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SET IN STONE: LEGENDS, TRADITIONS, AND SYMBOLS INFLUENCING PLACE ATTACHMENT FOR SOUTHERN UTAH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

by

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1992

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Educational Leadership
Department of Higher Education Leadership
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May 2011

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Claudine Nielsen

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Set in Stone: Legends, Traditions, and Symbols Influencing Place Attachment for Southern Utah University Students

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ABSTRACT

Set in Stone: Legends, Traditions, and Symbols Influencing Place Attachment for Southern Utah University Students

by

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This study explored the influence of campus legends, traditions, and symbols on the development of place attachment in students at Southern Utah University. An examination of organizational theory, including universities as cultures, student development theory, alumni participation, and place attachment revealed no cross-disciplinary research into how place attachment to a university campus may be influenced by intentional attempts to instill a sense of collective identity through the stories and rituals that occur on campus, hence the need to address this void. Unlike many organizations, colleges have a vested interest in maintaining a connection with students beyond the point of separation.

The student experience relies greatly on the student's involvement with the campus itself and research has shown a positive correlation between engagement and attachment (Pike & Kuh, 2005). This study suggests that engagement goes beyond student involvement in activities and academics and seeks to explore how involvement facilitated through campus legends, traditions, and symbols can create an element of place attachment that plays a significant role in student engagement. It is critical for colleges to create a bond with students that will encourage persistence to graduation and beyond, thereby serving as a catalyst for the advancement of the institution in the future.

A qualitative embedded single case study was used to pursue this research. Participants were selected using purposeful sampling through data provided by the institution, followed by a snowballing technique. They were interviewed using a semi-structured format. Questions were open-ended. Notes were taken throughout the interview process to record contextual cues such as gestures, inflections, and facial expressions.

Data were analyzed through a content analysis of the interview transcriptions and historical documents. Manifest and latent data were considered when analyzing the data, which was coded to reveal the major and minor themes that resulted in the findings.

The most striking observation in comparing involved students to students who were not involved was that there were no discernable differences between the two groups. Each group reported similar levels of attachment, and the importance of the various legends, traditions, and symbols was generally consistent.

In summary, the results of this study show that campus legends, traditions, and symbols influence students' sense of place attachment by creating another level of involvement. By being included in these stories and events, students felt they were a part of something and that their own stories interact with the story of the institution and those of fellow students sharing in the experience. At a time of economic uncertainty, intentionally implementing legends, traditions, and symbols to create an additional layer of attachment may encourage behaviors that eventually benefit the institution, such as retention, referrals, advocacy, donation, and philanthropic activity.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Bricks and mortar make up the physical presence of the university, but campus folklore may be responsible for making it come alive and become part of the students who share the university experience. Students are capable of spirited responses to their schools. Students at Southern Utah University (SUU), a midsized regional university offering bachelor and masters degrees nestled right in the center of Cedar City, Utah, remind each other: Once a T-Bird, always a T-Bird. Their institutional pride exists through losing football seasons, economic downturns, and institutional controversy.

As the economy lags, conversations have turned toward streamlining the educational process and removing extraneous events from the university experience (Weerts & Ronca, 2007). Unlike most organizations that develop an organizational culture for constituents, universities have a vested interest in creating relationships that not only persist for a specified amount of time, but will continue beyond the point of departure (i.e., beyond graduation). Indeed, these relationships directly impact the financial viability and academic reputation of the institution (Vedder, 2004).

While facilitating the propagation of legends, traditions, and symbols across generations of students may seem like a frivolous expense to some, it could be argued that creating an atmosphere of collective identity and place attachment may create bonds between the student and the university. This could encourage students to persist through graduation and then, as they become alumni, to maintain relationships with the institution. In both of these cases, students or alumni may be more likely to recommend

the institution to family and friends, advocate for the institution, and even provide in-kind and monetary support.

When viewed through the sociological approach to place attachment, the history of the institution and the student's personal history intertwine with potential for the institution's history to become that of the student (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). With so much of identity coming from an individual's personal history, it is important to understand what parts of the institutional history will transition into the personal and collective identities of alumni through their attachment to the place. This study sought to determine how campus legends, traditions, and symbols impact the development of place attachment to a college campus.

Problem Statement

Extensive research has been conducted to examine universities as cultures (Considine, 2006; Schein, 1986; Silver, 2003; Tierney, 1992), student development and involvement (Astin, 1993; Hayek, Carini, O'Day, & Kuh, 2002; Knox, Lindsay, & Kolb, 1992), and motivating alumni through social exchange theory (Gunsalus, 2004; Mael & Ashforth, 1990; Okunade & Berl, 1997; Pike & Kuh, 2005; Pike, Kuh, & Gonyea, 2003; Taylor & Martin, 1995; Weerts & Ronca, 2007). Additionally, environmental, community, and social psychologists have examined the importance of place attachment in development of neighborhoods, communities, and even cities (Hammitt, Backlund, & Bixler, 2004; Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004; Holmes, Patterson, & Stalling, 2003; Lounsbury & DeNeui, 1996). However, research addressing campus legends, traditions, and symbols, and how they relate to place attachment for students is inadequate. A

holistic view of the university-individual relationship and the lived experiences of students allows for a fuller understanding of the importance of the cultural elements that are generally overlooked by organizational and student development theorists. University culture, for the purpose of this study, is defined as a focus on the traditions, legends, and symbols that are unique to the campus experience, specifically to Southern Utah University.

Frederickson and Anderson (1999) suggest, “it is through one’s interactions with the particulars of a place that one creates their own personal identity and deepest-held values” (p. 22). The college experience is identified as critical in human development as the time when children become adults and begin their lived experience, develop their own identity, and determine their own values without the immediate influence of parents (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Chickering, 1969; Erikson, 1950; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2005; Maslow, 1943). If these elements of self are truly influenced by important places and events, it stands to reason that the bonds created with these places and events will in turn influence the student’s connection to the institution (Manzo & Perkins, 2006).

Often missed in organizational theory, specifically in relation to institutions of higher education, is the fact that colleges and universities have the unique interest of maintaining a relationship with the student for a specified period of time, as well as beyond the point of departure. Continued relationships may influence financial donations and increased enrollment based on the graduate’s experience with the institution (Vedder, 2004). Further research is needed to understand the impact of university culture on the student’s desire to persist and remain connected once he or she leaves the campus. For

example, what role the university's culture plays in creating place attachment with the institution and the impact of the university culture on those who experience it.

A holistic, cross-disciplinary study is necessary to understand how institutional culture may influence place attachment with the college campus. This study explored the role institutional culture plays in place attachment with Southern Utah University.

Purpose of the Study

This study sought to examine the importance of legends, traditions, and symbols toward influencing place attachment to the university. It determined what, if any, impact legends, traditions, and symbols have on the students of Southern Utah University (SUU) who experience them. Additionally, this study filled gaps in current research about place attachment, collective identity on college campuses, and student attachment in relation to both these elements using student development theories.

Conceptual Framework

A sociological perspective of place attachment was used to view Southern Utah University as a single bounded case. Holmes, Patterson and Stalling, (2003) state "among the most important developmental issues that arise from sense of place are identity, belonging, groundedness, meaning, growth, and spiritual well-being" (p. 241). The concept of place attachment is common not only in time-bound circumstances of an individual life, but also across life spans and generations. A place where significant development or change takes place may represent various elements of identity development for the individual. While places defined as important to a collective identity

may not necessarily be considered sacred or holy, “they retain cultural, historical, or personal meaning” (Holmes, et al, 2003, p. 243). When considering the mobility of modern life, the sense of identity developed during the four critical years of the college experience (Astin, 1993) becomes important in grounding students to something that becomes uniquely their own, shared with others, but defined by their own experience (O’Donovan, 1989). These concepts are more fully explored in chapter two.

Research Questions

With the need for cross-disciplinary analysis in mind, these questions guided this inquiry:

1. *How do Southern Utah University (SUU) students describe the importance of institutional culture, to include legends, traditions, and symbols, in their attachment to the institution?*
2. *How do SUU students describe the formation of place attachment to the school during their college experience?*
3. *What role do the legends, traditions, and symbols of SUU play in helping students form an identity as SUU students?*
4. *How do these cultural elements influence the creation of identity with the institution?*
5. *How do students who are involved in student clubs and organizations describe their experiences with campus legends, traditions, and symbols differently than students who are not involved in student clubs and organizations?*

These questions were answered through a qualitative analysis of sixteen students currently enrolled at Southern Utah University (SUU). A case study was used to examine SUU and its legends, traditions, and symbols. Open-ended interviews were conducted with sixteen current students. The study was bounded, using SUU as a single case. Because this research sought to explore institutional cultural traits that contribute to place attachment, qualitative methods were deemed appropriate and research was conducted using a case study (Babbie, 2006).

Methodology, Data Collection and Analysis

Merriam (2009) suggests that data for case studies are generally collected through interviews, observation, and document analysis. Data for this study were collected through analysis of historical documents and through semi-structured interviews with informants selected based on predefined criteria. Interviews were composed of open-ended questions and were flexible to allow informants to digress as they felt so moved throughout the interview process (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). The responses were recorded digitally and transcribed verbatim with researcher notes taken during the interview used to add context (Creswell, 2007).

The informants were selected through purposeful sampling. Students were gathered using the institution's computer-based student information system and broken into four class levels (freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors). Those groups were divided into students who were on record as being involved in any student clubs, organizations, or athletics, and those who were not listed as members or participants in these groups. Interview questions and protocols are included in Appendix D.

