sense sort of internally that, that everyone, pretty much
everyone who is here from faculty and staff point really wants to be, like, really wants to be here and really loves this place and is invested in this place.” Thus, any changes that were implemented were seen through the lens of equity and justice. Focus group participant 3 stated, “I think, I think it's the right, it's, there are some right things about it [change initiative], but I think it needs some adjustment to really make it fair and equitable.” The change response of constituents within the College were reflective of the core values and beliefs that make up the organizational culture and norms. Initial findings showed that the viability of the organizational played a significant role in the change response of the constituents during and following a change initiative.

**Organizational survival.** After the implementation of the three change initiatives, the College had the largest freshman class in history. Participant B stated, “We saw a significant jump this year, which led to the largest freshmen class [in history].” Participant F stated that in one enrollment cycle after the implementation of these initiatives, the college’s freshman class increased over the prior year by 71%. The change initiatives were seen as successful as they generated a significant increase in enrollment. Participant I stated, “And so, some of [how we look at our work] is dealing with the new, with the implementation of new initiatives but also the results of that, which is we were successful, and everyone's celebrating, and you're like, this is awesome.” The initial success of these change initiatives created an increase in morale across campus, thus affecting the change responses as was reported during the interviews and focus group session. Participant G stated, “[Morale] feels really good now.” Focus group participant 3 stated, “I certainly feel a, uh, an increased sense of optimism this year.” Participant F agreed, “So I think some of the morale has really improved.” In addition to organizational culture and norms and organizational viability, the third initial theme discovered was organizational leadership.
Organizational leadership. The College experienced three presidential transitions between 2006 and 2017: president A, president B, and president C – the current president. All three presidents in this period were seen by the College community as very different, two of whom were not a good “fit” and the third and current as being the right president for the College.

Focus group participant 1 stated:

So, like the president before [president B] would get up and talk in front of a room, [president A] and everybody would be like, who is this guy? [President B] got the job because he can wow a room, but that allure started to rub off after four years or so when people are like, wait a minute. He's not, the numbers kept going down and down and down.

Participant D stated:

I don't know that [the College community felt positively] was true during [president A’s] term. Uh, [president B] started out positive, but then the times and his personality, he, he was just brutally honest about a lot of things…So, there was, negativity was abundant. Now I really, it'll take a while longer, but I think [president C] has really shifted the tone of conversation, and I think that impacts way the campus looks at it. I think everybody is feeling more positive.

Participant A stated, “…it's very clear that [president C] is here for the right reasons and that she knows us and wants us to be who we are. That wasn't true with [president B]. He wanted to change us….”

The initial findings showed that organizational leadership was a significant factor in change response based on the beliefs and feelings about the previous administrations and the current administration. These beliefs and feelings created a sense of trust in the new
administration that had not been in place previously. Participant H stated, “When [president C] first arrived and just, sort of in the goodness of her heart, said things that, I trusted her, right? And I trusted her to be genuine. And you know, there was no hidden agenda with this president.”

The three initial themes, organizational culture and norms, organizational survival, and organizational leadership emerged from the codes and sub-codes during the initial analysis of the data. The next section weaves the data with Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory’s three dimensions – cognitive, emotional, and intention – through deductive analysis.

**Phase II: Part Two, Deductive Data Analysis**

The framework for this study is Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory. Piderit (2000) proposes three dimensions of change response: cognitive, emotional, and intention. Within each dimension exist three possible change responses: positive, negative, or ambivalent. Each dimension is independent of the others; however, there is a continuous interplay between each dimension. Prior to Piderit’s (2000) theory, the extant literature on change response did not include the role of ambivalence within and among the three dimensions.

An expanded qualitative research study to understand how lived experiences of individuals and groups affect their change response may be examined through a case study approach. The qualitative approach used in this study is best aligned with the interpretive research orientation as each person or group’s change response is based in their own reality and interpretation of an event or multiple events. Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory is designed to process the lived experiences of individuals and groups as they move through a change process through their response to the change initiatives, therefore, Piderit’s theory works well with a case study research design.
The interview questions listed in Appendix A and the focus group questions listed in Appendix B were based on document review discovery and Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory survey. Questions were open ended to encourage participants to answer with a more in-depth response, including reflections, stories, and considerations that played a role in their cognitive, emotional, intention, or ambivalent change responses and how those responses reacted and interplayed with each other. All data were analyzed in MAXQDA through the lens of Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory, which were then connected to the research question for interpretation and meaning. The researcher remained mindful of personal bias and purposefully remained neutral when analyzing the data so as not to bring in any assumptions based on the researcher’s own lived experiences.

The data analysis and findings were distributed into the three dimensions of Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory. Each change response fell into at least one of the dimensions, but often was placed into multiple dimensions as one dimension affected at least one other dimension. Once the responses were connected to the dimensions, dominant themes were created based on sub-codes, codes, and initial themes. These dominant themes led to findings based on Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory and the president’s role in the organizational change initiatives. Table 4 displays the dimensions of Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory with the inductive initial themes that emerged during data analysis.
To provide clarity on the interplay between the three dimensions of Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory and the three initial themes that came out of the data analysis, each of the dimensions as they align with the three initial themes are discussed in the following narrative.

**Cognitive**

According to Piderit (2000), the cognitive dimension, an individual’s beliefs about the change will directly affect the change response. Piderit (2000) stated that the cognitive response may be positive if the belief is the change is necessary for organizational survival. Data collected through document review, interviews, and a focus group session showed that enrollment was low and that the College was dependent on enrollment numbers to support the needed budget. The administration just prior to the current administration made significant cuts to the organizational structure and salaries and benefits. Both declining enrollment and the recent cuts led to the belief

Table 4

*Piderit’s (2000) dimensions as linked to the inductive initial themes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Piderit's (2000) Dimensions</th>
<th>Inductive Initial Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive</strong>: An individual's beliefs about the change.</td>
<td>Organizational Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational Survival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational Culture and Norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional</strong>: An individual’s feelings about the change.</td>
<td>Organizational Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational Survival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational Culture and Norms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intention</strong>: An individual’s intentions and actions related to the change.</td>
<td>Organizational Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational Survival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizational Culture and Norms</td>
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</table>
that the College was not financially viable in the current model. Two of the change initiatives, Free Tuition and MP One, to increase enrollment were seen as a method to increase viability of the College, thus resulting in a positive cognitive response by all participants. The third change initiative, Enrollment Ambassadors, while seen as a method to increase enrollment, thus enhancing organizational viability, was believed to be a misalignment with organizational culture and norms, resulting in a negative cognitive response.

The participants that had a positive cognitive response to Enrollment Ambassadors were individuals that were knowledgeable and engaged in the process. The knowledge and engagement came from an invitation to be an Enrollment Ambassador, and the amount of communication provided by the administration and admissions office about the initiative to those who were participating. During document review, the researcher noted 31 internal communications about Enrollment Ambassadors compared to 7 internal communications about Free Tuition or MP One. Of the participants who were engaged directly with Enrollment Ambassadors, they received communication from organizational leadership on the purpose, hoped for outcome, and the needed role of the individual in the process to increase enrollment and, therefore, increase organizational viability. This knowledge and understanding created a positive cognitive response where individuals who did not have this knowledge and understanding had a negative cognitive response.

**Emotional**

Piderit (2000) stated the emotional change response is based on the individual’s feelings about the change initiative. Data collected through document review, interviews, and a focus group session showed that the organizational leadership, organizational survival, and organizational culture and norms were factors in a positive, negative, or ambivalent emotional
response to the change initiatives. The data revealed a positive response to Free Tuition and MP One as they were seen as initiatives that were creating access, thus linking to equity and justice, the core values of the College as determined through data analysis. The alignment of these two change initiatives to organizational culture and norms was felt to be positive by the participants. The third initiative, Enrollment Ambassadors, was felt to be negative by the participants as it was seen as going against the organizational culture and norms by promoting competition and selectivity.

The feelings of the participants about the two scholarship based change initiatives were positive as the change initiatives were successful and more students came to campus, thus increasing morale across campus and the sense of the College being on the right track, which had not been the case in previous administrations. The campus began to feel more alive once additional students were on campus, lending to the positive feelings of organizational survival. The positive emotional response also came from the understanding of how two of the change initiatives aligned with the mission and vision of the College and were a part of the 2022 strategic plan. The organizational leadership’s message and support were felt for the initiatives and those who were involved directly or impacted by any of the initiatives.

**Intention**

According to Piderit (2000), intention is the behavioral response to the change initiative. Intention may be an intended action or it may be a past behavior. This study analyzed data that demonstrated both aspects of the intention dimension. As the change initiatives were implemented prior to the study, some of the intention response is reflected in past or current behaviors. However, as the change initiatives are also ongoing, a portion of the intention response is also reflected in future intentions. The intention response – both past behaviors and
future intentions – were positive or ambivalent, even if the emotional and cognitive responses were negative or ambivalent. The participants behaviors, regardless of the initiatives, were reflected in active participation in or support of the initiatives in intentions and behaviors.

The knowledge and understanding of the initiatives based on communication from organizational leadership of the process, the need, and the role to be played by constituents aided in the positive or ambivalent intention response. The role the change initiatives played in enhancing organizational survival by increasing enrollment also created a positive intention response. In addition to knowledge and awareness created by organizational leadership, the appreciation of the president’s willingness to act generated a positive intention response. The three initial themes were all discovered through the initial data analysis of document review, interview transcripts, and the focus group session. In phase III, data from which the three initial themes emerged was then analyzed on a deeper level to generate three dominant themes and three to four sub-themes for each dominant theme. The dominant themes and sub-themes are described in the next section of this chapter.

**Phase III: Data Interpretation and Dominant Themes**

Piderit (2000)’s response to change theory stated there are three dimensions to change response: cognitive, emotional, and intentional. Each of these three dimensions play into and off of each other to generate an overall change response. This change response may be negative, positive, or ambivalent. The entire process of data analysis was conducted with a focus on Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory as the base of the framework and the high impact factors discovered through Piderit (2000), the literature, and the first-level of data analysis: components of change, organizational readiness, time, organizational leadership, beliefs and values, organizational viability, and organizational culture and norms. The findings that emerged
from data analysis and interpretation were three dominant themes that reflected the multiview dimensions of Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory in addition to the seven high impact factors that influenced change response within the dimensions and the overall change response.

The following sections will provide detailed information and rich descriptions of the data that was analyzed from the interviews and focus group session and segmented into dominant themes and subthemes.

**Dominant Themes**

Three dominant themes emerged out of first- and second-level data analysis. Each of the three dominant themes were rooted in the cognitive, emotional, and intentional change response dimension of Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory. These three dominant themes support the belief that the change is in the best interest of the organization and decided upon by trusted leadership (cognitive), the feeling that the change aligns with the beliefs and values of the organization and the individuals that make up the organization and the College is worth saving (emotional), and the actions taken to support the initiatives and increase the changes for viability while maintaining a focus on core values and organizational culture (intention). The three dominant themes that resulted from the data analysis were:

1. Organizational culture and norms dictate the processes needed for a positive change response.
2. Trust, vision, and willingness to act generate respect for and buy-in to the change initiative.
3. Change initiatives linked to organizational survival generate an overall positive change response.

Tables were created to summarize each theme to generate a basis of knowledge regarding
the three dominant themes and their subthemes. Following the tables, the researcher describes each theme and subtheme in narrative format with direct quotations as evidence.

The dominant themes and the subsequent subthemes were all generated as a result of multiple levels of analysis within the MAXQDA software. The dominant themes were revealed through analysis of the weighted codes and initial themes. The weighted codes were then used as a basis of second-level analysis to consider connections between codes and sub-codes. The second-level analysis assisted in the development of the dominant themes and the subthemes. In Table 5, the dominate themes are shown in relation to the number of times codes that fall under the dominant theme are referenced and the weight of each dominant theme in relationship to the others; all codes were nested under the three dominant themes.

Table 5

*Weight of Dominant Themes Based on Data from MAXQDA Software*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dominant Themes 1–3</th>
<th>Number of Data References</th>
<th>Percentage of Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational culture and norms dictate the processes needed for a positive change response.</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust, vision, and willingness to act generate respect for and buy-in to the change initiative.</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change initiatives linked to organizational survival generate an overall positive change response.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 6–8 provide an overview and description of the themes and their subthemes based on the data analysis in the study. Table 6 presents the first theme and subthemes and their clarifying descriptions. Each subtheme that was discovered aided in the creation of the dominant
Table 6

*Overview of Theme 1 and its Subthemes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/Subtheme</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Connection to Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Theme 1: Organizational culture and norms dictate the processes needed for a positive change response. | This theme examines the relationship between organizational culture and norms and the decision-making process and implementation of a change initiative. | Cognitive: Knowledge and understanding  
Emotional: Inclusion and awareness  
Intention: Supporting behavior |
| Subtheme 1.1: Increased levels of process involvement and communication produce a positive change response. | This subtheme addresses the relationship between level of engagement and understanding of a change initiative and change response. | Cognitive: Engagement and understanding  
Emotional: Inclusion and awareness  
Intention: Supporting behavior |
| Subtheme 1.2: A culture of fear creates barriers for a positive change response. | This subtheme addresses the relationship between past lived experiences and the change response. | Cognitive: Experiences  
Emotional: Experiences  
Intention: Reflective behavior |
| Subtheme 1.3: Specific communication about the alignment of the change initiatives and the core values of the organization is needed for a positive change response. | This subtheme addresses the relationship between understood alignment of organizational values, the change initiative, and the change response. | Cognitive: Understanding of alignment  
Emotional: Core values  
Intention: Resulting behavior |
Table 7 provides an overview and description of the second dominant theme as well as the subthemes that came out of the data analysis. Each subtheme shown provided the basis for the second dominant theme: Trust, vision, and willingness to act generate respect for and buy-in to the change initiative.

