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Engaging non-alumni advisory board members in hospitality education

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ENGAGING NON-ALUMNI ADVISORY BOARD VOLUNTEERS
IN HOSPITALITY EDUCATION

by

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ABSTRACT

Engaging Non-Alumni Advisory Board Volunteers in Hospitality Education

by

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Hospitality education programs within higher education institutions often rely upon members of the hospitality industry to serve as volunteer advisory board members. A common role for volunteers of an academic program advisory board is to serve as a credible link between the formal education and degree earning process to the hospitality industry, provide insight and advice on current issues and trends, assist in developing industry relationships, and share their time and resources to help promote the program (Edwards, 2008; Merrill, 2003). While volunteer advisory boards within higher education are often made up of both alumni and non-alumni, this study focused on the non-alumni volunteers.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the self-reported motivations, experiences, and engagement levels of non-alumni volunteers to a hospitality education program. The participants were drawn from those who were executives in the hospitality industry and served as current volunteers on the International Advisory Board for the College of Hotel Administration at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. In-depth interviews were conducted with participants both in-person and by phone. Participants were grouped into two cases of five people each; Case 1 consisted of newer advisory board members and Case 2 consisted of longer-serving advisory board members. A
within-case comparison as well as a cross-case analysis was applied to the participant responses to better understand their motivations for volunteering and motivations to continue as volunteers.

The results of the study found that non-alumni volunteers, through their involvement with their fellow advisory board members, college administrators, and perhaps most importantly, interaction with students, developed emotional connections and pride in serving the institution. This led most volunteers to have a level of engagement that was meaningful to them and resulted in their desire to continue as volunteers. The participants acknowledged a variety of factors related to their experiences that influenced their overall feelings of engagement, factors that either contributed toward or hindered their satisfaction levels, emotional attachment, and identification with the advisory board. Implications of these findings for theory, practice and future research are discussed in the final chapter.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Hospitality education programs within higher education institutions often rely upon members of the hospitality industry to serve as volunteer advisory board members. A common role for volunteers of an academic program advisory board is to serve as a credible link between the formal education and degree earning process to the hospitality industry, provide insight and advice on current issues and trends, assist in developing industry relationships, and share their time and resources to help promote the program (Edwards, 2008; Merrill, 2003). The volunteers also serve as strategic partners, acting as employers, internship providers, mentors, and donors. While volunteer advisory boards within higher education are often made up of both alumni and non-alumni, this study focused on the non-alumni volunteers. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the self-reported motivations, experiences, and engagement levels of non-alumni volunteers to a hospitality education program. Having a greater understanding of the non-alumni volunteer motivations to serve may provide insight into how institutions can further engage and retain non-alumni volunteers to advisory boards.

Voluntary boards are often found at the academic unit level in a college or department where the board is advisory and does not exercise authority over the direction of the department or college (Olson, 2008). The responsibilities of advisory board members are different from a board of directors or board of trustees in that the advisory board does not have “policy-making authority and exists only to serve as a sounding board for the dean or president” (Olson, 2008, p. C3). It is common to find universities and related academic colleges and schools that have assembled volunteer advisory boards.
made up of industry experts to provide advisement and act as a sounding board for the academy.

**Problem Statement**

There is little applicable literature related to understanding volunteer engagement of higher education advisory board members (Saidel, 1998; Teitel, 1994). Of the existing literature, most address advisory boards prescriptively by providing directions about how boards should operate or guidelines to establish a board (Conroy & Lefever, 1997; Henderson, 2004).

A majority of the literature on boards in nonprofit settings is focused specifically on governing boards, where the organization has a board of directors or board of trustees that holds fiduciary responsibility for the organization in accordance with state and federal laws (Edwards, 2008; Preston & Brown, 2004; Worth, 2009). Saidel (1998) explains how advisory boards have much to contribute to nonprofit organizations:

Advisory group members perform numerous primary organizational activities, link nonprofits to key stakeholder groups in the environment, and strengthen ties of cooperation and shared purpose with other community actors…Nonprofit governance theory should take into account the functions and contributions to governance of advisory boards. (p. 421)

To reinforce the need for this research on advisory boards, Saidel stated in her work on advisory groups that due to the “relative newness and exploratory nature of research on governance and advisory groups supports the choice of a qualitative methodology” (p. 424) and confirmed, similar to the research in this study, that other studies on nonprofit governance “received little if any attention” on the topic of advisory boards (p. 424).
This study sought to understand the motivations involved with non-alumni volunteers who choose to join a hospitality education advisory board and sought to shed light on this topic that has not yet been investigated. What are the reasons non-alumni volunteers choose to serve on an advisory board for hospitality education? If one can better understand the motivations of non-alumni volunteer’s then higher education leaders may be able to use this information to build commitment and loyalty by improving engagement among volunteers who did not graduate from the institution. The goal of this research was to understand the motivations of non-alumni volunteers. While there exists literature that has explored volunteerism in the nonprofit sector (Clary & Snyder, 1999; Haaski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009; Wilson, 2000) as well as volunteerism among alumni who have an existing social and emotional connection to an institution (Leslie & Ramey, 1988; Weerts & Ronca, 2008), there is no literature that explores the motivations of non-alumni who serve as advisory board volunteers to higher education.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore the self-reported motivations, experiences, and engagement levels of non-alumni volunteers to a hospitality education program. The participants were drawn from those who work in the hospitality industry and currently serve as volunteers on the International Advisory Board for the College of Hotel Administration at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). This hospitality education program exists within a large, public, urban university. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2009) classifies the institution in the category of research universities, high research activity. The program was ranked third
among 100 top hospitality and tourism degree programs based on instances of research publications (Severt, Tesone, Bottorff, & Carpenter, 2009).

Identifying the motivational factors cited by participants for serving as non-alumni volunteers will provide greater understanding of why hospitality program volunteers choose to devote their time, energy, and resources to an academic program with which they otherwise have no natural affiliation. Additionally, this research provides information to better understand what a hospitality education program and its respective institution can do to further engage and retain non-alumni advisory board volunteers based on their motivations.

**Theoretical Framework**

Given the lack of existing research to explain the motivations and commitment of non-alumni volunteers to higher education, as well as the lack of research focused on advisory boards, a single theoretical framework did not emerge as a basis for this study. Therefore, this exploratory study used three theoretical lenses to see how each area would inform this research. Motivational theory, organizational commitment and affiliation theory, and relationship marketing theory were each explored to better understand and frame the assumptions that were used to help explain volunteer motivation and commitment within nonprofit advisory board organizations.

Organizational commitment theory is first discussed in detail to explore the existing theory that explains commitment of the paid employee to the employer. Several researchers have taken this concept and applied it to volunteers within organizations to help explain how they become committed to an organization (Preston & Brown, 2004; Stephens, Dawley, & Stephens, 2004). Meyer and Allen’s (1991) Three-Component
Model of Organizational Commitment emerged as a model that has explanatory power to help understand volunteer commitment, since this model was also applied to nonprofit volunteers by Preston and Brown and others. In their study, Preston and Brown assessed the commitment of social service nonprofit volunteer board members using Meyer and Allen’s model. Stephens et al. examined the commitment of chamber of commerce volunteers using the same model.

McPherson’s (1981) model of voluntary affiliation explains that people’s affiliations are dynamic as they move in and out of organizations throughout their lifetime. The author found that patterns of affiliation could provide insight into which individuals will serve in a greater number of organizations during their lives.

Motivational theories can provide insight into the diversity of reasons why people choose to volunteer. The literature review that follows in the next chapter explores the motivational research applicable to this study. One such study developed the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) to help identify the motivations of volunteers. Six measurable functions (values, understanding, career, social, protective, and enhancement) were combined into a survey or inventory for volunteers to complete (Clary & Snyder, 1995). The findings included confirmation that volunteer interests should be matched with volunteer activity and that a variety of activities will satisfy people differently.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the data collection and data analysis for this study:

1. What are the motivational factors of participants that influenced his or her desire to serve as a non-alumni volunteer to a hospitality education advisory board?
2. What are the motivational factors of participants for renewing his or her term of service on the advisory board after the first term was completed?

**Significance of the Study**

This study was significant because there is no published research that explored the motivations of non-alumni volunteers who serve on advisory boards within institutions of higher education and more specifically, an advisory board for hospitality education. Among the top 10 hospitality education programs based on research publications cited by Severt et al. (2009), nine universities listed on their websites that they have an advisory board-type volunteer organization. Only the University of Surrey did not show evidence of having an advisory board on their website. The types of boards varied in name from advisory committee (Hong Kong Polytechnic University), advisory council (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University), to strategic alliance council (Purdue University). Only Michigan State University listed their board as an executive board of directors, which, for the basis of this study, is considered to have different responsibilities than an advisory board.

Having an understanding of what motivates volunteers to serve when they have no natural affiliation will help higher education leaders better understand how to engage non-alumni to volunteer on advisory boards. Understanding non-alumni volunteer motivation will provide insight into how to better recruit, retain, and engage volunteers for consistency and longevity as board members (Shye, 2009). It is essential to understand the diverse motivations of non-alumni volunteers “because these individuals do not have the same social and emotional links with institutions as alumni do” (Leslie & Ramey, 1988, p. 121). Given that advisory board members may donate a fair amount of
time, expertise, and resources in their volunteer role, to understand why they do so may prove informative and help to guide future research.

Assumptions

Several assumptions were made in order to study the phenomenon of interest; that is, the motivations of non-alumni volunteers. Given that there was no literature found on the motivations to serve among non-alumni advisory board members, nor any literature discussing how to strengthen the engagement level among non-alumni volunteers, the following assumptions were necessary to explore this topic:

1. Volunteers serving on advisory boards to hospitality education are important and valued members of the university community.
2. Educators and administrators have an important role in involving and engaging non-alumni volunteers to be part of the academic community.
3. Volunteers have committed time, energy, and resources to the organization and therefore have some amount of commitment that motivates them to continue serving as a volunteer.

Delimitations

This study was delimited using the following parameters:

1. The volunteers served a single institution;
2. The interviews were conducted from among a sample of non-alumni volunteers.
   Each participant served on a single hospitality education advisory board from one specific institution; and
3. Participants in this study were limited to hospitality education volunteer advisory board members, chosen from among 27 existing members;
4. Participants were selected among those who did not graduate from the institution and were not required to have a college degree; and

5. Participants served at least one year on the advisory board.

**Definition of Key Terms**

The following definitions are provided for terms used throughout this study:

*Advisory Board or Advisory Council:* “A group created to advise and support a nonprofit and its board, also called advisory group, advisory committee, or advisory board; usually focuses on a specific issue” (BoardSource, n.d., Section A).

*Alumni:* Individuals who have received a degree from a school; in this study, alumni refers to people who have received an undergraduate or graduate degree (baccalaureate, master’s or doctoral degree) from a university (Alumni, 2010).

*Board of Directors:* “Governing body of a nonprofit or for-profit corporation; the board has specific legal and ethical responsibilities to the organization” (BoardSource, n.d., Section B).

*Engagement:* “Emotional involvement or commitment; greatly interested; committed;” (BoardSource, n.d., Section E).

*Nonprofit organization:* “An organization established for activities other than profit making” (BoardSource, n.d., Section N).

*University:* Refers to a four-year degree granting higher education institution.

*Volunteer:* “A person working without compensation” (BoardSource, n.d., Section V).

*Volunteerism:* Refers to volunteers and volunteer activities (BoardSource, n.d., Section V).
Outline of Dissertation

This chapter provided an introduction of the exploratory study related to non-alumni volunteer engagement to a hospitality education program. The chapter also included (a) problem statement; (b) purpose of the study; (c) theoretical framework; (d) research questions; (e) significance of the study; (f) assumptions; (g) limitations; (h) delimitations; and (i) definition of key terms.

Chapter 2 provides a focused review of literature that served as a basis for this study. The review of literature addresses four primary areas: volunteerism, a conceptual perspective on volunteer affiliation, developing institutional connections, and volunteer advisory boards. Chapter 3 outlines the qualitative research methodology used in this study. The research design, research questions, participant selection, and data collection and organization are discussed. Chapter 4 addresses the findings by describing two case studies. Chapter 5 includes a cross-case analysis of the two case studies and compares and contrasts the findings based on the research questions. The final chapter provides a summary, discussion of findings, and recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review of literature explored theories and models related to understanding motivation and volunteer affiliation to expand the concept of volunteer engagement specifically to non-alumni volunteers within higher education. While there exists literature that has explored volunteerism among alumni to colleges and universities, the researcher was unable to locate any published studies that looked at the contribution to colleges and universities made by non-alumni volunteers.

To provide a basis for this study, this chapter includes a review of literature from the following areas: (a) theories of volunteer affiliation; (b) institutional engagement using relationship marketing and organizational commitment; and (c) involvement and engagement. Each of these areas relate to the topic of this study, the motivation of non-alumni volunteers to serve as members of a volunteer advisory board for a hospitality education program, as described in Chapter 1.

Overview of Volunteerism

During the first decade of the 21st century, Americans were volunteering at rates considered to be a historic high. In 2009, 63.4 million American adults—26.4% of the population—volunteered throughout the United States (Corporation for National and Community Services, 2010). Volunteer tracking during 2009 indicated that altogether individuals contributed 8.1 billion hours of service to their communities and nonprofit organizations, worth $169 billion, a dollar amount that is too significant to go unnoticed (Corporation for National and Community Services, 2010). The service hours contributed by individuals means that nonprofit organizations gain that dollar value in the form of
volunteer labor, serving as an example of why volunteers are critical to nonprofit organizations.

The annual report by the Corporation for National Community Service (2008) found that despite the significant number of volunteers, annual statistics have also shown that retention and management are critical to both create a stable group of volunteers while also increasing the participation base. The report indicated that “one out of every three people who volunteer in a year do not volunteer the following year” (p. 5) and in 2005, this accounted for 20.9 million people who did not volunteer the next year.

Just as there is a cost associated with employee turnover after investing time and resources in training, the significant number of volunteers lost annually in the nonprofit sector also has a cost to the organization in terms of time and resources invested in those individuals with little or no return on investment. In real numbers, this turnover translates into an estimated $38 billion lost in the form of volunteer labor (Eisner, Grimm, Maynard, & Washburn, 2009). This statistic on volunteer turnover emphasizes the importance of understanding the motivations of volunteers to serve and also how nonprofit organizations can improve volunteer retention.

It is imperative to understand the motivations of volunteers and specifically, how those who volunteer at colleges and universities want to be managed and engaged—factors that may promote retention. “The prevailing wisdom is that unless organizations pay attention to issues of volunteer management, they will not do a good job of recruiting, satisfying, and retaining volunteers” (Hager & Brudney, 2004, p. 2).

Early research on organizational behavior and management focused on the paid employee. Organizational behavior research was then applied to the non-paid volunteer
sector to help explain the motivation and behavior of those individuals. However, Cnaan and Cascio (1998) contend “that there are inherent differences between paid and volunteer work, and, therefore, findings from the vast body of literature on the organizational behavior of paid staff are not applicable to volunteers” (p. 2).

While Cnaan and Cascio may not have supported the application of theories or models that reached beyond organizational behavior and business management into nonprofit volunteer research, nonprofit volunteer management research continues to apply management theories to its work to help explain volunteer behavior and motivation (Miller-Millesen, 2003; Millette & Gagné, 2008; Preston & Brown, 2004; Stephens, Dawley, & Stephens, 2004). At the same time, researchers acknowledge that ongoing research must continue to be conducted to help fill the gaps related to understanding the complexity of volunteers (Miller-Millesen, 2003; Millette & Gagné, 2008; Preston & Brown, 2004). While the literature is incomplete in that researchers continue to seek to understand the motivations of volunteers, this chapter explores the related literature within the nonprofit sector as well as beyond nonprofit research to provide context for what is known today about the topic of this study.

A Conceptual Perspective on Volunteer Affiliation

Much of the research conducted within the nonprofit sector seeks to understand why people volunteer, and according to Wilson (2000), volunteer research typically falls into one of two categories. Many studies seek to understand the motives behind volunteering (Clary & Snyder, 1995; Millette & Gagné, 2008; Wilson, 2000). The second dominant area of research assumes the people are “rational and that the decision to volunteer is
based largely on a weighing of costs and benefits in the context of varying amounts of individual and social resources” (Wilson, 2000, p. 218).

Existing research regarding volunteers for nonprofit boards has covered a number of aspects. Provan (1980) examined the importance of an externally powerful board and its ability to acquire resources for human service agencies. Murray, Bradshaw, and Wolpin (1992) sought to understand nonprofit governance and the distribution of power and power dynamics among board members and identified five common patterns of board governance that occur. Preston and Brown (2004) examined the relationships between board member commitment and individual performance. Taylor, Chait, and Holland (1991) researched the relationship between governing boards’ effectiveness and factors that motivate trustees to serve on private college boards.

However, such studies consistently focus on policy-making boards and do not explain the unique role served by advisory board volunteers, much less non-alumni volunteers for advisory boards in higher education. While policy-making boards are inherently different in their responsibilities, the aforementioned research is the most closely applicable to this study of an advisory board within higher education. Therefore, governing board research does provide context for the extent of research that exists for volunteer advisory boards.

Researchers have also explored the motivations of volunteers by applying a variety of theoretical frameworks or models to help explain behavior (Clary, Ridge, Stukas, Snyder, Copland, Haugen, & Miene, 1998; Clary & Snyder, 1999; Clary & Snyder, 1995). Motivational concepts appear to be helpful in understanding what would lead a person to serve. The sections which follow explore theories and research that help inform why
people remain in a volunteer role after choosing to serve, described as volunteer commitment and engagement.

**Motivational Theories**

The concept of motivation is a central issue in the field of psychology, one that seeks to be understood because motivation produces behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Ryan and Deci explain that one who is motivated is *moved* to do something with differing levels and sources of motivation. People are motivated by many different factors, most commonly categorized into intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Ryan and Deci define intrinsic motivation as doing something for its inherent satisfaction as opposed to some separate consequence, while extrinsic motivation pertains to an activity that is done because it leads to a separable outcome. Given this research seeks to understand the motivations of volunteers, this section provides background on a number of motivational theories that subsequent research has utilized.

Herzberg’s (1968/2003) early research on employee motivation was drawn from a sample of 1,685 employees and identified two categories of factors that affect motivation: *motivator* factors and *hygiene* factors. Herzberg described how the factors leading to job satisfaction and motivation were separate from the factors that lead to job dissatisfaction. These *motivator* and *hygiene* factors discussed by Herzberg have since been applied to many types of workers including volunteers (Gidron, 1978).

Herzberg describes *motivator* factors as factors that lead to job satisfaction. Considered intrinsic to the job are “achievement, recognition for achievement, the work itself, responsibility, and growth or advancement” (p. 185). The dissatisfaction or *hygiene* factors that are extrinsic to the job include “company policy and administration,
supervision, interpersonal relationships, working conditions, salary, status, and security (p. 185). This research provided sufficient data for Herzberg to conclude that the primary source of satisfaction came from motivators and the primary cause of unhappiness on the job came from hygiene elements. Herzberg’s research on employee motivation is important for providing insight into factors that were found to lead to job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. With regard to volunteers, motivators to volunteer job satisfaction such as being recognized for their contributions or the work itself may help keep them satisfied and therefore retained. However, if hygiene factors such as volunteer supervision and interpersonal relationships with the other volunteers are less than exceptional, it may lead to volunteer job dissatisfaction. If this occurs, volunteers may be less likely to continue their service.

Expectancy theory is the study of human attitudes and behavior in both the workplace and organizations, and are often used as operational and theoretical definitions of motivation (Lawler & Suttle, 1973). Early research by Vroom defined motivation as the “‘force’ impelling a person to perform a particular action, as determined by the interaction of (a) the person’s expectancy that his act will be followed by a particular outcome, and (b) the valency of that (first-level) outcome (Vroom, 1964, as cited in Lawler & Suttle, 1973). The first-level outcomes are considered direct results of performing a certain behavior and they achieve valence through securing second-level outcomes such as payment, promotion or recognition (Lawler & Suttle). The expectancy model of behavior developed by Lawler addressed previous weaknesses found in Vroom’s work, and defined motivation as the perceived likelihood that doing a task will
lead to success and accomplishment toward that goal, which in turn will result in outcomes or rewards (Lawler & Suttle).

According to Deci (1992), motivational concepts can be useful in explaining individual differences and similarities in behavior in the same context. Motivational concepts and theory provide considerable explanatory power for human behavior. It is, therefore, helpful to understand the motivations that influence people to “seek out volunteer opportunities, to commit themselves to voluntary helping, and to sustain their involvement in volunteerism over extended periods of time” (Clary et al., 1998, p. 1517).

The involvement principle posits that when a person has an emotional connection to an issue, they will become more engaged in that issue (Straker, 2003). Therefore, affective involvement is having an emotional attachment to things; that work has application to this study because non-alumni volunteers do not have a natural attachment to the organization. Social involvement extends to activities associated with the interpersonal interactions and connections with people. The involvement principle helps to explain why a person might be motivated to volunteer if they have some level of emotional attachment to the organization or have a desire to support a particular cause. For example, alumni likely have an emotional attachment to their university and would be motivated to volunteer to give back; identifying the emotional motivation for non-alumni volunteers remains a challenge.

Straker (2003) also discussed the investment principle concept, and explains that when a person invests time, energy, or money in an activity, it must somehow be a worthwhile cause. If an emotional meaning is attached to that activity, or if one makes a public commitment to the activity, individuals are likely to continue their investment and
it may also grow over time. This principle offers insight about why volunteers might continue service on an advisory board after making an initial commitment of time, energy, and money to serve. During that time, learning more about the organization may help develop an emotional connection to the group.

According to Wilson (2000), a number of researchers have spent considerable effort investigating motives for volunteering to provide insight into how people think about their volunteer work. Cnaan and Goldberg-Glen (1991) stated, “motivation is a difficult concept in general because, to a large extent, it is subconsciously constructed. In that respect…if we do not ask people what motivates them to volunteer, we will never know the answer” (p. 274). The following studies related to the Volunteer Functions Inventory and social motivations provide additional insight into volunteer motivation within nonprofit organizations.

**Functional approach to volunteer motivation: Volunteer Functions Inventory.**

In functional analysis, it is believed that “people volunteer to satisfy one or more needs or motives” (Finkelstein, 2009, p. 653). A functional approach to the motivation of volunteers was taken by Clary et al. (1998) in which “the core propositions of a functional analysis of volunteerism are that acts of volunteerism that appear to be quite similar on the surface may reflect markedly different underlying motivational processes” (p. 1517). The authors contend that motivation could be identified and measured with some degree of accuracy. The result was the creation of the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI), developed to reflect the psychological and social functions of volunteerism. This VFI contained six measurable motivational functions that are served
by the act of volunteering: values, understanding, career, social, protective, and
enhancement (Clary et al., 1998).

Clary et al. explained the motivational functions as follows. The values motive allows
people to express values related to altruistic and humanitarian concerns for others.
Understanding is a function served by volunteering in that people can receive new
learning experiences and also exercise knowledge and skills through service.
Volunteering can also provide a social function as people engage in activities with
friends or gain social rewards. Career-related benefits may be gained from the fourth
function served by volunteering, which provides opportunities for people to maintain or
gain career-related skills. Protective motives represent a desire to reduce the guilt caused
by being more fortunate than others. Lastly, enhancement motives increases the self-
esteeem and personal growth related to the activity.

In the Clary et al. study, participants represented a number of nonprofit organizations
and were asked to indicate how important a number of statements were as reasons to
volunteer. This research reflected the results of six investigations which provided
empirical support for a functional approach and contributed to understanding the
processes of human motivation. Of particular interest, the authors stated that “motivations
may guide the agendas that people pursue as volunteers, not only by moving people to
volunteer but also by defining what features of volunteer experience will constitute
fulfillment of those motivations” (Clary & Snyder, 1999, p. 1528). The authors found it
was important to match the individual’s motivations to the particular volunteer activity.

While the findings are supported by the six motivational functions of the VFI, this
tool only reflects motivations of generic application to volunteerism, rather than to
specific groups of volunteers such as advisory board members or other volunteer roles. Yet they acknowledged that there is a diversity of motivations that lead people to volunteer (Clary & Snyder, 1999). Despite this limitation, the VFI could prove useful in providing a snapshot as to which of the six functions tap into volunteer motivations for different volunteer types.

**Social Motivations.**

Haski-Leventhal and Cnaan (2009) found that people tend to volunteer in organizations due to social motivation. Similarly, those individuals with extensive social networks and organizational involvement increased their chances of volunteering (Wilson, 2000). The existence of social networks helps to explain why people who volunteer are more likely to have higher socioeconomic status, higher levels of education, and have extroverted personalities (Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009; McPherson, 1981; Wilson, 2000).