Content analysis was performed on both interview transcriptions and historical documents to determine what could be learned through the manifest and latent data (Creswell, 2007). The data analysis process began with initial coding of the data to uncover manifest and latent meanings followed by subsequent coding to allow themes to emerge and be compared between informants (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009).

In an effort to explore areas of interest as they emerged and achieve saturation of the categories, Creswell's (2007) constant comparative method of analysis was used simultaneously with data collection. This helped develop a thick, rich description of the case in general and the informants' views of the case in particular.

Lastly, the data were analyzed in an attempt to "understand the essence of the experience" (Creswell, 2007, p. 78; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). The data provided by informants, as well as the experiences of the researcher, were used to describe Southern Utah University (SUU) students who identify as "Thunderbirds" or "T-Birds".

Validation of Methodology

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest four constructs to ensure the trustworthiness of a qualitative study: credibility; transferability; dependability; and confirmability. Each of these constructs adds value to the study by creating assurance that the data are true, generalizable, objective, and consistent.

Credibility adds to trustworthiness of a study by verifying that "the subject was appropriately identified and described" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 201). This was achieved through a thick, rich description of the case. Credibility was also achieved by

triangulation through member checking, or allowing participants to read portions of the report that pertained to them to ensure it was taken in context of their own experiences. Transcripts of the interviews and resulting vignettes were returned to informants for review and clarification (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

One trait of research that establishes trustworthiness is transferability. Qualitative research is usually not considered generalizable because it is an in-depth look at a single case or phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). One method of accounting for this perceived lack of generalizability is to make the research transferable. Through transferability, "the researcher should argue that his or her findings will be useful to others in similar situations, with similar research questions or questions of practice" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 201). This study attempted to create a template by which other universities can explore how they can use their own legends, traditions, and symbols to create a sense of place attachment with their own students. While it may not be applicable to all institutions, those who use it to guide research may find elements that are useful and eliminate those that are not (Merriam, 2009).

Quality research must also be dependable. Dependability is where "the researcher attempts to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for study and changes in the design created by an increasingly refined understanding of the setting" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 203). A concerted effort was made to create consistency in the data, and was achieved first through a pilot review of the questions to be posed to informants, then through peer review, and finally through development of an interview protocol, designed to ensure as much consistency as possible in a semi-structured

interview process. Additionally, an audit of the method of inquiry was performed to provide triangulation of the data (Creswell, 2007).

Lastly, research must be confirmable. In qualitative research this means the researcher determines "whether the findings of the study could be confirmed by another" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 203). Confirmability is a method by which researcher neutrality and objectivity within the study is validated. This trait was achieved through peer review where colleagues responded to their own level of understanding of the subject under study. Peer review also provided another element of triangulation to the written report.

Ethics

An important part of any research is the protection of the participants. After completing the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) course and exams, this study was conducted with approval from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Institutional Review Board (IRB) in the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects and under close supervision of experienced researchers. IRB approval was also received from the Southern Utah University to protect the interests of their students. Letters of Informed Consent were provided to each participant explaining the purpose of the research and assuring anonymity in the report (Creswell, 2007).

Significance of the Study

In the current economic climate, institutions of higher education are challenged with finding new sources of funding and support, and the field of higher education has

come to look more like a business in a competitive market than the academic havens that existed when the nation was young (Considine, 2006). Considine writes:

> The current emergency has arisen not because universities are short of funds or straightened by competition, but because universities are finding it more and more difficult to explain what they do that is distinctive. The identity question has to do with the nature of the distinction between the university as a system and other proximate systems, on the one hand, and between the university and its resource environment, on the other. (p. 256)

Universities, then, can be expected to rely more and more on students, not just for tuition and fee support, but for referrals to future students and constituent support in the state legislature and other supportive agencies.

The perceived success of an institution is rarely a definitive question, nor is it necessarily a matter of supply and demand. Measuring human development can, to some extent, be done only on a case-by-case basis for each person being developed (Considine, 2006). This is why it is critical for institutions of higher education to create a bond with students that will encourage persistence to graduation and even endure well beyond graduation and serve as a catalyst for the advancement of the institution in the future.

The student experience relies heavily on what students learn and do in college (Pike & Kuh, 2005). “Research has strongly supported this assumption, indicating that engagement is positively related to objective and subjective measures of gains in general abilities and critical thinking” (p. 186). This study suggests that engagement goes beyond student involvement in activities and academics and seeks to explore how engagement,

facilitated through campus legends, traditions, and symbols can create an element of place attachment that ultimately plays a significant role in student involvement.

Prior research outlining institutional traits that create attachment for students is abundant and cites academic programs and student involvement as primary predictors (Astin, 1993; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Kuh, et al, 2005). Additionally, prior research has been conducted on institutional traits and demographics that impact student attachment to the university, up to and including the alumni relationship (Lounsbury & DeNeui, 1996; Mael & Ashforth, 1990; Okunade & Berl, 1997). A review of institutional traits, specifically those that create loyalty, place attachment, and collective identity in other environments (Holmes, et al, 2003) coupled with the results of this study attempted to fill a significant gap in the pursuit of the development of place attachment in students using campus culture, including legends, traditions, and symbols.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited by the scope of the data pool. While the selection of informants should provide for a rich description of the phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 2006), the responses may not reflect the experience of every Southern Utah University (SUU) student who feels a strong attachment to the campus, nor may it reflect every element of the undergraduate experience that contributes to the place attachment and collective identity. While purposeful sampling was used to account for as many differences related to gender, ethnicity, religion, and background as possible sources of institutional attachment and identity, many elements not related to campus culture are

still not accounted for and may present additional important factors in the development of place attachment and collective identity.

A heuristic approach to this study was used, and while the researcher's perspective served as another form of triangulation there is potential for researcher bias that may taint the results of the study. The idea of *epoche*, or the bracketing of researcher experience (Creswell, 2007), was used to account for this potential for bias by requiring the researcher to validate personal assumptions made prior to the study with actual data collected from students. It is through this process that preconceived notions were proved or disproved to be true.

While the concept of place attachment through student and human development may be useful to some extent on every campus as a method of increasing persistence, it must be acknowledged that SUU is a very unique culture. Because the nuances of religion, a small community, and a largely homogenous campus are unique to this Utah school, the results of the study may serve as a template for other campuses, but not necessarily be pertinent to other institutions.

Lastly, qualitative research is, by nature, a time-consuming undertaking. The work started here could go on for years and span many generations of students and alumni. The approach could easily start with freshmen and, using the "book end approach" to student development as outlined by Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, and Associates (2005), follow the cultural experience through to the alumni experience. The span of this study is not designed to encompass a topic that broadly, so valuable information may be lost here, but may serve as the foundation for a future broader study.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, several terms have been defined as follows:

TABLE 1.0 - Definition of Key Terms.

Term	Definition
Collective identity	The concept of a group of individuals who feel a sense of belonging to the group through shared values, experiences, beliefs, etc., whereby identity with the group may be even stronger than the identity of self (McDonald, 2009).
Culture	A focus on the traditions, legends, and symbols that are unique to the campus experience, specifically to Southern Utah University (Tucker, 2005).
Epoche	Also referred to as *bracketing*, a form of self-examination intended to "permit the researcher to gain clarity from her own preconceptions" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p. 105).
Folklore	"Forms of folklore include traditional narratives, songs, customs, beliefs, festivals, crafts, and house types. Often associated with artistic self-expression, folklore helps people articulate their values, needs, and concerns" (Tucker, 2005, p. 187).
Heuristic	An approach to phenomenological analysis whereby the researcher's own experiences are considered in the analysis of the data (Merriam, 2009).
Legend	"A genre of folk narrative that is closely connected to everyday life. The legend's implied question 'Can this be true?' makes listeners eager to learn more about it" (Tucker, 2005, p. 188).
Oral tradition	"Tradition transmitted primarily by word of mouth" (Tucker, 2005, p. 188).
Phenomenon	"The concept being experienced by subjects in a study, which may include psychological concepts such as grief, anger, or love" (Creswell, 2007, p. 236).
Place attachment	"An attitude of enduring affinity with known localities and the ways of life they sponsor" (Basso, 1996, p. 83).
Ritual	"A repeated pattern of behavior" (Tucker, 2005, p. 189).

Symbol	"A representation of something else, either in folk narrative or in other forms of expression" (Tucker, 2005, p. 190).
Textural description	A written description of the informant's experience (Creswell, 2007).
Tradition	"Material that is passed along from one person to another and from one generation to the next" (Tucker, 2005, p. 190).

Summary

This study examined the importance of campus culture in influencing student attachment. It sought to describe the influence legends, traditions, and symbols have on the students of Southern Utah University. Ultimately, this study attempted to open a door of research regarding place attachment and collective identity that will allow institutions of higher education to determine how their own institutional culture can be used to enhance student attachment. The given cross-disciplinary approach to this study may open the door for additional research in determining the importance of campus culture and the inclusion of legends, traditions, and symbols in attachment to an institution.