Table 7

*Overview of Theme 2 and its Subthemes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/Subtheme</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Connection to Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Theme 2: Trust, vision, and willingness to act generate respect for and buy-in to the change initiative. | This theme examines the relationship between trust in and the vision of the president and his or her willingness to act and constituent buy-in for the change initiative. | Cognitive: Belief is leadership  
Emotional: Leadership’s words and actions  
Intention: Supporting behavior |
| Subtheme 2.1: Trust in the president is a central factor for buy-in. | This subtheme addresses the relationship between trust in the president and buy-in for the change initiative. | Cognitive:  
Understanding of leadership intentions  
Emotional: Feelings of trust/understanding  
Intention: Reflective behavior |
| Subtheme 2.2: Demonstrating alignment of a new leader’s vision with the core values of the organization creates trust and buy-in. | This subtheme addresses the relationship among the alignment of the president's vision to the core values of the organization (shared vision), trust in the president, and buy-in for the change initiative. | Cognitive:  
Understanding of alignment/intentions  
Emotional: Feelings of trust/understanding |
Table 8 provides an overview and description of the third dominant theme as well as the subthemes that came out of the data analysis. Each subtheme shown provided the basis for the third dominant theme: Change initiatives linked to organizational survival generate an overall positive change response.
### Table 8

*Overview of Theme 3 and its Subthemes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/Subtheme</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Connection to Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme 3: Change initiatives linked to organizational survival generate an overall positive change response.</td>
<td>This theme examines the effect a threat to organizational viability has on change response.</td>
<td>Cognitive: Belief of best interest for organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional: Feelings of hope for org. survival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intention: Supporting behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme 3.1: Organizational survival is more important than organizational culture—at first.</td>
<td>This subtheme illustrates the effect a threat to organizational viability has on initial response to change when there is not complete alignment with organizational culture and norms.</td>
<td>Cognitive: Initial belief of survival over culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional: Initial feelings of survival first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intention: Initial supporting behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme 3.2: The immediate need is more important than the resources—at first.</td>
<td>This subtheme addresses the initial willingness to forgo needed resources in support of a change initiative if it supports organizational viability.</td>
<td>Cognitive: Initial belief of survival first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional: Initial feelings of survival first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intention: Initial supporting behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtheme 3.3: A positive outcome generates a positive reflective change response.</td>
<td>This subtheme addresses the effect a positive outcome to a change initiative that supports organizational viability has on a reflective change response.</td>
<td>Cognitive: Beliefs after outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional: Feelings after outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Intention: Behavior after outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As seen in the figures and tables above, multiple levels of analysis uncovered sub-codes that fed into codes. Those codes were then grouped into initial themes. The initial themes were the basis for the dominant themes. All data was coded and analyzed in MAXQDA based on document review, transcripts from nine interviews, and one focus group session. The questions used for the interviews and focus group session were informed by document review and adapted from Piderit’s (2000) response to change survey questions. Through the analysis process, the researcher continually assessed codes and coded segments with Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory. The findings indicate that the core components of Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory were present in the data. However, the research found that Piderit’s (2000) theory generates limited understanding of change response without consideration of influencing factors to the three dimensions and overall change response. What emerged in the inductive approach through asking open ended questions was a core set of findings. Through first and second-level data analysis through the lens of Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory and the seven high impact factors that resulted from the literature and data analysis, three dominant themes emerged and provided insight into the factors that most affected the change response of multiple constituents at the research site. In theme 1, the change responses were based in understanding, past experiences, and alignment. In theme 2, the change responses were based in trust, vision, and buy-in, and in theme 3, the change responses were based in organizational viability, resources, alignment, and outcomes. The first theme to examine is the understanding of how organizational culture and norms determine the processes needed for a positive change response.

**Theme 1. Organizational culture and norms dictate the processes needed for a positive change response.** Beliefs are affected by the perceived need for change and how it will benefit the organization. As such, a cognitive change response may be driven by organizational
culture and norms, thus impacting the emotional and intention change response (Amis et al., 2002; Piderit, 2000). In this study, the organizational culture and norms are strongly rooted in equity and justice. The core values of the College are held on to fiercely by faculty, staff, students, board members, and alumnus. Participant A discussed how important alignment between personal values and organizational values was in consideration for employment, “Folks know us as a place that has really deep values and roots . . . I applied [to work at the College] because I know that this is a place that feels like it aligns with my values.”

Upon analysis of the data, the researcher discovered a strong connection between the process of initiation and implementation of the change and the core values of justice and equity. The change initiatives that were implemented in what was considered a just process that supported equity across campus was supported in beliefs (cognitive), feelings (emotional), and actions (intention). Interviewees who perceived the change initiative as an unjust process that did not support equity across campus resisted the change, which resulted in a negative overall change response for those interviewees. The first dominant theme centered around organizational culture and norms and the process needed from start to finish of the change initiative to support a positive change response among constituents. Participants noted the organizational culture, beliefs, and values throughout the interviews and focus group session. These were also apparent throughout the website and in the strategic plan. All sources of data led to this dominant theme.

*Introduction to evidence supporting subthemes 1.1–1.3.* The data analysis revealed three subthemes that fell under the dominant theme: Organizational culture and norms dictate the processes needed for a positive change response. The researcher provides a narrative approach
to understanding the subthemes that support the first dominant theme through direct quotations. These quotations support the findings and the credibility of the study.

Theme 1 includes quotations from all nine interviewees and three focus group members. This theme resulted from the parent code, organizational culture and norms, and contained 116 reference points. Collectively, these reference points accounted for 50% of all reference points in the data analyzed in the study. The two codes under the parent code resulting in dominant Theme 1 were shared governance and beliefs and values. The new College president implemented a shared governance process not long after her arrival. It became apparent that the expectation of shared governance and the support for organizational culture and norms through beliefs and values were demonstrated most effectively through communication, engagement, understanding, and buy-in, which were indicated as sub-codes. Together, the codes and sub-codes created the subthemes for dominant Theme 1. The researcher selected key quotations that support each subtheme listed under the first dominant theme: Organizational culture and norms dictate the processes needed for a positive change response.

**Evidence supporting Subtheme 1.1: Increased levels of process involvement and communication produce a positive change response.** Subtheme 1.1 shows the correlation between process involvement and communication and positive change response. The College’s organizational culture and norms are based in the organization’s and individual’s beliefs and values. Based on document review and data analysis, the core values represented by the institution are rooted in equity and justice. The new College president implemented a shared governance system upon arrival, which also lends to the strengthened expectation of justice and equity in every system and process within the institution. Participants noted that if they felt they understood the initiative and that they were invited to be a part of the process, they felt better
about the initiative and they understood why the initiative was important, leading to a positive change response. If this didn’t happen, the feelings and beliefs were negative or ambivalent, leading to an overall negative response.

Through data analysis, the findings showed that a lack of understanding created a negative or ambivalent change response and a strong understanding created a positive change response. The levels of involvement and, thus, understanding, ranged widely across campus constituencies from a high level of involvement to very little involvement in the change initiatives—at times, within the same initiative and constituency group. Participant B discussed the different levels of understanding when considering one of the change initiatives: “I think there are a range from like total understanding to benign misunderstanding to like full-fledged conspiracy about [Enrollment Ambassadors].” For instance, a single faculty member may be highly involved in the initial discussion, then not be involved at all in the process of implementation, but then highly involved again in supporting the outcome through organizational systems. Participant B reflected on the high and low range of engagement of faculty during the change initiatives: “[Board members are] suffering a little bit of whiplash between over involvement and under involvement.”

The back-and-forth style of involvement of board, faculty, and staff, created a strong sense of understanding in some areas and a complete lack of understanding and support in others. This led to a feeling of ambivalence or negativity toward the initiatives, specifically Enrollment Ambassadors, as this initiative was designed to be a more inclusive and bottom-up process than Free Tuition and MP One.

When individuals heard a unified message, understood and were a part of the strategic planning process that demonstrated the need for the change initiatives, received continual and
transparent communication about the change initiatives, the process, hoped-for outcomes, and adjustments made based on constituent feedback, the process resulted in a positive change response in each of Piderit’s (2000) dimensions. Participant C reflected on the feelings of being heard, feeling informed, and hearing a singular message from the president when asked, by the administration, to be engaged in the process:

I think [the president] has done a great job of having a unified message around admissions and enrollment. I think that the strategic planning process that has been very iterative and, along the way, I think one thing that cabinet and the folks who have been involved in…as changes were made and um, feedback was received, there is pretty substantive changes from the initial of iteration to the latest, and I think they adapted their message and did a good job of keeping folks up to date on like these are informed by the community and different stakeholders. Like these are not, these are made with your feedback. It was not made purely like from our mind. And I think that that's helped to build some bridges back into build trust of the administration.

Focus Group Participant 1 also felt that communication about the administration’s vision for the College and why the change was taking place was strong and aided in understanding and buy-in:

The administration is now explaining what the problem was and what the plan is. So just almost feeling like, you know, they talk transparency, I guess is the word or just even sort of a feeling of I'm, I'm, it's not like I'm on a, I'm on a need to know basis and you don't need to know yet. It's sort of like, okay, well I know you don't, maybe you don't need to know, but I bet you want to know and you know, here's where it is and this is why we've had to do what we've done and this is what needs to happen. So, feeling like understanding what the last 5 years really meant and um, that there is a 5-year plan now,
which apparently there hasn't been. I was like, oh, that's sounds like a good idea to me so, just kind of this kind of feeling of yeah, that communication feels like it's gotten better.

For those individuals who were not engaged in the process and did not have a clear understanding of the initiatives and the implementation process, the change response was not as positive, resulting in actions that either demonstrated resistance to the initiative or ambivalence. The lack of understanding resulted in not only a resistance to the change but also contributed to the fear of what it meant for those individuals and their role in the organization in the short and long term. This fear translated into an almost frozen state where even if the individual understood cognitively that the change was needed, the emotional reaction was so strong that it dominated the intention response. Participant E noted the two factors leading to a reluctance to fully support the initiatives—communication and engagement and the fear of the unknown:

For some, I think there's a lack of communication about what was going on, a lack of clear storyline about where we're going, and so people filled in the blanks and got more and more nervous and entrenched in let's just keep doing what we're doing. So, I think that's one, it is undeniably impacting everyone. And then I think second is this larger conversation about what is the liberal arts, a fear that the liberal arts are going away and because of pressures from the economy and maybe political pressures as well, people are wondering about the relevance of Higher Ed and rather than joining that conversation and look for innovative ways to continue to celebrate what it is and also innovate. I think some folks …[are] just going to hang onto the liberal arts the way [they’ve] understood it.
The interaction of the focus group participants provided a deeper look at the emotional response to the change initiatives as it related to process involvement, specifically around Enrollment Ambassadors. The focus group consisted of individuals who had been invited to actively participate in Enrollment Ambassadors and individuals who had not been invited to participate. The individuals who did not participate in the program had a strong negative response to the initiative while the individuals who did participate understood the frustrations of others in the group, but did not have the same negative response. Focus Group (FG) Participant 1 said:

[Enrollment Ambassadors] was a similar thing. I had heard about it. I had no idea there was a money thing attached to it at all. Um, which is interesting. I think this idea of transparency, of leadership, um, we had heard about it…Um, it was announced at some, I don’t know, retreat or community meeting or something…I hear myself saying all this and is this like I wasn't invited and I should've been, I don't know that I should have been, but I in thinking about the transparency of process, it's [the College]’s as this land of committees and shared governance, but a lot of times, um, decisions are not made through that lens a lot of times.

FG Participant 2: It's like cabinet.

FG Participant 1: And I, and again, I don't, I don't want to, I'm not accusing them of being all like shady and backdoor, but it's shared governance to a point, right? There is also a reality that you can't have 500 people to make a decision . . . I just wanted to know, not necessarily be in these decisions but just to know why because we get asked all the time what we think of things. So, um, this has been happening less I feel like.
The individuals that were invited to participate had a more positive change response, but still questioned the process of implementation based on the core values of the organization and the individuals within the organization. FG Participant 3, when reflecting on the third initiative, Enrollment Ambassadors, stated:

I didn't know about, um, [Enrollment Ambassadors]. I don't remember learning about [it] until fairly late last year. Um, and yeah, I, we were invited to participate this year . . . Part of it, you know, the, the argument that I've heard that resonates with me is like, you know, I want, I want people to come here because, um, I want to encourage people to come here because I love it because I want people to come here, not because doing so is going to pad my budget. Um, and so, so I, it's one of those, I think, I think it's the right, it's, there are some right things about it, but I think it needs some adjustment to really make it fair and equitable.

Based on Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory, the cognitive and emotional dimensions played a strong role in a negative, positive, or ambivalent intention responses. When individuals felt included in the process, understood the initiatives, and felt the implementation of the initiatives were in alignment with the organizational culture and norms, the change response was more likely to be positive. If there was a lack of understanding and involvement, then the buy-in was likely to be low. This lack of understanding often resulted in a response based in fear of the unknown—both short and long term. The College’s organizational culture is rooted in the core values of justice and equity. The change initiatives that were implemented in an equitable and just manner, with communication and involvement driving understanding generated a higher level of buy-in and support. As a result of Subtheme 1.1, further analysis was completed and a correlation was found between a culture of fear and change response as seen in Subtheme 1.2.
Evidence supporting Subtheme 1.2: A culture of fear creates barriers for a positive change response. In Subtheme 1.1, a participant noted the fear created by the unknown.

However, analysis of the data showed that fear is not only based in the unknown but also may become an aspect of the culture based in past experiences. In considering Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory and the role fear and a culture of fear can play in each dimension of change response, the researcher conducted an in-depth analysis of a culture of fear and how the past experiences that created that culture played into change responses, even in a new realm of leadership. The second subtheme within the first dominant theme pointed to a culture of fear as a barrier to positive change response. Participants noted that there had been some difficult financial times for the College, leading to significant cuts of people and programs not handled well by an administration that was not trusted in a time of significant changes in liberal arts education, resulting in a culture of fear. This culture resulted in a constituent base that was change averse and fearful and distrustful of administration decisions. The findings indicated that attention should be paid to past experiences and how those experiences may affect change responses, especially experiences that created a culture of fear.