Taylor et al. (1991) explored governing boards’ effectiveness and the specific factors that motivate trustees to serve on boards. The results were analyzed using three motivational frameworks to help distinguish between effective and ineffective boards. The first framework used by Taylor et al. was developed by Foa (1971) and identified four types of motivation: love, status, information, and services. The second framework was Widmer’s (1985), who described material, social, developmental, and ideological rewards as motives for participation. The third framework proposed by Wilson (as cited in Taylor et al., 1991) stated that there are three kinds of noneconomic returns, or intangible rewards that might motivate volunteer participation: specific solidary, collective solidary, and purposive returns.
The result of the Taylor et al. (1991) study was that none of these frameworks were able to reflect the motivational differences and sources of satisfaction that differentiate members of effective boards. Therefore, Taylor et al. created a motivational framework to help explain boards’ effectiveness and the level of identification held with the institutions they serve. Interviews were conducted with 36 trustees representing 10 private colleges. The data collected were part of a larger study initiated to develop a grounded theory of board effectiveness.

The results of that study found that people who had stronger connections to the institution were more often also members of effective boards. “Members of effective boards were more often alumni, active in alumni affairs, relatives of alumni, relatives of former trustees, or in some other way intimately tied to the life of the college. Nearly half the trustees of ineffective boards whom [were] interviewed had no connections whatsoever before joining their boards” (Taylor et al., 1991, p. 214). The sense of connection was a recurring theme identified by the researchers. Overall, the members of effective boards, or those who had more connections to the institution, indicated joining because they identified deeply with the values and goals of the institution. Members of the ineffective boards indicated they “joined out of mild to moderate interest in the institutions, or because they saw the institutions as instruments for achieving such extrinsic goals as meeting the needs of the community, the church, or a family member” (Taylor et al., 1991, p. 217).

One goal of effective volunteer management is to recruit quality volunteers who are supportive and committed to serving the organization. If, as Taylor et al. (1991) suggest, ineffective boards are often made up of non-alumni who have little or no connection to
the university, the question is whether this study of college trustees can be compared to other voluntary organizations. If the findings can be applied to a higher education advisory board, the framework may help the institution improve the affiliation and connection non-alumni volunteers have to the institution for which they volunteer.

One approach to effective volunteer management may be to provide an orientation and appropriate social events so that the volunteers can get to know each other as well as the students, faculty, and administrators. This may ensure that the contributions made by the volunteers are purposive (Taylor et al., 1991). The benefits of improved retention of hospitality advisory board volunteers, for example, is that they can become better advocates for the institution, seek out support from the hospitality industry, participate in activities related to hospitality education, build relationships with students and faculty, as well as serve as resources who have a tie to the business world outside the university setting.

“Building relationships that allow board members to feel an emotional connection to the organization and each other may contribute to stronger, more involved board members” (Preston & Brown, 2004, p. 235). Involved volunteers therefore may be more effective at providing direction, resources, and participation in the life of a hospitality education program when they have longevity, care about the educational program, and have a variety of social and emotional connections to the program.

**Organizational Commitment and Affiliation Theories**

To provide a review of additional literature that has some application to the topic of non-alumni volunteer motivation to serve, this section will examine organizational commitment theory by considering Meyer and Allen’s (1991) Three-Component Model
of Organizational Commitment and McPherson’s (1981) Dynamic Model of Voluntary Affiliation. Just as the previous theories on motivation may help explain why people volunteer, this information about organizational commitment theory also has some applicability to inform our knowledge about the topic of volunteer commitment.

**Understanding commitment.**

Kanter (1968) defined commitment as “the process through which individual interest become attached to the carrying out of socially organized patterns of behavior which are seen as fulfilling those interests, as expressing the nature and needs of the person” (p. 500). Her research contributed to the understanding of human loyalty and involvement in social groupings by explaining why members of some groups are more committed and why some members are not. A more recent reference to commitment was found in management literature exploring organizational commitment research and generally stated “higher levels of commitment among employees lead to improved work performance and a wide range of other positive organizational outcomes such as reduced absenteeism and turnover” (Stephens, et al., 2004, p. 484).

According to Stephens et al., “Research on organizational commitment has been given considerable attention in management research over the past twenty-five years and has also been a popular concept with practitioners” (p. 484). This underscores its relevance in striving to understand commitment within the context of management research and practice. Preston and Brown (2004) found that there were very few studies surrounding volunteer board member commitment despite the fact that “practitioners within the nonprofit field have long cited board member commitment as a factor associated with higher-functioning boards” (p. 224). Additionally, there is evidence that
commitment is associated with board member contributions, concluding that “building relationships that allow board members to feel an emotional connection to the organization and each other may contribute to stronger, more involved board members” (Preston & Brown, 2004, p. 235).

Given the findings that emotional connections build commitment among volunteers to the organizations they serve, the following sections review and discuss the application of Meyer and Allen’s (1991) Three-Component Model of Organizational Commitment, which explores commitment among paid employees. Despite the seeming lack of applicability to volunteers, the work makes an important contribution to the literature given it was subsequently applied by several researchers who have studied volunteer commitment. Additionally, McPherson’s (1981) Dynamic Model of Voluntary Affiliation helps to explain organizational commitment by members through its application to nonprofit volunteers.

The Three-Component Model of Organizational Commitment.

Meyer and Allen (1991) built upon existing organizational commitment theory in order to expand the concept of traditional organization commitment as a mind-set or “psychological link between the employee and his or her organization that makes it less likely that the employee will voluntarily leave the organization” (p. 67). Meyer and Allen conceptualized commitment using a three-component framework for employees where affective, continuance, and normative commitment were each psychological states. Affective commitment referred to the emotional attachment, involvement, or identification with the organization. Continuance commitment described the employee’s awareness that there are costs associated with leaving the organization. Lastly, normative
commitment can be described as the feelings that one is obligated to continue working in the organization. The development of this three-component model was meant to help inform what was already known about commitment.

Stephens et al.’s (2004) study adopted Meyer and Allen’s framework and examined how the nature of volunteer commitment to an organization could be better understood. Stephens et al.’s study was designed to take the existing research on organizational commitment from the business world and apply it to the context of volunteers. Specifically, the authors examined chambers of commerce directors’ commitment to the board and in conjunction to their self-reported performance, defined as the self-assessment of time spent on board responsibilities, event involvement, meeting attendance, useful contacts for the board, and involvement in strategy related to other directors.

The study tested the relationship between four antecedents to commitment: tenure on the board; leadership role; assessment of board performance; and board size—with the three commitment variables—affective, normative, and continuance. Recognizing that volunteers are fundamentally different from employees, the authors acknowledged that “social expectations and organizational values are less certain and more fluid for the volunteer than they would be for the paid employee” (Stephens et al., 2004, p. 484).

The results suggest that volunteers who served in a board leadership position self-reportedly performed better and had higher levels of affective commitment to the board. The authors also found that normative and affective commitment enhanced self-reported performance. They therefore concluded that “chambers of commerce might be well served by fostering emotional attachment to the chamber among directors as well as
focusing recruitment on individuals with a strong sense of obligation” (Stephens et al., 2004, p. 497). This study reinforced the idea that affective commitment, that is, the emotional attachment or identification with an organization, will build loyalty. These findings support the goal of this study to understand the motivations of non-alumni volunteers to serve in order to gain insight into how to better engage volunteers to continue serving.

The work of Preston and Brown (2004) examined board member commitment and the relationship it had to individual performance also using Meyer and Allen’s (1991) model. The authors distributed surveys to midsized social service nonprofit organizations in Orange County, California. The executive directors were asked to assess individual board member’s involvement based on 13 behaviors cited as typical of board members. Additionally, the board members completed surveys related to their self-reported involvement that included length of service, board meeting attendance, service on committees, hours donated to the organization, and financial donations (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

The results of the study found a positive relationship between board member performance and affective commitment.

Board members who reported strong affective commitment were more likely to indicate that they were actively engaged in board member behaviors. They tended to make larger financial contributions, donate more hours to the organization, have better attendance at meetings, and serve on more committees (Preston & Brown, 2004, p. 233).
Preston and Brown recognized that it was wise to support board member engagement and that doing so also made it easier for board members to build relationships with the organization. These efforts could help people feel an emotional connection to the organization. As evidenced by Preston and Brown’s decision to apply Meyer and Allen’s (1991) model, they were able to demonstrate that this model based on the paid employee could be effectively applied to volunteer commitment with reliable results.

In reviewing organizational commitment literature, there is justification to consider the role commitment plays in motivating volunteers (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2008; Dailey, 1986). Dailey’s research found that job satisfaction was the most important factor in organizational commitment. Likewise in Dailey’s study, respondents indicated that their volunteer job could be changed to be more motivating. Organizational commitment has also been found as a key motivational factor within volunteer organizations (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2008; Dailey, 1986). Therefore, understanding the role commitment plays in volunteer motivation within nonprofit organizations may provide additional understanding as to why non-alumni volunteers are motivated to volunteer.

**Dynamic model of voluntary affiliation.**

McPherson (1981) developed a dynamic model of voluntary affiliation and looked at the rates of individuals joining and leaving an organization over time. The results suggest that people having higher socio-economic status combined with higher education levels, referred to by the author as “high status” people, remain as members longer in an organization than lower socio-economic individuals (p. 719). This research confirms the assumptions found in McPherson’s work that “observable class differences in affiliation
appear to be due to a tendency for high status persons to join organizations at a greater rate, and to remain in them longer” (p. 724).

McPherson (1981) also found that high socio-economic status people join a greater total number of organizations during their lifetimes and also remain in them longer. “Since high status individuals have higher affiliation rates and are likely to be located in extended friendship networks (Laumann), the high status person is more likely to have opportunities to join organizations (Booth and Babchuk)” (McPherson, 1981, p. 718). These findings are consistent with the compilation of research by Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) who cite that bachelor’s degree holders, as compared to their high school graduate counterparts, were 80% more likely to be involved with community leadership and community groups, and two and one-half times more likely to be volunteers.

Today’s popular social network theory is based on a network of social relationships and how individuals are connected to their social contacts and are often displayed in a social network diagram using nodes (individual actors) and ties (links or connections between people). Granovetter (1983) revisited his research from 1973 to reflect and further explore the importance of having both acquaintances (weak ties) and close friends (strong ties) to create a network of people, which helps us understand communication among those networks. Granovetter explains that weak ties affect the cohesion of complex social systems and have a role in people’s “opportunity for mobility” in jobs (p. 205). People with weak ties were provided with access to information and resources outside their strong tie social network and as a result, were more likely to hear about new job opportunities through their weak ties (Granovetter, 1983). Therefore, the research
found that recruitment of new members to an organization was reliant upon the strength of weak ties to bring in outside individuals and build a bridge between network segments.

This information is helpful as one considers the importance of recruitment of advisory board volunteers who also have high-level career positions. According to McPherson (1981), “it seems reasonable that a high status person would be more attractive to an organization as a resource for the activities of the organization” (p. 718). However, this research helps explain why some high-status people might serve as volunteers for longer periods, but it still does not fully explain how organization commitment and engagement is developed or why volunteers choose to remain active in a volunteer role.

Later work by McPherson, Popeilars, and Drobnic (1992) explored the importance of social network ties to voluntary affiliation and found that the theory can account for both stability and change in the demographic composition of social groups. The authors engaged in the first stage of the study with a probability sample of adults from 10 different Nebraska towns. The method included collecting event histories along with interviews to document participants’ accounts of their own voluntary affiliation.

The results of the McPherson et al. (1992) study outlined a theory that can account for the stability of an organization’s membership and explains why an organization might experience significant change in membership. The more social contacts a person had inside a group, known as “strong ties,” the longer that person would remain a member. Conversely, the more social contacts one had outside a group, referred to as “weak ties,” the shorter the duration of the membership. Those members who had weak ties to the organization helped to prevent the organization from being static. However, they also
brought change by having a shorter volunteer commitment therefore increasing opportunities for new members to join the organization.

Advisory board volunteers without an existing relationship to the organization are likely nominated or referred to by associates who are also serving in a volunteer capacity to the same institution. Applying the McPherson (1981) and McPherson et al. (1992) studies to the present research, non-alumni volunteers who are well-educated and have increased social status would be likely to serve on a number of different boards throughout their careers. Considered high-status volunteers, they may be more likely to continue service on a board for longer durations, if there are not strong ties that develop among the existing board members and with the organization, the board is more likely to have volunteer turnover. According to McPherson’s and McPherson et al.’s research, further engagement efforts to develop volunteer commitment, as described in the previous section, would be of importance to help maintain voluntary affiliation for longer durations.

**Developing institutional connection to non-alumni volunteers.**

While we still do not fully understand from a theoretical standpoint how non-alumni volunteers to higher education programs develop engagement, a review of relevant theories and models help to explain why in general, volunteers may develop a connection to a nonprofit organization. Findings indicate that those who have a higher socioeconomic status or a greater social network may be more inclined to volunteer or are recruited more often. Individual motivations also influence volunteerism. However, it is also useful to consider the role organizations have in influencing volunteers to become engaged. The next section explores the concept of relationship marketing to outline
external influences that may help further engage volunteers once they are motivated to serve as a volunteer.

**Relationship Marketing Defined**

To understand the progressive nature of relationship building and its benefit to the bottom line, one can look to the field of relationship marketing. Relationship marketing theory posits that the more committed a customer is to a product or brand, the higher levels of satisfaction, loyalty, promotion, and word of mouth will be demonstrated by that customer (Al-Alak, 2007). The traditional application of relationship marketing research has focused on the for-profit business industry and the economic aspects that build long-term relationships with customers (Arnett, German, & Hunt, 2003; Stover, 2005). In the nonprofit world, the focus is to build long-term relationships with volunteers.

There appears to be applicability to the volunteer sector. Once a person has determined they want to be a “customer,” or for the purposes of this research, a volunteer for an organization, how does the organization build commitment so that the person develops loyalty to the organization and satisfaction with their volunteer role? According to Al-Alak (2007), relationship marketing’s primary goal is to develop and maintain a group of customers who are profitable to the organization through the focus on “attraction, retention, and enhancement of customer relationships” (p. 2). Marketing to current customers in order to retain and build long-term relationships also involves understanding customer needs over a long period of time (Anctil, 2008; Berry, 1995). Relationship marketing, therefore, can provide insight into this concept of building relationships that last among volunteers and the organizations they serve.
A literature review of relationship marketing finds that its principles have been adapted to a wide range of service settings interested in retaining customers, including higher education services (Al-Alak, 2007), college student retention (Ackerman & Schibrowsky, 2007), alumni relations (Heckman & Guskey, 1998), and nonprofit volunteer management (Bussell & Forbes, 2006). The following sections explore the concepts of relationship marketing as it applies to the area of nonprofit and higher education relationship management. These concepts have applicability to volunteer management and retention for this study in the sense that once volunteers are motivated to serve, principles of relationship marketing can be applied to keep them involved, that is, to engage and ideally further retain volunteers.

**Applications of relationship marketing.**

Ackerman and Schibrowsky (2007) applied a relationship marketing framework to student retention within higher education. They contend that “adapting the customer retention model to student retention is appropriate given the emphasis both place on quality of services” (p. 307). In their study, the authors coined the term *student relationship management*, referring to those activities intended to build relationships with students in order to increase retention and loyalty to their school.

According to these authors, retention of college students is an important goal for educators because there is a compounding cumulative effect that retention could improve graduation rates while also improving the revenue stream from tuition and fees. Reducing attrition improves efficiency, builds strong relationships with students, and helps establish the necessary foundation for their involvement as alumni and donors after graduation.
Their research coincides with others who have studied relationship marketing. Organizations which retain their customers at higher levels see profits increase and the cost to maintain those customers is frequently lower than the cost to acquire new customers (Al-Alak, 2007; Berry, 1995). Similarly, the ability of nonprofits to build a volunteer’s loyalty and commitment, thereby reducing turnover, could decrease the costs associated with recruitment and training.

Within higher education, retention should be everyone’s job and student relationship management can be used as a tool and as an institutional philosophy based on relationship marketing concepts (Ackerman & Schibrowsky, 2007). “Colleges and universities need to treat students as a business treats its best customers…to learn about students, their needs, their preferences, and the criteria they use to make choices” (p. 328).

If, as the authors contend, institutions can develop strong student relationship management strategies that become part of daily business practices, then it is also reasonable that those strategies could naturally be applied to other constituencies that work with college and university higher education, including volunteers, who would have a variety of interactions with the institution at large.

Heckman and Guskey (1998) argue that university alumni can be seen as customers to their alma mater since the university depends on them for financial and other resources. Long-term relationships have been an area of focus among university alumni relations programs, so for a nonprofit institution to achieve its mission, it requires the lifetime support from its constituents in the form of participation and loyalty (McCort, 1994).
Heckman and Guskey (1998) studied discretionary collaborative behavior among alumni, which has been viewed as an integral part of relationship marketing strategy. Alumni who participate in a variety of activities, from promoting the university, to serving as volunteers, were considered to have participated in discretionary collaborative behavior. This is defined as “behavior performed by a customer in order to help a vendor, company, or institution, which contributes to the functioning of the relationship, which is outside the formal contractual obligations, and is performed without expectation of direct reward” (Heckman & Guskey, 1994, as cited in Heckman & Guskey, 1998, p. 98).

In their study, a mail survey was distributed to 3,000 alumni of a private, Midwestern university. They sought to identify which discretionary collaborative behaviors (e.g., verbally support the university to others; encourage others to attend; member of an advisory board; guest lecture;) alumni had performed or planned to perform because these types of behaviors are considered part of the bonding process that occurs between alumni and the university. Alumni satisfaction with their alma mater’s performance of its core mission was a strong predictor of both past and future collaboration with their alma mater. The results of the survey found that those who were more involved in university social activities considered themselves more informed about the university than other non-involved alumni.

Heckman and Guskey (1998) indicated “many universities depend on alumni to serve on advisory boards, assist in capital campaigns, talk to prospective customers (students and parents), provide cooperative education and employment opportunities for students and graduates, etc.” (p. 98). This statement supports the goal of relationship marketing that the more involved the alumni are, the more likely they are to be loyal and supportive.
As previously stated, alumni have an emotional connection to their alma maters. This hospitality advisory board study sought to understand what motivates non-alumni to volunteer for an institution and give of their time, energy and resources when they do not have a natural affiliation. The findings from Heckman and Guskey (1998) show the impact that involvement with a college or university can have lasting effects on one’s emotional connection that leads to loyalty and support, which logically could apply to non-alumni volunteers.

Lastly, Bussell and Forbes (2006) explored relationship marketing as it related to the volunteer recruitment and retention issues for community-based organizations in the United Kingdom. The authors conducted a series of focus groups in six areas of the country in order to gain insight into the shared understanding about key marketing issues facing the sector. They spoke with 54 people representing both volunteers and directors of agencies, who represented more than 70 organizations. The findings indicated that voluntary organizations recognized the need to view their volunteers as customers. “Today’s volunteer is an active participant in the exchange process. Managing the relationships becomes as important as recruiting volunteers “ (Bussell & Forbes, 2006, p. 171).

Volunteer organizations can benefit by reducing volunteer turnover because there would be decreased staff time involved with volunteer recruitment and training. Nonprofit organizations are relationship-oriented and place great value on establishing and maintaining long-term relationships with key stakeholders such as those who utilize their services and volunteers who help provide the services. While a nonprofit organization provides an important service to the community, volunteers are often used
for support and assistance in achieving its mission. “The volunteer invests time, social commitment, and also an emotional element. The relationship is also important to the organization, investing time, money and commitment to the volunteer” (Bussell & Forbes, 2006, p. 153).

Just as the business world recognizes it is important and beneficial to the bottom line to recruit new customers and then maintain them, the nonprofit world can also use these findings to recruit and retain volunteers (Bussell & Forbes, 2006, p. 153). “In relationship marketing, the emphasis is on developing strategies, which will achieve an enduring bond between the organization and the volunteer, moving the potential volunteer up the ladder of loyalty to becoming an advocate for the organization” (Bussell & Forbes, 2006, p. 153).

**Relationship marketing in the nonprofit sector.**

Given that relationship marketing principles have been used to inform how different sectors strive to retain customers, there appears to be an application to how nonprofit organizations can better engage and retain volunteers. McCort (1994) contends that relationship marketing offers a viable strategy for nonprofits because it is a relationship-driven strategy. Nonprofit organizations must meet the needs of their donors, volunteers, and patrons. McCort states, “The nonprofit must continuously, across lifetimes, develop constituents that will support its mission by giving their time and money” (p. 55). Additionally, the customer, volunteer, and donor are each seen as a partner in the mission of the nonprofit, therefore, “it is seen that there is a strong congruence between a relationship marketing philosophy and the needs of nonprofit organizations” (p. 55).
Within nonprofit management, the aim is to develop long-term and mutually beneficial relationships with volunteers (Bussell & Forbes, 2006). Just as business leaders have developed strategies to retain their customers, higher education leaders can readily adapt the principles of relationship marketing to volunteer management (Ackerman & Schibrowsky, 2007). This literature review provided examples of previous research to support the premise that the concepts of relationship marketing can be readily applied to a variety of sectors ranging from the higher education services and student retention to volunteer retention.

**The Volunteer Engagement Construct**

The term engagement is used in a number of disciplines including nonprofit management (Barnes & Sharpe, 2009; Millette & Gagné, 2008), student development (Kuh, Schuh, & Whit, & Associates, 1991), and organizational behavior literature (Macey & Schneider, 2008), often without providing a clear definition of what engagement is or how to achieve it. Given this term’s use as a construct in volunteer literature, engagement has been found linked to terms such as motivation, involvement, and commitment, which are each important concepts in this study.

For example, Barnes and Sharpe (2009) used the term engagement in their research and found that “researchers have examined aspects of volunteer engagement in a variety of ways. One way has been to focus on volunteer motives, with the rationale that by understanding motives, agencies will be better able to satisfy the needs of volunteers and thus foster engagement” (p. 172). Additionally, Millette and Gagné’s (2008) research on volunteer tasks concluded, “job design is one useful tool to enhance volunteer autonomous motivation, satisfaction and engagement” (p. 20). As a final example,
Preston and Brown’s (2004) research on board member commitment and performance highlights that engagement behaviors, such as volunteers’ donation of time and money, are linked to perceptions of board member performance. Therefore, the engagement construct is explored in this research because it seems to have a clear relationship to motivation.

Student development research explains how college students become engaged through their undergraduate involvement, and because of this engagement, they are likely to give back of their time and resources as alumni (Astin, 1984/1999; Kuh et al., 1991). Yet, this research does not explain why non-alumni become volunteers nor how they develop an attachment or loyalty to an institution they may otherwise have no natural affiliation.

In employee and organizational behavior literature, the term employee engagement helps to inform this engagement construct better than other disciplines. Macey and Schneider (2008) addressed the lack of a singular definition of engagement within employee engagement literature. They found that the “numerous definitions of engagement can be derived from the practice- and research-driven literatures” (Macey & Schneider, 2008, p. 4).

Additionally, Macey and Schneider refer to “folk” theory, that is, the intuitive sense that people have about work motivation. For example, “the notion that employee engagement is a desirable condition, has an organizational purpose, and connotes involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, focused effort, and energy, so it has both attitudinal and behavioral components” (Macey & Schneider, 2008, p. 4). Macey and
Schneider also explain that some also believe that engagement refers to a specific construct such as involvement, initiative, sportsmanship, or altruism.

Researchers have written that volunteers who are more involved and engaged are more likely to be committed or feel more attached to the organization (Eisner et al., 2009; Kramer, 1965; Taylor et al., 1991). When identifying members for a college volunteer advisory board, alumni are often a natural choice to serve as volunteers for their alma mater because they may be loyal and hold an emotional bond with the institution (Leslie & Ramey, 1988).

However, supporters of higher education also include non-alumni community members, friends, and business leaders who may not otherwise have an affiliation with the institution. Community members can be found serving in a volunteer capacity within institutions of higher education on a board of trustees or advisory board where community representation is highly valued. The volunteers serve as “ambassadors for the institution and most often bring to the table distinguished careers in business, law, medicine, politics, and public service that can contribute to the institution’s credibility” (Darling & Weimer, 2000, p. 539). For those who are non-alumni, it is imperative that educational institutions create experiences that develop ties with volunteers to encourage retention and advocacy.