The following chapters provide support and validation for the study. Chapter two provides a review of literature currently available as it relates to the topic and discusses what is missing from the body of knowledge available. Chapter three describes the methods used throughout, including data collection and analysis procedures. An overview of the participants is provided in chapter four. Chapter five presents the findings of the research. Finally, chapter six provides a summary of the study, an overview of the relevance of the research, recommendations for future study, and a conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature on organizational theory, specifically in regards to organizations as cultures, is far-reaching. This chapter provides an overview of that literature and how it applies to the campus culture, specifically campus traditions, legends, and symbols. A discussion of the sociological concept of place attachment will describe the importance of institutional legends, traditions, and symbols as they relate to the creation of place attachment and various subcategories such as sense of place as considered within the discipline of social psychology. These elements will then be synthesized to support the need for this study. Finally, an historical description of Southern Utah University (SUU), the institution selected for study, and its prominent traditions, will be discussed.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of research is the disciplinary orientation through which the researcher explains the world (Merriam, 2009). Place attachment is used as the conceptual framework for the purpose of this study. Holmes, Patterson, and Stalling (2003) explain the concept of "place attachment" or "sense of place" by describing its role in human psychology:

> Of all the academic disciplines that contribute to the fields of counseling and human development, behavioral geography and environmental psychology might seem the least likely to offer insight into clinical issues related to personal development. Yet, research findings and theoretical constructs from these

> disciplines can help professional counselors understand the important role that sense of place plays in human development … [particularly in] sense of place as a primary developmental influence across the human life span. (p. 238)

Researchers suggest that humans innately seek meaning in their surroundings and create significance of their own existence in the world around them (Holmes, et al., 2003; Mael & Ashforth, 1992; Smith, 2007). On this basis, cultural geography is an exploration of how humans create meaning of the places they inhabit in an effort to justify themselves and create purpose for their existence (Smith, 2007). Holmes, et al., (2003) suggest:

> Attaching cultural meaning often gives holy or spiritual status to specific locales or terrain features … Locale becomes socially significant and meaningful as people learn to behave with the same temporal rhythms … However, sense of place also involves aspects beyond those of mere physical location, for example, human values and intentions. (p. 239)

The ideas of social and collective identity align with this concept nicely.

> According to social identity theory, the self-concept is comprised of a personal identity, encompassing idiosyncratic characteristics such as abilities and interests, and a social identity, encompassing salient group classifications [which] enable individuals to order the social environment and locate themselves and others within it … Social identification, then, is the perception of belongingness to a group classification. The individual perceives him or herself as an actual or symbolic member of the group. (Mael & Ashforth, 1992, p. 104)

As humans develop, both individually and collectively, the lines that initially isolate an individual from a community begin to fade, and the place takes on a new meaning, one of feeling comfortable and "at home" in the individual's surroundings. "Among the most important developmental issues that arise from sense of place are identity, belonging, groundedness, meaning, growth, and spiritual well-being" (Holmes, et al., 2003, p. 241). This is especially critical during the formative years of traditionally-aged college students (Astin, 1984; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Assocates, 2005). Additionally, as society experiences industrial and technological growth, the basic human need for belonging diminishes as technology "serves to separate people from the direct experience of place" (Holmes, et al., 2003, p. 243).

Place attachment refers to a branch of social psychology which follows an individual's sense of self through the places with which one associates him- or herself (Relph, 1976). It is an overarching definition which gives special meaning to the people who experience it together. Cultural geographers generally associate place attachment with the physical features of the environment, such as mountains, deserts, or lakes, but also with the structures that the inhabitants create to define their own space, such as a street or building (Lukerman, 1964). A broader discussion of place attachment will follow.

Organizations as Cultures

Currently, much of the scholarship on organizations as cultures is geared toward leadership practices and general business practices (Bolman & Deal, 2009; Morgan, 2006). Institutions of higher education are different from these general business practices

in that their “customers” (the students) are actually members of their organization and the institution seeks to maintain a relationship with the “customer” (or students) after the point of departure, unlike in a business where the customer is important only in the context of repeat sales. Researchers who study the university as an organization with a culture of its own have historically overlooked the element of traditions, legends, and symbols (Considine, 2006; Schein, 1986, Silver, 2003; Tierney, 1992). These gaps in the literature prompt the need for this study.

An abundance of research has been conducted on organizational theory describing the culture and how it impacts the success of the organization. Recent works by Morgan (2006) and Bolman and Deal (2009) summarize years of theoretical development. Both works suggest that the concept of culture, including the traditions, legends, and symbols of the organization, is critical to the humanness of the organization. “Culture is not something that can be imposed on a social setting. Rather, it is something that develops during the course of social interaction” (Morgan, 2006, p. 132).

Viewing organizations as cultures serves the three highest level of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs: the need for love and belonging, the need for esteem, and the need for self-actualization (Maslow, 1943). Morgan (2006) describes how the organization becomes an active part of fulfilling the need for belonging, esteem, and self-actualization through personal satisfaction:

> We must attempt to understand culture as an ongoing, proactive process of reality construction. This brings the whole phenomenon of culture alive. When understood in this way, culture can no longer just be viewed as a simple variable that societies or organizations possess or something that a leader brings to his or

> her organization. Rather, it must be understood as an active, living phenomenon through which people jointly create and re-create the worlds in which they live. (Morgan, 2006, pp. 136-137).

Through successful creation and integration of individual worlds, people fulfill their need for belonging, esteem and self-actualization in the arena where they spend most of their waking hours.

Maslow suggests that a feeling of belonging in students satisfies the basic needs of health and safety and lays the foundation for young adults successfully making the transition to full development (Maslow, 1943). College students are in a state of personal and individual evolution (Astin, 1993; Chickering and Reisser, 1993; Erikson, 1968; Maslow, 1943); it makes sense, then, that the organizational culture in which they make these transitions is part of that process. Therefore, work that furthers the understanding of that development is essential.

Morgan (2006) suggests that organizations are "mini-societies" with cultures and sub-cultures that emerge through shared language, images, and daily rituals (p. 125). Organizational memory will often explain how such things evolved, but whether the true meaning of the gestures survives depends on the underlying values of the organization. These values facilitate relationships that can be inclusive or exclusive depending on how trust and respect are used by organizational leaders, both formal and informal. The institution's memory emulates organizational values through both product and process. "As a product, it embodies wisdom accumulated from experience. As a process, it is renewed and re-created as newcomers learn the old ways and eventually become teachers themselves" (Bolman & Deal, 2009, p. 269).

Where Morgan focuses primarily on how organizational culture can be used by leaders, Bolman and Deal (2009) identify traits of organizations that can be use by and for all members of the organization to create a sense of belonging. Specifically, Bolman and Deal look at myths, vision, and values; heroes and heroines; stories and fairy tales; rituals; ceremonies; metaphors, humor, and play. For the purpose of this study, these categories are combined. The category *symbols* will be used to encompass any element of organizational culture that is not included in the categories of legends and traditions. Myths, visions, and values, and stories and fairy tales will be combined and referred to as *legends*. Rituals and ceremonies will be combined and called *traditions*.

Bolman and Deal use the work of behavioral psychologists Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung to identify symbols as an important part of helping organizational members gain a sense of belonging:

> Distilled to the essence, people seek meaning in life. Since life is mysterious, we create symbols to sustain hope and faith. These intangibles then shape our thoughts, emotions, and actions. Symbols cut deeply into the human psyche (Freud, [1899] 1980) and tap the collective unconscious (Jung, [1912] 1965). (2009, p. 252)

Legends are the narratives that communicate the values of the organization to members (Tucker, 2005). They often describe some element of the origination or evolution of the organization and define how the organization came to its current state. They may recount the tales of founders or the heroic acts of members, leaders or otherwise, that emulate the values those members hold dear (Bolman & Deal, 2009). The values may be those stated in published documents, such as mission statements, or they

may be the underlying messages sent through the decisions and behaviors of leaders. Articulated as legends, they are "a shared fantasy, illuminating new possibilities" (Bolman & Deal, 2009, p. 255).

Bolman and Deal (2009) also point out that rituals and ceremonies are closely related, but distinctly different: "As a rule of thumb, ritual is more everyday. Ceremonies are more episodic – grander and more elaborate – convened at times of transitions or special occasions" (p. 265). Although these are different events in regards to a cultural organization, for the purpose of this study, both will be referred to as traditions.

A study performed by the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) in 2005 suggests that "individuals identify with universities and colleges, in part, because institutions represent societal values … Accordingly, universities and colleges have long used civic pride and the expression of community and national values to advance their interests" (p. 15). This concept, viewed through the lens of organizational culture helps to explain the importance of university culture on the personal evolution students experience during the four critical years of college (Astin, 1993; Chickering and Reisser, 1993, Maslow, 1943).

Universities as Cultures

The legends, traditions, and symbols that make up a university culture take on an increasingly important meaning. Where most organizations use culture to create a sense of community among current members, universities, which rely on alumni relations for funding and referrals, have a unique vested interest in maintaining that sense of community with members after departure (Okunade & Berl, 1997). Therefore, looking at universities as cultures becomes a method of determining the formation and evolution of

a lifelong relationship. This is where organizational theories require an improved design to be useful to colleges and universities.

Kuh and Whitt (1988) describe the importance of institutional culture on the student experience. They define culture as

> persistent patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that shape the behavior of individuals and groups in a college or university and provide a frame of reference within which to interpret the meaning of events and actions on and off campus. (pp. iii – iv)

For the purpose of this study the term "culture" will be used as an overarching concept that will take on elements of each previously referenced definition: A focus on the legends, traditions, and symbols that are unique to the campus experience, specifically to Southern Utah University.

As the financial survival of institutions of higher education depends increasingly on donations and referrals from alumni (Considine, 2006; Okunade & Berl, 1997), creating a bond with students becomes a priority. Kuh and Whitt (1988) explain:

> Under conditions of uncertainty and ambiguity, people usually become more cautious in interpreting the meaning and consequences of their actions. Cultural perspectives have been proposed as lenses through which the consequences of institutional responses to turbulent, uncertain conditions can be anticipated, understood, even managed. (p. 1 - 2).

Through campus culture, then, the institution has an opportunity to remove some of the uncertainty and ambiguity that may lead students to disassociate with the school, which

may have future implications for continued enrollment, potential donation, and other types of advocacy or support.