Several participants discussed the “layoffs” and “cuts” that occurred at the end of the previous administration’s time at the College. Participant F stated:

I think the internal community . . . because right before the new president came on, there were a series of layoffs. I think there was a lot of despair and fear and frustration at the end of the academic year that ended in 2017 . . . I think some of the morale has really improved despite a lack of huge infusions of ability to do, um, you know, much more funding wise.
Participant E also noted the feelings that remained from the previous administration and the overall concerns in higher education when they contributed:

I think one is fear. There's a lot of fear in higher ed in general. I think at [the College] we've seen declining enrollment. We've seen our salaries decreased and benefits decrease. And so, we're in a climate of fear about anything that's different and fear of that. Just any innovative idea. So, there’s kind of a pause to even explore that because it might mean I lose my job or I'm, I'm not relevant anymore in this institution. I think that's scary for people . . . I did not feel a strong sense of leadership from the two previous presidents and that really developed this culture of fear.

The data showed that the process needed for change initiatives to result in positive change response, specifically in a culture of fear, should address the reason for the initiative, communication and alignment of the initiative, and impact and expectations of those effected by the initiative. Participant A noted the “PTSD” from the time just before the new president came into her role and the effect that fear and distrust had on the initial skepticism about the new change initiatives:

When [the new president] came in and the faculty were more than a little distrustful of administration, we’d had a downturn. We had cuts and salary, we had a salary freeze, we lost our, our, um, college match to retirement hurts . . . So, it’s painful . . . you can be really negative about that. And you can kind of have, like, PTSD, you know, in any other cuts or any other kind of reallocation is like, oh God! . . . You know, really feel threatened and still feel really threatened . . . So, there’s, there’s a real fear in there in those people . . . there’s just this sort of fear of everything. So, when, when those ideas were raised about [Free Tuition and MP One], it, it, it sounded risky, I think to people,
people jumped to a bunch of conclusions . . . and you combine that with distrust and frustration and get kind of negative . . . and so I think there was fear and distrust about it upfront.

Participant A continued their reflection as the interview dug deeper into the change initiatives:

Again, there's been some push back from faculty about fearing that [Enrollment Ambassadors], especially, was pushing some curriculum stuff . . . worried [faculty] that this is another example of overreach of admissions, kind of pushing, pulling some levers when they might not should have their fingers in our pie.

The internal community prior to the arrival of the new president had undergone significant hardships and implemented changes in a way that created a culture of fear. That culture permeated the response to each change initiative in that if the initiative was seen as another threat, the cognitive, emotional, and intention responses would trend to the negative. If the initiative was seen as a step into more viability and stability, creating a safer environment for the community members, the change response trended more positively. One way in which the change initiatives were seen as a step toward viability and stability was through a strong process of communication about the alignment of the change initiatives and the core values of the organization, as seen in Subtheme 1.3.

**Evidence supporting Subtheme 1.3: Specific communication about the alignment of the change initiatives and the core values of the organization is needed for a positive change response.** The cognitive dimension of change response, according to Piderit (2000) is based on individuals’ beliefs and attitudes. Beliefs and attitudes are influenced by cultural norms and values, and as such, play a significant role in the overall change response. Upon analysis of the
data, it became clear that change response—positive, negative, or ambivalent—would be altered according to whether an effort was made to clearly communicate how the change initiatives aligned with the core values of the institution. The third subtheme within the first dominant theme pointed to the need among constituents to understand how the change initiative aligned with the core values of the organization to foster a positive change response. Participants noted that when they understood how the change initiative supported the organizational culture, norms, beliefs, and values, they had a greater sense of excitement and support for the initiative. When they did not see the alignment, or felt and believed that the initiative was out of alignment with the culture, norms, beliefs, and values, there was not overall support for the initiative.

Participant G reflected, “It speaks to the values, you know, from the [department] standpoint I often say we are what our values are. Everyone always says, what are our values? Are we living our values? Let’s go back to our values.” The data showed that unless provided with a clear understanding of how a change was aligned, the constituent’s change response was negative. However, when the focus remained on the values and mission of the institution, the change response was positive. Participant C stated, “We’re, we’re attracting students who are drawn to the mission, the values in the programs to the college and we’re giving them a more affordable way to, to access that.”

Some faculty and staff had an initial negative change response based on a lack of knowledge of how potential new in-state students would align with the mission and values of the college. This change response played off of the culture of fear described in Subtheme 1.2. The lack of understanding about how these change initiatives would align with the College’s strong organizational culture and norms created a fear, and thus, a negative response. Participant B discussed the concern over an influx of in-state students as the state where the College resides
tends to lean to the conservative side of politics and social justice:

We kept a pulse on, you know, well, what does that mean to have more people from [in-state] . . . assumption often was, well that means more first gen students, lower GPA, more need students were high needs students, perhaps more people who think somehow politically different than what we think, and what are we going to do about that?

Participant H also noted the concern over the influx of in-state students and how that would change the dynamics and demographics of the College:

Um, but when we implement certain initiatives there, it changes the character, not the character of the institution . . . for example, with the new [Tuition Free] scholarship, we have many more [in-state] applicants than we’ve had in the past. Um, that strikes to change the face of the college and the student body . . . It’s really going to change the demographic and we have to think about, um, depending on who they are. Do we need to add certain kinds of programming for this different student body? Um, we don't quite know because we haven't had that many [in-state] students before . . . So, the question is how, how’s that going to play out?

The core values of the College that came out of document review and data analysis were justice and equity. The overall mission of two of the change initiatives, MP One and Tuition Free, aligned with those core values. These two initiatives were driven by the need to increase viability through increasing access and equity in a just process. Within Tuition Free, however, although the overall mission of the initiative aligned with the organization’s core values, the unknown outcome was perceived as a threat to the core values and beliefs, thus affecting the organizational culture and norms. That unknown outcome combined with assumptions about the type of student the initiative would attract led to an initially negative change response to that
aspect of the change initiative. This negative response coexisted with an overall positive change response to the initiative as a whole. The third initiative, Enrollment Ambassadors, resulted in a very different change response as all participants reflected on how this change initiative did not align with the organizational culture and norms. FG Participant 2 expressed a positive response for the two scholarship initiatives that aligned with the core values of the organization but a negative response to the third initiative, Enrollment Ambassadors, as it seemed to go against the core values of the organization:

I would say in general there was a lot of excitement about [MP One] and [Tuition Free] . . . in large part because I felt like a lot of people were like, yes, this gets us back to our roots of like caring about this. And with the [Enrollment Ambassadors], my sense was that it actually caused a little bit more like division on campus because the sciences killed . . . humanities felt super threatened.

Participant C echoed the aversion to the third initiative because of the feeling that it did not align with the core values of the organization:

I think there's two things that you're never supposed to do as a faculty member from what I've heard. You're never supposed to, like, actually make any money, and you're never supposed to, like, compete or be competitive. It's, at least at [the College], it's very, like, egalitarian, almost socialistic set of values on the faculty, even on the staff….so this [Enrollment Ambassadors] was met with a certain level of apprehension. Um, there are some faculty who are secretly competitive, but um, they were excited to be rewarded for their efforts and to feel like they’re part of the team. But there are other folks who didn't want to incentivize certain programs . . . which again, we still are doing things in the best interest of the college. We are protecting the liberal arts tradition.
Participant A had a greater understanding of the intention of Enrollment Ambassadors, however, and upon reflection explained it was not as well received because it was out of alignment with the College’s core values of social justice and equity:

So, what they did was they gave an incentive because they knew they were asking faculty members to do above and beyond . . . But here at [the College] with our strong egalitarian, you know, kind of ethos a sort of anticapitalistic ethos, there are other people that are going, wait a minute . . . you're working, and when biology, for example, brings in a bunch of students, it has impacts on other departments. So why are they getting the money? And so, we, we have some pushback about the payment system.

This subtheme found that the alignment of the initiative with the College’s core values must be understood for each initiative, including multiple aspects of the initiative, to create a positive change response.

**Theme 2. Trust, vision, and willingness to act generate respect for and buy-in to the change initiative.** Piderit (2000) stated that the cognitive dimension (i.e., beliefs and attitudes about the change) and the emotional dimension (i.e., feelings about the change) have an interdependent relationship with each other and with the intention dimension (i.e., intended and planned actions to the change). The second dominant theme centered around the effect trust in the president and belief in and support of the president’s vision as well as the desire to see action taken to move the College forward had on buy-in and support for the change initiative. Participants noted trust in, vision of, and a willingness to act by the president throughout the interviews and focus group session. The president’s vision was apparent throughout the website, in the strategic plan, in online articles, and in specific emails from the president and the board. All sources of data led to this dominant theme.
The data illustrated the influence the president’s words and actions had on the cognitive, emotional, and intention responses of the constituents. The data showed that participants often mimicked the president’s demonstration of a strong belief and attitude that this was the right change for the College (vision), acknowledgement of her emotional alignment with the values and viability of the College and the constituents of the College (trust), and her willingness to commit to positive intended actions to move the College toward viability by way of value alignment and transparency (action). As the president focused on visibly and vocally promoting her vision, how it aligns with the values of the College, and the need for action to remain viable, an increase in buy-in and respect for the initiatives and the president resulted in a positive change response.

**Introduction to evidence supporting Subthemes 2.1–2.3.** Through multilevel data analysis and document review, the second dominant theme emerged: that a trust in the president and alignment with the president’s vision as well as the action taken by the president to benefit the college while aligning with the core values is a factor in the change response of the organization’s constituents. Through analysis of the second dominant theme came four subthemes:

1. Trust in the president is a central factor for buy-in
2. Demonstrating alignment of a new leader’s vision with the core values of the organization creates trust and buy-in.
3. A well communicated shared vision aids in building trust and creating buy-in from constituents.
4. Demonstrating action in support of a shared vision, in times of crisis, aids in trust and buy-in.
Theme 2 includes quotations from multiple interviewees and focus group members. This theme resulted from the parent code, organizational leadership, and contained 69 reference points. These reference points, collectively, accounted for 30% of all reference points in the data analyzed in the study. The codes under the parent code resulting in dominant Theme 2 were vision and direction, trust, buy-in, transparency, and take action. Upon arrival, the new College president came into a culture of fear based on the leadership and actions of the previous administrations. This culture of fear led to a baseline of distrust in the administration and a question of alignment between the new president’s vision and the core values of the institution and its constituents. Through review of the data, it became apparent that change responses of the participants were influenced significantly by the vision, direction, and transparency coming from the president, the trust in the president, and the willingness of the president to act. These factors led to constituent buy-in of the change initiatives, which often led to an overall positive change response. The researcher selected key quotations to support each subtheme listed under the second dominant theme: Trust, vision, and willingness to act generate respect for and buy-in to the change initiative.

Evidence supporting Subtheme 2.1: Trust in the president is a central factor for buy-in.

Piderit (2000) stated that the cognitive dimension in change response is based on beliefs and attitudes, specifically relating to the benefit and right direction for the organization. The emotional dimension in change response is based on feelings about the change. Both of the cognitive and emotional dimensions play a critical role in the overall change response. The first subtheme within the second dominant theme pointed to the effect trust in the president had on buy-in to the change initiative and change response. Participants noted they trusted the president
and that trust was a central factor in how they viewed the change initiatives and the motivations behind the initiatives as they were mandated by the president.

The data shows that trust is a central factor in a positive cognitive and emotional response leading to a positive intention response. Participant A stated the “faith” they had in the new president and the feeling that she was here for the right reasons, thus increasing the level of trust in the president:

I love [the College]. I knew we were in this crisis situation and I really have this faith in [the president] . . . she's got strengths and weaknesses like all of us, but she is, I think, the right person for the job now and has good instincts and um, and I wanted to be part of that team . . . It's very clear that she’s here for the right reasons and that she knows us and wants us to be who we are. That wasn’t true with the last president . . . if you don't get a place, you know, love the place for what it is, you can't help it. You can't fundraise, which [the last president] didn't. Um, and, and so [the new president] loves us, [this president] understands us and wants us to be a better, more integrated work as an academic program. Um, the, the, the vision [the president] has, I like almost everything.

Participant G noted the nature of distrust and skepticism felt by the faculty for the administration and how the president’s background heightened the faculty’s feeling of being understood, thus increasing the opportunity for increased trust in the new president:

I think it was really helpful to get a president who had higher ed experience . . . [The former president] didn't have any higher ed experience. So, I think from the onset, faculty were a little skeptical and maybe not as open to trust . . . I think getting [the new president] in here with her experience as a provost, her experience as a faculty member,
 folks right away felt comfortable, which was good. And like, oh, she gets us, she understands.

Participant C also discussed distrust for the administration and how the new president’s willingness to be transparent increased their trust:

I think that on the staff side, folks feel distrusting just given the recent history of the college and the financial struggles and the fact that folks felt caught off guard by some of the restructuring . . . [The new president] on the other hand, I think has done a great job in being transparent even about the things that you can be transparent about, which helps to build that culture [of trust].

The participants sited the new president’s background and experiences, transparency, instincts, and love and understanding of the College as ways in which trust was cultivated through her first year. The trust led to buy-in of the change initiatives, even if there was a reduced understanding of the alignment of values and knowledge of outcomes. Participant H discussed the actions the president took to address issues that were arising and how the willingness to discuss the issues and be open about her role in them generated trust and buy-in from the faculty:

When [the new president] first arrived and just sort of in the goodness of her heart, said things that I trusted her. Right? And I trusted her to be genuine. And you know, there was no hidden agenda with this president. I just knew that about her, but she said some things, and I was watching faculty put the worst possible interpretation on it and part of me was thinking, okay, they're, they're being just faculty. But then I also knew that they were coming out of hardship. We had downsizing; we had lost people; they were scared
nurse, and then she regrouped really quickly and sort of addressed what she was hearing and as far as I can tell, this year has been going really well.

These findings did not exclude the need for alignment of the core values with the new president’s vision. In fact, the data showed there is a strong influence of alignment and trust with positive change response.

*Evidence supporting Subtheme 2.2: Demonstrating alignment of a new leader’s vision with the core values of the organization creates trust and buy-in.* The second subtheme within the second dominant theme pointed to a key factor that influenced trust of the president and buy-in to the initiatives: alignment of the vision to the core values of the organization. Participants noted the feelings of support for the president’s vision and strategic plan when they felt it aligned with the core values of the organization. These feelings played into the belief that the change initiatives coming out of the vision and strategic plan were in the best interest of the organization, resulting in a positive change response.