Engagement theory within a university setting has continued to grow in interest and has been applied in a variety of settings. Researchers seek to understand which efforts made by the campus as a whole and specifically, the efforts made by faculty, administrators, and students, will contribute to a high-quality college experience (Hayek & Kuh, 2004). “Alumni carry on close social and emotional ties with their institutions”
(Leslie & Ramey, 1988, p. 121). For those who are non-alumni, it is imperative that educational institutions develop ties with volunteers to encourage retention and advocacy.

Higher education institutions can provide opportunities for non-alumni volunteers to develop a sense of belonging and become a loyal supporter to an institution where they otherwise would not have a natural affiliation. “Because these individuals do not have the same social and emotional links with institutions as alumni do, their charitable decisions should be influenced by more objective features of institutional academic quality” (Leslie & Ramey, 1988, p. 121). This concept requires thoughtful inquiry as to which factors are necessary and meaningful to affect the level of engagement a person feels for the organization in which they volunteer. If an individual’s motivations to get involved can help inform how one becomes more engaged, it may lead to a clearer understanding of the interconnectedness that motivation, involvement, and commitment have to engagement of volunteers in an advisory board setting, such as the advisory board volunteers researched in this study.

**Volunteer Advisory Boards**

Nearly all of the literature on nonprofit boards is focused on governing boards where the nonprofit organization has a board of directors or board of trustees that are legally responsible for governing the organization (Worth, 2009). The board volunteers are responsible for “ensuring that the nonprofit organizations they govern fulfill their missions, operate in accordance with state and federal laws, and make sound financial decisions” (Preston & Brown, 2004, p. 221). Other boards, such as advisory boards, “may contribute their expertise to the organization and help raise funds but that do not hold any legal authority for its governance” (Worth, 2009, p. 61).
As used by colleges and universities, advisory boards are often found at the academic unit level in a college or department, where the board is advisory and does not possess authority over the direction of the department or college (Olson, 2008). Additionally, the function of advisory boards is different from those of a board of directors in that the advisory board does not have “policy-making authority and exists only to serve as a sounding board for the dean or president” (Olson, 2008, p. C3). In the case of advisory boards, there is little recent literature on this specific type of volunteer. A majority of literature that addresses advisory boards provided either descriptions of how boards operate or guidelines to establish a board (Conroy & Lefever, 1997; Henderson, 2004).

**Summary**

While there have been studies about volunteerism, commitment, and motivation of volunteers, there exists a gap in the literature which seeks to understand the motivations of non-alumni to volunteer as members of a hospitality education advisory board. While research has demonstrated that alumni become attached to their alma mater through their social and emotional connections during their time in college, it does not translate to how non-alumni might establish and gain connections as volunteers (Astin, 1984/1999; Kuh et al., 1991).

Figure 1 graphically illustrates how this study is viewed through three theoretical lenses: motivational theories, organizational and affiliation theories, and relationship marketing theory. Organizational and affiliation theories help explain individual commitment to organizations. Relationship marketing research indicates that employees, customers and volunteers can develop loyalty through the use of relationship marketing strategies to build lasting relationships with the organization throughout a lifetime.
(McCort, 1994). The intersections of these theoretical frameworks take into account how these theoretical perspectives contribute to informing this study. Literature is also reviewed to explaining how volunteers that have greater emotional attachment to an organization possess a stronger sense of obligation, which in turn builds loyalty (Stephens et al., 2004).

Figure 1

*Intersection of Three Theoretical Frameworks Used to Inform this Study.*
However, it is still not understood why non-alumni volunteers choose to spend their time and resources supporting an institution to which they have no natural connection. A higher education advisory board’s goals of engagement are the same for alumni and non-alumni, which is that individuals develop a sense of commitment or loyalty to the institution so that they are actively engaged. Yet, for non-alumni, the question as to how commitment or affiliation to the institution is developed remains unanswered.

Due to the nature of volunteering, people may be affiliated with more than one organization and have multiple loyalties (Cnaan & Cascio, 1998). If the volunteer graduated from another institution, he or she may hold a loyalty to that school. The volunteer may also give of their time to more than one educational institution. This exploratory research study seeks fill a gap in the existing literature to understand the unique nature of non-alumni volunteers and their motivations for serving as volunteers to a hospitality education advisory board.
CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Chapter 3 describes the qualitative research method that was used in this study. To explore the motivation of non-alumni to volunteer, the researcher used an interpretive case study design consisting of in-depth interviews and document review with non-alumni volunteers to focus on the lived experience of the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The qualitative software program ATLAS.ti was used to code, organize, and assist in the analysis of the data.

This chapter includes: (a) design of the study; (b) selection of the cases and participants; (c) research questions; (d) research site selection; (e) pilot interview; (f) data collection and analysis; and (g) ethical and political considerations.

Design of the Study

Merriam’s (1998) case study methodology helped construct the design of this study. The case study approach was chosen in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the meaning of events and interactions of the participants. This research explored three areas: 1) the motivational factors cited by non-alumni to volunteer to a hospitality advisory board; 2) the types of experiences that help deepen commitment as a board member; and 3) the role administrators and fellow board members play in improving the engagement of non-alumni volunteers.

The exploratory nature of this study and the phenomenon of interest support using qualitative inquiry (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative research methods were used because these techniques are helpful in understanding the conceptual world of the participants “in order to understand how and what meaning they construct around events in their daily
lives” (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p. 23). The specific data collection techniques used in this study included in-depth interviews with non-alumni advisory board volunteers and document review.

An in-depth interviewing strategy was used as the data collection method (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). This involved conducting individual semi-structured, open-ended interviews that were digitally recorded and then transcribed. Using Rubin and Rubin’s (2005) responsive interviewing process, the goal was to achieve an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon rather than breadth of the topic. Additionally, this approach allowed the interview to be guided by the participant’s responses and informed by the meaning they assigned to their experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Case study design was selected due to “the nature of the research problem and the questions being asked” (Merriam, 1998, p. 41). By exploring the same phenomenon among participants within the same organization, while also using the same data collection and data analysis techniques, the researcher was able to “develop conceptual categories or to illustrate, support, or challenge theoretical assumptions held prior to the data gathering” (Merriam, p. 38). The unit of analysis will be the non-alumni volunteers who serve as members of a hospitality education advisory board.

Selection of the Cases and Participants

Two purposeful sampling techniques were used: 1) unique sampling; and, 2) convenience sampling (Merriam, 1998). The unique sample contains participants who have rare or atypical attributes related to the phenomenon of study. In this case, non-alumni volunteers who were also executive leaders of hospitality organizations constitute the unique sample. The convenience sample was used because, to some extent, the
availability of respondents and their physical location were factors influencing which board members were be selected as participants.

Case studies typically have two levels of sampling. The first level sample was the cases to be studied and the second level of sampling was the selection of the participants within each case (Merriam, 1998). The first case included a group of relatively new volunteers, those who had served at least one year but no more than three, which means they were serving their first term as volunteers. The second case consisted of relatively long-term members, those who had served more than four years, which equated to serving at least a second term in their volunteer role.

Criteria for selecting the participants for interviews were based on the following: For case one, (a) the participants were non-alumni of the university to which they were serving as volunteers; (b) members have served for at least one year but no more than three years; and (c) members have been employed or are currently employed in the hospitality industry and have an executive level title such as chief executive officer, chief operating officer, director, owner, founder, president or vice-president. For case two, (a) the participants were non-alumni of the university to which they are serving as volunteers; (b) members have served for at least four years; and (c) members have been employed or are currently employed in the hospitality industry and have an executive level title such as chief executive officer, chief operating officer, director, owner, founder, president or vice-president.

A sample of 10 participants, or five participants per case, was selected for in-depth interviews. Merriam (1998) suggests that the sample size be an “adequate number of participants” (p. 64) to answer the research question. Therefore, the researcher continued
interviewing until she reached a point of data saturation, which is when the researcher no longer heard new information, which was when 10 participants had been interviewed. The participants within each case were selected based primarily upon their years of service as volunteers, to ensure they have experienced the phenomenon being explored in this study (Creswell, 1998).

Those who responded positively to the request to participate were then screened to ensure they also fit the selection criteria. The researcher then coordinated interviews based on reasonable access to participants given the participant’s availability and any financial constraints that would prevent extended travel to interview participants, such as overseas travel. Consideration was also given to those respondents who demonstrated commitment as volunteers through consistent meeting attendance. While this study required participants to be non-alumni of the university, two participants did not have college degrees, and therefore were not alumni of any university.

**Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the data collection and data analysis for this study:

1. What are the motivational factors cited by the participant that influenced his or her desire to serve as a non-alumni volunteer to a hospitality education advisory board?

2. What are the motivational factors cited by the participant for renewing his or her term of service on the advisory board after the first term was completed?
Research Site Selection

To identify and contact the participants who met the case and participant selection criteria, the university database containing volunteer records was accessed with permission from the executive director of the UNLV Foundation as well as the dean of the College of Hotel Administration. The site location was the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where the advisory board program is housed within the College of Hotel Administration. This site was primarily selected because of the access the researcher had as an employee of the university. Additionally, the researcher had a working relationship with the volunteers serving on the International Advisory Board, the group from which participants were selected.

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) recommend that a researcher study something in which she is not directly involved because it may be difficult to separate oneself from the study. However, the researcher’s professional role in university advancement is one that places a high value on relationship building. The potential participants already knew the researcher professionally, which likely created a comfortable climate to discuss the proposed topic by lessening the distance between researcher and participant. Creswell (1998) explained that a feminist approach to interviewing supports establishing a collaborative and non-exploitive relationship with the participants as an example that people already known to the researcher can still be viable participants.

The researcher bracketed her personal experiences as it related to the topic of volunteerism prior to conducting the interviews. This “self-examination is for the researcher to gain clarity from her own preconceptions” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p.
It is important for the researcher to separate one’s own experiences from those of the participants (Creswell, 1998).

Additionally, there is great importance placed on advancement professionals to have a better understanding of the motivation of volunteers to serve. Given that there is an existing gap in the literature related to the motivation of non-alumni volunteers and their subsequent development of commitment and retention as members of an university advisory board, this research project serves an important role in contributing to the academic literature.

**Pilot Interview**

One pilot interview was conducted with a female participant who was a non-alumni volunteer to an academic advisory board within the university. She also happened to be a founding member of the board. The questions for the in-depth interviews were developed based on a review of volunteerism, commitment, and motivational literature described in Chapter 2. The pilot questions allowed the researcher to examine if the research questions were appropriate and if the techniques used supported or detracted from the objectives of the study (Seidman, 2006). Results from this pilot interview in combination with the participant feedback helped the researcher revise and formulate the final interview protocol and questions (see Appendix A).

**Data Collection**

The in-depth interviewing data collection method involved individual semi-structured, open-ended interviews that were digitally recorded and then transcribed. Interviews served as the dominant strategy for data collection since they provided detailed accounts of one’s thoughts and motivations using the participant’s own words.
(Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed the researcher to focus on the specified topic of inquiry (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002). Field research such as interviews is effective in studying attitudes and behaviors and provides a greater level of validity than do surveys (Babbie, 2004). Additionally, in-depth interviews are appropriate to understand the lived experience or essence of the phenomenon in the participants’ own words (Creswell, 1998; Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

Using responsive interviewing techniques, the researcher spent time to make the participant feel at ease before starting the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). To begin each interview, the topic was framed as a free-flowing, exploratory discussion (see Appendix A). The first questions related more broadly to the participant’s background and volunteer history in order to get a basic understanding of the participant’s range of perspectives (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). The interviews were open-ended to allow the participant to speak freely about the topic. The interviewer probed more deeply on topics or issues brought up by each participant, an approach that is considered a guided conversation (Rubin & Rubin, 1995 as cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

A series of interview questions contained in an interview guide were prepared to gather comparable data across the different interviews (Fossey et al., 2002). Each interview lasted approximately 60 minutes to allow enough time to have a thorough discussion (see Appendix A). Follow-up to the interviews was necessary in some cases to ask for clarification or additional detail about a topic that was originally addressed. The follow-up was done by electronic mail.
To become more familiar with the data, prior to having the audio transcribed, the researcher listened to the audio files three times per interview. This allowed the researcher to gain familiarity with both the content and intent of the participant, which was useful when it came to analyzing the data. The researcher utilized two professional transcribers and a transcribing service to complete the audio transcription. The interviewer then manually went through each transcription to ensure content and spelling accuracy. In order to increase validity, member checks were conducted so that participants could review the data and ensure accuracy of their responses (Fossey et al., 2002).

Document review was also completed as a supplement to the interviews. The types of official documents included the participant’s volunteer history as documented by the university and maintained in the university donor and volunteer database. This documentation indicated the number of years a person has served as a volunteer as well as his or her donor records. A review of the meeting minutes was completed to track the attendance of volunteers. Lastly, a review of the participant’s professional biography, résumé, or vita was perused to confirm the volunteer’s professional title and experience as well as volunteer service activities.

**Data Organization and Analysis**

As described previously, once the interviews were digitally recorded, the data were transcribed. Upon reviewing the transcriptions and listening to the audio, the researcher made notes related to her ideas and speculations to assist with the analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). The transcribed data was uploaded into the qualitative data analysis software, ATLAS.ti, the concept database used to manage the data for the researcher,
which was used for its ability to flexibly allow the researcher to organize and analyze qualitative data.

A constant comparative method of data analysis was used to code the data and attempted to gather new information by “constantly comparing them to an emerging category to develop and saturate the category” (Creswell, 1998, p. 240). By comparing comments and incidents from the interviews with other comments, it lead to tentative categories, which were then compared with each other, and to other instances (Merriam, 1998). The interviews were analyzed for themes, commonalities, and differences across interviews, across each case, and finally, a cross case analysis was conducted to reveal common themes and contrast differences across the cases (Merriam, 1998).

The analysis involved working with the data and breaking it up into manageable units, comparing the units of data with the next while looking for recurring regularities in the data. This was done in conjunction with the data collection using the constant comparative method, despite the study was not one of grounded theory (Creswell, 1998).

The category construction was done by applying codes related to the theory (e.g. the Volunteer Functions Inventory) and was also generated by identifying common and unique themes (Fossey et al., 2002; Merriam, 1998). Coding categories were developed and guided by the suggestions found in Merriam (1998) related to organizing and managing the data (see Appendix B). Open coding was completed to develop categories, axial coding allowed for the categories to be interconnected, and selective coding helped to build a “story” that connected the categories together from the in-depth interviews with the 10 participants (Creswell, 1998).
The first step was to conduct open coding by reviewing the interview transcript data line by line while making notes, comments, and observations (Merriam, 1998). This resulted in an initial set of codes based on related concepts found in the transcript. A thorough review of each transcript produced open codes (see Appendix B). This master list provided an initial outline to reflect the recurring themes in the study, which eventually became the categories or themes used in this study (Merriam, 1998). To further analyze these codes, notes were made about each of the categories to serve as reminders, note questions about the category relevance, and to further explore the content within each category and subcategory.

Axial coding was then used to establish several main categories within each of the cases (see Appendix B) by linking them together (Merriam, 1998). The codes were assembled in new ways after going through the open coding process so that central categories about the phenomenon were explored and delineated (Creswell, 1998). Upon completion of this analytical process was completed, core categories were chose for each of the two cases (see Appendix B).

Subsequent to the open coding and axial coding processes, selective coding was completed. This required identifying the existing core categories that serves as the foundation for the study’s findings. The result is a case study “story line” which integrates the numerous categories based on the axial coding so that the results can be presented (Creswell, 1998).

In this dual case study, both a within-case analysis and a cross-case analysis of the data were conducted (Merriam, 1998). This method allowed for a thorough analysis of the data collected related each of the two case studies, that is, the new volunteers and the
longer-serving volunteers. Upon completing the analysis of each case, the cross-case analysis was then conducted. The goal for the researcher was to compare and contrast both cases and develop a more sophisticated explanation for the phenomenon of study (Merriam, 1998).

Content review of the biography and resume documents collected was completed as a “method for describing and interpreting the artifacts of a society or social group” (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 117). To ensure quality the qualitative research included a detailed description of how the research was conducted, how the researcher came to specific conclusions, and “address[ed] issues of congruence, appropriateness and adequacy” (Fossey et al., 2002, p. 729).

ATLAS.ti was used throughout the data analysis process to organize, code, and categorize the data (Creswell, 1998). Each transcript was uploaded into ATLAS.ti prior to beginning the data analysis and coding process as described by Creswell (1998): 1) open coding; 2) axial coding; 3) selective coding. After completing the data coding process and developing emerging themes (see Appendix B), a cross case analysis was used to examine the data from both Case 1 and Case 2. This analysis provided a common framework from which to compare and contrast the data from each of the two cases.

**Ethical and Political Considerations**

This project was submitted to the UNLV Office for the Protection of Research Subjects and approved by the UNLV Institutional Review Board (see Appendix C) to ensure the protection of human subjects while upholding all ethical and research standards for the proposed study (Seidman, 2006). The primary ethical consideration was that the donor database information is confidential and may only be used for official
university business unless otherwise approved. Therefore, gaining approval to contact
these volunteers from the College of Hotel Administration dean was imperative.
Additionally, the UNLV Foundation executive director provided approval to access the
university database containing volunteer records and contact information to use for this
purpose.

The researcher selected the potential participants from among the existing advisory
board member who were of interest in this study. The potential participants were sent an
e-mail by the dean of the hotel college and were invited to respond if interested in
participating (see Appendix A). Those who responded were then reviewed to ensure they
met the initial screening criteria and then a subset was invited to participate.

There was minimal risk to participants in this study. Perhaps the most sensitive aspect
of this study was related to questions that address personal commitment to an
organization in which they serve. The participants were asked to sign an Institutional
Review Board approved informed consent form, acknowledging the risks and the
researcher’s responsibility to guarantee their anonymity throughout the study. They were
also informed that the university volunteer database would be accessed to gain details of
their volunteer records, as applicable.

Summary

This chapter provided a description of the research methodology that was used in this
study. Specifically, this chapter included: (a) design of the study; (b) selection of the
cases and participants; (c) research questions; (d) research site selection; (e) pilot
interview; (f) data collection and analysis; and (g) ethical and political considerations.
A qualitative multiple case study design was used because of the exploratory nature of this study. The multiple case study design consisted of in-depth interviewing of non-alumni volunteers. The qualitative software analysis program, ATLAS.ti, was used to code and assist in the organization and analysis of date. Network views were used to explore the emerging themes and concepts, which also helped illustrate the findings in this study. Lastly, a cross-case analysis was conducted in order to compare and contrast the findings from each of the two cases (Merriam, 1998).
CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of two case studies in which the researcher explored the motivations of volunteers to serve on the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) hospitality advisory board for an institution of higher education they did not attend. This research sought to understand the two research questions outlined in this study: 1) the motivational factors that influenced people to serve as non-alumni volunteers to a hospitality education advisory board; and 2) to understand the motivational factors of participants for renewing his or her term of service on the advisory board. The 10 participants in this study were interviewed during May and June of 2010, either in-person or by phone.

The two case studies presented in this chapter represent the findings based on five participants in each case and both cases were organized into three sections: an introduction to the participants; their motivations to volunteer; and their motivations to remain on the board. The interview questions served as a framework to organize the data into these sections. The first case consisted of five non-alumni advisory board volunteers who were serving their first three-year term as a board member with the length of service ranging from one and a half years to three years. The second case included five non-alumni advisory board volunteers who were serving beyond their first three-year term; the length of service of the participants ranged from four years to 10 years.

The participants were selected from among a group of board members who responded to an e-mail request for non-alumni volunteers to participate in this study (see Appendix
The volunteers were screened to ensure they met the pre-established selection criteria. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the motivational factors of participants that influenced his or her desire to serve as a non-alumni volunteer to a hospitality education advisory board?
2. What are the motivational factors of participants for renewing their term of service on the advisory board after the first term was completed?

Advisory Board Background

The UNLV hospitality advisory board is a volunteer board which does not possess authority or fiscal responsibility over the direction or operation of the college. To gain membership, prospective members were generally nominated by current board members or the dean of the college. Upon submission of a résumé, the existing board members then vote on the nominees. Alternatively, the dean of the college can also selectively appoint individuals when appropriate. The advisory board meetings take place twice per year, during the spring and fall semesters, are held at the university, and are scheduled to last approximately five hours in addition to any other planned activities, such as an advisory board dinner or serving as guest lecturers prior to the meeting. The mission of the advisory board is as follows (see Appendix D):

The mission of the Advisory Board is to support the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration in its mission to provide outstanding educational opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students as well as education and research for industry professionals. Through its work, the Advisory Board will assist the Dean with increasing the visibility of the College within the industry and its other academic
constituencies. The Advisory Board shall be considered advisory and not a policy-making body (“Advisory Board Mission,” February 4, 2008).

The meetings provide an opportunity for the dean to meet with the board members, present updates on the activities of the college, seek guidance and advice from the members on academic and industry issues, as well as provide time for the board members to interact and socialize with each other. The board is asked to serve as advocates for the university and help build connections between the college and the hospitality industry. Additionally, an expectation of membership is that all board members either make a philanthropic donation or assist in securing financial donations for the college.

This board, which at times has been as large as 35 members, had 27 members during the time of the study, of which four were University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) alumni; the remaining 23 were non-alumni. The board is comprised of senior level hospitality executives and consultants, majorities of which live within United States and just two come from other countries. Together, their extensive experiences cover a broad spectrum of the hospitality industry including hotel and timeshare management; food and beverage management; restaurant and foodservice management; tourism, event and convention management; recreation and leisure management; equipment and supplies; community relations; finance and acquisitions; human resources; law; marketing; and consulting.

Board members begin with a term of three years and upon the completion of that term, may choose to renew for a subsequent two- or three-year term. There is no limit to the number of terms one may serve; however, if a member does not attend three meetings in a row, they are relieved of the board commitment (Advisory Board Bylaws, February
2008). At the time of the study, the entire board consisted of 10 volunteers in their first term, two in their second term, five in their third term, and 11 in their fourth term of service. There is no compensation provided to volunteers and they are expected to pay for all travel and accommodations while attending the bi-annual meetings.
Case 1: The New Advisory Board Volunteers

The five Case 1 participants spent a majority of their careers working in the hospitality industry. Three have at least a four-year college degree from institutions other than UNLV, one of whom specifically studied hospitality management at another university. At the time of the interviews, two participants owned their own companies and the remaining three were executives within companies for which they worked. All have served in a volunteer capacity on other boards or community organizations. While all five people volunteered to serve at a university they did not graduate from, only two have volunteered in some capacity for their alma maters. Of the five volunteers in this case, two did not have a college degree.

Two participants were interviewed in person and three were interviewed by phone. Pseudonyms were used in this study to protect the anonymity of the participants. Additionally, professional and personal background details were generalized and some identifying details were excluded. Confidential safeguards were put in place so that identifying information would not be made available to anyone outside the research project.

Introduction to the Participants

This section provides a brief description of each of the five new advisory board members who participated in this study. Additionally, this section provides an overview of the board member’s career, length of involvement, and volunteer experience.

Annie

Annie has spent the past 30 years in the foodservice industry, working as an executive for a major corporation. In her corporate leadership role, she has worked with college
students and enjoys having an impact on future generations. When she was recruited for this board, she already knew three board members and one professor in the college. These initial interactions gave her context for the college and helped to develop her interest in serving as a volunteer. The biography she provided as part of this study included mention of her advisory board position. Annie has served on this board for two and a half years and was interviewed by phone.

**Cate**

Cate has a degree in business and is an executive who has worked for several different major hospitality companies over the past almost 20 years. At the time of the interview, she was self-employed. With expertise in the hotel, gaming, and tradeshows services industries, she has been involved with college student recruitment for her various employers. She believes strongly in supporting education in her local community and serves on two other volunteer advisory boards. The biography she provided includes mention of her advisory board position. Cate has served on the hospitality advisory board for three years and was interviewed in person.

**James**

Since receiving his college degree in hospitality management from another university, James has spent his career in hotel management and currently is responsible for managing a number of hotel properties. James was encouraged to consider joining this advisory board by a colleague who was also board member. He saw the opportunity to contribute to a hospitality education program and have an impact on students studying hotel management. James’s company strongly endorses employee community service, thereby providing him strong connections to his community while also nurturing his
desire to give of his time, expertise, and energy. The biography he provided includes mention of his advisory board position. James has served on this hospitality advisory board for two years and was interviewed by phone.