Investigating institutional culture through the eyes of students is increasingly important. Scanlon, Rowling, and Weber (2007) argue that many elements of the contemporary university are designed specifically to encourage attachment and secure persistence during a student's tenure and financial support after graduation. These elements are significant as students are increasingly maintaining lifestyles different than that of the historically typical perception of students, for example, single, 18 to 24 years of age, attending school full-time while working part-time.

> Full-time students have increasingly developed attendance patterns akin to part-time students and this has resulted in a less stable student community with which individual students can identify. This is a very significant development in terms of student identity … less time spent on campus [means] that students [are] less likely to define themselves as university students. (Scanlon, Rowling, & Weber, 2007, p. 225)

Where most organizational cultures seek to involve employees in order to attract customers or clients, universities involve all members, past and present. Unlike faculty and staff, students are intentionally transitory, which means it is important for the institution to create a part of the culture that students can carry with them. The institution has a vested interest in maintaining long-term relationships, the element missing from the cultural model of organizational theory. Very few organizations outside of the academe seek to maintain a relationship with people after they separate, however, colleges and universities do.

Kuh and Whitt (1988) argue that organizational theory is founded "in a strong desire for order and orderliness" (p. 3). Additionally, Astin (1993) discusses the importance of environment in student development. Understanding that traditional students are at an important age in regards to adult development (Astin, 1993; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Assoc., 2005; Kuh & Whitt, 1988) allows the institution to create an environment whereby students can feel a part of the strengths and successes of the institution. Cultural traits of the institution allow students to understand their surroundings and feel that they are part of a community as their lives are evolving and developing around them (ASHE, 2005).

University Culture Defined

Culture, for the purpose of this study, will be defined as a focus on the legends, traditions, and symbols that are unique to the campus experience, specifically to Southern Utah University (SUU). Mael and Ashforth (1992) describe organizational identification as "a perceived oneness with an organization and the experience of the organization's successes and failures as one's own" (p. 103). Culture, then, describes the elements of the institution that create this sense of "oneness" and leads to one's identification with an organization. Kuh and Whitt (1988) suggest that understanding the role of culture in relation to the organization is critical to success because it is often "viewed as an interpretive framework for understanding and appreciating events and actions … rather than as a mechanism to influence or control behavior" (p. 3). Additionally, they suggest that "cultural perspectives acknowledge and legitimate the nonrational aspects of college and university life" (p. 3). Culture focuses on the intangible and sometimes indescribable

aspects of the institution, but those aspects often define the institution and describe how it is unique from all others.

Student and Human Development Theory

When considering the relationship between institutional culture and the development of place attachment in students, it is important to consider the developmental processes that are likely to occur during the years students spend in college. This section will discuss the development of the student and how the institution may use this time to establish a relationship through place attachment.

Astin's I-E-O Model

Alexander Astin is among the most noted theorists to investigate traditionally-aged college students and the experiences that lead to persistence and completion. Beginning in 1962 and going through a variety of iterations, most recently in 1993, Astin and his colleagues collected raw data regarding the traits of college freshmen and, through longitudinal studies determined the impact college has on students. Noting that young adults experience the process of change regardless of whether or where they attend college, Astin looked specifically at what difference college makes in the developmental process. His input-environment-output (I-E-O) model assesses "the impact of various environmental experiences by determining whether students grow or change differently under varying environmental conditions" (1993, p. 7). Astin's model looks specifically at how the student's involvement, or "the investment of physical and psychological energy in various objects" (1984, p. 298), impacts the developmental process and looks at the factors that influence development rather than at the process itself.

The I-E-O model looks at many facets of student life through which involvement can impact persistence and completion, including involvement in social aspects of the institution. Astin's research revealed that the most influential element of the student experience on personal development is the peer group (1993). Astin states:

> Student-student interaction had its strongest positive effects on leadership development, overall academic development, self-reported growth in problem-solving skills, critical thinking skills, and cultural awareness … It also had positive effects on self-concept … Student-student interaction had negative effects on feeling depressed and on the beliefs that the individual cannot change society. (p. 2)

Astin's I-E-O model examines the complicated process of student development and breaks it down to three fairly simple steps. *Inputs* are traits that the student brings with her to the college experience and include everything from her upbringing to her school experience thus far to the social development that has taken place. *Environment* includes everything the student experiences when she becomes part of the campus, including activities, educational experiences, faculty and staff, and other elements of the campus community. *Outputs* are the traits the student embodies after being exposed to the campus environment (1993, p. 7). Measuring these traits at the beginning and end of the student's tenure reveals critical data on the types of impact the college experience has on students.

The Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) administers a survey annually to more than 13 million students on 1,900 college campuses across the United States (http://www.heri.ucla.edu/cirpoverview.php, 2010). Since 1996, the CIRP has been

used to collect data that breaks down student traits into attitudinal and behavioral measures, both at the beginning and end of the college experience. The measures incorporate various aspects of the student's experiences, such as institutional characteristics (including curriculum and faculty environment, which is collected from the faculty), and the peer group (including intellectual self-esteem, permissiveness, altruism and social activism, and other similar traits). The data are collected and analyzed quantitatively and the results are used by campus administrators to refine the educational experience. The student's level of involvement as defined above is a specific focus for Astin; however, missing from his research is the impact of campus legends, traditions, and symbols on the student's involvement and commitment to the institution.

Astin's (1993) work looks very closely at the effects several characteristics of the student and institution, namely, place of residence, financial aid, major field of study, academic involvement, involvement with faculty, and involvement with student peers. Missing from his assessment is involvement with the less tangible and frequently overlooked elements of campus, such as legends, traditions, and symbols specific to the campus.

Although many psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists have influenced or constructed student development theories, Astin's work was selected as a guide for this study because Astin is widely regarded as the preeminent theorist in regard to student involvement and persistence, and his work is, in fact, the foundation for several theories that have followed (Chickering and Reisser, 1993; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt & Associates, 2005; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Mulugetta, Nash & Murphy, 1999). Each of these studies emphasizes the role campus can play in the student's transition from adolescent to

adult, or the “I am” to the “I am becoming” element of the critical developmental period framed by the college years.

Lastly, Astin’s I-E-O model builds on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (1943). Maslow’s work laid the foundation for psychosocial development, and looks specifically at the adolescent to adult transition.

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

In 1943, Abraham Maslow produced ground-breaking work in the field of psychology by creating his theory on human motivation through the basic needs of the person, each level of needs developing on the successful foundation of the level before it. This “hierarchy of needs” outlines how human beings achieve greater levels of success through satisfaction of deficiencies in the growth process. A person cannot successfully develop a sense of safety, he argued, until basic physiological needs have been satisfied. Only when foundational needs have been met at one level will the person be motivated to grow into the next level. Although Maslow’s work was founded on the best and brightest of society at the time of his research, he also focused on the top 1% of students at some of the nation’s most illustrious institutions (Hill, 2009).

The first level of Maslow’s hierarchy (1943) consists of physiological needs: breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, and homeostasis. These are the elements that the person needs simply to stay alive. The second level is safety: ensuring security of the body and the resources necessary to maintain health and property. This level may include safety through financial resources (employment) as well as a level of emotional resources (family and morals). Physical resources will have been secured in the first level. The third

level of needs includes love and belonging: the need for relationship with family, friends, and partners. This builds upon the emotional resources secured in the second level.

The two highest levels of Maslow's hierarchy include esteem and self-actualization. On the esteem level, the individual develops self-esteem and confidence through personal achievements. She seeks respect and learns to respect those around her. In self-actualization, the individual has enough self-esteem and confidence to accept others even if they hold values different from her own, solve problems through creativity and adherence to personal morality, and a desire to understand that which she does not know.

For the purpose of this study, it is important to note that the college experience occurs, to a large extent, in the two highest levels of the hierarchy (Hill, 2009). For college-level learning to take place, Maslow states that the lower three levels must have already been met. Otherwise, the student is focused on fulfilling more basic needs. Considering that, it may be in the best interest of the institution to ensure that those basic needs are provided. Physiological and safety needs are generally easy to maintain for on a college campus: residence halls and dining halls account for the physiological needs, while public safety, financial aid, wellness centers, and similar structures strive to ensure health and safety (Winston, Creamer, Miller, & Associates, 2001).

What must be considered, however, is the need for love and belonging. The college experience is generally the student's first experience living away from home and family (Astin, 1993; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2005). A sense of displacement can occur, causing the student to seek friendships and establish familial ties with those around them (Winston, et al., 2001). It is at this point that the institution has a

vested interest in facilitating a sense of belonging and place attachment for the student. By including the student in the culture of the institutional community, the university can create belongingness, fulfilling the need for love and belonging through inclusion in the university family, so the student is better able to succeed in her academic goals (Kuh, et al., 2005). The institution's assistance in the individual's basic needs as a student will establish the foundation of the student-institution relationship, which will, to a large extent, translate to persistence and loyalty throughout the college experience.

Mael and Ashforth (1992) define organizational identification as "the perception of oneness with or belongingness to an organization where the individual *defines* him or herself in terms of the organization(s) in which he or she is a member" (p. 104). This form of social identification, whereby the participants sees herself as a member, honorary or actual, of a social organization, can be used to describe how students may identify themselves in terms of the institution itself. It is important to note that this social identification can be interpreted in terms of the individual's sense of self (I am) or in terms of the individual's connectedness to the core values shared with the institution (I believe) (Mael & Ashforth, 1992).

Knox, Lindsay, and Kolb (1992) support Mael and Ashforth's findings, contending that the institution's power to grant status (through degrees or association) becomes a primary predictor of attachment.