The data in this study found that trust was a central factor for buy-in and overall positive change response. To establish and increase trust and buy-in, the data showed that there was a need for the president to communicate her vision and align it with the core values of the organization to generate an overall positive change response. Participant H reflected on the communication and openness of the president regarding her vision and actions, how they align with the vision and core values of the organization, and the resulting shift in the faculty’s attitudes and intentions around the change initiatives:

Well look, our president says, look, you know, she’s new. She says we have to be all in. And I said to her, gosh, when people think that when you say we’re all in that you, you’re saying we have to agree with you, and I know that’s not what you mean. And so, she,
she backed up and made it clear to audiences that was not what she was saying. What she was saying was that we’re a team and you know, we have to be agile, we have to move in the same direction, we do need to express our differences . . . So, before she made that clarification and afterwards, could you see a difference in the attitudes and the intentions of especially how faculty were thinking about [the change initiatives]?

Participant C discussed watching the individuals’ reactions in their department because of the amount of time they have been involved with the College and how much change they have seen over the years:

Yeah, well there's sort of three groups on the [department] staff. There's just like the, like the old dogs [who have] been here for 20 plus years each, so they’ve seen every high and low time in the last couple of decades and they, they feel buoyed by this, uh, by these new initiatives in this time that we’re in, um, and feel that our message…that we’ve stuck to our mission and our values as a college.

Participant I noted the concern and distrust the faculty and staff had of the previous administration’s dismissal of the core programs and offerings of the college, which they felt represented the organization’s culture and the positive feelings that arose when the new president vocalized how her vision aligned with that of the organizational culture, norms, and values:

Towards the end of the last president’s time on campus, [the administration] was really kind of calling into question our whole [triad] model . . . There were lots of uncertainties and the alums were very upset with what was happening on campus . . . so I think that settled down, um, with the new president who’s like, no, here’s who we are, here’s what we’re doing…we [need to be] thinking about how to do it well, how to lean into it, and
how to do it best, how to serve our students, but we’re not questioning whether or not we’re going to do this. And that was a different message.

Participant A expressed disagreement with some of the new president’s ideas, but stated support for the proposed changes once there was an understanding of the need for the changes and how the changes, ultimately, align with the College’s core values and culture:

I like almost everything [of the new president’s vision]. Some things [the president] has thought of that [she] wants us to pursue are way outside my realm of expertise and things that I haven't ever been a champion of . . . [the president] thinks we should think about online master’s program, you know, when, when that has come up in the past, my approach is my thought has been that we're a small, hands on liberal arts college that thrives on close relationships. But, in the reality we’re in now, [the president’s] argument is yes, and in order to continue to afford to be able to do that, we need some high paying programs that can allow us to do that. We're not going to change who we are, but if we had some other sources of income, it can keep the doors open for philosophy and, you know, other programs. I understand that now . . . I think [the president is] probably right on. I think we've been pretty complacent about looking at ourselves in this new market reality, and I think she's got good ideas . . . the strategic plan has just been redone . . . I knew the direction it was going, and I have said for a long time that, that we've got to stay true to our mission of work, service, and academics . . . I knew she was on board for all those things and, because I said, you know, if I come on board, that’s, those are the things I want, you know, I want to work on. And that’s exactly what the new strategic plan looks like. Um, I'm really excited about the new strategic plan.

Based on the culture of fear that dominated the faculty and staff, there was an initial
distrust of the administration, however, once the president took a step back, stayed on message, and communicated how her vision (i.e., strategic plan) aligned with the core values of the institution, the trust was established, leading to understanding of and buy-in to the change initiatives. Participant G stated, “transparent communication, living into the values, again, [the president] really supporting those, not changing, um, uh, helping to kind of reframe the strategic plan so folks could play a role in that and it was really open, was good.” The reflection of how communication may relate to trust and buy-in leads to Subtheme 2.3: A well communicated shared vision aids in building trust and creating buy-in from constituents.

Evidence supporting Subtheme 2.3: A well communicated shared vision aids in building trust and creating buy-in from constituents. It is difficult to have a positive cognitive change response if there is no knowledge of how the proposed change will benefit and affect the institution and constituents. Piderit (2000) laid the groundwork for a greater understanding of change response through the three dimensions. The third subtheme within the second dominant theme pointed to the messaging and communication of the president’s vision and the effect that has on building trust for the president and buy-in and support for the change initiatives. Participants noted how important the communication and understanding of the direction the president was taking the College and how inspired the participants felt by the president’s vision and leadership.

The data showed that knowledge influences beliefs, emotions, and actions. If there is an understanding of the vision and plan, how that vision aligns with the organizational culture and norms and values, and trust in the leadership, then overall change response is positive. Participant C stated, “[The new president] has a powerful way of creating a vision and a mission, articulating that, and then allowing the folks who are doing the work to think of the best way to
operationalize it.” The data found that knowledge is generated by the frequent and consistent communication of the vision and, in turn, the strategic plan. Participant I noted how the vision, direction, and support of the administration creates a belief and feeling that the change is possible:

I feel like we have direction. I feel like [the leadership has] vision . . . I feel like in terms of direction and vision and support, it's there and, and, and also support in terms of like problem solving, you know, so when you say this has got to happen, it's like alright, how do we make this happen? And I don't feel like I'm in that alone.

The participants stated that they not only had buy-in to the initiatives but also excitement around them if they understood and felt aligned with the vision and the strategic plan led by the new president. Participant F noted that although they were not one of the decision makers, they were excited about the change initiatives and the potential outcomes: “So, I feel like it's a very innovative and exciting time, especially to be in . . . a leadership role at the time. I wasn't a decision maker on it, but I feel like it was cool to hear . . . how those decisions are made and to be really excited about them.” The vision and strategic plan created an action plan steeped in the organization’s core values, which, especially in a time of crisis, are needed and welcomed.

Subtheme 2.4 addresses the desire of constituents to have leadership willing to take action to support the shared vision.

**Evidence supporting Subtheme 2.4: Demonstrating action in support of a shared vision in times of crisis aids in trust and buy-in.** When the new president began her tenure at the College, the budget was not balanced and there was a significant need for action to increase enrollment to support the viability of the institution. The fourth subtheme within the second dominant theme pointed to the thirst for action among participants as they were in a time of crisis
and something needed to happen to change the College’s course for the better. Participants noted how previous administrations seemed to talk about the problems a great deal, but that no actions were taken to put the College on the right track outside of severe cuts. They noted the difference with this president and the relief that actions were being taken that aligned with the vision, which aligned with the core values, in the best interest of the College.

The data showed that there was a call for the new leadership to take positive action that aligned with the core values of the College that would result in forward momentum and a pendulum shift toward increased enrollment. The belief that change initiatives would be beneficial for the institution and those within the College created a positive cognitive response. The feeling that there was action being taken to create viability generated a positive emotional response. Participant D stated, “I think so what [the new president] brought to it was a real sense of urgency that we have to do something big and we've got to try something, you know, just tweaking and all that is interesting, but we’ve got to do something to move the needle.” The positive cognitive and emotional responses generated a support for the change initiatives to increase enrollment. Participant C discussed the idea that the new president decided to act on a controversial topic for the betterment of the College:

The triad [work, service, and academics] . . . became a point of confusion for, for folks, um, and walking [new president] into a situation where there's a deep connection to a concept on campus that’s been long lived and then allowing it to continue to change and evolve and seeing the need for that takes some courage. I think, you know, you could as a leader just say no, I'm going to like, I'm going to take the easy way . . . but she had the courage to not give into that, which was admirable.
Participant E discussed how the president’s willingness to act increased the level of trust in the president and buy-in to the change initiatives:

Just the fact that enrollment bumped up felt really good to people. I think that changed the sense of fear and also the sense of trust of this president that some of these ideas that she was willing to make a move on things. That's something that at least I haven't felt like, there’s just a lack of taking initiative and being proactive and moving forward. I think if it generated a sense of trust and a sense that maybe we’re going to get out of this situation we’re in. So, I think it was positive in that respect

In a time of crisis, the constituents of the College stated that willingness to act in the best interest of the College and the willingness to be intentional about when to allow programs to continue to evolve generated an appreciation, respect, and trust for the new president and positively enhanced the cognitive, emotional, and, intention change responses. Subtheme 2.4 leads into dominant Theme 3. The data revealed that the understanding of and feelings about the organization’s precarious situation increased positive change responses, even if the initiatives were slightly out of alignment with organizational culture.

**Theme 3. Change initiatives linked to organizational survival generate an overall positive change response.** The third dominant theme centered around organizational viability and the effect it had on change response across constituencies. Participants noted the feelings that the first thing that mattered was organizational survival and that everything else could be figured out later. This was apparent in the review of emails, in the interviews, and in the focus group session.

The first consideration in dominant Theme 3 is the culture of fear among participants that was revealed through data analysis. This fear grew out of actions taken by former
administrations who hoped to stem the bleeding that threatened the viability and survival of the organization. The process through which these actions were taken created a negative change response, and thus, a strong culture of fear. The second consideration for this theme is the strong love and dedication the participants have for the College and the tight alignment between their individual core values and beliefs and those espoused by the institution. This love and dedication for the institution created a desperation to implement action that would lead the College to viability through increased enrollment. Although the need and desire for the change initiatives to align with the core values of both the organization and the participants was high, the need and desire for the College to survive was found to be higher. The belief and feelings that these actions would assist in the viability of the College was the primary driver of an initial change response to the change initiatives to increase enrollment.

Upon reflection of the entire change initiative process, the change initiatives that increased viability and aligned with core values and beliefs resulted in overall positive change response. If there was a feeling of stronger viability but there were faults in the alignment between the core values and beliefs and the change initiatives, including the real or perceived lack of needed resources, the response would become more negative, and at times, ambivalent. Piderit (2000) discussed the role of ambivalence in change response and the importance of understanding how ambivalence can move the participants toward a long-term positive change response. In addition to viability, alignment of core values, and resources, the outcome of the change drove the longer-term change response. During reflection of the change process, participants noted that the generation of the highest incoming class in the history of the College boosted morale and fed into the belief that the change initiatives were in the best interest of the college and were producing the desired results. This had a positive impact on the organization
and the faculty and staff, which led to a positive change response. Each of these findings is discussed further under the three subthemes discussed in the following pages.

**Introduction to evidence supporting Subthemes 3.1–3.3.** Through multilevel data analysis and document review, in the third dominant theme, change initiatives linked to organizational survival generated an overall short-term positive change response with conditions that led to either longer-term ambivalence, negative, or positive responses. Analysis of the third dominant theme resulted in three subthemes:

1. Organizational survival is more important than organizational culture—at first.
2. The immediate need is more important than the resources—at first.
3. A positive outcome generates a positive reflective change response.

The discussion of Theme 3 includes quotations from multiple interviewees and focus group members. This theme was a result of the parent code, organizational survival, and contained 46 data references. These references collectively accounted for 20% of all reference points in the data analyzed in the study. The codes under the parent code resulting in dominant Theme 3 were resources, buy-in, beliefs and values, and morale.

Upon arrival, the new college president created a plan based on a vision that aligned with the core values of the institution and created a map to increase enrollment and viability. This vision and plan were communicated clearly, often, and consistently as organizational priorities that would ensure the future viability of the College. This viability is essential to being able to deliver programs and maintain the organizational culture and norms that were strongly loved and lived by the internal constituents. The data revealed that a change initiative that focused on increasing enrollment to ensure organizational survival produced an overall short-term positive change response even if the core values did not completely align and the resources to make the
changes were not perceived to be in place. However, the data also showed that the longer-term change response shifted to ambivalent or negative once the outcomes were in place. This is true because increased enrollment that leadership sought, resulted in a heavier-than-normal work load for faculty and staff. At the same time, the data showed that the morale boost that came from increased enrollment and more secure viability created a positive change response with participants, but they noted that their response may have been different if the outcomes had not been successful. The subthemes examine the data to support these findings starting with Subtheme 3.1: Organizational survival is more important than organizational culture—at first.

_Evidence supporting Subtheme 3.1: Organizational survival is more important than organizational culture—at first._ The first subtheme within the third dominant theme pointed to the feelings and beliefs that organizational survival was even more important than organizational culture, at least initially. Participants noted that although some of the changes happening were not always in alignment with the organizational culture, that if the College did not survive, the culture would not matter. This was true until the first round of implementation and results were completed. Once that was the case, there became more of a concern for organizational culture while still advocating for organizational viability.

The viability of the College was under strain and had been for several years. The strong organizational culture and norms resulting from embedded and hallowed core values created a strong desire for organizational survival. The faculty and staff who had not been restructured in the past few years remained because they believed strongly in the organization and the role it plays in education and society. This desire for organizational survival played a critical role in the cognitive and emotional change responses, which fed into the intention response. Even though the faculty and staff worried about a shift in organizational culture and norms, they knew
the situation was dire and initially supported the change initiatives and processes. Participant E stated, “I haven't really, haven't been involved, but I'm a supporter; I'm trying to be as supportive of anything [that increases viability].” The desire for organizational survival overrode the consideration of complete alignment with organizational culture creating a short-term positive change response. Participant A pointed out that the sole focus of the College in that moment was to increase the chances for viability:

It’s kind of a constant refrain right now: we have to increase enrollment, increase retention, increase alternative revenue sources, and increase the student, um, quality of experience. It’s a business model right now. We have to think of this as a business . . . We're operating in the red; we can’t do that. And so, we’ve got to focus on those things. [The president] keeps saying that. And I think that’s been a little hard for faculty to hear. Participant B reflected that there was an understanding of the urgency around increasing enrollment and the strategies being implemented were focused on doing just that:

So, I think that we had begun [talking about organizational viability and enrollment] over the years, and I think that the community really understood this sense of urgency around that. So, I think that helped, you know, but let's be clear, it’s an enrollment strategy, you know, we need to bring in more people.

Participant E noted the consistency and honesty of communication around the idea that organizational survival has to come first and why:

I mean it wasn’t the president standing there [presenting about viability and enrollment], but it was clearly like, hey, we want to communicate honestly about what’s going on. And I think [the president has] been really consistent about that, that we’re not out of the woods. We got focused on this and in all these different ways. And so, I think that
messaging has been clear . . . The key issue here is getting more students and sometimes I think, I think, faculty particularly, gets a little lost in distractions that are typical of a college of, you know, I want more benefits and tenure, and I want these things, and I think those things are nice too. But you, if there's no college, you know, I, I'm not real worried about tenure.