Kevin

Kevin began his career in the hotel and timeshare industry after studying business in college. A college internship gave him exposure to the hospitality industry, and he never left; having devoted nearly 20 years of his career to the industry; he is employed by a large hospitality company. He was recruited to serve on the advisory board after an outgoing board member nominated him to serve. Kevin was not familiar with the university or its programs and had no connections to the college or board members prior to serving. In his free time, he coaches youth sports and mentors students from his alma mater, enjoying the connection he continues to have to that program. The biography he provided includes mention of his advisory board position. Kevin has served on this advisory board for one and a half years and was interviewed by phone.

Raymond

Raymond is a long-time resident of a community near the university and has been associated with the institution for a significant length of time. As an involved community member, he came to know professors and the founding dean of the college. As an owner and operator of his own hospitality business, he not only observed the university and community growth first hand, but also participated its development throughout his career. Raymond knew two other board members and some faculty prior to joining the board two years ago. The résumé he provided does not include mention of his advisory board position. Raymond was interviewed in person.
Advisory Board Member Involvement

Table 1 categorizes four types of volunteer involvement that each of the five new board members have had with the hospitality advisory board. Their length of service ranged from one and a half years to three years. The volunteers will have completed their first term when they reach three years of service, which Cate had just completed during the time of the interview. Attendance at board meetings has been relatively consistent with the most meetings missed being three. Over the past two years, four out of five volunteers have made a financial donation, either personally or through their employers.

Table 1

Overview of Advisory Board Member Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement</th>
<th>Annie</th>
<th>Cate</th>
<th>James</th>
<th>Kevin</th>
<th>Raymond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of advisory board membership in years</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board meeting attendance since joining, out of total possible</td>
<td>4/6</td>
<td>5/8</td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>4/5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent (past 2 years) financial donations made personally or through company</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest lecturer</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Faculty members frequently invite industry representatives and other external experts to meet with students during scheduled class times. Two of the Case 1 participants have done so, serving as a guest lecturers. Those who were interested and available were placed into classes. During the interviews, the participants were asked about whether or
not they had been guest lecturers during their service on the board. With regard to interacting with students, Raymond stated, “I have not even taken the opportunity yet…I’m sure they’re available but I have never been asked.” Kevin confirmed he had not yet been in a classroom but had interacted with students during roundtable discussions. He stated, “I thought that was great and you know, even just having students and sitting next to them at lunch, we can just talk and hear what’s going on and have those conversations.” Cate indicated she would definitely like to guest lecture in classes given all her recruitment activities with students over the years.

**Motivations to Volunteer**

This section focuses on the common themes which emerged during the interviews related to Research Question 1, what were the motivational factors that influenced people to serve as non-alumni volunteers to a hospitality education advisory board? Four themes emerged as informative and explanatory. The participant’s prior experience as volunteers, their awareness of the institution and prior connections in advance of volunteering, who was responsible for recruiting them, and the benefits of membership. Throughout the interviews, these themes guided the structure for Case 1.

To understand their motivations to volunteer, the participants were asked to discuss other professional, social, or community organizations for which they were currently volunteering. The purpose of this question was to understand how their volunteer time is spent, as well as open up a discussion related to the level of support their employers gave them to volunteer, given that this advisory board’s membership is comprised of people who work in the hospitality industry.
Those who worked within a corporate structure indicated that their companies supported their volunteer service. Annie, Cate, Kevin, and James each received positive support from both current and past employers to participate in volunteer work. Two participants described how their companies encouraged employees to take paid time off to work in the community. Kevin shared that not only did he personally choose to volunteer, but also he received his company’s support to do so. He stated, “I felt like it was important for me to volunteer for balance and to give back. The company also has a program that encourages us to do a certain amount of paid community hours throughout the year.” James shared insight into his company’s values and stated, “each of our [properties] finds a way to embrace a hospital, a school, a charitable cause…we encourage our management staff to spend X amount of hours working in some capacity for the betterment of the community.”

“The company is very supportive of all of us participating in the work outside of our immediate responsibilities in the organization,” stated Annie. “This does a couple of things. One, we can individually grow from or improve from the volunteer experience. Second, it has a direct benefit for the company by broadening the sphere of influence by participating in outside organizations.”

Of the five new board members interviewed, Kevin and James have each volunteered for their respective alma maters. James informally helps host alumni gatherings and Kevin is a mentor to current college students. Annie and Cate both volunteer and advise other educational programs at universities they did not attend. The two participants who owned their own companies had the flexibility to participate in volunteer work at their own discretion. Raymond is the only board member who was not volunteering for any
other organization at the time of the interview although throughout his career he has
served on a number of community and hospitality industry boards.

Each of these participants expressed commitment to their communities and
professions by sharing their diverse volunteer experiences during the interviews. From
hospital boards, professional associations, community organizations, to their children’s
school boards, these board members are not new to volunteering. Cate stated, “I’m really
committed to this community and to Las Vegas in addition to the fact that I’m committed
to education….I’d like to see this continue to be one of the top hotel schools in the
world.”

Throughout the interviews, it became apparent that the participants were open to
volunteer opportunities when presented, although they may not always seek them out due
to busy schedules or simply being unaware that there were opportunities to serve on a
hospitality advisory board. In regard to why it was important to serve as a volunteer,
Kevin stated,

It’s good for the community and also good because there’s a lot of great talent that is
coming out of [the college] that we would love to come work for us…And then
second, it would be good for me, for my career, networking, and meeting new
people…

Given that this advisory board had a direct connection to the hospitality industry, the
board member’s personal interest combined with the support of their companies seemed
to positively influence their ability to serve on the board.
Awareness of the College and University

In order to gain insight into the factors that influenced each non-alumni participant’s motivation to serve on the UNLV hospitality advisory board, they were asked a series of questions designed to elicit responses regarding their motivations for joining the advisory board (see Appendix A). The participants were each asked about their awareness of the UNLV hospitality college and the university prior to joining the board. They discussed how they were first made aware of the opportunity to serve on the board and why they ultimately chose to join the board. Additionally, they were asked to reflect on any benefits they may have received as a result of serving on the board.

While Annie knew of the hospitality school and that it had one of the largest student enrollments, she did not realize that the educational focus went beyond hotel management to include food and beverage, among many other hospitality-related disciplines. Annie first gained awareness of the hospitality college after being introduced by a sitting board member to a professor who was working on a research project for food equipment manufacturers. “I was aware of the faculty research and they presented at an industry meeting, so I met some of them,” she stated. Annie also attended two receptions hosted by the college during an industry trade show, which allowed her to meet additional faculty, volunteers, and students as she was considering board membership; she stated,

I got to meet a number of other people that were on the board and what I realized was that there were some really interesting people. I would be delighted to have a chance to get to know or work with them. Probably one of the biggest influences for me was
that there would actually be quite a bit of access to the students and I was particularly interested in that aspect.

Coming from the hotel and gaming industry, Cate was aware of the quality of students graduating from the university through her years working in college recruitment. Prior to joining the board, she had not met the dean or any of the faculty and initially indicated during the interview that she did not feel she had any prior connections to the UNLV hospitality college before joining the board. “We got good candidates from here….When I went to [another company]…most of our grads came from UNLV’s hotel school,” noted Cate. However, after some reflection about her prior contact with the university, she commented that she had been connected to the university since 1988 because she was involved with student recruitment for her prior employers.

With regard to joining the advisory board, Cate stated, “I didn’t know much about the board. I didn’t reach out to get on this board in the way I did with [another community organization] I’m involved with, so the staff member who recruited me was important to my joining.”

James discussed how the hospitality college holds special memories for him because he applied to the school during his college application process. “I was accepted and flew out to the school and I interviewed with the founding dean. I’ve probably owned t-shirts with the school name on them. I’ve always had an affection for the school.” While James ultimately decided to attend a different university, he has always had an affinity for UNLV. So when a colleague invited him to join the board, he enthusiastically accepted.

Raymond’s role as a long-time resident in the community has provided him access to and awareness of the university and its hospitality program. Raymond shared, “I was
involved with the dean for a long time. As a matter of fact, I knew [a professor] who was here a long time ago. He was a good friend of mine and I knew him as a part of the school.” Raymond explained that he has seen the school grow along with the hospitality industry in the city. “I really respect it because of the growth in this town on the hospitality side. There’s a need for [this hospitality program] and they’ve done a lot for the industry,” referring to the hospitality college’s impact on the community.

Kevin was the one participant who knew very little about the school and did not have any personal connections to it before joining the board. “To be honest, I didn’t know much at all. My only real knowledge of the university was the basketball team,” he said with a laugh. He continued,

I have an East Coast bias. Growing up on the East Coast, I didn’t know a lot about the different sub-programs within the school. When you think of hotel schools in the east, you think of Cornell. For me it was pretty amazing to see all that this school has to offer and how well it is known. Then you look at where the school is going with all of the international expansion, it has obviously changed my opinion of the program.

When Kevin was asked why he decided to join this board without any prior connections to it, he explained why he felt it was important.

I thought it was important for our company since we are such a large employer in that market. I thought it was important for to have good—not good—a strong relationship with the school. It’s good for the community and it’s also good because there’s a lot of great talent coming out of there that we would love to have come work for us. That was one of the first drivers for me.
Kevin also shared that he had no connections to the college prior to joining the board. Annie, Raymond, and James already knew at least one board member and at least one faculty member.

Table 2 provides the type of prior connections as cited by the participants. While alumni have may have far more connections and be more intimately tied to the life of the institution (Taylor, Chait, & Holland, 1991), these non-alumni still have a number of connections that may fill the gap left by not attending the university. The recruitment process to join this board was quite similar for each of the five board members. They did not seek out this opportunity but, rather, were initially approached by a colleague or staff member who thought they would have something to contribute.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior Connections to the Institution</th>
<th>Annie</th>
<th>Cate</th>
<th>James</th>
<th>Kevin</th>
<th>Raymond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knew faculty</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knew other board members</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community supporter</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied to the school</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knew alumni/hired alumni</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved with University in another capacity</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No connection</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Mean number of connections per respondent is 2.6.

Existing board members have been instrumental in helping to recruit new members, having recruited four out of the five new advisory board members who participated in
this study, indicating that networking among industry colleagues lead to people being nominated and selected as board members. This suggests that the industry relationships represented by the volunteers were instrumental in their being recruited to serve on the advisory board. A college staff member who felt the participant would be a valuable contributor to the advisory board recruited the final person.

Annie shared that a current board member contacted her about the advisory board. “He was sitting on the board and one day he suggested that this board would be potentially interesting for me, both for my own benefit and also for the benefit of the board…” Annie also confirmed that her colleague was “absolutely” instrumental in her decision to join the board since she “hadn’t even given it consideration until he suggested it.” Raymond was recruited by a couple of long-time colleagues and friends who also served on the board. “They approached me. They wanted me to be part of this. That’s how I got interested in it.”

James shared a story about a current board member bringing up the topic of serving on the advisory board, at one point saying to him,

‘Hey James, what do you think about UNLV?’ I told him my little love fest for the school and that I applied to the school. Then he said I should sit on the board. It was an easy decision, one because of the school, and second because of my relationship with [my friend] and I trust in his good guidance.

The commitment of existing board members to identify and recruit potential board members has been instrumental in bringing industry executives to the UNLV advisory board. Their existing industry ties by the current board members help to diversify the
board by recruiting people with a wealth of experiences and perspectives to the advisory board.

**Benefits of Advisory Board Membership**

The board members were asked to reflect upon their board service during the interview. Specifically, they were asked to describe which benefits, if any, they had received from their board membership. Throughout the hour-long interviews, participants referred to benefits they received in a variety of different contexts based on the questions they were being asked. Those responses are also discussed in the following sections and revealed their perceived benefits and also their disappointments. Yet when specifically asked to state the benefits they may have received, the participant responses fell into three different categories: (a) have not benefitted; (b) job-related benefits; and (c) personal satisfaction from spending time with students. Table 3 summarizes these results.

Table 3

*Benefits of Serving*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have not benefitted</td>
<td>2a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job-related benefits</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal satisfaction of spending time with students</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* aOne participant first stated she had not benefitted but then later stated she had benefitted from membership. Her original response is noted here.

Of the five participants, two did not believe they had benefited from serving on the board. Raymond seemed disappointed, “I do not know the answer…because quite
realistically, I have not really contributed much.” Perhaps this perspective is why Raymond did not mention his volunteer service with the university on his biography.

Cate talked about some of the benefits to meeting other board members, but as for a specific professional benefit, she said, “I can’t say I got this contract or met this person who offered me this job opportunity…although I have…gotten information and referrals. There hasn’t been anything really specific.”

Kevin discussed why he thought it would be beneficial for him to join the advisory board:

It would be good for me, my career, networking, meeting new people…As it relates to career, obviously, it’s a good item on a résumé as well. So I saw that there was going to be some good benefits for the company and some good benefits from a career standpoint…Lastly, but definitely not least…I just want to make sure that I am giving back to highly qualified students.

Two study participants gave examples of job-related benefits to serving. James shared that he is able to take what he learns at the board meetings and apply it to work directly. “I think…I am perceived as being more current with the whole topic of college recruiting…or motivating younger managers, etcetera, because of the connection to UNLV,” stated James.

Kevin also shared that he has benefitted through conversations with other board members, discussing “different challenges we are facing, just sharing some different ideas back and forth. I don’t have specific examples…we were just having a good intellectual discussion and it made me think about some things a little differently…”
The participants’ responses throughout the interviews indicated that in addition to their initial comments on the benefits received by serving on this advisory board, they also felt that networking opportunities were a benefit of serving on this board. The participant comments are provided in the following sections.

During the interviews, several of the participants expressed that they believed one benefit to serving was the opportunity to interact with other hospitality leaders. They cited examples of being able to develop new professional relationships with other members. However, individuals also shared that they were disappointed that they were unable to build more meaningful relationships with fellow board members.

Kevin stated, “I have met new people, so that’s been a plus as it relates to networking and just discussing different issues and opportunities that we face in the business world.” The advisory board meets only twice a year for a five hour meeting and an optional pre-meeting activity, such as committee work, observing classes, or guest lecturing in classes. The participants also expressed that the level of interaction with other board members was not as significant as they had anticipated. The professional relationships were viewed as just touching the “surface.”

Cate recognized the professional benefits of board membership, stating, “Making connections with influential people in the community is another reason to get involved. I met some new people through the board.” She also expressed that the involvement looks good on a résumé and demonstrates to potential clients that you’re involved in the community. However, she felt that the board meetings do not provide enough activity to develop more meaningful relationships, “I just don’t think there’s enough interaction,” referring to getting to know her fellow board members. While Cate previously stated that
she had not benefitted professionally from her board membership, there’s an apparent conflict in her opinion given she stated above that developing relationships with influential people was an important reason to get involved.

Annie initially felt that the networking would be important benefit to joining the board and she has reached out to a few people after the meeting to discuss their businesses. However, this benefit has been “very soft” from her perspective. Yet she also shared that one of her “strongest personal benefits from [serving on the board] has been a couple experiences with students.” Kevin was asked about the extent to which he identified with the advisory board. He was asked to choose among high, medium, or a low level of identification as a board member. He said he had a low identity prior to joining the board as well as when he was interviewed. This could be attributed to Kevin’s lack of opportunity to build relationships with the board members. Kevin commented:

It’s just that the relationships I have developed are surface relationships…it’s not like I am interacting with other board members…when I am on [business trips]. And not to say that I need to, but that’s why I would say I am kind of low right now.

While Raymond initially stated he did not believe he had benefitted from serving on the advisory board, he later shared that professionally, he has been able to meet new people and broaden his horizons to gain expertise and expand his knowledge base from interacting with people on the board. This is a noticeable difference of opinion given he previously stated that he does not believe he has been able to contribute nor benefit from his volunteer service.

One participant commented that professional relationships may develop over time, and more frequent meetings or longer meetings would accelerate that a bit. Others
indicated that while they had met more people or found others who had perspectives they could relate to, it was difficult to strengthen relationships to more meaningful levels. While it might be a perceived benefit that they would be able to build new business relationships, one expressed that she had gained new business by virtue of sitting on this board and three specifically indicated they hadn’t gained new business opportunities through their board membership.

**Motivation to Continue as a Volunteer**

This section explores participant motivations which influence their desire and interest to continue, or discontinue, volunteering as advisory board members. This section directly relates to Research Question 2 where we seek to understand the motivational factors of participants for renewing his or her term of service on the advisory board. Five common themes emerged during the interviews which helped to inform this section and provide insight into the participant’s motives to continue volunteering. The themes covered in this section include the time commitment required for serving, the volunteer motivations to interact with students, the various types of engagement activities, the utilization of member expertise, and the role of the dean.

The participants were asked a series of questions related to their level of engagement with the advisory board, to understand their perceived effectiveness of the board, their satisfaction, their feelings of emotional attachment to the board, their identification as a member of the board, and desire to continue as a board member (see Appendix A). Each of these questions sought to reveal their level of engagement as advisory board members and helped to inform an understanding of their motivation to serve as a non-alumni
advisory board volunteer. The following subsections highlight the main themes that emerged in the participant interviews.

**Time Commitment**

Volunteering requires time and energy. High-level hospitality executives and those who own their businesses have a number of demands on their professional and personal time. The participants were asked for about the time commitment necessary for serving on the UNLV advisory board. Participants responded that their advisory board service was not a huge time commitment given there were only two meetings per year. James reflected back on when he was asked to join the advisory board and stated,

> [The time commitment] was probably the only concern I had [about joining]. I’m not one who would sign up for something just to add it to a résumé. I committed to the twice per year meetings, the length of time. It all seemed very doable to me.

On the other hand, Annie, Cate, and Kevin both indicated their preference for longer meetings in order to more effectively delve into issues and spend more time with students. Annie stated,

> I really dislike that the board meeting is half a day. I don’t think we accomplish anything in half a day…I would be very much in favor of a much longer period of time and I think that a full day meeting would give us an opportunity to actually have really valuable input. I also think it would strengthen the board.

In a similar vein, Kevin reflected on the meeting structure and stated, “I think it needs to be longer and it needs to have more types of activities woven into it. There needs to be more interaction with the students…I think we would be more effective as a board…”

Lastly, Cate explained that having only two meetings per year is not conducive to
building relationships, “Not that I necessarily think we need to meet more, but meeting twice a year, you get kind of disconnected. Even if it was three times a year…I think the question would be, ‘how would that work for people?’”

The responses indicate that the time commitment required of board members does not appear to be difficult to uphold. However, what is interesting is that three people mentioned their interest in meeting more often or longer so that it would be a more effective use of their time and help to strengthen the board. This indicates that some board members have a desire to contribute more of their time if asked to do so to help strengthen the advisory board.

**Motivation to Interact with Students**

An overarching theme throughout the interviews included the participant’s desire to make a difference in the lives of students. This appears to be how the volunteers measure the impact they have as a board member. They used words like “impact,” “satisfaction,” and “giving back” to describe their desire to work with students. Kevin reflected,

I look at how a summer internship with a hospitality company got me on my career track. I feel it was a great avenue that opened up for me and I just want to make sure that I am giving back to other highly qualified students…I do really want to feel like I am giving some direct help to the students and giving back to them—some coaching and mentoring. I think that we can have a tremendous impact on individuals and can lead the future of our nation by having an impact on people at a younger age prior to them going into the professional world.

Each participant was asked if there was anything that would further increase their commitment or involvement as a board member. Annie stated, “Yeah…it’s access to the
students…I think that more opportunities to have time with students would really help.”

Annie continued, “One of the things I do here in my work is mentor a lot of young people and I hire a lot of young people for our company…that’s why I like working with the students in the industry.” Annie went on to share,

I think of my strongest personal benefits from [serving on the board] has been a couple experiences with students where I actually had one student say right to their professor that the time I spent in the classroom had been the first time that they were shown the whole industry and they felt inspired. All their ideas of what they wanted to be were reinforced. To me, that’s incredible. To actually have that kind of influence on even just one person—that’s worth being there for as many years as I might find myself there in many regards.

These comments indicate that board members derive personal satisfaction from the opportunities provided to interact with students. This type of benefit, the feeling of satisfaction, appears to be important to the participants.

James indicated that the most fulfilling part of serving on the board is also the interaction with students. James stated, “The few times we’ve actually interacted with students in various ways, I think is a great benefit. It keeps me a little bit closer in touch with an important generation that is critical.” He continued,

I think that all our talk behind closed doors kind of blossoms and flourishes when you have 10 students from the undergraduate program sitting in front of you, [while sharing] your perspective. And the same applies for the classes that we’re asked to speak in. I think that’s very, very fulfilling.
Board members also mentioned that they would like to get to know the faculty and they have not had the opportunity. When asked what they might change about the advisory board, Kevin responded, “We would be more involved with students and faculty…”

Upon learning that there were about 50 professors, James commented,

I think the biggest disconnect we have is that 47 of them are invisible…These are the folks that are in front of our customer—the student. They’re in front of our gold—our fuel. And I think once we might have invited them and there was very low attendance by the faculty. I was actually excited. I said, ‘Wow, I’m going to meet someone that impacts these college kids’ minds’…And the fact that we don’t [know the faculty]—that’s huge…Your critical link are those folks that are teaching these students. And we do not even know who they are.

Developing relationships with students and faculty were important to board member’s perceived level of satisfaction and they expressed that having more interaction would improve their overall volunteer experience. Combine the desire for student and faculty interaction with their desire to get to know their fellow board members, especially as relatively new volunteers, demonstrates that relationships are very important to help them feel directly involved with the hospitality college.

Volunteer Engagement

The volunteers were each asked to share their perspective on the effectiveness of the advisory board. Among the new volunteers, their perception of the level of board effectiveness ranged from “not very,” “average—could be better,” to “solid,” “meet’s purpose,” to “effective.” These results are listed in Table 4 and also outline the
participant responses to several questions that gauge their perceptions of board effectiveness, satisfaction, emotional attachment, and identification as a board member.

Table 4

*New Board Member Engagement Levels*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement</th>
<th>Annie</th>
<th>Cate</th>
<th>James</th>
<th>Kevin</th>
<th>Raymond</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board Effectiveness (open comments)</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>Meets purpose</td>
<td>Reasonably effective</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Only dean can determine High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Satisfaction</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium - High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Attachment</td>
<td>Medium - High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low – Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification with Board (prior to serving)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification with Board today</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each participant was asked about the perceived effectiveness of the board. Kevin responded, “I’d say average. It seems like we end up rehashing a lot of stuff…a lot of it is very general discussion.” Raymond brought this question full circle and indicated only the dean could determine how effective the board is. However, other participants had stronger opinions about the board, which indicated they have a desire to make the advisory board better. Annie responded,

I think that there are individuals on the board who are very helpful and potentially work very closely with the dean. So I would say the university probably gets benefit from the fact that there’s a lot of senior industry people sitting on the board. But my sense is that I would give [the board] about a 45% effectiveness rate….It’s really up
to the individual board members to make more of it. So I took responsibility for saying I want it to be more. And what I found was that I did have that opportunity because I have had enough access to students and that’s been meaningful and it feeds me. But anyway, I think the board could be more effective.

Board members’ satisfaction with the advisory board ranged from low to high. Similarly their emotional attachment to the advisory board ranged from low to high. With regard to the “low” responses, comments indicate that the lack of meaningful relationships with fellow board members lead to feelings of dissatisfaction and lack of commitment, as well as lower identity with the board. Three of the participants indicated that prior to joining the board, they felt a high level of identity with the board. Now, after serving, each of them indicated their level of identity with the board had dropped to a medium sense of identification. This suggests that identity and emotional connections may be connected to the difficulty they experienced in developing personal and professional connections on this board. Identity and emotional connection-related comments also consistently referred back to the lack of existing board relationships they possessed.

**Utilization of Member Expertise**

These volunteers bring to the board a diversity of experiences and a desire to make a difference. Related to understanding their level of satisfaction with board service, each person was asked if they felt their expertise had been tapped for the board. Overwhelmingly, the participants did not believe they have been utilized to the extent they would be willing to offer their assistance.
Annie stated, “There’s no time. There’s just not enough time. We only have half a day and by the time you have had coffee…by the time we’ve gone through the regular meeting, there’s no quality time left to actually accomplish anything.”

James responded that he’s challenged to contribute, not because he doesn’t have the opportunity, but because of the board dynamics.

I don’t know. I was going to immediately say ‘no’…I feel very confident in speaking up. Sometimes I want to stifle myself [because] there are some members of the board that don’t say a word, or say very little.

Kevin stated he still feels new to the board, which may be because in the one and a half years on the board, he has only been able to attend two out of four meetings. In response to the question of whether or not his expertise has been utilized, he stated,

No, and part of that is just me trying to feel my way of when I should speak up and when I should not, because I don’t know a lot of the history. I would say I have been underutilized… I’m new and because I’m an outsider, I don’t feel like I’m making as big of an impact as I would like.