> If an institution is to produce changes through socialization, it must motivate its charges to want to be socialized. This ability to motivate, in turn, inheres in the institution's power to confer credentials that provide access to future status-identities which students perceive to be advantageous. (p. 304)

Following the idea present by Knox, et al, it becomes increasingly important for institutions to socialize the student body through both academic and non-academic ventures. In their investigation of institutional characteristics that foster attachment, Knox, et al, determined that pride in the institution comes certainly from the credentialing abilities of the academic functions of the university, but also from the story of the university, particularly if that story is one that reflects strength and uniqueness. “As long as the fiction is operative, it has real consequences, for it strengthens attachments and loyalties to an institution and its public image” (Knox, et al, p. 322).

Understanding the preceding concepts is important for administrators and faculty for a simple reason: The student is forming identity while under their watch and this “student identity” can, and often does, lead to persistence and completion. By acknowledging the important role students play in the growth and survival of the institution (Weerts & Ronca, 2008), the institution has an opportunity to facilitate this growth and development into something that is beneficial to the student during the critical years of college, but also may be beneficial to the institution in the future. A healthy student-institution relationship becomes the foundation for persistence and loyalty.

Place Attachment

The concept of place attachment finds its origins in the study of cultural geography and may be viewed from an anthropological, sociological, or psychological lens (Holmes, Patterson, & Stalling, 2003; Long & Perkins, 2007; Manzo & Perkins, 2006). The concept itself originates with social psychology theories dating back to the

1930s, including Mead's 1934 exploration of the social self, *Mind, Self, and Society.* Relph (1976) explains the importance of place attachment in the human experience:

> This practical knowing of places, although essential to our existence, is quite superficial and is based mainly on the explicit functions that places have for us. That the significance of place in human experience goes far deeper than is apparent in the actions of individuals and groups protecting their places against outside forces of destruction, or is known to anyone who has experienced homesickness and nostalgia for particular places. To be human is to live in a world that is filled with significant places: to be human is to have and know your place. (p. 1)

Place and Space

Understanding the idea of place becomes complicated in that it does not merely describe where something exists, but also everything that exists within the location and gives it meaning to those who experience it (Relph, 1976). The fact that 'place' can refer to a small area or a vast region causes confusion for those defining the place, but also those experiencing it, particularly if they are transplanted into it. Lukerman (1964) writes, "the study of place is the subject matter of geography because consciousness of place is an immediately apparent part of reality, not a sophisticated thesis; knowledge of place is a simple fact of experience" (p. 168). To that end, as a student experiences the university he or she will create a geography based on memories and personal experiences as well as expectations of what could happen there (Relph, 1976). By involving new students in the legends and traditions of those who occupied the place of the university before them, the

institution has an opportunity to take part in the development of place attachment (Tucker, 2005).

Relph (1976) describes sense of place as the “emotional encounters” (p. 10) that tie human beings to their surroundings and create a lived experience rather than simply a perception of senses. He identifies six types of space and how they facilitate a sense of place: Pragmatic, perceptual, existential, architectural, cognitive, and abstract.

Pragmatic, or primitive space is simply the space in which we exist and function. It is created by sensory input and physical reactions to stimuli that cause us to survive. Space is merely a continuum of places, the realm of which extends only as far as the individual exists in that space.

Perceptual space is defined by the emotional responses that occur during encounters with the physical attributes of the place. Relph (1976) likens it to understanding the character of a place rather than the physical attributes, the desert being “empty” rather than “vast” (p. 10).

The interpretation of space by an individual rather than by a group is existential space, although there is likely to be overlap between the two. Relph states, “existential space is not merely a passive space waiting to be experienced, but is constantly being created and remade by human activities” (p. 12). This may be expressed in the physical placement of a city near a river or at the mouth of a canyon.

Architectural space is closely related to existential space. It refers to the intentional planning and creation of spaces with meaning for the inhabitants. The placement of structures and the deliberate physical attributes of those structures define the architectural make up of a place (Relph, p. 22).

Cognitive space is a place defined by its boundaries. The borders of a country or the fence of a property are examples of cognitive space. The people and experiences that occur within the cognitive space are made more meaningful because they occur within the boundaries that identify the place (Relph, pp. 24-25).

Abstract space is Relph's final subcategory of place and placelessness. It recognizes that cognitive space is uniquely human and constructed out of a need for identification. By removing the borders, the place becomes continuous and the symbols humans find in one space can be carried with them through memory or legend to other places. While it can include concrete evidence of space, such as the Grand Canyon or the Rocky Mountains, it can also be an ethereal concept such as heaven or hell. It is the meaning that humans develop in a place and then carry with them to the next place (pp. 25-26). The meaning behind legends, traditions, and symbols becomes an important element of social psychology in abstract space.

Sense of Place and Rootedness

Studies such as Relph's *Place and Placelessness* (1977) and others that built on Mead's work appeared in the 1970s (Bandura's *Social Learning Theory* in 1977; Gerson, Stueve, and Fischer's "Attachment to place" in 1977). However, Yi-Fu Tuan's 1980 groundbreaking work on the concepts of "sense of place" and "rootedness" is widely viewed to be the foundation upon which contemporary studies on place attachment are built. As early as 1980 Tuan recognized the American growth toward a society bound together by technology and the converse but increasingly important urge to maintain "rootedness" as part of human and social development. His work defines two terms that have become the foundation of place attachment theories: "sense of place" and

"rootedness." Tuan argues that while these terms are related, their meanings are actually in opposition based on how the concepts evolve with the human experience. Rootedness, Tuan argues, "is long habitation at one locality … a state of being made possible by an incuriosity toward the world at large and an insensitivity toward the flow of time" (p. 4). This state of being, he suggests, is all but lost to Americans due to a sense of globalization.

Furthermore, Tuan (1980) suggests that the concept of a distinct timeline hinders modern societies from understanding rootedness fully:

> In the course of life human beings witness many lacerating events, such as the death of a child, and have no wish to be haunted by them. To operate effectively in the present, past tragedies must not be allowed to intrude unduly on present consciousness. Certain mishaps are better forgotten. Although it is true that the memory of pain is no longer pain, the memory of embarrassment is embarrassing, and the memory of humiliation, humiliating. As for the recall of past happiness, it does bring pleasure, but pleasure of a rather wistful and etiolated kind. (p. 5)

His argument, then, is that Americans can never truly experience the type of rootedness of aboriginal tribes who have, for generations, existed in one place, largely unaware of the world beyond their borders.

On the other hand, Tuan also describes rootedness as a "psychological state of being" or mood. It is unreflective: "People may not even be aware of home when they are truly at home, wrapped in the small satisfactions of day-to-day affairs, unconcerned with the past's heritage or the future's promises" (p. 6). This "at-homeness" proves to be a common theme in the study of place attachment.

Creating a sense of place, on the other hand, is more a deliberate choice. Sense of place is defined by the structures and words that make something common to many. Tuan states,

> Words have great power in creating place … [people] maintain their awareness … with the stories they tell and the rituals they perform. The power of words is further illustrated in the settlement of a new land. Explorers conjure places out of the wilderness by simply naming certain peaks and rivers. When the farmers and traders move in, they enter an already baptized world … in a sense, a place is its reputation. (1980, p. 6)

With Tuan's work serving as a foundation, several models have evolved, breaking down "sense of place" and "rootedness" into subcategories that describe levels in between these bases. Additionally, theoretical research has evolved in such a way as to describe more comprehensively the relationship between the social psychology of human development and place attachment.

Social and Personal Identities

Understanding social psychology requires a foundation in the concepts of "self" and "identity." Deaux (1992) offers a concise distinction between the two: "self refers to a fairly abstract, global concept, where as identity is linked to specific aspects of self-definition" (p. 10). She argues that self-motivation, once physical needs are met, generally takes place within the individual's idea of self, specifically relating to objectives or goals. Citing a study of first-year university students, she states that definition of self for freshmen generally includes activities that facilitate social belonging as well as academic success.

As these goals are defined, specific actions that must take place to achieve them begin to develop traits of the individual's identity. The student may join a Greek organization or honors society in an effort to achieve the goals that define the student's self. Actions such as these create a continuum of personal and social identity along which the student will exist, beginning closer to the side of social identity and moving toward personal identity as the student develops habits and traits that define her uniquely from her community (Deaux, 1992). This can also be described using a target, with social identity as the outer rings and personal identity as the bullseye (Brewer, 1991). The 'self' contains the 'identities' of the individual. The identities generally include the roles that a person plays, so the individual may identify as student, daughter, sorority sister, tutor, athlete, friend, and so on. The complex relationship between the identification as a member of all these groups creates varying levels of emotional investment, and the strongest emotional ties become the strongest identifiers of the self (Deaux, 1992).

Breakwell (1992) builds on Deaux's explanation of social identity in a discussion of self-efficacy. She states, "people's perceptions of their own capabilities influence how they act, their motivation levels, their thought patterns, and their emotional reactions in demanding situations" (p. 35). At the same time self-efficacy is developing, psychological estrangement, or the "inability of the individual to find any intrinsic satisfaction" (p. 37) draws the individual into social settings as she seeks to find extrinsic sources of motivation.

Perhaps most pertinent to Breakwell's argument, supported by Maslow (1943), Erikson (1968), and others (see Kroger, 1989, for a comprehensive summary), is her assertion that adolescence is the most critical time in an individual's life in relation to

developing a balance between the social and personal identity. She contends that "adolescence is a time when the individual seeks to forge a unique identity which balances compliance to new society role requirements and desires for autonomy" (p. 38). Understanding that self-esteem is related in to successful life experiences with causality being multidirectional (Rosenberg, 1989), it becomes increasingly important for institutions of higher education to take an active role in helping students find the balance between social and personal identity (Breakwell, 1992).