Participant C noted the willingness to step outside of the organizational norms if it is to benefit the College in the long run:

Um, so there’s been an increased willingness to partner [faculty with admissions in Enrollment Ambassadors]. I think . . . going back to the general cultural, culture of skepticism, you know, it, it takes time to build those relationships. I, it’s been easier to have the ask for, for faculty because they’ve already seen that partnering with us is something that is beneficial to, to everyone.

Participant H suggested that increasing enrollment is everyone’s responsibility, thus, creating a feeling and belief that organizational viability trumps traditional roles:

[There is a lot of conversation about] enrollment decline and the recognition that students had choices to go to larger institutions that might cost less . . . Faculty will get on the phone and call you and say, I really hope you come to my school and worked with me and I’m a full professor . . . That’s what we are, that’s our business now. It’s pretty incredible. It’s our job. We have to do it.

FG Participant 1 reflected that even without total understanding, there is buy-in for the change initiatives as they support organizational viability:

I was, I was not involved in any of it. Um, I um, yeah, I mean I was kind of surprised, I guess in a good way about a Milepost One and NC Free, sort of like, it was one of those
I, I didn't and I'm not sure that I still, I still don't 100% understand financially how they made it work. My rudimentary understanding is that part of it is, is like, okay, one, we need more students here because we’re a work college, so we need people to be doing the work and part of it is like, okay, we’re, this is a big publicity thing. People are going to start looking at us even if they don’t qualify for these programs.

Although there is continued concern about organizational culture and norms aligning with the change initiatives and the process of implementation, there is an understanding that if the College closes its doors, then nothing else will be relevant in the end. Therefore, the focus on increasing enrollment has to be a priority and must happen for the institution to be able to move forward in any direction. At the same time, the data also shows that after the initial positive change response, there was a move toward negative response or ambivalence as the question of culture and norms alignment came into play. Participant I stated:

I mean I think, I think there’s lots of conversation about um, kind of our focus and you know, there’s always the dilemma of . . . how would this program be for students. And so, faculty are like liberal arts, there shouldn’t be a business program. And it’s like, well, do you want to have a job? We need a business program. So, it’s, you know, some of those kinds of conversations. So, I think it, it really has again, kind of shifted how we’re all looking at our work.

Participant C noted the initial understanding of the role of the change initiatives and timing of implementation as well as the reflection of needed thoughtfulness of future implications:

The strategic planning and implementation of, like, new initiatives [has] to really be thoughtful and to not be hasty or impulsive, and I don’t want to give the impression that I
felt like those were. I think sometimes we have to react quickly, but um, if you have the luxury of time to really be thoughtful and think deeply about, um, okay, we have this vision of where we want to get to and what this is going to be [how does this fit in].

These participants reflected on the experience after the initiative had been implemented. The initial response was positive and supportive. The follow-up and reflective responses were still supportive in action, but more ambivalent or negative in their cognitive and emotional dimensions. The initial and reflective change responses also shifted when discussing resources, leading to Subtheme 3.2: The immediate need is more important than the resources—at first.

Evidence supporting Subtheme 3.2: The immediate need is more important than the resources—at first. The second subtheme within the third dominant theme pointed to the immediate need of more students being more important than the resources the participants felt they had or did not have to accommodate an increase in enrollment — at least at first. Participants noted that while there had been cuts and the staff were used to very small class sizes, there was still complete support and excitement for a large increase in enrollment. However, once the large increase in student population occurred, the feelings and beliefs that there was a need for additional resources began to affect change response.

Based on the data, the strong love and deep connection the faculty and staff have to the College influenced the cognitive, emotional, and intention responses to the change initiatives. The desire to secure the immediate need of organizational survival overrode the consideration of the recent reduction in resources and what that would ultimately mean for the constituents working daily with the student. Participant I stated, “We don't always have all the resources that we would like to put toward some of the things that they’d like to do. And I think the faculty and staff . . . see the value in the mission.” The initial change response was positive cognitively and
intentionally across the board with Free Tuition and MP One. The emotional response fluctuated as a result of the rapid pace of which the initiatives were implemented and the volume of students enrolled, leading to a need for a quick shift in responsibilities and actions. Participant H reflected on the positive outcomes of the change initiatives and the lack of preparedness for those outcomes. Although there was excitement over the increased enrollment, faculty and staff were called upon to do more with less:

I was very directly involved with the effect of the [Free Tuition] scholarship this year because we had the, after years of enrollment decline, we had our largest class in the history of the college, and there I was scrambling to get instructors for the first-year seminar program last year. And I remember walking into a faculty meeting and I said, we have a good problem. Yeah, this is a problem we really want. I need three of you to cancel some under-enrolled upper level course and lend your talent to our most vulnerable students. Who are the freshmen, right? Those are the ones who really need you. And they said, when do you need to know? And I said 5:00 p.m. And they thought I was kidding. And boy did they, they, they ponied up.

Participant E reflected on the intensity of the feelings around the excitement over the outcomes and the allocation of resources:

I got the feeling that while those departments were supportive, it really was a sense of like upheaval in their worlds that we were admitting all these students and we’ve got to figure out financial aid and sort of a, but in, in the innovative world of like, it has just inserted this [sound like her mind being blown], you’ve got to rethink what you’re doing, and we’ve got to find this money. And I think it probably was exciting on one hand and also completely disorienting for some of those offices.
The emotional response did not hinder the outcome of the change initiatives; however, it did come into play once the new students were on campus. The reduction in resources created feelings of concern about the system needed to support the students so they would have a good student experience. Participant F reflected:

[Enrollment] affects everything from orientation to class size to being able to take the right classes in the right order. Um, what else? Housing issues, I mean just kind of all kinds of things that you couldn’t necessarily know ahead of time they were going to happen, and I think have made things harder.

Participant G observed the challenge of rapidly increasing enrollment and fewer resources: And it was interesting because we know we needed more students. I mean vibrancy of campus is one thing, and it would help with that, and then the revenue is one thing. But when we started to get the students, there was also the sense that it happened so quickly and we didn’t have the systems to support them.

Piderit (2000) examined the interactions and interdependence between the cognitive, emotional, and intention dimensions resulting in a positive, negative, or ambivalent change response. The concept of organizational survival prioritized the dimensions by putting the beliefs that the change is in the best interest of the organization above the concerns over needed resources. As the participants’ belief that the most important thing is organizational survival saturated the change response, the emotional response did not alter the positive intention response.

Evidence supporting Subtheme 3.3: A positive outcome generates a positive reflective change response. The third subtheme within the third dominant theme pointed to the effects a positive outcome of a change initiative has on the reflective change response. Participants noted
the increase in morale, the increased excitement and feelings and beliefs of viability – with a healthy dose of reality – were not only a result of what occurred during the implementation process of the initiatives but also, upon reflection, a result of the positive outcomes of the initiatives. The interviews and focus group session took place approximately a year and a half from the start of implementation. The reflections of the individuals considered the initial response and the outcomes of the change initiatives. The data showed that a positive outcome creates a greater possibility of a positive reflective change response. Although there may have been initial concern over alignment with core values and organizational culture and norms, the outcomes were successful and resulted in a large incoming class that enhanced the core values of the organization and norms of the organization. The outcomes resulted in a positive morale shift and the right steps toward organizational viability. Therefore, the beliefs, feelings, and intentions were based on excitement and optimism for the future of the institution.

Participant A reflected upon the alignment of the successful outcomes with the overall positive response:

I think the success of the big class was huge. Um, because I mean, we’ve been seeing all the numbers, you know, we’ve, we’ve had presentations of the downward spiral and, and, um, and so seeing a real turnaround concrete big turnaround was pretty huge, uh, that felt pretty good. And, and you know, that was not like a knock it out of the park kind of thing because our, our overall enrollment was flat because our sophomore, junior, senior classes are so tiny, so our enrollment didn't change and our financial situation didn't really change, but our future outlook is much better. Um, and so, uh, I think that large class was huge and it just creates, it also just creates energy and excitement, you know, instead of dwindling little dinky classes, all of a sudden, it’s like, whoa, we have, there’s
people around on it… So, I think, I think everybody’s kind of now getting on board, and, certainly, they’ve now seen the success of those two programs . . . Which, you know, again, if we had not had these big numbers this year, it would be a totally different story and [the president] would probably be under the crosshair for sure.

Participant E’s overall change response was positive. When asked to reflect on that, this participant observed the successful outcomes as a factor of a positive change response:

I also think just having more people on campus has a better feel for the whole community as a positive moving forward. And I don't, I, I can’t name the numbers, but I do feel like it’s a more diverse class in terms of students of color that and I, I know for sure that it is in terms of socioeconomic diversity, and I think those things are good. I mean, my, my sense is this class was more diverse and once before, but I can’t say the numbers and, and I think that’s great for us and it feels to me, feels like a very positive direction.

The data showed that organizational survival is a dominating factor in change response, even when strong factors are misaligned. The participants clearly indicated that the first priority had to be organizational viability and survival and that other worries and concerns would need to be a later focus. In addition to the desire for organizational survival, the outcome of the change initiative also plays a role in overall change response. Upon reflection, the participants noted that if the change initiatives had not been successful, the beliefs, feelings, and intentions of the constituents would have likely shifted toward a negative response.

**Summary**

Through multilevel data analysis and document review, the researcher coded the data with three levels of coding: parent codes, sub-codes, and codes. The parent codes were the foundation for the three dominant themes based on the data analysis. The three dominant themes
were:

1. Organizational culture and norms dictate the processes needed for a positive change response.
2. Trust, vision, and willingness to act generate respect for and buy-in to the change initiative.
3. Change initiatives linked to organizational survival generate an overall positive change response.

These three dominant themes each contained three to four subthemes based in the codes and sub-codes revealed during data analysis. Each theme and subtheme was examined in relationship to Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory and the lens of cognitive, emotional, and intention change responses. The data showed that, as Piderit stated, there is a continual interplay and interdependence between dimensions that will alter overall change response. For instance, participants noted that if they felt they understood the initiative and that they were invited to be a part of the process, they felt better about the initiative and they understood why the initiative was important, leading to a positive change response. If this didn’t happen, the feelings and beliefs were negative or ambivalent, leading to an overall negative response. The same was true for the interactions of feelings and beliefs around the president’s vision and alignment with organizational culture, norms, beliefs, and values. Participants noted the feelings of support for the president’s vision and strategic plan when they felt it aligned with the core values of the organization. These feelings played into the belief that the change initiatives coming out of the vision and strategic plan were in the best interest of the organization, resulting in a positive change response. When considered as a whole, the three themes illustrate the importance of leadership, communication, implementation, and organizational culture and norms.
for change response.

**Conclusion**

This chapter presented findings based on Phases I, II, III and IV through analysis of the qualitative research results. Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory provided the framework upon which to base the data collection and analysis by providing guidance in assessing the three dimensions of change response within each of the data reference points, codes, and themes. The data analysis focused on three change initiatives, which were all second-order changes mandated by senior leadership. Each change was a planned change; however, the initiatives were all implemented in a short period of time and without much notice. Although each change came from the top, Free Tuition and MP One were implemented in a top-down approach, while Enrollment Ambassadors was implemented in a bottom-up approach.

The difference in the process of implementation was a significant factor in change response as the Enrollment Ambassadors initiative was not believed to be or felt to be in alignment with the organization’s and the individuals’ core values and organizational culture and norms. Although there was an understanding of the benefit to the organization by increasing enrollment, there was a feeling and belief that creating competition and inequity among the departments could harm the organization. This feeling of inequity led to a belief that the process was unjust. The core values of the College—justice and equity—conflicted with the perception of injustice, and therefore, the overall change response to this change initiative was negative.

The two scholarship initiatives had an overall positive change response due to a few key factors. First, the scholarship initiatives, Free Tuition and MP One, were seen as a way to increase access and, thus, bring the organization back to the core values of justice and equity. Second, the president communicated consistently and clearly the need for the initiatives, how
they would benefit the organization, and how they aligned with the organizational culture and norms. This communication established trust in the president and generated buy-in for her vision and strategic plan.

The two overall supported change initiatives, Free Tuition and MP One, generated the largest incoming class in the history of the college, leading to a large boost in morale and feelings of excitement and renewed commitment to the College. Awareness of the resource challenges that arose from these initiatives created a longer-term shift in change response. This data tells us that the outcomes of the change initiatives may result in different shorter-term and longer-term change responses to the same initiative. When aligning the data with Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory, the data showed that change initiatives centered around organizational viability, mission and vision alignment with the change initiatives, and change initiatives that support and are based in the organizational culture are more likely to generate a positive overall change response based on the interplay of three dimensions: emotional, cognitive, and intention as reflected in Figure 4. In Chapter 5, the researcher will analyze the data in relationship to the literature to consider how overall change response may be formed.
Figure 4. Participant reflections on words and behaviors by organizational leadership affecting change response as framed by Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory.
Chapter Five: Conclusions

Small, private, liberal arts colleges are encountering significant challenges in enrollment, funding, and operational costs (Gansemer-Topf, et al., 2014; Hartocollis, 2016; Mitchell, 2015). These challenges threaten viability. Each year, more of these colleges close their doors or merge with other institutions (Ernst & Young, 2016). The leaders of these institutions struggle with effective plans to turn the financial crisis into viability and stability. To do this, they must consider change, which is often difficult to accept and manage (Piderit, 2000). The purpose of this study was to explore the change response of multiple constituencies to mandated change initiatives implemented by the new president to increase student enrollment at a small, private, liberal arts college.

The study was conducted in four phases: (I) data collection and initial discoveries, (II) inductive and deductive analysis, (III) data interpretation and identification of dominant themes, (IV) interpretations and implications. In chapter four, three dominant themes and ten sub-themes emerged in alignment with the conceptual framework based in Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory: (1) organizational culture and norms dictate the processes needed for a positive change response, (2) trust, vision, and willingness to act generate respect for and buy-in to the change initiative, and (3) change initiatives linked to organizational survival generate an overall positive change response. These findings provided an in-depth understanding of the influence of seven high impact factors on the three dimensions of change and the overall change response to mandated change initiatives to increase enrollment at a small, private, liberal arts college. Piderit’s (2000) three dimensions of change response are cognitive, emotional, and intention. From the literature, six high impact factors of change response were found: (1) components of change, (2) organizational readiness, (3) time, (4) organizational leadership, (5) beliefs and
values, and (6) organizational culture and norms. From the data analysis and findings, one additional high impact factor of change response was discovered: organizational viability. This chapter will discuss the implications of the dominant themes supported by the conceptual framework based in Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory and the literature and the implications of these themes to theory, practice, and future research.