Raymond stated it this way, “My biggest concern since I joined is what I can do for the board and for the students?… If I cannot contribute and haven’t done anything, then I don’t belong here. That’s still in the back of my mind.”

Given that the board members may believe their expertise is not being utilized and that they do not get enough interaction with students, why is it they choose to continue serving? The participants were asked why they would continue as an advisory board volunteer. Annie has a strong desire to contribute, as do all the volunteers interviewed.
Yet, the decision to continue is not always easy, as Raymond reflected above. Annie said she would continue volunteering because she believes things could change.

I would say because I have some sense of hope…because I think the times when I have thought, ‘I’m not sure this is for me,’ or ‘I think that the board would be better served if I were to move on’…The moments that I’ve come to that [decision], I’ve said, ‘okay, well maybe I’ll attend just one more meeting.’ Although I’ve been on the board for a short period of time…it has been a frustration since joining the board. For one thing, we have two meetings a year and it’s really only [one] meeting that gives us access to the students.

Cate’s perspective was somewhat different. She feels a higher level of satisfaction with the board (see Table 4), and explained why she continues as a volunteer, “Well, I think it continues to be the same things that brought me in. I think if there’s anything I can do to help the school get better, I’m interested in doing that on a personal basis.”

**The Role of the Dean and Decisions to Continue Serving**

This advisory board was established in 2000 by the dean of the college to provide industry support and expertise to the dean and the college. The dean has been integral to the board’s development over the past 10 years. Therefore, board members were asked about the role the dean played in their engagement level with the advisory board. Given that a dean transition was occurring during the time of the interviews, the questions were especially relevant.

Cate stated that part of the reason she felt a high level of emotional attachment to the board is because the “[dean has] been great at making everyone feel a part of [the board] and important.” However, the dean transition was not enough of a reason for her to
consider stepping down at the completion of her first term on the advisory board. When reflecting on the importance of having a new dean in relation to the advisory board, James stated,

From my perspective, that position is critical because if it is not someone you have any respect for—this [role on the board] is voluntary…If you think the leader of the school is not a competent leader or has goals that aren’t aligned with what you think the university’s goals should be, or at least the advisory board goals, that’s critical. So the wrong dean who doesn’t give the right attention to the board would be devastating to its success.

James also reflected on the outgoing dean’s long-term relationship with other advisory board members. He commented that longer-serving board members have a loyalty to the outgoing dean.

It’s an interesting dynamic…I’ve heard from a number of people that [the dean’s] departure has caused people to say, ‘Well, I’m ready to get out.’ Their love and affection for [the dean is] all good and commendable, but I’m not on the board because of [the dean]. I guess I could have been there if I knew [him] in advance…. And if [the dean] was the one to ask me and I did it because of great affection for our friendship or working relationship in the past, maybe I would feel that way…I hold him in very high regards. He is top notch in my book and I’m sad to see him go…I’m excited for him. I’m happy for him…His leadership will be missed. But I’m equally excited to learn about the new guy.

Kevin has never considered stepping down from the board but explained how the next dean could be influential in that decision.
It’s not important to be honest…unless the dean said that he doesn’t want the board or he doesn’t want me on it. But from my perspective, it doesn’t really [have] weight. Unless we get the sense at the next board meeting that the dean doesn’t care about anything we are saying.

The feelings of dissatisfaction have at times led Annie to consider stepping down from the board. However, when asked about the dean transition, she stated, “I’m actually kind of excited about a transition at this point because I have no reason to feel anything but entirely optimistic about change. I would say, yes, I’d be delighted to spend another term [on the board].”

Raymond’s consideration to step down from the board came from his feelings of not contributing to the board. He indicated that he is unsure if he will continue for another term. Knowing that a new dean was being hired, he was positive and stated, “I think he can do a lot. He has the benefit of working in the industry. He has been community oriented…I think he should be good for the school.”

While the dean’s leadership is integral to the advisory board members’ feelings of engagement among the new volunteers, the dean was not the only reason they chose to continue serving. Cate shared that the dean helped her feel emotionally attached to the college, however, the dean’s departure does not impact her desire to continue as a volunteer. The responses shared during the interviews expressed a commitment to making an impact in the lives of students and to help the college. The volunteers recognize that leaders may change, but with change comes new opportunity. Therefore being faced with a dean transition did not appear to influence these new board members to step down.
Case 2: The Longer-Serving Advisory Board Volunteers

This case includes five of the total 10 participants selected for this study, each held senior level positions within the hospitality industry. Four of the participants have spent a majority of their careers working in the hospitality industry and one began working in the industry just over a decade ago after making a career change. All five participants hold at least a four-year college degree from an institution other than UNLV and, as in Case 1, one participant studied hospitality management at another university. At the time of the interviews, three participants owned their own companies and the remaining two were executives within companies for which they worked. All have served in a volunteer capacity for other boards or community organizations. Only one has volunteered in some capacity for his alma mater.

Each of the five participants was interviewed in person. Pseudonyms were used in this study to protect the anonymity of the participants. Additionally, professional and personal background details were generalized and some identifying details were excluded. Confidentiality safeguards were put in place so that identifying information would not be made available to anyone outside the research project.

Introduction to the Participants

This section provides a brief description of each of the five longer-serving advisory board members who participated in this study. The purpose is to provide an overview of the board member’s career background, length of involvement, and volunteer experience.
Brooke

Brooke has spent more than 30 years in the hospitality industry including a long career in foodservice management prior to becoming a consultant to executives, owners, and entrepreneurs in the hospitality industry. She has volunteered for several other hospitality programs and informally mentors students who plan to work in hospitality. She was recruited to the board by an existing board member, and continues to seek out people to serve on this board to help diversify its wealth of experience and expertise. The biography she provided for this study includes mention of her advisory board position. Brooke has served on this board for nine and a half years and was interviewed in person.

Charles

Charles has worked in the beverage industry for more than a decade and is one of the few board members that did not start his career in hospitality. A passionate board member, he loves learning from his fellow board members and has a passion for working with students. He is involved with a number of community organizations and has volunteered with his alma mater. However, the UNLV hospitality advisory board is the first higher education board he has served on. Charles was recruited by another board member and has served on the hospitality advisory board for four years. The biography he provided includes mention of his advisory board position. He was interviewed in person.

Elgin

Elgin has spent more than 25 years in the hospitality and gaming industry. He held a number of executive positions while working for several gaming companies prior to starting his own consulting company. He was recruited by the dean of the college as a
founding member of the board after becoming familiar with the university through relationships his employer had with the university. He feels a strong desire to promote gaming education and increase interaction between the gaming executives and the students. The biography he provided includes mention of his advisory board position. Elgin has served on the advisory board for 10 years and was interviewed in person.

**Seth**

Seth’s job after graduating with a degree in hospitality management was as a dishwasher. Since then, he has spent his entire career working in the hotel industry and recently became a consultant to the industry. Seth strongly believes in the importance of helping students be successful and often takes it upon himself to mentor students and help them find jobs after college. He was originally recruited by the dean of the college to serve on the advisory board and has served for 10 years. The biography he provided includes mention of his advisory board position. Seth was interviewed in person.

**Sima**

Sima is an executive in the restaurant industry. Her true passion is teaching and training employees, and appreciates every opportunity to work with college students. In addition to her current volunteer service on the hospitality advisory board, she has also served on industry association boards and other school boards. Sima first became aware of the university when her company was expanding into the Las Vegas area. Upon meeting the dean of the college for the first time, they instantly developed a connection and soon after, the dean recruited her to serve on the recently established advisory board. The biography she provided includes mention of her advisory board position. Sima has served on the board for eight and a half years and was interviewed in person.
Advisory Board Member Involvement

As longer-serving advisory board members, their involvement and participation in areas such as meeting attendance and donating money and time, were tracked. Table 5 provides an overview of three types of volunteer involvement with the university that contribute to feelings of engagement. Brooke, Elgin, and Seth are each considered founding members of the advisory board since they joined within the first year of the advisory board’s creation; Sima joined the board a year and a half later. At the time of the interviews, Charles was serving his second term on the board and had only missed one meeting. The remaining four people were each in their fourth term of service. Board meeting attendance was generally consistent, as they had missed between three and five meetings over the total span of their service.

Table 5

*Overview of New Advisory Board Member Involvement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement</th>
<th>Brooke</th>
<th>Charles</th>
<th>Elgin</th>
<th>Seth</th>
<th>Sima</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of advisory board membership in years</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board meeting attendance since joining, out of total possible</td>
<td>17/20</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>15/20</td>
<td>15/20</td>
<td>15/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent (past 2 years) financial donations made personally or through company</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest lecturer</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four of the five participants have made a financial donation, either personally or through their company, in the past two years. Board members are sometimes invited to guest lecture to classes, either by individual faculty or through coordination by the dean’s
office. During the interviews, the participants were asked about whether or not they had been guest lecturers during their time on the board. All except for Elgin had been a guest lecturer. He shared that he had never been asked although he was interested in doing so.

**Motivation to Volunteer**

As industry leaders, each of these study participants has demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting community and industry organizations as volunteers. The participants have each volunteered with community and educational organizations throughout their careers. They were asked to describe other professional, social, or community organizations for which they were currently volunteering, including their own alma maters. The purpose of these questions was to understand how their volunteer time is spent, as well as open up a discussion related to the level of support their employers gave them to volunteer, given this advisory board’s membership consists people who work in the hospitality industry.

Brooke shared details about a number of other college, community, and industry organizations she was involved in as a volunteer. While she is currently self-employed, she explained that when she worked for a company, they were also supportive of her community involvement, including her role on the UNLV hospitality advisory board. Brooke has worked with two other hospitality schools, and stated why it is important for her to give back,

I’m very dedicated to working with the schools that are actually teaching and training the next generation of leaders in our industry. I’m also dedicated to the fact that I think our traditional model of baptism by fire and paying your dues is not a great one.
Sima shared that her company “absolutely” supports her board service. She has also volunteered for other hospitality schools in the past. Elgin indicated he has served on other boards in the past, but this hospitality advisory board is the only organization for which he currently volunteers. Charles has also been very involved with his community and has focused on serving a number of community organizations. He is the only one among the five participants who has volunteered for his alma mater.

**Awareness of the College and University**

In order to gain insight into the factors that influenced each non-alumni participant’s motivation to serve on the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) hospitality advisory board, they were each asked a series of questions designed to elicit responses regarding their motivations for joining the advisory board (see Appendix A). The participants were each asked about their awareness of the UNLV hospitality college and the university prior to joining the board. They discussed how they were first made aware of the opportunity to serve on the board and why they ultimately chose to join the board. Additionally, they were asked to reflect on any benefits they may have received as a result of serving on the board.

Charles, the newest member among the five participants, joined the advisory board four years ago. He indicated his original impression of the hospitality college was “strong.”

From a distance, I thought it was strong from the students that I had met from the hotel college. I imagine there were probably six or seven over a five-year period who [had come to my company] as part of [a scholarship] and they were impressive.
Seth was aware of the university because he had met alumni who went on to work for his company.

I only knew about it because the students were the best workers and I don’t remember specifically doing anything myself but I remember influencing [my employer] that we needed to recruit there because they were the best out of the box—[those] hotel grads.

For the other board members who joined the board nearly a decade prior, their impression was very different. In contrast to Charles’ opinion, Brooke’s perspective was based on the perceived quality of the university, “…UNLV was the easy place to get a hospitality degree,” she stated with a smile.

Sima compared her first impressions of the university to her current impression. She originally was aware that UNLV had a very large hospitality program, and explained:

I didn't know if it was a well-respected school or not. Sometimes when you associate a lot of things with Las Vegas you know, there's a lot of mixed feelings…I also spoke in a couple of the classrooms and as I got to know the school and people involved in it more and more, and as I got to know [the dean], the more I gained a large respect for the school.

Sima went on to explain that her opinion of the school has changed over time, specifically related to the hospitality college.

…As far as [the college], that’s the part that I've watched—how it has looked at its mission, it has looked at its curriculum, moving into other parts of the world. Wanting to build a hotel within the school… to me, every one of them are steps going forward—steps making UNLV more progressive.
Elgin recalled that with the exception of the basketball team, “You hardly ever heard of anything other than [about] the hotel college, as far as engineering or anything else….So I was pleasantly surprised to find the breadth and depth of the university staff, the faculty, the goals, and mission.”

Given that the board members did not have established connections to the university prior to becoming a volunteer, they were also asked to describe the factors that lead to their decision to join the board. For three of the participants, the dean of the college was instrumental in developing the original advisory board and specifically recruited Elgin, Seth, and Sima to serve on the board. Fellow board members recruited Brooke and Charles.

In terms of any prior connections each person had with the college, Sima did not have any prior connections until she met the dean. She explained, “[Our company was] just establishing ourselves in Las Vegas…I met [the dean] and he asked me to be on the board and that’s how it all started.” Seth shared that he joined the board “because [the dean] told me to,” he said with a laugh. Brooke knew the dean because they were both affiliated with another institution prior to UNLV and she also knew an existing board member. Elgin had no prior connections to the university until he met the dean through some work his company was doing with the university. Lastly, Charles had not met the dean until he attended his first advisory board meeting. He was recruited to the board after meeting a current board at an industry event. “Because I had already hosted students [at my company] over the years who were scholars…I already had…a level of respect and admiration for the organization. Otherwise, I probably would not have been interested.”
Table 6 provides the type of prior connections to the institution as cited by the participants. Four of the participants had a maximum of two prior connections to the institution before joining the advisory board. The mean number of connections per respondent was 1.8.

Table 6

*Longer-Serving Members’ Prior Connections to the Institution*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Connections</th>
<th>Brooke</th>
<th>Elgin</th>
<th>Charles</th>
<th>Seth</th>
<th>Sima</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knew faculty/dean</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knew other board members</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community supporter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knew alumni/hired alumni</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No connection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Mean number of connections per respondent is 1.8.*

The participants were also asked to share their motivations to volunteer for the advisory board upon being asked. Each of the participants shared both professional and personal motivations related to representing their company in the industry as well as their desire to have an impact on students.

Brooke saw she would have the opportunity to interact with people in the industry at a level she wanted to influence. But professional interests were not the only reason for volunteering. Brooke reflected that she had reached a point in her career when it was time for her to give back:
Personally, I was at the age that my give back level was very high. I think as you mature in your career, you take, learn, take, learn, and then you start this very sharp [upward trajectory], ‘what can I do to give back?’ So, personally, I was motivated to give back.

Charles succinctly shared why he joined the advisory board. “Because I think I have something to give back…there’s a lot I want to share with students...” He continued, “If you're fortunate enough to have some level of success in life you should figure out a way to give back…and in giving back you should focus on your strengths. Hopefully I have something to contribute.”

Elgin described the inter-dependence of the gaming industry and education as his motivation for agreeing to serve:

Because I feel that in my little way, to be able to support and to assist the gaming industry, which is an industry that I enjoy being part of, it's important that we support the university and that's why I help. I still feel that way.

In Seth’s case, he stated, “It was a personal motivation….The whole basis of wanting to be a nurturer or developing people comes out of something…some passion.” Simply stated, Seth shared that he considers himself a nurturing person. He felt drawn to the board because of the opportunity to nurture students.

Lastly, Sima reflected that she had both personal and professional motivations to serve on this advisory board:

Because I think it was a combination of personally wanting to especially be available to other young women that are coming up, you know you always read about the glass ceiling, there's always been a lot of controversy about it. I will tell you I have never
once felt it at this company, I think we're all pretty much equal depending on what it is you're contributing to the company….If it meant that young people could talk to me at any point, reach out to me, if I was going to be involved in the classrooms [in any] way, I wanted to be able to give back, but I also wanted to establish a relationship for the company, breaking into a new market.

While none of the participants sought out the opportunity to volunteer, the opportunity to serve on the advisory board seemed to match a stage in their lives where they had an interest in giving back their time and expertise. The advisory board provided a natural outlet for the participants to interact with the students, network with fellow board members, all while supporting the hospitality college, and through it, the industry.

**Benefits of Advisory Board Membership**

The study participants were asked to reflect upon their board service. Specifically, they were asked what, if any, benefits had they received from their board membership. Responses fell into three different categories: (a) job-related benefits; (b) personal satisfaction from spending time with students; and (c) pride in seeing the college develop. The results are summarized in Table 7.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job-related benefits</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal satisfaction of spending time with students</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride in seeing the college develop</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Job related benefits include things such as learning about the various aspects of the hospitality industry. For example, Brooke stated,

[What has] benefited me personally is just the diverse information I have now and exposure and certainly [the] exposure to a broader group of the industry. So professionally I learned much more about hotels than I ever knew. [I’ve] Learned more about gaming than I ever knew. So both of those things have really benefited me. Professionally I think I have also gotten the benefit of people, some people have hired me from the board to work with them and some people have told other people about me. So it's been a good place where people learn my story and learn what I do.

Sima shared that she has also received benefits from her membership on the board. “I think it has given me more insights into Las Vegas. I think I’ve met some terrific people. I’ve become more aware of graduates.”

Charles shared that he has benefitted from his involvement with students and his fellow board members:

The interaction with students, which I think we need even more of, has been invigorating to me. The interaction and listening to other board members has been genuinely stimulating and genuinely enjoyable. And dare I say, down right fun, and you shouldn't do something, anything, in life that is not fun….And it's really has been fun listening to people and having them talk about their businesses. I've learned a number of lessons about business, about careers, about hospitality and it's been entirely a positive experience, I've enjoyed it very much.

Seth responded from a different perspective and stated,
It allowed me to view other board members behavior and strengths and weaknesses. You know, when you sit a room with 30-some people, and you see the quiet ones, you see the vocal ones. You see the ones who, when they say something, it matters and the others…so that's like a learning kind of curve. And that enabled me to talk to and help some young folks. It taught me the hurdles of trying to run a school. You know, being part of a big school.

Brooke and Sima had similar perspectives in that they had benefitted from learning quite a bit about the hospitality industry, which in turn benefits them professionally. Along with Seth, the interactions and exposure to the university, the diversity of board members, and their related professional backgrounds were beneficial to gaining new knowledge.

A positive aspect of board membership is the exposure the volunteers have to fellow industry executives. During their interviews, Annie, Brooke, and Charles cited that networking was perceived as a benefit or motivation for joining. One anticipated benefit to the longer-serving board members is that the volunteers have the opportunity to develop long-term relationships with other board members. Those who have been on the advisory board for nearly 10 years, such as Brooke and Sima, shared similar positive responses about the opportunities to network and build new professional relationships.

Brooke stated, “I’ve developed some very good, very fun, positive relationships with people I would have never known.” In addition to these positive relationships, as Brooke mentioned previously, she has also been hired by board members, which can be attributed to her ability to successfully build relationships on the advisory board. Sima indicated, “I
like very much the people that I’ve met and the relationships.” She continued to share details about how these relationships exist outside the board meetings:

There are a few that will e-mail back and forth. I’ve helped get people jobs or internships for the company that they’ve forwarded along to me [people] they feel strongly about. There’s a handful that I will talk to occasionally. I think that I would be very comfortable if I needed something, that I could reach out to anyone and I would hope they would feel the same way.

Charles discussed that he has typically reached out to other board members following the meetings. However, he has not developed new professional relationships that lead to new business opportunities. He stated, “Certainly, I feel I’m among old friends when I’m at the board meetings….Which is a good thing because camaraderie invites candor and frank discussion. It also invites constructive criticism.”

Elgin felt he has had the chance to network with a number of the board members over the years but by virtue of the fact many live out of state, it is more difficult. “I've had a chance to meet presidents of companies that [I otherwise would] never had the chance to meet.” He continued, “For the most part they're out of town, when they come to town they're not coming here to see me so in most cases I have little opportunity, but I have developed some relationships both on the faculty as well as the college and on the board.”

The responses consistently indicated that networking was a valued benefit to serving on the advisory board. However, Elgin and Charles’ comments were a reminder that the networking may not build their business and that infrequent interactions make it more difficult to build more than introductory relationships.
Motivation to Continue as a Volunteer

This section explored participant motivations that influence their desire and interest to continue or discontinue volunteering as advisory board members. The participants were asked a series of questions related to their level of engagement with the advisory board, to understand their perceived effectiveness of the board, satisfaction, feelings of emotional attachment to the board, identification as a member of the board, and desire to continue as a board member (see Appendix A).

Each of these questions sought to reveal the level of engagement as advisory board members and helped to form an understanding of their motivation to serve as a non-alumni volunteer. The following subsections highlight the main themes identified by the participants.

Time Commitment

The longer-serving board members did not find the time requirement for board meetings to be inconvenient. Sima indicated, “It’s not a huge amount of time and I like very much the people that I’ve met and the relationships. I’ve enjoyed watching the school move forward—as long as the school is moving forward I want to continue to watch it progress.”

Charles commented on his board service and stated, “…the time commitment is not huge. It’s a couple of meetings a year with interesting and stimulating people.” He continued,

I think it’s fair to say that I, as well as most of the other people on the board, are among the busier people you will meet in terms of juggling schedules and calendars. And if we can all make it to the board meetings, then everyone else can.
Aside from these comments, the participants did not have concerns regarding the time required of board meetings, it seems that they are satisfied with the meeting schedule and it supports their motivation to continue serving as a volunteer.

**Motivation to Interact with Students**

Not surprisingly, throughout the interviews the participants described the importance of making a difference in the lives of students. Charles described why it was important to work with students, “I think [the students] play an important role in the advancement of the hospitality industry—I think UNLV plays an important role in the advancement of the hospitality industry in the United States and the success of that industry.” Charles has had the opportunity to meet a number of students and also guest lectured at least once in a class, which supports his conviction about the importance the hospitality college plays in the developing future leaders.

Sima described what has made her feel most satisfied:

When we can make a difference with the kids. That is the one, and we all bring it up at every meeting, that we want to have more of an impact with the kids….I do think that when we can spend time, there's so much talent in the room during those meetings that could impact the kids. I loved the last time that we went around the classrooms as a group and talked about things and that, to me, is powerful and I would love to see more of that.

Charles also expressed opinions similar to those of Sima:

So, I just feel when…I have the chance to interact with students…they are always unfailingly kind and gracious and send thank you notes and all of that, which is certainly not expected, but it is appreciated... I just feel so invigorated. I am so
grateful that I have that opportunity and it is in giving that we receive, and student interaction is a wonderful example of that…. I think we need more of that interaction because you know we're all there for the students and not for each other. However, the board members also consistently felt there was not enough interaction with the students while they were meeting on campus. Brooke commented that the most fulfilling aspect of her work on the board was her work with the students, although there was never enough time set aside to spend with them. Charles shared:

…I think the student interaction component is critical because students will remember. I can remember the guest speakers in college. I can remember guest speakers in high school who came in and talk about their jobs, their career, what they did for a living, what they learned about life vis-a-vie their career. We need to do more of that. That's where some tremendous, tremendous value can be added to board membership and a student benefit after all, that's why we're there.

The participants were also asked why they continue to volunteer. Brooke explained, I think for my own personal satisfaction that I’m doing what I set out to do, which is influencing, having input on the next generation. Every year I usually take on one or two students from UNLV and [work with] them privately…..So [I] help them to make choices about where they are going to go in the industry and just knowing that I have a personal investment in the students. But I think that affects the industry in the long run so I think that keeps me going.

The volunteers consistently shared that they desired more meaningful interaction with the students. The board members’ statements is consistent with their previous comments that they are motivated to serve as volunteers because of the opportunities to interact with
students and the personal satisfaction they may gain from that experience. Interestingly, the participants discussed how they wanted to make an impact on students, but aside from wanting more interaction with students in the classroom, most of the participants did not share any other specific ideas about how to make further impact.

The participants spoke quite a bit about their desire to have more access to students. Given that four of the five have spoken in classes, but still desire more interaction, other sources of student involvement are reviewed here. Seth shared that he influenced his prior employer to recruit at the university and now the employer recruits students every year. Additionally, after listening to a student panel discussion, Seth identified one student as a potential recruit. He then assisted her in finding a job and has since become a mentor to her.

Brooke described how she initiates one-on-one mentoring with a student each year outside of the board meetings and Seth likes to mentor and help students find jobs. There are additional opportunities such as recruiting and hiring students and alumni, providing internships, mentoring students, and making donations or helping to secure financial support. Each of these are additional types of activities board members can engage in to have a direct and meaningful impact on students beyond guest lecturing.