Place Identification and Place Identity

Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) expound on Breakwell's model by defining two specific ways that sense of place can be related to identity: place identification and place identity. These terms differ in that place identification suggests a social identification and "would express membership of a group of people who are defined by location," (p. 206), such as members of the Southern Utah University (SUU) community referring to themselves as "Thunderbirds." Place identity, on the other hand, refers to the individual's "socialization with the physical world" (p. 206), including identification with structures and landscapes rather than identification with a group.

In a review of prior research, Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) determined that "there is no account of what processes guide action in relation to identity, and therefore no explanation of how or why places become salient for the self-concept" (p. 205). To address this gap, they outline a model suggesting the use of Breakwell's four principles of identity development that serve to encourage attachment to place. The four principles include: distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem, and self-efficacy.

Distinctiveness is defined by the uniqueness of the relationship the individual has with his/her environment. This special relationship is described in the way individuals outline the benefits of belonging in their unique relationship with their home as opposed to similar relationships held by others. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell discuss how a study of Londoners uncovered a pride in their identification as 'city' people that extended to the point of outlining how life as a 'city' person contrasted in a positive manner with other lifestyles. On a university campus, this may be described through school spirit, understanding that it is the unique traits of the campus that make the school special to those who identify with it. A student, for example, may identify with the school: "Thunderbirds are exceptional students. I am a Thunderbird, therefore, I am an exceptional student." This, then, would be an example of place identification.

The second principle, continuity, relies on two types of relationships with environment: place-referent and place-congruent (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell). Place-reference occurs when something within the environment serves to tie an individual to their own past, providing "a sense of continuity to their identity" (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, p. 207). University logos, for example, may be seen as symbols that allow place attachment to accompany the individual beyond the campus boundaries. This idea is important when considering the role the university plays in an individual's personal development. Students come to college with the intention of changing, whether academically, professional, or personally. Hormuth (1990) identifies the importance of individual choice when change occurs. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell describe Hormuth's ideas on self-concept change:

> Choosing to move can represent self-concept change with the old place becoming a symbol of the old self and the new place representing an opportunity to develop new identities. In both these examples, place is considered to be an active part of the construction of a person's identity, representing continuity and change. (p. 207)

Place-congruent continuity is different from place-referent continuity in that it looks at how certain elements of the place can remain the same as they transfer from one place to the next (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996). This offers two interesting thoughts in relation to college campuses. First, it is important to note that as the campus landscape changes with the addition or demolition of buildings and structures, the stories and traditions associated with those buildings and structures can remain and be adapted to incorporate new structures, thereby tying the historical value of the campus to new generations. The second item of importance is the implication this concept has for transfer students. The first of these ideas will be explored further; the other offers a thought for future research.

Self-esteem is Breakwell's third principle addressed by Twigger-Ross and Uzzell. Where Breakwell's definition of self-esteem is summed up as "a positive evaluation of oneself or the group with which one identifies; it is concerned with a person's feeling of worth or social value" (p. 208), Twigger-Ross and Uzzell expand on this and incorporate other theorists to show the role positive environments can play on self-esteem, particularly during developmental periods of life. "Through living in an historic town a person can feel a sense of pride by association" (p. 208). On a college campus, a legacy of pride, then, may potentially connect generations of students.

The last principle of place identification and place identity is self-efficacy, which is defined by Twigger-Ross and Uzzell as "an individual's belief in their capabilities to meet situational demands" (p. 208). This principle is especially important to social-learning theory when considering the mission of higher education. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell suggest that being able to manage one's environment, particularly their daily functions within the environment, is a critical element of psychological well-being. Implications of this concept are especially important for residential campuses as the personal and social development of the student may be added to the academic development as a core goal for the university. While Breakwell (1986) developed these four principles to guide social psychology, Twigger-Ross and Uzzell's incorporation of environment creates a framework for understanding the process by which human beings become attached to a defined place.

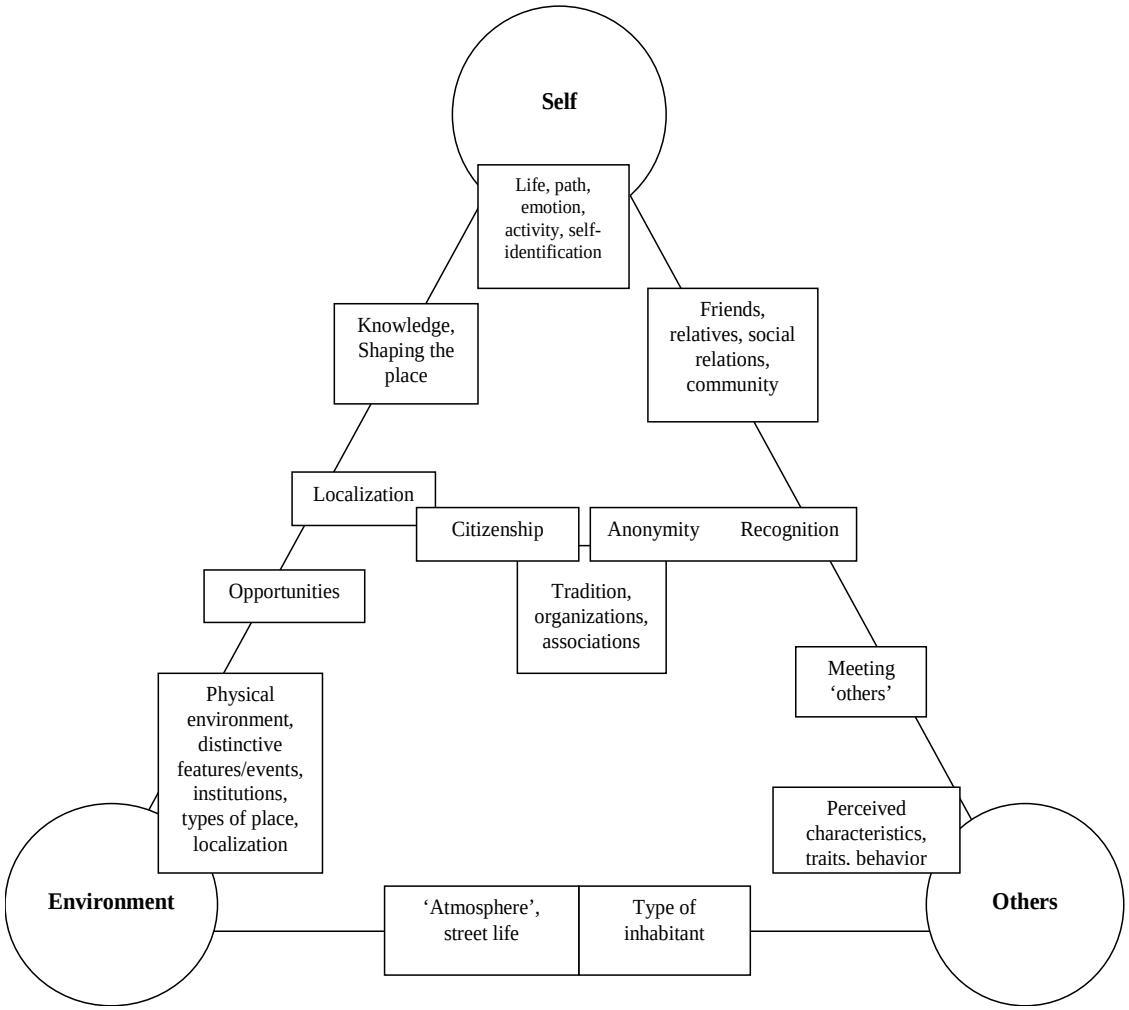
Gustafson summarizes the prior works and offers a comprehensive analytical framework that serves to describe the processes through which places become meaningful. Focusing on Relph (1976) as a foundation for theoretical research and Twigger-Ross and Uzzel (1996) as a foundation for empirical research, Gustafson identified three overarching and interrelated themes in describing the sense of self and the meanings of place: Self, others, and environment. The meanings of place, he argues, are defined in the relationships that exist between these facets. These relationships are illustrated in Figure 2.0.

Gustafson (2001) describes the meanings of places in relation to 'self' as the life path that develops as individuals live in different places for long periods of time. On the continuum between 'self' and 'others' is the meaning that comes from being a part of a

community and having social relationships with others that share the place. Place is defined by ‘others’ as the characteristics of the people who occupy the place, “often based on explicit comparisons between ‘us’/‘here’ and ‘them’/ ‘there’” (p. 10).

Places gain meaning from the relationship between ‘others’ and ‘environment’ by becoming associated with a feel, described by the participants in Gustafson’s study as an ‘atmosphere’ or a ‘climate’ associated with an area (p. 10). An example of this would be the settling of immigrant neighborhoods or the division between an urban environment and a suburban area. The environment itself can give meaning to place through weather, topography, or even events. The relationship between ‘environment’ and ‘self’ may be defined by formal knowledge of the history of the area or membership in the group that built or reshaped the physical environment (Gustafson, 2001).

Figure 2.0 - Meanings of place. (Gustafson, 2001, p. 10)



It is the combination of all three elements that make up the meanings that a place holds for individuals (Gustafson, 2001). In relation to the late adolescent development, Gustafson argues that "traditions, festivals and anniversaries often implicate self, others and various environments" (p. 11) and emerge as themes for the meanings of place and the attachment that comes with them.

Hay's 1998 study of 'sense of place' and 'place attachment' is important in that it describes how these phenomena impact human development. His discussion focuses on the ideas of "residency" and "insider status" as critical to the creation of a sense of place.