Implication of the Findings

Analysis and examination of the data provided an understanding of the complex nature of change response. Change response is multifaceted and is influenced by countless factors existing in day-to-day life prior to, during, and after the change process. The implications of the findings were based in the conceptual framework made up of Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory and high impact factors on change response from the literature and data analysis.

Implications of Theme 1: Organizational Culture and Norms Dictate the Processes Needed for a Positive Change Response

The data showed that the College’s core values are rooted in justice and equity and has an organizational culture based in shared governance. The literature showed that organizational culture and norms dictate process needed for a positive change response (Jones & Van de Ven, 2016). This study found that organizational culture and norms are most important when deciding upon and implementing a change initiative. The implication of theme 1, supported by the data and the literature, is that in small, private, liberal arts colleges with a strong organizational culture rooted in justice and equity, that there is an expectation of the constituents that the change initiatives will be decided upon and implemented through shared governance and in accordance with the core values and culture of the organization (Ford, Ford, & D’Amelio, 2008; Zilber, 2006; Morphew, 2009).
Involvement and communication. The literature supported the findings that when participants were involved with the planning of or implementing the change initiative, the overall change response was positive. However, when the participants were not involved and did not understand the intention or the application of the change initiative, the overall change response was ambivalence or negative response (Buckley, 1998; Parker, 1980; Pettigrew et al., 2001). The literature supported the findings that a lack of engagement in the process resulted in a lack of understanding of how the change aligned with the vision and mission of the organization and the effects the change initiative would have on the institution and how those changes would be mitigated if at all (Hazy & Boyatzis, 2015; Seo et al., 2012; Shults, 2008). The implication of this finding based in the data and literature is the importance of the role organizational culture, norms, beliefs, and values play in the planning, implementation, and follow-up of second-order change in generating a positive overall change response (Avey et. al., 2008; Kezar, 2012; Shults, 2008; Craig, 2004; Townley, 1999).

Culture of fear. The findings revealed and the literature supported that a strong barrier to a positive change response was a culture of fear (Dasborough et al., 2015). In the previous two administrations, participants noted that the leadership created a culture of fear across constituents who experienced campus life on a daily basis. The literature supported the finding that fear was based in a lack of communication, involvement, understanding, and the decision-making process (Hechanova & Clementina-Olpoc, 2013; Cooper et al., 2013; Dasborough et al., 2015). The findings supported the literature that although organizations that have a strong level of readiness will likely move through the change process with positive change response, resistance will come into play when there is a lack of understanding and knowledge around the change, a lack of control in the change process, and an anxiety-producing lack of awareness
about what this change means for the constituent or the organization (Kezar, 2005; Lewis, 2006). The lack of understanding, past actions taken to right the ship by restructuring the organization, and the lack of a plan of action that aligned with the organization’s core values created a persistent worry about the state of the school and the future of the faculty and staff. This fear created a lack of immediate readiness for change as some participants were not ready to think and act differently. The findings supported the literature that if individuals are not ready to think and act differently, the readiness for change is diminished (Woodman & Dewett, 2004).

This culture of fear limited the initial trust in the initiatives and the administration’s vision and action steps. To counteract concern about the alignment of the change initiatives with the core values of the organization, the president created consistent and clear messages about the need for the initiatives, their purpose, and her vision for the organization. The literature supported the findings that this messaging persuaded members of the College community that the initiatives would return the College to its roots, which resulted in a positive change response (Lewis, 2006; Lines, 2005; Liu & Perrewe, 2005; Sultz, 2013). The implication of this finding based in the data and supported by the literature shows that effective communication about the need for change and how it will enhance the organizational mission will increase the positive emotional and cognitive response, thus prompting supportive behavior and actions (Kezar, 2001; Lines, 2005).

**Alignment with core values.** The literature supported the findings that an understanding of the alignment of the change initiative with the organization’s core values and beliefs aid in buy-in and support for the change initiative, leading to a positive change response (Avey et. al., 2008; Kezar, 2012; Shults, 2008; Craig, 2004; Townley, 1999). Three change initiatives were discussed by each participant: Free Tuition, MP One, and Enrollment Champions. Two of these
initiatives were scholarship programs, mandated by the new president and implemented from the top down. These two initiatives received a positive change response because they aligned so closely with the core values and beliefs as they both increased the opportunity for student access to higher education. As the literature would predict, if there is a strong value commitment to and alignment with the change, and there is a strong belief in the organizational values, then the change occurs more swiftly and with more positive outcomes (Amis et al., 2002). Both initiatives were implemented by the admissions office in partnership with the financial aid office and the president and cabinet. The initiatives had a feel of justice and equity and enjoyed a positive cognitive, emotional, and behavioral response from participants. The literature supports this finding as attitude is often affected by the perceptions of justice occurring within the change initiative (Foster, 2010). The implications, supported by the findings and the literature, indicate a perception of unfair treatment and injustice within the organization often results in a resistance to change and a negative attitude and emotional response as well as a negative behavioral change response (Fuchs & Edwards, 2011).

The third change initiative was Enrollment Champions. This initiative was also mandated by the president and implemented by the admissions office; however, participants saw the implementation process as unjust, inequitable, and promoting competition among departments. The literature supported the findings that if organizational culture and norms do not support this type of competition, there will be strong resistance to the initiative (Gayle et al., 2003). As participants believed the promotion of competition among departments went against the egalitarian ethos of the institution, the overall change response to this change initiative was negative. The literature showed and the data supported that ambivalence may occur when organizational leadership emphasizes the need for supportive and positive behaviors for the
change initiative, but individuals within the organization are not persuaded the change will be in the best interest of the organization. These individuals may undertake the actions necessary to implement the change without truly supporting the change (Lines, 2005).

The findings, supported by the literature, revealed that to successfully implement a change initiative, the individuals and groups creating and driving the change must consider organizational culture and norms in the planning and implementation process (Craig, 2004; Zilber, 2006). The implication of this finding, based in the data and supported by the literature is when consideration is given to the core values, beliefs, and behaviors of an organization and the individuals within the organization, and a plan is created based on those considerations, the change initiatives will likely generate an overall positive change response (Craig, 2004; Kezar & Eckel, 2002a).

**Implications of Findings from Theme 2: Trust, Vision, and Willingness to Act Generate Respect for and Buy-in to the Change Initiative**

The literature supported the findings that illustrated that a combination of trust in the president, motivation around the president’s vision, and a willingness to act on a plan that aligned with the core values of the organization generated buy-in and support for the change initiatives (Oreg, Vakola, & Armenakis, 2011; Harold & Alexander, 2014; Khachian, Pazargadie, & Manoochehri, 2013; Mckinnon-Russell, 2015). Several participants discussed the initial trust and the growth of trust in the president as she demonstrated the alignment of her vision with the core values of the organization, which led to a positive overall change response (Cooper et al., 2013; Dasborough et al., 2015; Harold & Alexander, 2014). The findings support the literature revealing the need for the vision to align with the core values of the organization to create trust and buy-in (Craig, 2004; Kezar & Eckel, 2002a; Baker and Baldwin, 2014). Ten
participants discussed how their understanding of the president’s vision and how that vision aligned with the core values of the institution affected the perception of and excitement around the change. The key factor, supported by the literature, in this finding was the clear and consistent communication of that shared vision (Kezar, 2001; Lines, 2005).

The findings show that a well-communicated shared vision aided in building trust and creating buy-in from constituents. When participants understood the direction in which the new president planned to take them, how she wanted to do that, and her plan moving forward, the change response was positive. When participants did not understand how the change initiative fit into the organizational culture and, through a lack of awareness, understanding, and involvement, felt the initiative was not in alignment with the president’s stated vision, the change response was negative.

Analysis of the data revealed that, in a time of crisis, when a president demonstrates action in support of a shared vision, trust for the president and buy-in to the change initiative increases. Several participants expressed the desire among constituents for action to take place as past administrations held many discussions but failed to make actionable decisions. The implications of this finding, with support from the literature, indicate that, when in a crisis mode, an administration that establishes a bold vision that aligns with the core values of the institution, communicates that vision often and consistently, and puts the plan into action will be more trusted and will have greater overall support for the change initiative.

**Interpretation of Theme 3: Change Initiatives Linked to Organizational Survival Generate an Overall Positive Change Response**

Over the past decade, the College has seen several presidential transitions, a decline in enrollment, and diminishing endowments and philanthropic funding. Enrollment was at its
lowest in 2017. Morale on campus was low and attitudes were fearful. For all intents and purposes, the College was in survival mode and could not withstand many more years of operating in the red. In May, 2017, a new president began her tenure at the College. She knew she had to create change to ensure survival and, eventually, restore long-term viability. The literature, supported by the findings, stated that attitudes and emotions have a strong impact on the individual’s behavior in change response (Liu & Perrewe, 2005). Individuals’ attitudes and emotions within an organization in survival mode alters the change response. The findings revealed that change initiatives implemented to directly enhance the chance for organizational survival are more likely to generate a positive change response, even when not completely aligned with organizational culture and norms. A gap in literature existed in research on the president’s role in change response in the specific context of organizational viability, therefore, one implication of this finding is the need to further examine change response and organizational leadership in the context of crisis and viability.

The findings showed that although alignment of organizational culture and core values with the change initiatives and the communication of the alignment is a key influencer of change response, a crisis realigns these priorities because strong feelings emerge about the fact that if the College does not survive, then tenure, culture, and values will not matter. The participants stated that what they felt was most important in the moment was to save the school now and worry about the implications and needed resources later. The literature stated that cognitive change response is based on how an individual thinks about the change (Piderit, 2000; Kegan and Lahey, 2001). This dimension takes into consideration the belief of the need for the organizational change and the perception of the outcome for the organization if the change is implemented (Pardo del Val and Fuentes, 2003; Piderit, 2000). The implication of this finding is that initial
mental and emotional support for the change initiative will occur when the viability of the institution is at stake.

The participants noted that the most support came in the initial stages of the initiative when there was not concern for anything but the immediate need. Once the students were enrolled, the participants noted a concern over resources and how specific change initiatives aligned with the core values of the organization. The findings indicated, supported by the literature, that a positive change response may erode over time if communication does not continue and individuals feel they do not have the resources or knowledge to cope with the outcomes of the change (Sonenshein, 2010).

Although the initial change response to the two scholarship initiatives, MP One and Free Tuition, was positive in some ways (increasing access) and negative in others (concern the students would not enhance or align with the organizational culture), the overall change response after the first year was positive upon reflection. The implication of this finding, supported by the literature, was that a positive change outcome that results in a positive benefit for the organization and the individuals within the organization will be reflected upon with a positive change response, whereas an outcome that was not seen as beneficial will be reflected upon with a negative or ambivalent change response (Dashborough et al., 2015).

**Implications for Theory**

This research was based in a conceptual framework combining Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory and seven high impact factors that influenced the three dimensions and overall change response and aimed to describe the factors that generate a positive, negative, or ambivalent change response to a mandated change by the new president. The findings discussed in chapter four supported Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory by showing the cognitive,
emotional, and intentional dimensions were factors in each change initiative to the overall change response. The findings also supported the conceptual framework that included seven high impact factors on change response: components of change, organizational readiness, time, organizational leadership, beliefs and values, organizational viability, and organizational culture and norms. The cognitive, emotional, and intention dimensions were found to have a strong interplay with each other and the high impact factors when examining the overall change response. During the analysis process, the researcher found, and the literature supported, that the cognitive and emotional dimensions directly influenced the participants’ intentions – past behavior and future intentions (Piderit, 2000).

While the findings showed the accuracy of Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory and the high impact factors that influenced the three dimensions and overall change response, three implications for theory resulted from the data analysis and interpretation. These three implications are (1) change response is a continuous cycle of factors that influence the cognitive, emotional, and intention dimension, (2) there may be a dominant dimension within change response that has a greater influence over the other two dimensions depending on the culture of the organization, and (3) there are multiple high impact factors that influence the three dimensions of change response and the overall response to change. These implications provide an additional lens to support future research on change response.

**Continuous cycle of change response**

This research found support for a continuous cycle of change response through the interplay of the three dimensions: cognitive, emotional, and intention. Because the factor of time played a role in the overall change response, so too did the cycle of Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory dimensions. When the change initiatives, MP One and Free Tuition, were initially
implemented, the overall change response was positive because the participant’s believed the initiatives were in the best interest of the College and felt that these initiatives aligned with the College’s core values and organizational culture. These positive beliefs and feelings produced positive intention, thus an overall positive change response. However, as time progressed and the reality of the significant increases in students with no increases in resources became a reality, the participants noted a shifting change response that was still positive, but with some negative or ambivalent cognitive response presented. According to Sonenshine (2010), change response will shift over time, thus creating a continuous cycle of the interactions between overall change response and the three dimensions. Figure 5 provides a visual for this implication.
Dominate dimensions influencing change response

Piderit (2000) stated that when responses are not unilaterally positive across dimensions, then the overall response may be analyzed as cross-dimensional ambivalence. Piderit (2000) also stated that employees are more willing to express negative beliefs vs. emotions. However, the data in this study showed that the dimensions are not always equal and an overall positive or
negative response does not always enjoy a unanimous positive or negative response across all three dimensions.

The data in this study showed that while this may be accurate in some instances, it is not true across the board. The participants in this study demonstrated a strong emotional reaction with an equally or only slightly less strong cognitive reaction that resulted not in ambivalence, but a positive overall change response in two of the three change initiatives and more ambivalence or negative response in the third initiative. The main difference in these two segments of the change initiatives was based in the organization’s and individual’s core values and beliefs of equity and justice. Figure 6 provides a visual for this implication.