**Volunteer Engagement**

The volunteers were asked to share their perspective on the effectiveness of the advisory board, as well as their feelings of satisfaction, emotional attachment, and identification as a board member. These results are presented in Table 8. The responses regarding the effectiveness of the advisory board ranged from “marginal” to “very effective.” Board member satisfaction ranged from “low” to “medium-high” at the high
end. With regard to feelings of emotional attachment, all five board members indicated medium-high to high levels of attachment. They each have a strong feeling of attachment despite generally not feeling highly satisfied. Three of the volunteers felt a high level of identification with the board prior to joining, and only one maintained this high level. The two other participants indicated their identity dropped to medium. However, two people felt an increased identity level compared to when they first started serving on the board.

Table 8

*Longer-Serving Board Member Engagement Levels*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement Level</th>
<th>Brooke</th>
<th>Charles</th>
<th>Elgin</th>
<th>Seth</th>
<th>Sima</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board Effectiveness (open comments)</td>
<td>Dedicated group. Needs focus/purpose</td>
<td>Very effective</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Moving ahead when there weren’t funding problems</td>
<td>Core group of committed people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Satisfaction</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low – Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium – High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Attachment (prior to serving)</td>
<td>High: relationships; Medium: purpose</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium - High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification with Board today</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Brooke expanded upon why she believes the board is not as effective as it could be when she shared that the board needed a clear focus and purpose. She suggested one way to improve this effectiveness is to follow-up with the board on the results of their advice:
Well I think it's a dedicated group of people. Effective means...do we have a vision and focus and purpose...? And I don't think we have a very strong vision and focus and purpose....[It's an] informal board. Now it is an Advisory Board. I think the…discussion around advice can be much, much better because we don't see...when we're asked a question…I don't see the follow-up to the…answer to their question.

Elgin responded most similarly to Brooke. He expressed that the advisory board was marginally effective and he felt a medium to low level of satisfaction with the board. To explain, he shared some constructive advice on changes that could increase his own commitment or involvement:

I would love to see a more clearly defined mission statement along with specific goals and milestones. What does the new dean want and need from us, and how do we become more accountable in providing it to him? As a planner, I like to know where I’m going, what I have to do to get there, and how to recognize it when I have gotten there.

On the other hand, Charles felt like the advisory board is very effective, and responded to the question, how effective is the advisory board?:

Very effective in that the dean of the hotel college, whoever he is at any given chapter in the history of the university, needs real world perspective and the incoming dean is an example of someone who certainly has that. Having said that, he will soon be immersed in the daily duties of running the hotel college—it's inescapable. So, he will need real world perspective and a few hours twice a year is worth the time and effort of all involved because that real world perspective, current real world perspective, is of value to the university because everyone of those students ultimately is going to be
out there in the real world. That's the goal. And the goal is that they succeed in the real world. They can't succeed in the real world unless the hotel college helps them prepare for that real world. And that's where the advisory of board comes in.

The emotional attachment to the advisory board ranged from medium to high, and four people mentioned they currently felt high attachment. Despite this high attachment, they did believe it could be stronger. Sima indicated that her involvement as a board member could indeed be increased. “I think if we did more with the kids. If we did more in the classroom I would be willing to come out more often and do something in a classroom.”

Both Brooke and Charles indicated that they could have a stronger impact. “Well, I think I would just repeat that I think we can be doing so much more and I don't think we're tapped to do that,” stated Brooke. Charles shared, “I think I could contribute more if I had more student interaction particularly in the classroom setting. Being a guess speaker in the classroom. I think I can be most impactful if I have more classroom interaction.”

Although this group of volunteers did not attend UNLV, as longer-serving board members, they expressed strong emotional identity to UNLV, almost as if they had adopted the school as their own. For example, Elgin expressed positively, “I’m proud to be part of this university.” Sima explained her attachment to the college after nearly a decade of involvement.

Again, I think it's watching [the school] move forward to, you know, it had that Las Vegas connection to overcome. I mean, in some ways a Las Vegas connection is a good thing but in lot of ways it's not. I sit back and I get, personally, professionally,
any which way you want to look at it, proud when I hear people talk about it in a real positive light. I feel a real attachment. Whether I went there or didn't go there, it doesn't matter, you know, it's like being a Mom. Whether you adopt or whether you give natural birth, when you make a decision to take on something, it's the same as whether I graduated from there or I didn't.

Brooke also explained her level of pride and attachment to the university:

I do talk about [the college] a lot….I think that there is identification with that school. The question becomes, where is your loyalty level and where is your attachment level?...I don't run around going 'Go Rebels!' but every time I see UNLV I feel very proud that I contributed there and very proud of what it can be in our industry….I think I'm more dedicated to what can happen for our industry because I think I feel…I owe more back to the industry than I owe to anybody else. So you know, UNLV becomes a vehicle for that.

Seth was the only volunteer who expressed he has not felt fulfilled recently. He indicated he feels a high emotional connection to the college but he has not been able to make a meaningful contribution lately. He discussed his contemplation of stepping down from the board:

I don’t feel fulfilled because I think the need for money is extremely important and I am unable to deliver on that promise….I mean, I’m not getting out because of anything [the board is] doing wrong, it’s what I can’t do. And again, being the nurturing person that I was in the hotel business…you can’t spend extra money here participating in something and not have a residual [good] feeling…But if…it is time to go, I’d feel badly about it. But I will if I can’t feel relevant.”
The participants consistently ranked their emotional attachment higher than their satisfaction levels. Elgin and Seth both feel lower (medium) identification with the board today compared to how they felt before joining the board (high). Based on their comments, Elgin and Seth range from a low to medium level of attachment and have shared that there are things that could be done to increase their satisfaction and identity as board members. For example, increasing the amount of student interaction would provide an opportunity to potentially make their board service more meaningful. Brooke and Charles each indicated they felt medium satisfaction with the board yet had high attachment with the board. This indicates that they still feel high attachment as members despite not feeling the board is highly effective. Sima was the one board member who indicated feeling a medium-high level of satisfaction and also a medium-high level of attachment to the advisory board.

Together, Brook, Charles, and Sima each indicated feeling a high level of identification with the advisory board today while Elgin and Seth felt a medium level of identification. Despite and frustrations or challenges the participants may have expressed, overall, the responses indicated they all felt a high attachment to the advisory board. Their expressed concern and suggestions for improvement seem to come from feeling attachment and concern for their roles on the advisory board and desire to make it a stronger, more meaningful advisory board.

**Utilization of Member Expertise**

Given that each of the volunteers brought a wealth of experiences and expertise to the advisory board, they were asked if they felt their expertise had been utilized on the board. Consistently, the longer-serving advisory board members expressed they have not been
able to contribute their expertise to the board or to the students to the extent they are willing to share it. Their opinions ranged from disappointment to acceptance that their expertise may not be utilized. While Elgin, Sima, and Brooke expressed that they had realistic expectations of serving on this board, there still have been unmet expectations, such as the access to students. Elgin expressed his opinion on the parameters of the board’s responsibility:

I did not ever feel that my position was to instruct or direct or influence other than information that I may be able to contribute to....I'm telling you it just makes me nervous when I get into those meetings and they start saying 'Well, you need to do this, this, and this....' and I just go, 'it's not our job, people, to tell the dean how to run his school.

With that said, Elgin also commented:

I don’t think anybody has been tapped. I don’t think that anybody has been utilized properly….I think it’s an opportunity to have…people on the board that can provide contacts and ideas and I think it’s an opportunity for us and I don’t think people know how [they] can contribute.

On the other hand, Sima did not have an expectation that her role on the board would draw upon her expertise. She stated,

Has my [industry] knowledge of laws and all that been used? No. But…I didn’t think it would be unless I was in the classroom talking to kids or meeting with faculty about some of the things that you face today? But I think that was my expectation of the board.

Brooke felt as though she has contributed somewhat:
I think my experience has been tapped; my perspective of the industry has been tapped. I think my personal expertise in the areas of strategy and communication haven't been tapped because it's such a dysfunctional group in meetings… I would just repeat that I think we can be doing so much more and I don't think we're tapped to do that.

Charles also confirmed that his expertise had not been utilized enough. His solution was to take advantage of opportunities to talk with the students and get more “involvement in the curriculum.” Lastly, Seth shared,

I think I would be more comfortable feeling that I was really contributing something and I’m not any longer. And so I could probably do better with my time because I don’t have that passion that I did before and I need to feel that. I think the board needs people. If you’re on the board, you have to give money—you have to raise money. And I don’t want to do that.

These longer-serving volunteers expressed their desire to contribute more of their expertise yet it was tempered with a realistic view that there were limited ways to contribute. None of them approached their role unrealistically, and all were most concerned that they wanted to make more of a difference.

The Role of the Dean and Decisions to Continue Serving

For the longer-serving advisory board members, the role of the dean of the college was integral to their board service. Their desire to continue on the board is partially because of the years of service they had already contributed and also due to the relationships they had built over time. The outgoing dean was held in high regard by each of these advisory board members, yet the dean transition was supported favorably and
only one person interviewed among the five was considering stepping down. However, this appeared to be only marginally related to this leadership transition.

Seth indicated he was not sure he wanted to continue as a volunteer, but had felt this way for some time before the announcement of the dean transition took place:

I think that my initial reason for being there was the relationship with [the outgoing dean] and the ability to get [students] jobs… I think that I’d be more comfortable feeling that I was really contributing something, and I’m not any longer…

In Elgin’s experience, the dean was instrumental in his interest in serving on the advisory board.

When I met [the dean] I was very impressed with his background, his personality, his excitement and enthusiasm and vision for UNLV’s hotel college. It was contagious and I just felt that… any city that has a university will never be better than that university. Over the last 24 years, I have determined that gaming needs the UNLV hotel college.

Charles explained how that he was quite likely to renew his term of membership on the advisory board when the time came. With regard to the role of both the outgoing and incoming deans, he shared, “I am a big fan of [the outgoing dean] as well. One of the things that was really terrific was the fact that [the outdoing dean] enthusiastically embraced [the new dean’s selection].” With regard to his interest in continuing as a board member, he stated,

I think if we had someone whom I had a significant problem with, then it may be impactful although, fortunately we got someone, who by all accounts, appeared to be magnificently suited for the position. So, it’s really not an issue. But… if a person
wasn’t someone great, it might be an invitation to try to help them be great…I it would certainly be a topic of thought and conversation but would it inspire me to stay or go? I’m not sure.

Charles continued,

If for whatever reason, someone in the position of authority determined that my services were no longer needed I would step aside graciously. But I wouldn’t want to stay if there is someone who thought my contributions weren’t valuable and impactful.

Regarding her board service, Sima commented that stepping down “has never crossed my mind.” With regard to the dean’s transition and its impact on her volunteer role, Sima stated,

I will miss [the dean]…I think the new dean coming in deserves a smooth transition and I think [the outgoing dean] picked us and we owe it to [him] to continue giving back…If I feel it’s going nowhere then, we’ll see. But I’m going to be optimistic and I’m going in to give my full support…You know what…you’ve got to give it a chance. You owe it to [the outgoing dean] and you owe it to the school that you give it a chance and see if we can at least make a smooth transition.

Brooke expressed that she has not ever considered stepping down. “As long as I feel I’m contributing I wouldn’t step down unless people thought I was stale.” In reference to the dean’s transition, similar to Sima, Brooke stated,

I’m sure [the new dean] will lose some people because of those that are [the outgoing dean’s] followers. But I think there are still a lot of people that are here, not just because of the [outgoing dean] but because of the university…There are some
[volunteers] that did it just because [the dean] asked them to and there’s no doubt in my mind that there will be a huge fall off when [the dean] leaves because it was a personal friendship that brought them in and made them commit.

Charles reflected on the role of the board in helping the new dean transition into his role:

…he will soon be immersed in the daily duties of running the hotel college—it’s inescapable. So, he will need real-world perspective and a few hours twice a year is worth the time and effort of all involved. Because that real-world perspective is of value to the university because everyone of those students ultimately is going be out there in the real world. That's the goal. And the goal is that they succeed in the real world. They can't succeed in the real world unless the hotel college helps them prepare for that real world. And that's where the advisory of board comes in…The advisory board is not there to provide the plan, we're there to provide perspective.

In summary, the five participants each had a very positive outlook on the leadership transition. They each possessed strong, positive feelings for the outgoing dean yet expressed their commitment to ensuring the advisory board transitions smoothly as the new dean steps in to lead the college. The board members understood that their long-term commitment to the organization would be important as advisors to the dean, as Sima stated so succinctly above, “You owe it to [the outgoing dean] and you owe it to the school that you give it a chance and see if we can at least make a smooth transition.”

However, it cannot be overlooked that Seth expressed his dissatisfaction with serving on the advisory board because he was no longer in a position to contribute in a way that
was personally meaningful. The timing of having the dean step down may be the impetus for him to make a decision about his board service.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of two case studies in which the researcher explored the motivations of volunteers to serve on the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) hospitality advisory board for an institution of higher education they did not attend. This research sought to understand the two research questions outlined in this study: 1) the motivational factors that influenced people to serve as non-alumni volunteers to a hospitality education advisory board; and 2) to understand the motivational factors of participants for renewing his or her term of service on the advisory board. The next chapter will provide a cross-case analysis and identify similarities and differences across Case 1 and Case 2 participants related to their motivations for serving.
CHAPTER 5
CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

In this chapter, using the process identified by Merriam (1998), the data was analyzed across both cases in order to identify similarities and differences among the motivations of new and longer-serving volunteers to a hospitality advisory board. By identifying similarities and differences, this cross-case analysis seeks to provide additional insight into the motivations cited by participants to volunteer for a university from which they did not graduate.

This chapter also provides a brief summary of the two case studies presented in Chapter 4 and then revisits the study’s research questions in an attempt to answers those questions using a cross-case analysis. The analysis was framed based on the research questions in this study that addressed two areas of inquiry: 1) what are the motivational factors that influenced the participants’ desire to serve as non-alumni volunteers to a hospitality education advisory board?; and 2) what are the motivational factors of participants to renewing his or her term of service on the advisory board after the first term was completed. Research question 1 is addressed in the Motivation to Volunteer section and research question 2 is addressed in the Motivation to Continue Volunteering section that follows.

Case Study 1 and Case Study 2

Case 1 included five people who were serving their first term as advisory board volunteers. Their terms of volunteer service ranged from two to three years for the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). The five participants spent a majority of their careers working in the hospitality industry and were currently working in that industry.
Three participants have at least a four-year college degree from institutions other than UNLV, one of whom specifically studied hospitality management at another university. At the time of the interviews, two participants owned their own companies and the remaining three were executives within companies for which they worked. All have served in a volunteer capacity on other boards or community organizations. While all five people volunteered to serve at a university they did not graduate from, only two have volunteered in some capacity for their alma maters.

Case 2 included five longer-serving volunteers who had served on the advisory board anywhere from four to 10 years. Four of the participants spent a majority of their careers working in the hospitality industry and just one person began working in the industry just over a decade ago after making a career change. All five participants hold at least a four-year college degree from institutions other than UNLV and, as in Case 1, one participant studied hospitality management at another university. At the time of the interviews, three participants owned hospitality-related consulting companies and the remaining two were executives within hospitality companies for which they worked. All have served in a volunteer capacity for other boards or community organizations. Only one has volunteered in some capacity for his alma mater.

**Advisory Board Member Involvement**

Weerts and Ronca (2008) stated that alumni have a personal investment in their alma mater and therefore make good volunteers and advocates. They are also more likely to have access to a strong network of influential people. Given that these types of involvement behaviors have been found to lead to engagement among alumni, this cross-case analysis seeks to understand the motivations of non-alumni to serve an institution
they did not graduate from and how they were able to develop connections to that institution despite having not attended.

This study considered a variety of factors that might lead to volunteer engagement and helps explain the motivation volunteers experienced to serve on an advisory board. Table 9 provides the background on both Case 1 and Case 2 volunteers’ length of service, meeting attendance, donations, and guest lecturing in classes. Meeting attendance ranged from 50% to 100% for new members. Among the longer-serving volunteers, the lowest attendance was 75% and the highest attendance was 88%. The average attendance for new members was 73.4% and 81.2% for longer-serving members. While the attendance varied among both groups, none of the participants indicated that time commitment to attend the meetings was unreasonable. In fact, several new members suggested that longer meetings be planned in order to make them a more effective use of their time.

Among both the new and longer-serving members, 80% of the participants had made a financial donation to the hospitality college at least once in the past two years; therefore there was no difference between the two groups. Preston and Brown (2004) researched factors such as attendance, donating money, and donating time as indicators that volunteers will be more actively engaged and feel a stronger commitment to the organization if they exhibit these behaviors. Preston and Brown used Meyer and Allen’s (1997) Three-Component Model of Commitment in their research and found that affective commitment is the emotional attachment, identification, and involvement with the organization. Individuals who have strong affective commitment will continue volunteering for the organization. In this study, the length of service, meeting attendance, donations, and guest lecturing were considered important engagement factors among
volunteers. These activities attributed to participant affective commitment, in that they are more likely engaged board members if they are participating in these ways.

Table 9

*Overview of Advisory Board Member Involvement*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advisory board membership in years</th>
<th>Board meeting attendance since joining</th>
<th>Recent financial donations made personally or through company</th>
<th>Guest lecturer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Board Members*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annie 3</td>
<td>4/6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cate 3</td>
<td>5/7</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James 2.5</td>
<td>5/5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin 2</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raymond 2.5</td>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longer-Serving Board Members**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooke 9.5</td>
<td>17/20</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles 4.5</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elgin 10</td>
<td>15/20</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seth 10</td>
<td>15/20</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sima 8.5</td>
<td>15/18</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* aAttendance averaged 73.4%, 80% were donors, and 40% had guest lectured. bAttendance averaged 81.2%, 80% were donors, and 80% had guest lectured.

The most noticeable difference between the two groups is the rate at which board members have served as guest lecturers in classes in the college. Just 40% of the new
board members had guest lectured compared to 80% of the longer-serving members. This is likely due to the fact that the new board members have had far fewer opportunities to guest lecture. They have not had much access to the faculty during their tenure, making it difficult to be invited in to classrooms, as stated by new members James and Kevin during their interviews. Generally, the faculty and volunteer board members have not had opportunities to interact in the past, a disconnection that is not yet clearly understood. Based on the interview responses, neither the faculty nor the volunteers have reached out to each other directly regarding being invited into the classroom.

Of the six participants who have guest lectured, they most recently had done so through coordination by the Dean’s Office while they were attending advisory board meetings. Consistently, among both new and longer-serving volunteers, the participants indicated a strong desire to have more interaction with students and several also wanted to interact with faculty. This could be described as a desire to increase their emotional attachment. This expressed desire to become more involved and get to know students and faculty is an extension of the findings of Stephens, Dawley, and Stephens (2004), that those who have a greater emotional attachment to an organization may possess a stronger sense of obligation, which in turn builds loyalty.

**Motivation to Volunteer**

Research Question 1: *What are the motivational factors of participants that influenced his or her desire to serve as a non-alumni volunteer to a hospitality education advisory board?*

In this study, each advisory board member was recruited to volunteer rather than seeking the opportunity to serve. Among new volunteers, existing board members
recruited four of the five members. Of the longer-serving board members, an existing member recruited two people and the college dean recruited the remaining three people. Reliance upon the dean to be involved with recruiting each longer-serving member was understandable given most of the recruitment took place during the initial stages of forming the advisory board. As for the new volunteers, existing board members had by then more actively assumed the recruitment function. The involvement from the dean during the early years of creating the advisory board was evident in his volunteer recruitment activity. This connection the dean had was exemplified in the members’ responses regarding the role of the dean in their commitment to serving as compared to Case 1 members.

Wilson (2000) found that recruitment conducted by current board members was common, explaining that most volunteers are recruited to serve through the more effective face-to-face invitations. This is especially true if recruitment is done by an existing volunteer who is familiar with the volunteer activity. Additionally, Widmer’s (1985) study found that 43% of board members first talked with a friend before joining the board. In this advisory board study, existing volunteers recruited 60% of the participants and the dean or a staff member recruited the remaining 40%, but recruitment by the dean occurred early in the history of the board.

Research by Taylor, Chait, and Holland (1991) looked at the connections existing board of trustees members had with the institution prior to serving. They found that the more connections the trustees had, the more effective the boards were. The Taylor et al. study found that members of effective boards had a mean number of connections per respondent of 1.8 compared to a mean of .8 for members on ineffective boards.
While this advisory board study did not explore effective versus ineffective boards, the comparison to the Taylor et al. study was helpful to use as a comparison. Among the Case 1 non-alumni volunteers in this study, there was a higher mean number of connections per respondent at 2.6 compared to 1.8, the number of prior connections effective trustees held in the Taylor et al. study (see Table 10). Among the Case 2 volunteers, they had a mean number of 1.8 prior connections with the university, equal to that found in the research by Taylor et al.

Taylor et al. speculated that previous connections to the college might influence the motivation of trustees. That research is helpful in understanding the potential importance that social connections may have on one’s motivation to join and continue volunteering for an organization. In the current study, Case 1 participant Kevin was the only person to join the advisory board without having a prior connection with the university; an existing board member who subsequently resigned by the time Kevin joined the board recruited him. While the Case 2 longer-serving members had fewer connections than Case 1, their prior connections to the college and their longevity on the board indicates they have some level of volunteer commitment to the college and the advisory board.
Table 10

*Prior Connections to the Institution*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>New Advisory Board Members&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Longer-Serving Advisory Board Members&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Annie</td>
<td>Cate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knew faculty</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knew other board members</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community supporter</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied to the school</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knew alumni/hired alumni</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved with University in another capacity</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No connection

*X*

<sup>a</sup>Mean number of connections per respondent is 2.6.  
<sup>b</sup>Mean number of connections per respondent is 1.8.

McPherson, Popielarz, and Drobnic (1992) discussed that those who have strong ties to an organization were more likely to remain a member. Similarly, in this study, eight out of the 10 participants knew at least a faculty member or existing board member before joining the advisory board and only Kevin had no previous connections to the institution prior to joining the advisory board. While the longer-serving members in Case 2 had a maximum number of 1.8 prior connections, which was fewer than the Case 1 participants, their longevity on the board ranged from four and a half to 10 years (see...
Table 9), indicating they had already made a long-term commitment to serving. That they had been recruited to the board by the dean of the college and that they expressed admiration for the dean may be factors influencing their long term commitment, an example of the quality of the relationship being more important to commitment than the number of relationships.

When the participants were asked to cite their motivations for participating on the advisory board, the answers among both Case 1 and Case 2 were consistent with “ideological incentives” cited by Widmer (1985). These incentives are considered intangible rewards such as satisfaction and gratification, “which are expected to accompany efforts to achieve goals which do not directly benefit the participant but which rather result from working toward ‘something one believes in’” (Taylor, Chait, & Holland, 1991, p. 211).

Widmer’s ideological incentives were compared to the responses from the participants in the current study to see if they matched the theoretical model, which they did. Ideological incentives include reasons such as an interest in education (Annie, Elgin, and Sima); interest or respect for the college (Cate); service to the community (Cate; Brooke, Charles, Seth, and Kevin); having a loyalty or love of the college (James); and long-term connections to the college (Raymond).

Kevin, Brooke, and Sima also shared responses that matched Widmer’s (1985) “material incentive” category, that is, the incentive to gain professional development or to serve the expectations of the employer. This perspective seems appropriate given Kevin had no meaningful connections to the college prior to serving, but he expressed his desire to develop new relationships through his board affiliation. Longer-serving members
Brooke and Sima, who have both held a long-term relationship with the college, both indicated that their time spent on the advisory board provided benefits to their professional development and connections to the hospitality industry.

There were two individuals from among Case 1 and one from Case 2 who indicated they had considered stepping down from the board at one point. As a new member, Raymond did not believe he had been able to make a difference over the past two and a half years. Despite knowing the dean, faculty, and other board members, as well as living in the community, he indicated he did not feel as though he was contributing at a meaningful level. Annie, who had served three years, expressed that she had considered stepping down because she did not feel satisfied with her experience on the board. While Seth, who had served 10 years, indicated he had considered stepping down because he was not able to help in ways that he had in previous years. While they may have each possessed ideological motivations for joining the advisory board, those incentives may have been outweighed by not feeling satisfied with their advisory board experience.

As was seen in Herzberg’s (1968/2003) research, factors that lead to employee motivation are different from those hygiene factors that lead to job dissatisfaction. Hygiene factors such as the structure of the volunteer job itself may lead to dissatisfaction, as stated by the participants in this study who were dissatisfied with their role as volunteers. Similarly, Gidron (1978) indicated that workers needed to make the level and nature of rewards fit their expectations. Additionally, Dailey’s (1986) organizational commitment research confirmed that job satisfaction was the most important factor in organizational commitment and that volunteer respondents indicated that their volunteer job could be changed in order to be more motivating. Through the
cross-case analysis of Case 1 and Case 2, the idea of changing the volunteer role to improve satisfaction may be a reasonable suggestion for this advisory board to impact satisfaction among both new and longer-serving members.