Place Attachment and the Student Experience

The evolution of a technology-based society considered in tandem with a social need for sense of place defines a challenge faced by universities. Tuan (1980) suggests that as technology evolves

> widely held values such as technological progress, spatial mobility, and the achievement of a modern national culture are challenged. To an increasing number of college-educated Americans, the good words are likely to be 'harmonious stability' rather than 'dynamic progress,' a feeling for and an attachment to place rather than the ideal of a shared national culture. (p. 3)

The challenge for universities, then, is progressively embracing the advancements in technology while holding closely to a shared past that creates a feeling of home for students.

Holmes, Patterson, and Stalling (2003) view place attachment as a "primary developmental influence across the human life span … By nature, human beings are

bound by place; all human endeavors occur within the context of physical and cultural place" (p. 238). This becomes especially important in relation to traditionally-aged students. The university experience is transitional. The student is leaving her parents' home but not yet moving into her own adulthood. This transitory state creates an ideal opportunity for creating a sense of self in relation to the physical, mental, and emotional changes taking place as the student develops (Holmes, Patterson, & Stalling, 2003).

Tuan (1980) also describes the importance of working to create a sense of place for transient populations. He writes,

> In the most literal sense, we create places with sticks and stones. A built object organizes space, transforming it into place … Unusual artworks and buildings may not … find quick acceptance. Egregiously visible, they yet bear no recognizable message, and resonate neither with present reality nor with hallowed memories of the past. (p. 6)

Naming buildings or halls on a university campus may give meaning to those areas. The legends surrounding those for whom these areas are named become the defining factor in creating a sense of place on campus.

This idea is especially important in the physical layout and design of a campus. Generally, sense of place comes from the desire to preserve a group's unique past. Social psychology suggests that an individual or a group of people may not develop a sense of identity if they are unable to trace their history (Tuan, 1980). Therefore, it becomes crucial for campus planners to recognize the need to develop progressively while at the same time maintaining a sense of history for prior generations of students (Smith, 2007). There is a need to impress current and future students with the state-of-the-art, but also a

need to maintain the “at-home” feeling for the comfort and security of alumni. Naming a new building after a beloved former leader can become a deliberate act in tying the past to the present and future. Through such naming, Tuan (1980) suggests that “not only do the achievements of the ancestors accrue to the most recent descendent, but the ancestors themselves appear to be mere forerunners pointing to what is yet to come” (p. 7).

An institution can begin this process of place attachment as part of the recruitment process (Kuh &Whitt, 1988). The process begins with the prospective student aligning personal values with those of the institution (Holmes, Patterson, & Stalling, 2003). The concept of identification with place provides a way for students to develop personal beliefs and values in surroundings that provide conducive experiences in a supportive community (Manzo & Perkins, 2006).

Holmes, Patterson, and Stalling (2003) argue that “Among the most important developmental issues that arise from a sense of place are identity, belonging, groundedness, meaning, growth, and spiritual well-being” (p. 241). A sociological view of cultural geography suggests that “when a person offers reasons for her actions, or the actions of her group, she normally places the actions in the context of a story that justifies the action as a right or a duty that follows her pursuit of a proper end” (Smith, 2007, p. 183). This story, as understood by members of the community, becomes a master narrative for the community, and “every reasonable, intelligible, meaningful thing and place must find its reason in the master narrative” (Smith, p. 183). This becomes a line of communication between generations and individuals from different stations in the community, hence being a member of that community is more meaningful (Smith).

Cultural geographer Jonathan M. Smith provides, in part, the impetus for this study in his 2007 review of the Texas A & M University Aggie Bonfire and all that surrounds it. Using a sociological framework for cultural geography, Smith presents an in-depth history of the institution and the tradition of Bonfire and then discusses why, even after the Bonfire accident that killed twelve students in 2000, the tradition remains too much a part of the Aggie tradition to be stopped.

In his narrative of the history of Texas A & M, Smith discusses the importance of a military heritage to the evolution of the campus.

> Traditional knowledge of community and objective values was transmitted to cadets by means quite different than technical knowledge. It was *experienced,* not explained. Community and objective values were given to cadets as substantive goods and *internal* to the disciplined and uniform life of the Corps, not as doctrines, theories, or techniques … traditional knowledge always has this character. It is learned by immersion in a way of life that results in unreflecting adoption of unself-conscious habits. Because these habits respond to substantive goods, their performance is confident, unhesitating. But, for this same reason, persons motivated by traditional knowledge find it difficult to explain, defend, or intentionally modify these habits. (pp. 185-186)

This can be likened back to Tuan's definition of sense of place.

In many ways, actions and stories create the place. Tuan (1980) describes the Mbona cult of Malawi and Mozambique:

> The shrine at the cult center is a hut made of highly perishable material. It has to be rebuilt on the average of once every five years. What unifies the far-flung

> members of the Mbona cult and give the cult center its special aura is not the shrine, but the act of building it – not so much the final material product as the cooperative effort and gesture. (p. 6)

The importance of actions to a culture describes how campus rituals become part of the bond that creates a sense of place, an "at-homeness," for generations of students, and creates a bond by which they are all part of a collective.

Loyalty to one's institution is a feature that exists on many campuses. By being part of the institution, students are part of the successes and failures. A winning football season brings happiness even to those who do not attend the games. The death of a beloved faculty member is felt by all who studied with or under him or her (Smith, 2007; Holmes, Patterson, & Stalling, 2003).

Southern Utah University: A Brief Overview

The following discussion will present a narrative of Southern Utah University (SUU). That narrative will express the cultural practices including legends, traditions, and symbols, and how they are used to create a sense of solidarity in the place attachment that is formed around the campus (Smith, 2007). The following is drawn almost exclusively from *Southern Utah University: A Heritage History of the First Hundred Years,* by Anne O. Leavitt (1997) and confirmed by Paula Mitchell, archivist for Southern Utah University.

Founded in 1897, SUU was a branch of the state normal school (the University of Utah) to serve the southern half of the state (Leavitt, 1997). At the time, the state legislature was seeking a branch for the normal school as the southern half of the state

was growing. Cedar City was selected, at least on record, due to the centrality of the location and a strong educational record. Unofficially, legend has it that Cedar City was selected because it was the only town in those bidding for selection that did not have a saloon. For whatever reason, Cedar City was selected, and a building in town called Ward Hall was immediately restructured to accommodate a new mission. The Branch Normal School seated its first class in September, 1897.

Not long into the school year, the state attorney general determined that the building being used for classes was not adequate for the requirements because it was owned by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS or the Mormons) and could not be deeded over to the state. Separation of church and state required that classes be held in a building not associated with the Church. The citizens of Cedar City were given one year to construct a new building, or the school would be moved to another part of the state.

Winter started early that year and building materials were scarce, but with the threat of losing the school looming over them, the townspeople set out to make the new building happen, regardless of heavy snowfall on the mountains where the lumber would be harvested. On January 5, 1898, an assembly of men set out to cut logs and bring them back so construction could begin in the spring.

After days of tramping through the snow and sleeping in snow caves, the men determined that the wagons brought along to haul the logs were not going to make it back through the snow. Sleighs would be needed. As they turned back they realized that heavy snowfall had obliterated the trails they made on the way up and it was even deeper than

before. They were forced to abandon the wagons in a clearing and forge their way through snow chest high.

It was at this point that a quiet old sorrel horse became the first true legend of the institution, and remains the only legend of its type in the United States.

> Placed out at the front of the party, the horse, strong and quiet, would walk steadily into the drifts, pushing and straining against the snow, throwing himself into drifts again and again until they gave way. Then he would pause for a rest, sitting down on his haunches the way a dog does, heave a big sigh, then get up and start all over again. 'Old Sorrel' was credited with being the savior of the expedition. (http://suu.edu/general/history.html, 2010)

The building was completed in time and the Branch Normal School stayed in Cedar City.

In the early 1900s, a controversy arose about the fact that Branch Normal School was essentially a high school funded by the state, while all other high schools were funded by the county or the LDS Church. In addition to this, students who were training to be teachers were still required to complete the last year of their education in residence at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. After much discussion, the Board of Regents voted in 1910 to allow the final year to be taught in Cedar City, thus eliminating the need for students to transfer to the University of Utah, and Branch Normal School was advanced to the rank of college.

Utah State University, then known as Utah Agricultural College, was founded in 1888 as the Land Grant institution for the state of Utah. The schools established by the Land Grant Act were to be focused on practical education such as agriculture and

mechanical arts, hence, the A & M in many of their names (Smith, 2007). Additionally, these schools were supposed to support military development through training and strategy. Most significant, these institutions were designed to create access to education for the common people, those considered underprivileged and ineligible for education prior to this time (Williams, 1991).

Another requirement of the agricultural schools was the establishment of extension sites throughout the state to serve the needs of small, rural communities. When the Branch Normal School was designated a college by the Board of Regents, leaders at the University of Utah decided to disassociate from the Branch Normal School so the Regents aligned the new college with the Utah Agricultural College, and in 1913 the name of the Cedar City school changed to the Branch Agricultural College (BAC). School colors for the University of Utah were red and white; colors for the Utah Agricultural College were navy blue and white. Years later, when the BAC became its own entity, leaders paid homage to its roots by incorporating both red and blue into the school colors. A change in focus from teaching educators to agriculture was controversial to many (although a teacher training program was re-established in 1919), but leadership at the school and in southern Utah saw it as a great leap forward, unveiling potential for the southern half of the state to gain fairer representation at the state capitol.

The relationship between the Utah Agricultural College and the Branch Agricultural College was often described as a “mother-daughter” relationship. This held fast for many years and is played out in the development of legends and traditions at the smaller school, as described in the next section.