![Figure 6. Emotional dominance implication for Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory](image)

**Additional influencing factors in change response**

Piderit (2000) discussed a few influential factors that affect the dimensional and overall change response: beliefs and values, organizational readiness, and time. The literature supported
each of these influential factors and contributed the components of change, organizational leadership, and organizational culture and norms. The implication for theory. The findings contributed an additional influential factor in change response: organizational viability.

The implication for theory is rooted in the findings that organizational viability is a highly influential factor in each dimension of change response and overall change response. Consideration should be given to organizational context as it pertains to viability when studying change response. Figure 7 provides a visual representation of this implication.

Figure 7. High Impact Factors and Variables on Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory

Summary

This study provided new understanding to change response through Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory. Piderit’s (2000) framework allowed the researcher to gain new
insights about factors that most encourage a positive change response to a mandated change in a small, private, liberal arts college. The findings of this study are supported by Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory when aligned with the cognitive, emotional, and intention responses that generate a positive, negative, or ambivalent overall change response.

**Implications for Practice**

As many small, private, liberal arts colleges are experiencing threats to viability, there is a call for significant second-order changes in an effort to bring the colleges into stability and viability. To do so, many governing boards recommend new leadership be brought to the table. The real and timely need of successful change initiatives creates significant implications for practice based on the findings in this study.

**Implication 1. Governing board**

The role of the governing board is to oversee the governance of the institution. This includes the hiring and firing of the president. In times of uncertainty, the board often looks to new leadership to guide the organization safely to the next point. Small, private, liberal arts colleges are in such a time of uncertainty and many colleges are looking to hire new leadership in hopes of attaining viability. The findings in this study pointed strongly to the role of the college president in a positive or negative change response. One participant stated:

That wasn’t true with the last president . . . if you don't get a place, you know, love the place for what it is, you can't help it. You can't fundraise, which [the last president] didn't. Um, and, and so [the new president] loves us, [this president] understands us and wants us to be a better, more integrated work as an academic program. Um, the, the, the vision [the president] has, I like almost everything.

As the governing board considers new leadership, it is important to consider
organizational culture, norms, and values and an individual’s ability to engage, accept, and commit to those norms and values. During the interview process, one participant stated, “…the new president who’s like, no, here’s who we are, here’s what we’re doing…we [need to be] thinking about how to do it well, how to lean into it, and how to do it best, how to serve our students, but we’re not questioning whether or not we’re going to do this.” The findings showed that a positive change response is supported by a president who understands and supports the organizational culture, norms, and values and is able to articulate those in a way that is inspiring and builds trust and buy-in of the constituents. The implication for the governing board of a small, private, liberal arts college moving into second-order change is the need to analyze the culture and context of the organization and the components of needed changes, then hire a new president who aligns with the culture and context and can lead the change initiative based on the components of change.

**Implication 2. New college presidents**

Taking on a leadership role at an institution that is in a time of financial uncertainty is a challenge. Taking on a leadership role at an institution that has strong and deeply rooted culture, norms, and values and is existing in a culture of fear related to the implementation of second-order changes is a greater challenge. New college presidents will need to be ready to move the organization through the change process from start to finish with considerations of how their actions influence the change response and, ultimately, the outcomes of the change. The findings in this study implicate four key areas new presidents should consider prior to launching a second-order change.

The first key influencer is the ability for the president to understand, support, and commit to the organizational culture and norms based in the core values and beliefs that guide the
organization. The second influencer is the president’s ability to generate and maintain trust. The third enlisting champions for the change. The fourth is the ability of the president to transparently communicate the plan of action and how it aligns with the organizational values and the needed outcome.

**Organizational culture, norms, values, and beliefs.** To support a positive change response, the new president should enlist key members of the organization, across constituents, to learn about the culture, norms, values, and beliefs. He or she should read the history of the organization, seek to understand past leadership and the outcomes of those leaders’ initiatives, and explore any significant changes that have happened in the recent past, including understanding how they were implemented and their successes and challenges. The new president should consider gaining a more in-depth understanding of what the core values of the college mean and how they are best seen, heard, and felt on campus.

**Generating, growing, and maintaining trust.** To support a positive change response, the new president should self-reflect on his or her own personality, strengths, and weaknesses as they relate to the job at hand, the culture, and the organizational structure. The findings showed that trust may be initially given to an individual who presents with the desired credentials, background, or characteristics. However, to grow trust more broadly, the new president should consider the steps needed to do so when planning, implementing, and following up on a change initiative. According to this study’s findings, the considerations should be:

1. Demonstrate alignment of the president’s vision with the core values of the organization.
2. Communicate the shared vision and how it aligns with the core values often and with consistency.
3. Create and take actions based on support of the shared vision and core values.
Enlisting champions for the change. The findings showed and the literature supported the idea that senior-level individuals who are champions for the change initiatives support a positive change response from the individuals on the lower tiers of the organizational chart (Barlett & Chase, 2004; Bardati, 2006; Eisen & Barlett, 2006). The senior administrators, cabinet members, and others at this level will need to be very informed, have a clear and consistent message, and be a champion for the change initiative to encourage an overall positive change response. One participant discussed the role their supervisor played in helping her understand the change initiatives and how it aligned to what was happening on campus and the vision of the president:

She [supervisor] is one of the most sophisticated administrators I’ve ever worked with. She walks the line well of being transparent. She will also tell me when I, when she can’t tell me things and she asked my opinion a lot, which I value that she wants my opinion… I knew [they] were going to do what they needed to do.

This implication, supported by the literature and the findings, demonstrates the need to assure understanding of how the change initiative aligns with the vision and core values of the organization, the president, in addition to senior administrators, must continually repeat the same message with support and excitement.

Transparently communicate the plan of action and alignment with organizational values and needed outcomes. The findings showed and the literature supported the value in the president’s ability to demonstrate and communicate the alignment between the vision, core values, and strategic plan and the change initiatives to produce the needed outcomes for organizational viability while staying true to mission aids in greater support for the change initiative (Altunay & Arli, 2012; Cooper, Nieberding, & Wanek, 2013; Dasborough et al., 2015;
Harold & Alexander, 2014). One participant stated, “[The new president] has a powerful way of creating a vision and a mission, articulating that, and then allowing the folks who are doing the work to think of the best way to operationalize it.” This implication, supported by the literature and the findings, relates the importance of the president’s understanding of the organizational culture and values, how to best communicate the alignment of those values to the change initiative, and how this change initiative will provide outcomes that support the organizational values and needs.

Implications for Future Research

The findings of this research provide information to researchers and practitioners of organizational leadership within higher education to fully consider the best way in which to initiate, plan, implement, and carry out second-order change initiatives. A second-order change is one that results in a shift of systems, culture, and internal order (Levy, 1986; Liu & Perrewe, 2005). To confirm and expand upon the findings, future research is needed. This section will review the recommendations for future research.

Recommendation 1. Multiple site case study

This study was a single site case study. To replicate the findings in this study and increase generalizability, research of multiple sites is needed. The findings generated from future research may differ across other small, private, liberal arts colleges depending on their state of financial stability, enrollment, leadership, and organizational culture and norms.

Recommendation 2. Impact of organizational viability on change response

Ample literature exists that discusses change response and its relationship to change initiatives. However, there is no known literature that reflects how individual leaders interact with the components of the change in a particular context to influence the outcomes. The
researcher recommends future research using Piderit’s (2000) response to change theory through the lens of leadership, specifically in times of crisis around organizational viability. Further research is needed to determine if the initial change response is positive when organizations are focused first on organizational viability.

**Recommendation 3. Organizational culture and values**

Additional considerations for future research are to explore any differences in change response between an organization that has an incredibly strong and deeply rooted culture and one that has a hard time articulating the core values of the organization. It would be beneficial to the field if further understanding of the role culture plays in relation to the other key influencing factors noted in this study were examined.

**Recommendation 4. New vs. current organizational leader**

This study found that the role of the president is critical in generating a positive change response to mandated change initiatives at a small, private, liberal arts college. It would be beneficial to the field to gain further insight into the understanding of any possible differences in needed behaviors for new presidents and sitting presidents to drive positive change responses in second-order changes in small, private, liberal arts colleges.

**Conclusion**

Small, private, liberal arts colleges are in crisis. Hundreds of schools currently teeter on the tipping point (Busta, 2019). Many of these colleges operate at a deficit and the leadership and governing boards understand that they need to find a way to survive or they will end up closing their doors or merging with another institution. Although the latter may be the best option for some institutions, it is not for others. The colleges that opt for survival find themselves at a crossroads. These colleges include individuals deeply rooted in the
organizational culture and norms who are strongly aligned with the organization’s values and beliefs. The faculty and staff who remain believe in the mission of the organization and have suffered through the years of cuts and downsizing to support its needs.

To move these colleges to viability, organizational leaders must create change to counteract the external forces that are shifting the dynamics of higher education. Many of these forces for small, private, liberal arts colleges result in declining enrollment and increasing operating costs. As such, the financial burden is too great for colleges that do not have a substantial endowment to help them weather the storm.

Change is difficult (Piderit, 2000). Change in an organization with a strong identity, values, and traditions is incredibly difficult. Although current leadership who is trusted, respected, aligned with the organizations core values, and who has a shared vision that is motivating and inspiring may be able to successfully guide their organization through second-order change in a time of crisis. Leaders who do not have these abilities and characteristics may find themselves at a loss to generate support for the needed changes. When this is the case, new leadership must be brought in to guide the organization into viability and stability.

This study contributed to the literature by examining the correlation between specific actions and behaviors needed by the president of a small, private, liberal arts college to generate positive change response to mandated change initiatives in a time of crisis. The need for deeper understanding of this subject, specifically among governing boards and current and new presidents, is urgent. With hundreds of small, private, liberal arts colleges on the brink of closure, the right leaders are needed—leaders who can work with the college community to generate positive outcomes around the systemic changes needed for the colleges’ survival.
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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What is your role at the college?
2. What is your role in your department?
3. How do you think your department is viewed by people inside and outside of the college community?
4. How do you think the larger college is viewed by the internal and external community?
5. What initiatives were mandated from college leadership to increase enrollment?
6. What was your involvement with the implementation of mandated changes to increase enrollment?
7. Did the implementation of new strategically mandated initiative(s) to increase enrollment change how you do your work or how you interact with people inside the college?
   - If yes…what specifically had changed either in your own work or your interaction with people at the college?
8. How have your relationships on the campus changed since the implementation of the new college strategy to increase enrollment?
9. Have you allowed yourself time to reflect the process of implementation or the effect of these initiatives on you or the campus community?
10. Have there been opportunities to have your team reflect on the mandated change(s) to increase enrollment?
11. Have you changed how you do your work in response to the implementation of the mandated change(s)?
12. Do your colleagues and leaders support the mandated change(s) in words and actions?
13. How did your colleagues and leaders support the implementation of the mandated change(s)?
14. Do you have the resources and direction needed to keep supporting the mandated change(s)?
15. Has the amount of resources available changed from initial implementation to now?
16. What is the leadership’s message in words and actions related to the mandated change(s) now versus during initial implementation?
17. Have the messages changed over time or stayed consistent?
18. Do you have a good understanding of the mandated change(s) even if details may not be clear?
19. Has your level of understanding changed over time?
   - If yes, how has it changed specifically?
Appendix B: Focus Group Questions

1. What is your role at the college and within your department?
2. How do you think the college is viewed by the internal and external community?
3. What initiatives were mandated from college leadership to increase enrollment?
4. What was your involvement with the implementation of mandated changes to increase enrollment?
5. As these new initiatives were implemented, did working interactions and/or relationships change on campus?
   • If yes…what specifically had changed either in your own work or your interaction with people at the college?
6. How have these initiatives affected you and/or the campus community?
7. Has there been any effect on your department? What has that looked like?
8. Have you changed how you do your work in response to the roll out of these initiatives?
9. Do your colleagues and leaders support the mandated change(s) in words and actions? How so? What are some examples?
10. Do you have the resources and direction needed to keep supporting the mandated change(s)?
11. Has the amount of resources available changed from initial implementation to now?
12. What has the message from college leadership about and around these initiatives?
13. Have the messages changed over time or stayed consistent?
14. Do you have a good understanding of the mandated change(s) even if details may not be clear?
15. If you had to think of a movie or book title that has or continues to describe your experience through the process of initiation and implementation of the initiatives, what would it be?
Appendix C: Recruitment Letter

Dear [NAME],

As mentioned by [Name] back in November, I am a doctoral student at Northeastern University (NEU), and I am working on my dissertation. I have received permission from [Name] and approval from the NEU Internal Review Board to conduct my research study at [Name]. I am asking that you consider participating in the study. Your participation is completely voluntary, and if you decide to participate, you may opt out of the study at any time.

The title of the research study is *Higher Education Disruption: An Intrinsic Case Study Examining the Change Response of Multiple Constituencies of a Small, Private, Liberal Arts College to a Strategic Change Initiative During a New College President’s Inaugural Year*. The purpose of the study is to explore the perception and change response of college leadership, faculty, and staff who worked collaboratively to implement the [Name], initiated by the new president.

Data collection will include document review, study of archival records, individual interviews, focus groups, and field notes. I am requesting your participation in one interview session. This session will last approximately 1 hour and will be held on campus. The process will be confidential and anonymous. You will have an opportunity to review your remarks. The focus group will be held at a convenient time and location.

Your participation is meaningful to the success of the research study, as we will have the opportunity to reflect upon the change responses and perceptions that took place during and after the change initiative. This is also an opportunity to assist new presidents, faculty, staff, and administration as well as future leaders in higher education on understanding the role of change response in change initiatives, specifically ones made during the first year of a new president’s tenure. Your participation is entirely voluntary. [Name] will not be told who participated and who did not.

I want you to know that confidentiality will be strictly adhered to, and I will use pseudonyms to protect you. In addition, the data collected will primarily be used for the student researcher’s doctoral thesis project and potentially for future journal articles.

Please email at [Name] if you are interested in participating in this study. Per Northeastern University IRB, emails to any other email address must be deleted with no response. This study is solely for my student work. If you do not email me at [Name] to volunteer, you will not be contacted again regarding this research.
Appendix D: Focus Group Recruitment Letter

Dear [NAME],

As mentioned by Dr. Morton back in November, I am a doctoral student at Northeastern University (NEU), and I am working on my dissertation. I have received permission from President Morton and approval from the NEU Internal Review Board to conduct my research study at Warren Wilson College. I am asking that you consider participating in the study. Your participation is completely voluntary, and if you decide to participate, you may opt out of the study at any time.