**Benefits of Advisory Board Membership**

The study participants were asked to reflect upon their board service during their interviews. Specifically, they were asked what, if any, benefits had they received from their board membership. Responses fell into different categories: (a) job-related benefits; (b) personal satisfaction from spending time with students; (c) pride in seeing the college develop; and (d) have not benefitted. The results of both the new and longer-serving volunteers are summarized in Table 11.

Table 11

*Benefits of Serving*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>New Board Member Responses</th>
<th>Longer-Serving Board Member Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job-related benefits</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal satisfaction of spending time with students</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride in seeing the college develop</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have not benefitted</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* <sup>a</sup>One participant first stated she had not benefitted but then later stated she had benefitted from membership. Her original response is noted here.

This advisory board study found that a majority of both the new and longer-serving board members, when asked the open-ended questions, similarly cited two primary benefits to serving: job-related benefits and personal satisfaction of spending time with
students. Eight participants felt they had benefitted (some listed more than one benefit) from their service. One longer-serving volunteer from Case 2 reported that another benefit was to watch the college develop over time. As explained in Widmer’s (1985) research, content board members cited benefits to serving and an “accomplishment of personal objectives” (p. 20). This supports the idea that these advisory board volunteers may be more content with their board service compared to the people who indicated they had not benefitted from serving.

Cate and Raymond from Case 1 initially felt they had not received any benefits from serving on the advisory board. However, immediately after Cate stated this, she then clarified that she had received professional benefits through networking. Yet Raymond did not believe he had benefitted. This is similar to Widmer’s findings that discontented board members reported few benefits and a “failure to achieve desired objectives and the inability to play desired roles” (p. 20). While there were three volunteers who had considered stepping down from the board, only Raymond indicated he did not feel he had benefitted from his time on the board.

Overall, the participant opinions converged into four categories when it came to sharing self-reported benefits received by serving on the board. Both Case 1 and Case 2 participants were felt similarly in this regard. A majority of answers fell into two main categories: job-related benefits and personal satisfaction of spending time with students. Therefore, as Widmer suggests, the “incentives” or benefits to serving should be explicit to prospective members to ensure their objectives are best matched to the volunteer role.
Motivation to Continue as a Volunteer

Research Question 2: What are the motivational factors of participants for renewing their term of service on the advisory board after the first term was completed?

This section compares and contrasts the perspectives of both the new and longer-serving members related to their motivations to continue serving as volunteers to the hospitality advisory board. Factors such as the ability to network with fellow board members, time commitment, interactions with students, volunteer engagement, utilization of member expertise, and the role of the dean were common topics that emerged during the interviews for both groups of participants. A discussion of these topics continues in the followings sections.

Networking

In their study on volunteer satisfaction, Galindo-Kuhn and Guzley (2001) found that social relationships among fellow volunteers were a predictor of intent to remain as a volunteer. Research has shown that individuals with extensive social networks, or social capital, and prior volunteer experience each increase the chances of volunteering (Wilson & Musick, 1997; Wilson, 2000). Additionally, Haski-Leventhal and Cnaan (2009) stated, …social capital can also explain the impact of human capital (income and education) on volunteering, given that individuals with higher positions at work and those who attended college have more social contacts, which increases the chances they would be asked to volunteer or will know people who volunteer (p. 66).

Consistently among both Case 1 and Case 2, high-achieving industry leaders were recruited to serve on this advisory board. Therefore, being categorized into the high social capital category as discussed by Haski-Leventhal and Cnaan was appropriate.
These people may be more likely to participate as volunteers, have more education, better jobs, and higher incomes than those who may not have high social capital (McPherson, 1992; Widmer, 1985).

Research findings about the importance of volunteer relationships are again supported by the participant’s comments from both Case 1 and Case 2 (Galindo-Kuhn & Guzley, 2001; Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009; Wilson & Musick, 1997; Wilson, 2000). Those who indicated they had existing personal relationships with other board members expressed satisfaction with the social and professional relationships that existed, as previously stated by Case 1 participants Brooke, Sima, and Charles. While not a written expectation of volunteering for the board, developing business connections does sometimes happen. Brooke indicated that she had received business referrals from board members but Charles and Cate specifically stated that they had not.

Cate and Kevin from Case 1 and Elgin from Case 2 each expressed their desire to build stronger relationships with their fellow board members. Kevin, who had served the least amount of time on the board, and Elgin, who had served the longest amount of time, similarly stated that the relationships they had were not strong enough to keep in touch with people outside of meetings. Cate enjoyed making new contacts but hoped they would develop into more meaningful professional relationships. While not every participant mentioned the business relationship piece, it was discussed by several members from each case and therefore, indicates that generally speaking, board members among both Case 1 and Case 2 had an expectation of building professional business and networking relationships with other volunteer board members.
Stephens, Dawley, and Stephens (2004) theorized that larger organizations may decrease commitment level among members because they can be impersonal and more difficult to identify with or build meaningful relationships. This may be the case for newer board members such as Cate and Kevin, who expressed they have not had the opportunity to build relationships with existing board members. Additionally, Elgin is an original founding member, and it is possible that the board has grown to a size where he feels he has not been able to get to know his fellow board members. While Stephens et al. did not state the exact size considered to be “large” for a board, this advisory board had 27 members and only meets twice per year for a relatively short amount of time, one half day per meeting. Therefore, the structure of both the advisory board and the meetings may contribute to the lack of opportunity for volunteers to strengthen desired relationships, as expressed by Cate, Kevin, and Elgin.

**Time Commitment**

Individual motivation to serve on this advisory board was not hampered by the time required to serve based on the participants’ comments. However, their satisfaction with how their time was spent is another aspect of commitment. In fact, Annie, Cate, and James from Case 1 each suggested that the meetings could be better if they were actually longer or more often while also providing an opportunity to make more of an impact through interaction with students, as well as a desire to spend more time advising students and giving feedback. The Case 1 volunteers were much more specific about how they preferred their time be used.

The members of Case 2 did not have any suggestions for the meetings related to the time commitment, but rather, stated that the time commitment was reasonable. As longer-
serving volunteers, Sima shared that as long as the college was making progress, her service was worth her time. Charles commented that those who are on the board are all very busy people; however, everyone should be able to attend the meetings. It may be that longer-serving board members have figured out how to use the limited meeting time to network because they are more familiar with some members than are the newer members. If so, then the newer members will likely be left out until they too learn how to maximize meeting time to realize or promote their satisfaction.

Participants did not attribute their discontent specifically to the time commitment required by the board, but rather to how their time was being used. There appears to be a connection to how their time is spent and their commitment level. Volunteers from both Case 1 and Case 2 expressed their desire to use the time to have meaningful interactions with students. This topic of interacting with students will be discussed in the next section.

**Motivation to Interact with Students**

The desire to make a difference in the lives of students by experiencing meaningful interactions was a common theme between both the newer and longer-serving members. Annie, from Case 1, stated that providing more access to students would definitely increase her commitment and involvement with the college. Brooke, from Case 2, shared that she receives personal satisfaction from student interaction but still desires more such contact.

New members Kevin and James both commented that they also desired access to the faculty because of the integral role faculty have in teaching students. It was mentioned by James that he recalled only one opportunity in past years to meet the faculty, but that the event was not well attended. There appears to be a disconnect between the expectations
of the volunteers to work directly with faculty and students and the mission of the advisory board to be advocates for the college. While both aspects may be a natural fit, the significant focus on faculty and student interaction has not been the primary mission of the board, but rather, it is to serve as a resource and advisor to the dean of the college. The Case 2 longer-serving members did not share many comments related to faculty interactions, whether it was because they were used to the meeting structure or perhaps because it wasn’t as significant an issue to them. While the answer isn’t clear, it was evident that the newer members desired the faculty interaction.

Throughout the interviews, it became apparent that individual board member strongly desired to make a difference in the lives of students was important, but how they could do so was somewhat limiting. In one way or another, each participant in both Case 1 and Case 2 indicated that they wanted to make a difference in the lives of students, but most focused only on being guest lecturers as a way to do so. As one example, while 80% of the volunteers have made financial donations to the college in the past two years, none of them commented about how these gifts support students or that as donors they are valuable resources to ensure the college continues to have resources to support students.

Only Brook and Seth from Case 2 spoke about their commitment to mentor students outside of meetings. Longer-serving volunteer Seth and new member Cate were the only two people who discussed the many years they spent hiring students specifically from UNLV, although they were not doing so during the time of the interviews, possibly because they are now consultants as opposed to working for companies that have the need to hire recent graduates. Of the remaining participants, only Kevin mentioned influencing his company to recruit and hire at the university. Additionally, none of the
volunteers mentioned contacting the college outside of attending meetings when they were in town for business (or for those who live in town), to request opportunities to guest lecture, meet with faculty, or participate in other campus activities separate from the board meetings.

Despite the many ways the volunteers have been able to make a difference in the lives of students, as stated previously, the Case 1 and Case 2 participants seemed to have a narrow perspective as to the ways they can contribute and have influence. As the advisory board matures under the leadership of a new dean of the college, perhaps there will be ways to further connect the students, faculty, and advisory board members that would be of interest to both the volunteers and the college. Determining how best to respond to this interest on the part of board members will, however, present challenges.

**Volunteer Engagement**

In seeking to understand the motivations of volunteers in this study, it became apparent that individual motivations are complex and not easily understood without having a context for the overall volunteer experience. Terms such as engagement, satisfaction, emotional attachment, and identification have been used in this study to help get closer to understanding what motivates volunteers to serve. Table 12 compares the responses linked to engagement levels among both groups of participants.
Table 12

*Board Engagement Levels*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Effectiveness (open comments)</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Emotional Attachment</th>
<th>Identification with Board (prior to serving)</th>
<th>Identification with Board today</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Advisory Board Members</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annie</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium - High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cate</td>
<td>Meets purpose</td>
<td>Medium – High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James</td>
<td>Reasonably effective</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low - Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raymond</td>
<td>Only dean can determine</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Longer-Serving Advisory Board Members</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brooke</td>
<td>Dedicated group. Needs focus/purpose</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High: relationships Medium: purpose</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>Very effective</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elgin</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Low – Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seth</td>
<td>Moving ahead when there weren’t funding problems</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sima</td>
<td>Core group of committed people</td>
<td>Medium - High</td>
<td>Medium -High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several researchers have discussed engagement factors in their findings. Wilson (2000) stated that “Commitment can be thought of in two ways: as attachment to the volunteer role over time, and as commitment to a particular organization or task” (p. 134)
Volunteers who feel a commitment to their volunteer role may be the source of motivation to continue serving. Additionally,

...board members who were motivated by an emotional attachment to their organization were more likely to intend to continue serving and to be more satisfied with their volunteer position than those who were not motivated by strong emotional bonds to their organization (Preston & Brown, 2004, p. 223).

Among the volunteers in Case 1, the self-identified levels of emotional attachment volunteers expressed were low-medium, medium, medium-high, and two people felt a high emotional attachment. In comparison, volunteers from Case 2 ranged from medium high with two responses and the remaining three people felt a high emotional attachment. This strong expression of emotional attachment to the advisory board may help explain why the Case 2 volunteers have continued to serve so many years. Conceivably, a person with lower levels of attachment would not remain a volunteer for any significant length of time if they did not feel the emotional bonds that are referenced in Preston and Brown’s (2004) research findings.

During the interviews the volunteers were asked an open-ended question about the perceived effectiveness of the advisory board. Case 1 responses indicated the board had average effectiveness with responses such as “45% effectiveness,” “meets purpose,” “reasonably effective,” and “average.” Only one person redirected his answer by indicating that only the dean could determine if the board was effective. There were not any overwhelmingly positive answers about the effectiveness of the board.

Among Case 2 volunteers, the responses ranged slightly more along the continuum, ranging from “very effective” to “marginal,” “dedicated group,” “needs focus/purpose,”
“core group of committed people,” and “moving ahead when there weren’t funding problems.” Interestingly, of the Case 2 participants, four people answered the question without providing a concrete answer to the question, similar to Raymond from Case 1. While the Case 2 volunteers have made re-commitments to their board service by serving multiple terms, it will soon be time for Case 1 volunteers to decide if they will continue as volunteers when their terms are completed.

The next category, satisfaction, illustrated in the second column of Table 13, generated responses about the level of satisfaction volunteers had for their advisory board service. Among Case 1 responses, one person indicated a low level of satisfaction, two people felt medium levels, one person felt a medium-high level, and one felt a high level of satisfaction. The comparison between satisfaction and emotional attachment were not noticeably different. Two people’s responses had just slightly lower levels of satisfaction compared to emotional attachment and three indicated they held about the same level of satisfaction as their level of emotional attachment (see Table 13).

Among the Case 2 responses, one person felt a low level of satisfaction, one person indicated low-medium satisfaction, two people indicated medium satisfaction, and one person felt medium-high satisfaction. Similar to Case 1, Case 2 study participant responses ranged from low to medium-high, but nobody indicated feeling high satisfaction. In a comparison of satisfaction responses to emotional attachment responses, it is apparent these volunteers have a strong emotional attachment but do not feel the board provides them with high levels of satisfaction. It may be that their many years of service have developed their strong commitment to the board but they still feel there are areas for improvement, such as making the advisory board more effective.
The level of identification that board members felt prior to joining the advisory board as compared to their identification level with the board at the time of the interview also provides interesting information. Conceivably, at the time of joining an organization, volunteers might have a low level of identification because they are not very familiar with the group. But for Case 1 volunteers, four out of five people felt a high level of identity when they joined the board. Only Kevin felt a low level of identification. As mentioned before, Kevin was the only new volunteer who had no prior connections before joining the board. However, when the volunteers were asked about their current level of identification with the board compared to their identity with the board when they were first appointed as board members. Three people felt a decreased level of identity, from high identity which then decreased to medium identity. Both Kevin and Raymond maintained the same level of identity, low and high respectively.

Among Case 2 participants, three people felt a high level of identity upon joining, one felt a medium level, and one felt a low level of identity. Only Brooke maintained her high identity with the board while both Charles and Sima felt an increased level of identity at the time of the interview compared to when the first joined the board. Elgin and Seth both indicated a decreased over time level of identity with the advisory board.

The findings of Preston and Brown (2004) explain that affective commitment is a person’s “emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization” (p. 67). Those who have a strong affective commitment stay with the organization because they want to do so. Of the three people who indicated that they had considered stepping down, new volunteers Annie and Raymond and longer-serving volunteer Seth each felt high emotional attachment. While Raymond indicated he had a
high level of satisfaction with the board, both Annie and Seth felt a low level of satisfaction with the advisory board. Despite the lower levels of satisfaction experienced by new volunteer Annie and longer-serving volunteer Seth, their high levels of attachment and medium level of identification may support Preston and Brown’s theory that the emotional attachment possessed by advisory board members may influence them to continue to volunteer with the advisory board.

Four of the Case 1 participants indicated receiving benefits from their board service, while Raymond was the only person who did not believe he received any benefits from serving, despite feeling high levels of satisfaction, emotional attachment, and identification. Cate was one who indicated she had not benefitted but then realized she indeed had received some benefits. Of the remaining four excluding Raymond, while they had varying responses to their satisfaction, emotional attachment, and identity to the advisory board, all spoke positively that they had received benefits from serving. While Kevin felt low identity with the board and had a medium level of satisfaction, he still indicated he had benefitted from serving on the advisory board.

The five participants in Case 2 also felt they received benefits from serving on the board. The responses from these volunteers were slightly higher related to their level of emotional attachment and identification with the advisory board. Therefore, it is possible that the more years of service one commits, plus opportunities for increased involvement among members, can lead to increased attachment to the organization.

**Utilization of Member Expertise**

Both groups of volunteers felt under-utilized when it came to the opportunity to share their expertise as board members. Participants from both Case 1 and Case 2 had
somewhat unenthusiastic comments about the meetings and their ability to contribute.

Kevin and James from Case 1 discussed the meeting dynamics that prevented them from contributing. Case 2 participant Brooke described the meetings as “dysfunctional” while Elgin also commented negatively on the meeting dynamics. There was apparent agreement between the participants in both Case 1 and Case 2 regarding the feeling that their expertise had not been utilized properly. Newer members Annie, Cate, and Kevin cited a desire for longer, more productive meetings. Longer meetings might allow more time for participants to contribute their expertise if meeting time was used more effectively. They also indicated that they’d like to have more time to spend with students. Overall, the opinion shared was that the volunteers ultimately want to feel like they are making a difference and longer meetings might provide more opportunity to do so.

The longer-serving members from Case 2 also felt they had expertise they could contribute. While their suggestions did not relate to lengthening the duration of the meetings, there were some specific ideas shared. Charles mentioned he’d like to participate more in curriculum discussions while Sima indicated she can make the biggest impact while guest lecturing. Sima also indicated she did not necessarily feel her expertise would be tapped in the board meetings, so she did not express disappointment to the same extent as the others. Brooke felt as though she has had opportunities to contribute her expertise, yet there was still more she could do.

Overall, there were consistencies among both Case 1 and Case 2 participants that they are willing and able to give more of their time, energy, and expertise if given the right opportunities. Leadership from the dean of the college may provide such opportunities. Elgin commented that he did not think that the board members know exactly how they
can contribute. Therefore, the dean may be essential in helping to define opportunities for
the volunteers.

**The Role of the Dean and Decisions to Continue Serving**

At the time of the interviews, the current dean was in the process of stepping down
and an interim replacement had been identified. The advisory board members expressed a
heightened level of awareness and reflection regarding the role of the dean in their
advisory board experience.

For new members in Case 1, the dean’s influence and role was valued and deemed
important. However, the emotional energy that was expressed by the longer-serving
board members in Case 2 was different from the responses of the new board members.
The new board members understood the role of the dean of the college and his role in
making the volunteers feel part of the group. However, the dean did not recruit any of the
new members and therefore their individual loyalty was more often expressed as being to
the college, the industry, and the students. The new members also shared the importance
of the role of a dean in general, indicating that the only way the new dean would
influence their commitment to serve is if they did not feel the dean wanted or supported
the advisory board.

The longer-serving members were thoughtful about the length of time they had
served, four of them spending eight years or more on the board. Their emotional
connection to the dean was evident; they had been recruited to serve by the departing
dean and had worked with the dean over extended periods of time. The participants still
felt encouraged to help support the new dean during this transition period. They
expressed awareness and concern that other volunteers might step down because of their
loyalty to the outgoing dean, yet this group of participants indicated that the dean transition had no bearing on their decisions to continue to serve.

There was consistency between both Case 1 and Case 2 responses that it was important for them to continue serving the college and students through this leadership transition. The sense of commitment and attachment to the board’s success was evident between both groups of participants. They expressed a commitment to ensure the board and the college continues to make forward progress.

**Summary**

This chapter consisted of a cross-case analysis to understand the similarities and differences among the participant motivations in Case 1 and Case 2. The purpose was to answer the two researched questions posed in this study: 1) to understand the motivational factors that influenced people to serve as non-alumni volunteers to a hospitality education advisory board; and 2) to understand the motivational factors of participants for renewing his or her term of service on the advisory board. This chapter provided insight into the importance of engagement factors such as attachment to and identification with the organization in relation to board effectiveness and satisfaction levels. Despite not graduating from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, a majority of the volunteers have developed an identity with both the college and the advisory board, and as a result, have intentionally made a commitment to remain as volunteers. The final chapter will provide a summary of findings based on the research questions. Additionally, implications and recommendations for future study will be suggested.
CHAPTER 6
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the self-reported motivations, experiences, and engagement levels of non-alumni volunteers to an university based hospitality education program. Chapter 1 provided the background for this dissertation and stated the research questions. Chapter 2 provided a review of the literature from the following areas: (a) theories of volunteer affiliation; (b) institutional engagement using relationship marketing and organizational commitment; and (c) involvement and engagement. Each of these areas relate to the topic of the study, that is, the motivation of non-alumni volunteers to serve as members of a volunteer advisory board for a hospitality education program. Chapter 3 detailed the qualitative research methods and the multiple case study design used for this study. Chapter 4 presented the findings from the two cases: Case 1 consisted of five newer advisory board members who had served for three years or less. Case 2 consisted of five longer-serving advisory board members who had served between 4 and 10 years. Chapter 5 revisited the research questions and conceptual framework to construct a cross-case analysis of the findings from the two cases. As the final chapter, Chapter 6 offers a summary of findings, a discussion of implications for theory, practice, and future research.

Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to explore the self-reported motivations, experiences, and engagement levels of non-alumni volunteers to an university based hospitality education program. Given that alumni often hold an emotional and social connection to their alma mater, what is it that draws non-alumni to volunteer to serve a university they
did not attend? The results of the study found that non-alumni volunteers, through their involvement with their fellow advisory board members, college administrators, and perhaps most importantly, interaction with students, they developed emotional connections and pride in serving and helping to build the institution. This led most of the volunteers who participated in this study to have a level of engagement with the institution that was meaningful to them and resulted in their desire to continue as volunteers.

Case 1 was comprised of new board members who were in their first term of service and had served three years or fewer. This participant group expressed a desire to build more meaningful relationships with their fellow board members, as well as a desire to interact with and have an impact on students. In comparison, the difference between this group and the longer-serving members was that the Case 2 study participants overall did not express as strong a desire to get to know fellow board members, presumably because they feel they already knew them well enough. This may be because the Case 2 volunteers had served anywhere from four and a half to 10 years, and that time had been well-spent getting to know their fellow board members. Yet the newer members felt there were limited opportunities for social interactions among board members, which they believed were important for networking.

It is important to note that self-reported satisfaction levels related to serving on the board were generally low for both Case 1 and Case 2 participants despite their expressed feelings of commitment and emotional connections to the advisory board. Another valuable finding is that while the volunteers consistently expressed a strong desire to interact with students in meaningful ways, it was not necessarily the mission of the
advisory board that its members do so. Rather, the mission of the advisory board is to support the college to provide outstanding educational opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students as well as education and research for industry professionals.

There was an apparent disconnect between the stated purpose and mission of the board and the expectations held by the advisory board members as to what their role was, which is an important finding. Given that satisfaction levels were consistently low among both Case 1 and Case 2 participants, it is likely that over time, low satisfaction levels may impact their desire to continue as volunteers or, at least, the depth of commitment board members have to their roles. There may come a time when feelings of low satisfaction can no longer be offset by feelings of emotional attachment.

*Researcher’s note:* In the months after the research interviews had been conducted, the researcher was notified that two participants, Raymond from Case 1 and Seth from Case 2 independently made the decision to step down as volunteer board members. During the interview, Raymond had expressed concern that he had not benefitted from his board service and found it difficult to contribute in any meaningful way. Seth expressed during the interview that he had considered stepping down because he no longer felt he could make an impact and was unable to be as helpful to the board as he had in the past. Board members go through a careful selection process; when members decide to leave their reasons for doing so are important to study and understand.

**Implications**

**Implications for Theory**

The results of this study have implications for understanding the motivations of non-alumni advisory board volunteers. While completing the review of literature, a single
theory did not emerge as explanatory to describe the motivations of non-alumni advisory board members to serve for an institution of which they did not graduate. Previous research suggested a number of theories related to motivation, volunteer commitment, and relationship marketing, all of which helped to inform this study. Despite the fact that much of the engagement and commitment research focuses on the paid employee, there is a growing body of literature which focuses on the volunteer, as does this research study.

An important contribution of this study is that it supports findings from previous research and theoretical understandings (Clary, Ridge, Stukas, Snyder, Copland, Haugen, & Miene, 1998; Dailey, 1986). With regard to volunteer motivations, the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) contained six measurable motivational functions served by the act of volunteering: values, understanding, career, social, protective, and enhancement (Clary et al., 1998). The participants in the current study provided responses that clearly fell into five of the six function categories. For example, participants discussed a desire to have give back (values); they shared examples of how they learned from other board members (understanding); they expressed a desire to get to know fellow board members (social); they described interest in networking (career); and finally, there were people who felt the volunteer experience was helpful toward their learning about the hospitality industry (enhancement). Only the protective category did not really apply. This may be because this board serves a university as opposed to more common community based, nonprofit organizations that might serve persons in need such as United Way.