The title of the research study is *Higher Education Disruption: An Intrinsic Case Study Examining the Change Response of Multiple Constituencies of a Small, Private, Liberal Arts College to a Strategic Change Initiative During a New College President’s Inaugural Year*. The purpose of the study is to explore the perception and change response of college leadership, faculty, and staff who worked collaboratively to implement the NC Free Tuition Program, initiated by the new president.

Data collection will include document review, study of archival records, individual interviews, three focus groups, and field notes. I am requesting your participation in one focus group session. This session will last approximately 1.5 hours and will be held on campus. The process will be confidential and anonymous outside of the focus group members in the same session. You will have an opportunity to review your remarks. The focus group will be held at a convenient time and location.

Your participation is meaningful to the success of the research study, as we will have the opportunity to reflect upon the change responses and perceptions that took place during and after the change initiative. This is also an opportunity to assist new presidents, faculty, staff, and administration as well as future leaders in higher education on understanding the role of change response in change initiatives, specifically ones made during the first year of a new president’s tenure. Your participation is entirely voluntary. President Morton will not be told who participated and who did not.

I want you to know that confidentiality will be strictly adhered to, and I will use pseudonyms to protect you. In addition, the data collected will primarily be used for the student researcher’s doctoral thesis project and potentially for future journal articles.

Please email at branham.t@husky.neu.edu if you are interested in participating in this study. Per Northeastern University IRB, emails to any other email address must be deleted with no response. This study is solely for my student work. If you do not email me at branham.t@husky.neu.edu to volunteer, you will not be contacted again regarding this research.
Appendix E: Member Check Email

Dear [Name],

Thank you for your participation in the research study entitled, *Higher Education Disruption: An Intrinsic Case Study Examining the Change Response of Multiple Constituencies of a Small, Private, Liberal Arts College to a Strategic Change Initiative During a New College President’s Inaugural Year*. As we discussed, I am sending you this follow-up email so you can review the transcription of the interview for accuracy (please see attached). Please feel free edit the transcription as necessary, as well as offer any additional thoughts, ideas, or reflections you may have had since our interview.

Please make any changes or corrections to this by DATE and return to me via email. If you do not have any changes or corrections, please also let me know via email. Thank you again for your time and willingness to participate in this study.

Best,

Tucker J. Branham, CFRE, M.A.
Doctoral (EdD) Student, College of Professional Studies
Northeastern University
Boston, MA
Appendix F: Signed Informed Consent for Semi-Structured Interviews

Northeastern University, Department
Name of Investigator(s): Dr. Rashid Mosley, Tucker J. Branham
Title of Project: Higher Education Disruption: An Intrinsic Case Study Examining the Change Response of Multiple Constituencies of a Small, Private, Liberal Arts College to a Strategic Change Initiative During a New College President’s Inaugural Year.

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

We are inviting you to take part in a research study. This form will tell you about the study, but the researcher will explain it to you first. You may ask this person any questions that you have. When you are ready to make a decision, you may tell the researcher if you want to participate or not. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, the researcher will ask you to sign this statement and will give you a copy to keep.

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?

We are asking you to take part in this research study because of your involvement in the planning, implementation, and/or outcome of the change initiative(s).

Why is this research study being done?

The purpose of this study to understand the way in which a specific change initiative affects the responses to change across different populations of the college, specifically during the first year of a new president’s tenure.

What will I be asked to do?

If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to participate in a one-on-one, face-to-face interview to discuss the change initiative, how it was decided, how you felt about the initiative, what your reaction was to the initiative. We will also discuss how it affected you and your role within the college.

Where will this take place and how much of my time will it take?

The interview will be held in a private location at a location (on or off campus) that is convenient and comfortable for the participants. The interview will take approximately hour.

Will there be any risk or discomfort to me?

There are no anticipated risks or feelings of discomfort during this process. You will be free to decline from answering any question if you feel uncomfortable for any reason and are free to withdraw from this study at any time. All discussions will be kept confidential and secure.

Will I benefit by being in this research?

There are no direct benefits offered to participants. However, your participation may shed light on the change responses that occur when a change initiative is being carried out during the inaugural year of new leadership within a college.
### Who will see the information about me?

The student researcher and the transcription service only have access to the data. Files with participant’s information will be identified by a pseudonym to protect confidentiality. The data will be used primarily for this doctoral thesis project, and potentially for future journal articles or presentations. Even in these potential instances, confidentiality will be kept for all participants.

The participants will only be referred to by name during session, and assigned a pseudonym for data collection, transcription purposes, and on all typed documents.

### What will happen if I suffer any harm from this research?

No special arrangements will be made for compensation or for payment for treatment solely because of my participation in this research.

### Can I stop my participation in this study?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may quit at any time. If you do not participate or if you decide to quit, you will not lose any rights, benefits, or services that you would otherwise have [as a student, employee, etc].

### Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?

Include the name and viable contact information of one or more appropriate people. If there is a possibility of an emergency, be sure an immediate response is available.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Tucker Branham, the person mainly responsible for the research. You can also contact Dr. Rashid Mosley, the Principal Investigator.

### Who can I contact about my rights as a participant?

If you have any questions about your rights in this research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 490 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. You may also contact Dr. Martha Knight-Oakley, Chair, Warren Wilson College IRB, irb@warrenwilson.edu, 828-771-3705. You may call anonymously if you wish.

### Will I be paid for my participation?

There will be no compensation for your participation.

### Will it cost me anything to participate?

There will be no cost to you to participate in this study.

### Is there anything else I need to know?

There is no additional information not stated in this document.

### I agree to participate in this research.
Signature of person [parent] agreeing to take part

________________________

Printed name of person above

Signature of person who explained the study to the participant above and obtained consent

________________________

Printed name of person above

Date

Date
Appendix G: Signed Informed Consent for Focus Group

Northeastern University, Department
Name of Investigator(s): [Redacted]
Title of Project: Higher Education Disruption: An Intrinsic Case Study Examining the Change Response of Multiple Constituencies of a Small, Private, Liberal Arts College to a Strategic Change Initiative During a New College President’s Inaugural Year.

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

We are inviting you to take part in a research study. This form will tell you about the study, but the researcher will explain it to you first. You may ask this person any questions that you have. When you are ready to make a decision, you may tell the researcher if you want to participate or not. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, the researcher will ask you to sign this statement and will give you a copy to keep.

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?
We are asking you to take part in this research study because of your involvement in the planning, implementation, and/or outcome of the change initiative(s).

Why is this research study being done?
The purpose of this study is to understand the way in which a specific change initiative affects the responses to change across different populations of the college, specifically during the first year of a new president’s tenure.

What will I be asked to do?
If you decide to take part in this study, we will ask you to participate in a focus group session to discuss the change initiative, how it was decided, how you felt about the initiative, what your reaction was to the initiative. We will also discuss how it affected you and your role within the college.

Where will this take place and how much of my time will it take?
The focus group session will be held in a private location at a location (on or off campus) that is convenient and comfortable for the participants. The focus group session will take approximately one hour and a half.

Will there be any risk or discomfort to me?
There are no anticipated risks or feelings of discomfort during this process. You will be free to decline from answering any question if you feel uncomfortable for any reason and are free to withdraw from this study at any time. All discussions will be kept confidential and secure.

Will I benefit by being in this research?
There are no direct benefits offered to participants. However, your participation may shed light on the change responses that occur when a change initiative is being carried out during the inaugural year of new leadership within a college.

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There is no additional information not stated in this document.

**I agree to participate in this research.**

________________________
Signature of person [parent] agreeing to take part

Date

________________________
Printed name of person above

________________________
Signature of person who explained the study to the participant above and obtained consent

Date

________________________
Printed name of person above
Appendix H: Interview Protocol

Part I: Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to be a part of this study. As I mentioned in my email, I am in the final phase of my doctoral studies at Northeastern University and my study focuses on change response to a mandated change initiative in the new President’s first year. You have been selected to speak with me today because you have been identified as someone who was involved in or impacted by the change initiative(s) implemented in 2017-2018. Through this study, I hope to gain more insight into your experiences with the initiation, implementation, and/or the outcome of the change initiative(s). Through this study, it is my hope for greater understanding of factors needed to increase the chance of a positive outcomes and responses to change.

First, I want to emphasize that all of my participants will remain confidential, and that your participation is completely voluntary. If you don’t mind, I would like to review these consent forms with you before we begin.

[Review and sign NEU Consent Forms]

Thank you. I have a few more administrative items to discuss before we begin. Because your responses are important and I want to make sure to capture everything you say, I would like to audio record our conversation today so I can focus on our conversation. Is that okay? Also, I will have a professional transcriptionist to transcribe the interviews. The transcriptionist will receive the audio labeled by a pseudonym, meaning they will never know your name to maintain confidentiality. Once the audio recording is transcribed, I will email you the main themes identified from the interview for your review.

I have planned for this interview to last approximately 60 minutes. During this time, I have several questions that I would like to cover. Additionally, there may be times where I may probe you to go deeper in your explanations. You have the right to only answer the questions you feel comfortable answering and you may quit at any time. Do you have any questions before we start?

Part II: Interview Questions

To learn more about your and the community’s beliefs, feelings, and behaviors around the change, I would like to ask you several questions. Let’s begin with a few questions about you.

20. What is your role at the college?

21. What is your role in your department?

22. How do you think your department is viewed by people inside and outside of the college community?

23. How do you think the larger college is viewed by the internal and external community?

24. What initiatives were mandated from college leadership to increase enrollment?
25. What was your involvement with the implementation of mandated changes to increase enrollment?

26. Did the implementation of new strategically mandated initiative(s) to increase enrollment change how you do your work or how you interact with people inside the college?
   • If yes…what specifically had changed either in your own work or your interaction with people at the college?

27. How have your relationships on the campus changed since the implementation of the new college strategy to increase enrollment?

28. Have you allowed yourself time to reflect the process of implementation or the effect of these initiatives on you or the campus community?

29. Have there been opportunities to have your team reflect on the mandated change(s) to increase enrollment?

30. Have you changed how you do your work in response to the implementation of the mandated change(s)?

31. Do your colleagues and leaders support the mandated change(s) in words and actions?

32. How did your colleagues and leaders support the implementation of the mandated change(s)?

33. Do you have the resources and direction needed to keep supporting the mandated change(s)?

34. Has the amount of resources available changed from initial implementation to now?

35. What is the leadership’s message in words and actions related to the mandated change(s) now versus during initial implementation?

36. Have the messages changed over time or stayed consistent?

37. Do you have a good understanding of the mandated change(s) even if details may not be clear?

38. Has your level of understanding changed over time?
   • If yes, how has it changed specifically?

Those are all the questions I have for today. Thank you for your time in answering these questions and helping me with my research. If I come across a need to ask any follow-up questions in order to clarify one of your responses, would it be ok for me to contact you? Once I have the interviews transcribed, I will email you the interview transcript to review, edit and add
any additional thoughts, ideas or reflections you have had since our interview. Do you have any questions for me at this time?

Thank you so much for your participation in this study. It was wonderful speaking with you today.
Appendix I: Focus Group Protocol

Part I: Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to be a part of this study. As I mentioned in my email, I am in the final phase of my doctoral studies at Northeastern University and my study focuses on change response to a mandated change initiative in the new President’s first year. You have been selected to speak with me today because you have been identified as someone who was involved in or impacted by the change initiative(s) implemented in 2017-2018. Through this study, I hope to gain more insight into your experiences with the initiation, implementation, and/or the outcome of the change initiative(s). Through this study, it is my hope for greater understanding of factors needed to increase the chance of a positive outcomes and responses to change.

First, I want to emphasize that all of my participants will remain confidential, and that your participation is completely voluntary. If you don’t mind, I would like to review these consent forms with you before we begin.

[Review and sign NEU Consent Forms]

Thank you. I have a few more administrative items to discuss before we begin. Because your responses are important and I want to make sure to capture everything you say, I would like to audio record our conversation today so I can focus on our conversation. Is that okay? Also, I will have a professional transcriptionist to transcribe the interviews. The transcriptionist will receive the audio labeled by a pseudonym, meaning they will never know your name to maintain confidentiality. Once the audio recording is transcribed, I will email you the main themes identified from the interview for your review.

I have planned for this interview to last approximately 60 minutes. During this time, I have several questions that I would like to cover. Additionally, there may be times where I may probe you to go deeper in your explanations. You have the right to only answer the questions you feel comfortable answering and you may quit at any time. Do you have any questions before we start?

Part II: Interview Questions

To learn more about your and the community’s beliefs, feelings, and behaviors around the change, I would like to ask you several questions. Let’s begin with a few questions about you.

16. What is your role at the college and within your department?
17. How do you think the college is viewed by the internal and external community?
18. What initiatives were mandated from college leadership to increase enrollment?
19. What was your involvement with the implementation of mandated changes to increase enrollment?
20. As these new initiatives were implemented, did working interactions and/or relationships change on campus?
• If yes…what specifically had changed either in your own work or your interaction with people at the college?

21. How have these initiatives affected you and/or the campus community?
22. Has there been any effect on your department? What has that looked like?
23. Have you changed how you do your work in response to the roll out of these initiatives?
24. Do your colleagues and leaders support the mandated change(s) in words and actions? How so? What are some examples?
25. Do you have the resources and direction needed to keep supporting the mandated change(s)?
26. Has the amount of resources available changed from initial implementation to now?
27. What has the message from college leadership about and around these initiatives?
28. Have the messages changed over time or stayed consistent?
29. Do you have a good understanding of the mandated change(s) even if details may not be clear?
30. If you had to think of a movie or book title that has or continues to describe your experience through the process of initiation and implementation of the initiatives, what would it be?

Those are all the questions I have for today. Thank you for your time in answering these questions and helping me with my research. If I come across a need to ask any follow-up questions in order to clarify one of your responses, would it be ok for me to contact you? Once I have the interviews transcribed, I will email you the interview transcript to review, edit and add any additional thoughts, ideas or reflections you have had since our interview. Do you have any questions for me at this time?

Thank you so much for your participation in this study. It was wonderful speaking with you today.