This study also provided examples to support the organizational commitment research. For example, Dailey (1986) found that job satisfaction was the most important factor in organizational commitment. In this study, a common theme among participants
was related to their dissatisfaction with the lack of student interaction. The results of this study made it apparent that the volunteer role as defined by the advisory board mission statement is different from the expectations of the volunteers. This created a mismatch that can easily be fixed by addressing the role and expectation of volunteer board members and doing so with some frequency. If a purposeful adjustment between the role and expectations is not made, dissatisfaction among the members will likely result.

Concepts from the relationship marketing research sector are also applicable to this study. Ackerman and Schibrowsky (2007) recommend that higher education leaders can easily adapt principles of relationship marketing. As a relationship-driven strategy, relationship marketing supports the idea that non-alumni can become loyal, committed, emotionally engaged volunteers to an institution and, conceivably, multiple institutions or nonprofit organizations (Cnaan & Cascio, 1998). One does not need to be a graduate to develop those emotional connections to a university or, specifically, to an advisory board within a university. In this study, the relationships developed among the longer-serving advisory board members are evidence that the experience has been meaningful and worthwhile given that four people spent more than eight years each serving as a volunteer on this advisory board. The length of those relationships both between the members as colleagues and individually as each connected with an university from which they did not graduate suggest that the levels of bonds that are fundamental to relationship marketing can be applied to maintaining volunteers, particularly when those volunteers are invited to structurally connect with the institution as these volunteers are. The danger is, and the disconnect cited here is an example, that expectations for the volunteers as stated in the mission and what the volunteers have come to see as their role may destroy the bonds.
Implications for Practice

As Edwards (2008) found in her study on successful engagement of advisory councils, volunteer advisory groups are valuable because they often provide counsel to leadership related to the strategic goals of the organization from volunteers who often include community leaders, experts and stakeholders with interests related to the organization. Similarly, volunteers can be a valuable constituency to higher education. Volunteers are spread throughout the university and hold both formal and informal roles in the work they may do. Those who are formally involved as appointed leaders are often expected to serve as advocates for the university, share their expertise in roles such as a board of trustee or advisory board member, and they are typically also active community members who help represent the university and its interests externally. Engaged volunteers are more likely to be donors who contribute their time and financial support to the benefit of the university over time (Preston & Brown, 2004). However, managing volunteers requires time and resources to ensure that their needs and interests are being addressed. While the idea of recruiting volunteers to help with a project may seem easy, the reality is that they require a support system, resources, and access to the institution so they become part of the fabric of the academic program and embrace it as their own. And, as this study found, the role that is ascribed to volunteers should match the expectations for service held by the volunteers.

The role of the dean of the college was found to be vitally important to the recruitment of a number of the longer-serving volunteers in this study. The dean personally recruited four participants in Case 2 and each of them had served nearly a decade at the time of the interviews. This was a significant amount of time to consistently
serve one organization and can be attributed to the fact that they seemed to be loyal to the dean. At the time of the study a transition to a new dean had been announced. However, the dean transition did not influence their interest in continuing to serve. A number of participants expressed their commitment to ensuring a smooth transition as a new dean was identified.

Among newer members in Case 1, participants consistently articulated the importance of the dean’s role; however their loyalty was more often expressed as being to the college and to the students. There were also comments related to a lack of connection to the board itself, either because they did not know their fellow board members well or because they wanted to meet faculty and work with students more closely. However, they each indicated that the dean transition would not influence their decision to continue unless they felt the new dean did not support having an advisory board.

This study provided insight into understanding that there needs to be a clear mission and focused expectations on the volunteer role to prevent feelings of disappointment or low satisfaction. For example, in this study all 10 volunteers expressed a desire to have more access to students. The job description and expectations of board membership should be reviewed periodically to ensure that members and administrators alike continue to uphold the mission (see Appendix D).

Benefits to volunteering included the opportunity for board members to have an impact on the lives of students. This was one benefit deemed very important by the volunteers and would directly attribute to volunteer satisfaction and engagement. Additionally, the opportunity to interact socially and in more structured situations with fellow board members to get to know each other was also stated as important, especially
for newer members. This is consistent with the findings of Haski-Leventhal and Cnann (2009):

A group can be beneficial to its members as people enjoy being together, approve of the activities and mission, or believe that membership will be useful to them in other contexts. The better the match between the individual’s needs and characteristics to those of the group, the higher the benefits will be (p. 65).

Both a new board member and a longer-serving board member commented that they did not know more than a couple faculty members, yet both desired opportunities to interact more frequently with faculty. This is because faculty they have daily access to the students. A second longer-serving member also expressed interest in participating in curriculum discussions as a link back to the knowledge and skills students should possess when they enter the industry.

Given this board is made up of hospitality executives, an anticipated benefit of board service would be that the members to network among fellow industry leaders who have united for a common cause. The length of time served may be an important variable in that the longer the Case 1 participants serve, the more likely it is that they will have opportunities to build relationships with fellow board members. Clearly, the interviews revealed that newer members simply do not feel the connection with the board that longer-serving members expressed. Therefore, to help speed up the engagement process, creating intentional opportunities to interact socially for newer members is important to build camaraderie and identity as volunteers. Care also needs to be taken so that the relationships formed among longer-serving members do not exclude members who are new or newer to the group.
Lastly, the overall meeting schedule should be examined to determine if the meeting length and structure are adequate for these leaders to feel they are contributing in a meaningful way. Do the meetings provide time for productive advisement of the dean? Are there discussions which include advice, suggestions, and input from all the board members? Are there opportunities for significant interactions with students and faculty? Are volunteers able to network with their peers? Are there opportunities to build identity with the institution?

Based on this experience, the following recommendations are provided to help guide the work of practitioners:

• The dean or department head’s role should not be underestimated in the importance to provide leadership to the advisory board, even when meeting planning is delegated to other staff members.

• Develop a working mission and set clear goals and expectations for the volunteers. Reiterate those goals often so volunteers clearly understand what is expected of them and to prevent a disconnection between the two, as was seen in this study.

• Volunteer duties should be meaningful. Job design can be a useful tool to enhance the volunteer experience, motivation, satisfaction, and engagement (Millette & Gagné, 2008).

• The dean of the college should periodically contact each individual volunteer board member to ask for advice, share college updates, engage the volunteers in projects, assist with making professional connections, or simply spend time getting to know them. This is especially important for the newer members.
How the dean communicates with volunteers between meetings is just as important as how the dean communicates during meetings.

- Invite faculty to meet the advisory board, propose research connections, encourage guest-speaking opportunities, and utilize the board as resources related to college activities.

- Provide an orientation for new members to meet each other and spend time with the dean to hear about the vision for the college and the advisory board history. Given that the prior connections for new members will vary, this is an opportunity to help them feel comfortable and begin to meet fellow volunteers. Additionally, provide ample social time for all board members to get to know each other and begin to build personal/professional relationships. This can lead to meaningful industry connections that help show there are benefits to serving on the advisory board.

- Given the importance advisory board members have placed on their desire to have student interaction, develop a mentor program where students are paired with advisory board volunteers for the year and can share advise and provide support to students.

- Identify and recruit people who have at least one, if not more, prior connections to the institution (Taylor, Chait, & Holland, 1991). These prior connections aid in increasing their engagement level and can provide increased opportunities to build identity as a member of the university community. Additionally, volunteers may feel a sense of commitment to ensure the college is successful. While alumni may have a much stronger
identity and commitment to the institution, the board structure and activity can help build identity, commitment, and overall engagement by providing non-alumni with opportunities to get involved and stay connected.

- Consider the amount of time meetings require of members. While this study consisted of high-level executives, presumably very busy people, they indicated that the meetings did not take up too much time. Newer members suggested lengthening meetings to be more productive.

- While it is tempting to have a large board with representation from a number of industry sectors, be cognizant of the size and how it might impact commitment. Research found that larger organizations may decrease commitment level among members because they can be impersonal and more difficult to identify with or build meaningful relationships (Stephens, Dawley, & Stephens, 2004).

**Implications for Future Research**

This qualitative case study design was appropriate for this exploratory research design. Future research should continue to explore the complex motivations of volunteers serving on non-governing boards such as advisory boards. The review of literature revealed that most studies that address advisory boards do so prescriptively by providing advice as to how the board should operate or guidelines to establish a board (Conroy & Lefever, 1997; Henderson, 2004). Therefore, new research that focuses on volunteer advisory boards is a topic area that deserves additional attention. Would an advisory board made up of people local to the community they serve show increased engagement levels compared to boards made up of people who live outside the community? Based on
the research, it is conceivable that people may be more engaged if able to attend university events, have access to students and faculty throughout the year, and be more likely to see their fellow board members.

This study found that the volunteer advisory board members gained satisfaction from interacting with students and from having the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of students. Therefore, future research will be important to understand how college and university advisory boards can be structured to better meet the expectations of volunteers. Future researchers may want to investigate the desire and effectiveness of board member influence over the curriculum, consistent with the stated mission of the advisory board to provide linkages between academia and the industry.

With regard to volunteer motivation, it would also be helpful learn if members of other academic advisory boards are motivated to serve for similar reasons. This study helped to understand why these select non-alumni volunteers chose to serve as volunteers to a hospitality advisory board for a university that they did not attend. However, their reasoning may or may not be similar for other non-alumni serving on advisory boards for other academic programs within universities.

Campus administrators should be aware of the importance volunteer advisory board members place on having meaningful interactions with students. Social exchange theory posits that feelings about the experiences gained are compared to the cost of time and social capital spent in serving the organization (Weerts & Ronca, 2008). Therefore, providing high quality volunteer experiences are important to ensuring volunteers continue to support the university by contributing their time and talent for future generations of volunteer leaders.
APPENDIX A

CASE STUDY PROTOCOL

Contents

Data Collection Timeline

Volunteer Recruitment Email

Volunteer Interview Questions

Data Collection Timeline

- April 28, 2010: Recruitment email distributed to potential participants
- May 12, 2010: Pilot interview questions tested through an in-person interview with an advisory board volunteer
- May 25, 2010: In-person interview with Sima, located in the Midwestern U.S.
- May 27, 2010: In-person interview with Elgin, located in the Southwestern U.S.
- June 3, 2010: In-person interview with Brooke, located in the Western U.S.
- June 3, 2010: In-person interview with Charles, located in the Western U.S.
- June 4, 2010: In-person interview with Seth, located in the Western U.S.
- June 8, 2010: In-person interview with Cate, located in the Southwestern U.S.
- June 16, 2010: Phone interview with James, located in the Western U.S.
- June 18, 2010: In-person interview with Raymond, located in the Southwestern U.S.
- June 23, 2010: Phone interview with Annie, located outside the U.S.
- June 28, 2010: Phone interview with Kevin, located in the Southeastern U.S.
To: (Recipient Name)  
From: Stuart.Mann@UNLV.edu  
Subject: Request for assistance

Dear Advisory Board Members:

I am writing to ask for your consideration to participate in a research study being conducted by doctoral student Judy Nagai. Your participation is completely voluntary and in no way is an expectation of your role as a board member. However, I hope you will consider participating. I am serving as a member of Judy’s dissertation committee and fully support her research study.

Thank you,

Stuart H. Mann  
Dean  
Michael D. Rose Distinguished Chair  
UNLV College of Hotel Administration

---Forwarded Message Below---

Dear UNLV International Advisory Board Members:

I am writing to request your participation in a research project being conducted on the motivations of advisory board members to volunteer for a hospitality education program. This study is being conducted related to my role as a Ph.D. candidate in the UNLV College of Education’s Educational Leadership program.

The purpose of this research project is to investigate and report the motivations of non-alumni to volunteer for a hospitality education advisory board for an institution of which they did not attend. The information obtained from this study will assist in providing an understanding of how to better engage and involve non-alumni volunteers at UNLV. This research project will include in-person interviews regarding non-alumni volunteer motivation to serve on a hospitality education advisory board.

You are being asked to participate in the study because you are a current volunteer on Dean Stuart Mann’s International Advisory Board and have experiences and perspectives related to the research topic. The interview will take approximately 90 minutes and will be digitally recorded. Following the interview, you may be contacted for purposes of follow-up or clarification. In addition to the interviews, documents pertaining to your role as a volunteer will be collected prior to, during or after the interview.
To participate, you must meet all of the selection criteria as follows:

1. You have not attended UNLV as a formally admitted student;
2. You must be a current volunteer serving on the Dean’s International Advisory Board for the UNLV College of Hotel Administration;
3. You have worked or currently work in the hospitality industry;
4. You have an executive level title, such as chief executive officer, chief operating officer, director, owner, founder, president or vice-president;
5. Either:
   a. You have served at least one year but no more than three years (first term of service) on this advisory board.
   —OR—
   b. You have served more than four years (second or longer term of service) as a volunteer on this advisory board;

If you are unsure of your term of service, please feel free to contact me.

Based upon respondents who meet the selection criteria, participants will be selected and invited to participate on a date and time convenient to conduct the in-person interview. If you are interested in participating but require additional information, please feel free to contact me at anytime.

If you choose to participate and meet the selection criteria, all information gathered in this study will be kept completely confidential. This includes allowing the researcher to access your individual database record held by the university and lists your volunteer and affiliation history. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you or your company to this study. However, direct quotations may be used to emphasize a point or to support existing research theories.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact either myself or fellow researcher, Dr. Robert Ackerman.

Thank you for your consideration,

Judy Nagai  
Ph.D. Candidate  
UNLV Department of Educational Leadership  
(702) 461-8811 Cell, Judy.Nagai@UNLV.edu

Dr. Robert Ackerman, Professor  
UNLV Department of Educational Leadership  
(702) 895-2740 Office, Bob.Ackerman@UNLV.edu
Volunteer Advisory Board Interview Questions

Introduction: Thank you for participating in this research study. I anticipate spending approximately 90 minutes with you and have a number of questions to ask. Please feel free to speak openly and ask for clarification. The information you share today is completely confidential and will be used to inform this study.

Date / Time / Interview with ___ (pseudonym)

1. Tell me a little about yourself and your current professional position in the hospitality industry.

2. Tell me about any other professional, social or community organizations for which you currently volunteer.
   a. Have you ever volunteered for your alma mater?
   b. Does your company encourage or support your board service? (Widmer, 1985, p. 16)

3. Did you have any professional or personal connections to the hotel college before you became a board member? (Did you know faculty or administrators? Did you know current board members? Did you know people who have attended? (Taylor et al., 1991, p. 209 & p. 214)

4. Who first spoke to you about your willingness to serve on this board? (Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009, p. 66; Widmer, 1985, p. 10)
   a. How influential was this person to encourage your participation?
   b. Did you seek out this volunteer activity or were you recruited to join the advisory board?

5. People join volunteer boards for a number of reasons, whether it be person or professional. Why did you agree to serve when you were asked to join the advisory board? (Taylor et al., 1991, p. 209; Widmer, 1985, p. 11)
   a. This is a two-part question. Can you first cite your personal motivations for joining and then cite your professional motivations for joining? (Finkelstein, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2000)

6. What was your impression of UNLV before you joined the advisory board?
   a. How has that original impression changed since becoming a board member?
7. Volunteering requires time, resources and energy. Some might say that you need to get something out of it, otherwise it isn’t worth your time. Why do you continue to volunteer for UNLV? (Clary, et al., 1998, p1517; Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991, p. 270; Millette & Gagné, 2008, p. 15)

   a. Have you ever helped recruit other board members? Why or why not?

8. Has your board membership benefited you in any way? (Clary et al., 1998, 1518; Widmer, 1985, p. 13)

   a. Please explain.

9. What sources of personal satisfaction have you derived from board membership? (Taylor et al., 1991, p. 217)

10. What have you found to be the most fulfilling aspects of your work on the board? (Heckman & Lawler, 1971; Taylor et al., 1991)

11. Why do you think other board members choose to volunteer? (Shye, 2009)

12. Have you had the opportunity to develop new professional or personal relationships with board members since joining the board? (Haski-Leventhal & Cnaan, 2009, p. 66)

13. Going back to the value of your time, how effective do you think this board is? (Taylor et al., 1991, p. 217)

   a. Are there things that, if changed, would further engage (or increase your commitment) as a board member?

14. How important do you believe the Dean is to your decision to continue as a board member to this point in time?

15. How likely are you to remain on the board for another term?

   a. If the dean were not stepping down, would your intention to serve be different?

16. Since joining the board, have you considered stepping down at any point? (Millette & Gagné, 2008, p. 13)

   a. If so, why? Time commitment? Costs?

   b. Lack of return on investment? (Social exchange theory says commitment is a function of profitability, rewards minus costs.)

   c. Are there other reasons that have nothing to do with the board? (Bussell & Forbes, 2002 as cited in Millette & Gagné, 2008, p. 19)
17. In the next questions, I will ask you to pick among 3 answers. The choices are “high,” “medium,” and “low.” (Preston & Brown, 2004, p. 223; Taylor et al., 1991, p. 221)

   a. Share with me the extent that you personally identified with the advisory board when you decided to join. Did you feel a high, medium, or low level of identification?

   b. Share with me the extent that you personally identify with the advisory board today? Do you feel a high, medium, or low level of identity?

   c. How would you rank your current level of satisfaction with the advisory board today? Do you feel a high, medium, or low level of satisfaction?

   d. What is your current level of emotional attachment to the advisory board today? Do you feel a high, medium, or low level of emotional commitment?

   That concludes my questions for you. With our time left, I’d like to go back to something you said earlier...can you expand upon...?
APPENDIX B
CODING SCHEME

The coding procedures were completed utilizing the ATLAS.ti qualitative software program. The interviews were transcribed and then the transcripts were uploaded into ATLAS.ti and then coded inductively by the researcher. While the review of literature provided a framework for possible codes, no pre-established codes were used in analyzing the data (Merriam, 1998).

Open coding was the first step in beginning to develop initial codes generated from each of the 10 interviews based on the transcripts. The code list was analyzed and comments were created within ATLAS.ti which consisted of definitions and conceptual guidelines for the researcher’s reference. Throughout this process, the constant comparative method was used to compare each piece of data with codes that had already been identified (Merriam, 1998).

Main categories began to emerge upon working with the ATLAS.ti network view, which allowed the researcher to visually build and connect relationships between the coding categories and also explore less obvious relationships that might exist.

1. Open Coding

Alumni connection
Attachment
Attachment to college
Awareness of alumni
Awareness of university
Background of board member
Benefits to serving on board
Board experience
Board influence
Board service: Employer support
Commentary of issues
Commitment
Commitment to board service
Connections to college prior
Contribute expertise as board member
Dean: Impression
Dean: Loyalty
Effectiveness of board
Emotional attachment
Faculty disconnect from industry
First exposure to college
Fulfillment
Fulfillment: Student interaction
Fundraising
Give back
Give back in community where you work
Identity as a board member
Impact – making one
Involvement
Involvement as a guest speaker
Involvement with faculty
Involvement with students
Learning from other board members
Motivation: Extrinsic
Motivation: Intrinsic
Motivation: Make a difference
Meeting structure suggestions
Motivation of other volunteers
Motivation: Industry supports school
Motivation
Networking
Nominate other board members
Personal attributes
Pride in affiliation to school
Pride: Other board members
Progress: College
Recruit students
Relationships
Reputation: College
Role model
Satisfaction with board service
Time commitment
Volunteer for alma mater
Volunteer for other orgs/schools

2. Axial Coding
Case 1: New Members
Attachment to college
Awareness of alumni
Awareness of university
Background of board
Benefits to serving
Board service: employer support
Commentary of issues
Commitment to board
Connections to college
Contribute expertise
Dean: impression
Dean: loyalty
Effectiveness of board
Emotional attachment
Faculty disconnect from industry
First exposure to college
Fulfillment: student
Give back
Identity as a board member
Impact: making one
Involvement with faculty
Involvement with students
Learning from others
Motivation: extrinsic
Motivation: intrinsic
Motivation: make a difference
Meeting structure suggestions
Motivation of other volunteers
Networking
Nominate other board members
Pride in affiliation
Recruit students
Relationships
Reputation: college
Role model
Satisfaction with board
Time commitment
Volunteer for alma mater
Volunteer for other orgs/schools

Case 2: Longer-Serving Members

Alumni connection
Attachment to college
Awareness of alumni
3. Selective Coding

Research Question 1: Advisory board member involvement; motivation to volunteer; employer support; commitment to community; awareness of college and university; prior connections to the institution; recruitment of members; benefits to serving; networking;
Research Question 2: Motivation to interact with students; satisfaction; engagement levels; emotional attachments; identification as a board member; board effectiveness; utilization of member expertise; role of the dean;
APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

Social/Behavioral IRB – Expedited Review Approval Notice

NOTICE TO ALL RESEARCHERS:
Please be aware that a protocol violation (e.g., failure to submit a modification for any change) of an IRB approved protocol may result in mandatory remedial education, additional audits, re-consenting subjects, researcher probation/suspension of any research protocol at issue, suspension of additional existing research protocols, invalidation of all research conducted under the research protocol at issue, and further appropriate consequences as determined by the IRB and the Institutional Officer.

DATE: March 11, 2010
TO: Dr. Robert Ackerman, Educational Leadership
FROM: Office for the Protection of Research Subjects
RE: Notification of IRB Action by Dr. Charles Rasmussen, Co-Chair
Protocol Title: Engaging Non-Alumni Advisory Board Volunteers in Hospitality Education
Protocol #: 1002-3379M

This memorandum is notification that the project referenced above has been reviewed by the UNLV Social/Behavioral Institutional Review Board (IRB) as indicated in Federal regulatory statutes 45 CFR 46. The protocol has been reviewed and approved.

The protocol is approved for a period of one year from the date of IRB approval. The expiration date of this protocol is March 10, 2011. Work on the project may begin as soon as you receive written notification from the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS).

PLEASE NOTE:
Attached to this approval notice is the official Informed Consent/Assent (IC/IA) Form for this study. The IC/IA contains an official approval stamp. Only copies of this official IC/IA form may be used when obtaining consent. Please keep the original for your records.

Should there be any change to the protocol, it will be necessary to submit a Modification Form through OPRS. No changes may be made to the existing protocol until modifications have been approved by the IRB.

Should the use of human subjects described in this protocol continue beyond March 10, 2011, it would be necessary to submit a Continuing Review Request Form 60 days before the expiration date.

If you have questions or require any assistance, please contact the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects at OPRSHumanSubjects@unlv.edu or call 895-2794.

Office for the Protection of Research Subjects
4505 Maryland Parkway • Box 451047 • Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-1047
(702) 895-2794 • FAX: (702) 895-0805
APPENDIX D

ADVISORY BOARD MISSION AND JOB DESCRIPTION

William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration
Advisory Board Mission and Job Description

MISSION

The mission of the Advisory Board is to support the William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration in its mission to provide outstanding educational opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students as well as education and research for industry professionals. Through its work, the Advisory Board will assist the Dean with increasing the visibility of the College within the industry and its other academic constituencies. The Advisory Board shall be considered advisory and not a policy-making body.

JOB DESCRIPTION

• Be informed about the College’s mission, programs and services.
• Serve as a spokesperson for the College in the community and throughout the industry.
• Make an annual financial or in-kind contribution to the College.
• Commit to being involved in raising funds by making a personal or corporate gift to the College or by identifying potential donors, or by “opening doors.”
• Represent the hospitality, gaming and leisure services industries to the College.
• Assist the Dean in meeting the needs of the industry by providing the College with information on new issues and trends.
• Assist in bringing into the classroom the newest information from the industry.
• Disseminate information about the College’s research and other accomplishments for the industry’s benefit.
• Participate in the development of an annual plan for the Advisory Board.
• Serve as a sounding board and source of advice for the Dean and review and comment on new College initiatives and long range plans.
• Identify opportunities for partnerships between the College and individuals and corporations.
• Attend semi-annual board meetings.
• Review agenda and supporting materials prior to board meetings.
• Suggest possible nominees to the Advisory Board who could make significant contributions to the work of the Advisory Board and to the College.
• Adhere to the University’s policies on fundraising, confidentiality and conflict of interest.
• Term length is three years from date of first meeting and options to renew for two or three-year terms is available.

Revised 2/4/08
REFERENCES


doi:10.1177/089976409102000207

University. Retrieved from ERIC Database

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http://www.jstor.org/stable/2657355

VITA

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Judy Ann Nagai

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  Master of Education, Higher Education and Student Affairs Administration, 1997
  University of Vermont

Dissertation Title: Engaging Non-Alumni Advisory Board Members in Hospitality Education

Dissertation Examination Committee:
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  Committee Member, Mario Martinez, Ph.D.
  Committee Member, Kim Nehls, Ph.D.
  Graduate Faculty Representative, Lori Olafson, Ph.D.
  Committee Member, Stuart H. Mann, Ph.D.