To fulfill the requirements of the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 it was necessary for the school to secure land for teaching and experiments. The community donated several acres as well as livestock, poultry, and seeds in preparation for making the transition, but the student body was not sufficient to plant and cultivate the seeds for the first year, so faculty, staff, and community members were called upon to assist in preparing the land and planting seeds. More than 300 men, women, and children showed up to lend a hand to the fledgling college, and Spring Planting Day is still celebrated by faculty and staff each year, and the academic calendar was even changed to a quarter system to allow students to begin their studies in such a way that did not interfere with the agricultural nature of the school and community.

The school's tie to the mission of the Morrill Act of 1862 was called into action with the start of World War I. Students were expected to stand before their local military examiners and local men were drafted. Teachers of domestic sciences scrambled to teach women in the community to get by on less as they were asked to donate their crops to support the allied forces. Additionally, at the request of the United States government a Student Army Corps branch was to be formed on the campus with the expectation that students would enlist in exchange for a stipend for tuition, room, and board. Although the Armistice was signed before the Student Army Corps was needed the program eventually developed and evolved into a successful and lauded ROTC program.

In 1953 the students and leadership of Branch Agricultural College recognized that the school had grown beyond simply being a "daughter" to another institution. It had taken on a mission and history of its own, and the leadership determined that the name of the school should reflect more than just the institution that governed it, and in response to

a formal petition and plea from governing agencies, the Board of Trustees changed the name to College of Southern Utah and funding was secured to build a new library and auditorium through which the school would expand its fine arts program.

In addition to becoming a cultural center for southern Utah, the school also served the needs of the local ranchers and farmers, so recruitment of new students became the job of every faculty and staff member throughout the course of the year, but especially during the county fairs that took place in the late summer and early fall. At one point the director of the school was asked by the governor for a list of all faculty and staff members to determine how efficiently the school was using state funds. The governor determined that the ratio of students to faculty was too low, so the director proceeded outline how many of the people listed as "faculty" were actually the men who herded the school's flock of sheep. When the governor insisted on including those people as faculty, the director retorted that if the sheepherders were considered staff resources, it made sense to count the sheep as students. The school was granted the appropriate funding.

In 1969 the state legislature created the Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) which would oversee all higher education institutions in the state and create centralized leadership and consistent application of standards and regulations for all Utah schools. Regents appointed by the governor would determine policy and represent the schools to the legislature with each school being represented by a president who spoke for the trustees appointed to each school. With this change, the governor requested that each school be defined in terms of mission and constituency. For the College of Southern Utah (CSU), this meant an evaluation of who was being served through the school's mission. As a newly autonomous state institution, the students, faculty, and staff of CSU felt a new

name was in order that would reflect their autonomy, and effective July 1, 1969, the school became Southern Utah State College (SUSC).

The campus grew. Visitors now needed a map to maneuver their way around campus, and programs were added that appealed to prospective students from around the region. Housing was provided for single students, and also for married students. The students built on the traditions left over from the years of association with the University of Utah and Utah State University, and eventually, the campus became a community in and of itself. In 1976, then-President Royden C. Braithwaite acknowledged the growing community: “A campus is more than just buildings. The thing that overrides the buildings and pulls them together is the organization of the outside spaces; the outside rooms, the vistas, and the surprises around the corner” (in Leavitt, 1997, p. 161). With this statement, Braithwaite declared that SUSC would strive to be the most beautiful campus in Utah, perhaps in the nation, and funding was set aside to ensure constant upkeep of the SUSC grounds, the beauty of which remains a source of campus pride.

In the fall of 1989 Weber State College, a school 300 miles north of Southern Utah State College, decided to petition the Board of Regents for a name change to Weber State University, stating that the requirements for graduation were the same as those for the University of Utah and Utah State University, and the word “university” on a diploma made a student more marketable in the workforce. SUSC, which also had the same graduation requirements, determined that a name change was in order there as well. At first the constituents at Weber State balked at including SUSC in their petition, but after much discussion it was noted that neither school had the votes necessary to make the change on their own, but the two together did. This seemingly minor change became a

source of contention across the state, particularly in communities where universities already existed. Additionally, leaders at the community college in southern Utah, Dixie College, came out in firm opposition to the move expressing concern over what such a change would mean for their own status as a college.

The decision was put before the Board of Regents. At the January, 1990, meeting, the issue passed by one vote and moved to the legislature. Still facing contention, the relatively small schools reminded the legislature that whether the measure passed 7-6 or 13-0, in a democracy, the majority had spoken and it was now the responsibility of the legislature to uphold the wishes of their constituents. Weber State College and Southern Utah State College became Weber State University and Southern Utah University. Since that time, master's degrees have been added in the College of Education, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the School of Business. SUU continues to work toward quality higher education on both undergraduate and graduate levels.

The community in which it resides, Cedar City, Utah, is in the southwest corner of Utah and was founded by pioneers sent by Brigham Young, leader of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (hereafter referred to as LDS or Mormon). These pioneers took their religion and their commitment to the nation through military development very seriously. Additionally, the persecution suffered by church members during their trek across the United States bound them in a way that only groups considered the underdog can be (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1996). These three traits may describe, to some extent, why loyalty is so strong among community members.

Smith (2006) discusses the formation of place attachment in relation to Texas A & M and compares it to the formation of a nation, pointing out that Texas was, in fact, a nation in and of itself prior to becoming a state. He writes,

> Nations are often said to be in the grip of a national narrative, or national identity myth. This is a story that discerns direction and meaning in the national experience, integrates into a coherent plot selected instances from the past, and points to appropriate future action … the national narrative of the United States was, at least until the 1970s, a story of hard-won but inevitable victory over evil. (Smith, 2006, p. 184)

This is significant when discussing the members of the SUU community. Looking at the narrative of the institution requires understanding the institution through the lens of religion, military, and the commoner. Religion is a means by which people are tied together through their collective faith in an entity or system that cannot be proven. It is generally steeped in tradition, and symbols of faith are of utmost importance to believers. In the LDS faith, piety is shown through ritualistic practices including ceremonies of baptism, confirmation of faith, sacrament, and several others that are protected by members and performed only within the walls of the LDS temples.

Commitment to national agendas is also important to the religion. The Articles of Faith outline thirteen principles that the founder of the Church, Joseph Smith, felt described the essence of the Church. The Twelfth Article of Faith reads, “We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law” (Smith, 1842).

Understanding the history of Southern University through these three lenses and analyzing the place attachment that develops through shared beliefs and common experiences helps to establish an understanding of the level to which SUU students feel a sense of loyalty. These three elements bring together individuals and bind them through three common experiences. The ties to place and people are that much stronger for having three threads, each created out of core values, pulling participants together through a developmentally critical time of life (Holmes, Patterson, and Stalling, 2003).

Legends, Traditions, and Symbols of Southern Utah University

As related earlier, the Legend of Old Sorrel is perhaps the most important story at Southern Utah University (SUU). Not only does it recount the founding of the institution, it is also the only legend of its kind (an animal acting as "savior" to an institution) in the nation. This legend is part of the campus tour provided not only to incoming freshmen, but also to potential employees. Including this legend in the tour shows the importance of the story to members of the community. However, the Legend of Old Sorrel is only one of the legends, traditions, and symbols used to create a sense of place among community members. Unless otherwise noted, the following descriptions of SUU legends, traditions, and symbols are pulled largely from personal correspondence with Keri Mecham, director of Student Involvement and Leadership at SUU. Mecham is also an alumnae who served on the Southern Utah University Student Association during her time as a student. These stories were also confirmed by Paula Mitchell, archivist at Southern Utah University.

True T-Birds (beginning unknown)

On the Friday of Homecoming week, participants gather at the statue of Old Sorrel at midnight and kiss while touching the statue. This action makes them a "True T-Bird." They are given a laminated card and a lip balm stick to commemorate the occasion. Students may also become a True T-Bird by kissing while touching the statue of Old Sorrel under a full moon at midnight anytime during the year, but in this case, one of the participants must already be a True T-Bird and there is no card or lip balm. This tradition was handed down from Utah State University, home of the True Aggie, when SUU was the Branch Agricultural College.

The Ghost of Old Main (circa 1898)

The stories surrounding late-night disturbances at Southern Utah University's Old Main vary slightly, but the essence is the same. Legend has it that a young woman, some say her name was Virginia, others say it was Christine, was murdered by a jilted lover and her blood spilled on the bricks that were used to build Old Main in 1898. Various types of disturbances have been described including a woman walking silently on hardwood floors on the top level of the building after midnight, certain types of music being turned down on the stereos of faculty and staff who occupy the building, and a feeling of someone brushing by when no one is around. When Old Main burned down in 1948, the only death recorded was the man suspected of killing the young woman 50 years before. After Old Main was rebuilt, using as many of the same bricks as used in the original building, the disturbances began again and are now used as part of campus legend passed on to prospective students on the campus tour.

Gunther the Rock (circa 2005)

A large boulder sits outside the front doors of the library and is said to be the point of contact for the entire student body. The messages painted onto Gunther, as the rock is known, are now approved and monitored by the student body officers, but originally, anyone could paint any message and it would be left there until a new message was left. The original rock now sits under hundreds of layers of paint, and now messages are generally to advise about coming events, although political statements can be found from time to time. It is still considered a central point of communication for the entire student body.

Thunderbirds (circa 1969)

SUU's mascot is the Thunderbird in homage to the Piute Tribe, which is part of the Cedar City community. In Native American folklore, the Thunderbird is a bird so large that it beats its wings and causes thunder and wind, while bolts of lightning shoot from its eyes. According to legend, one should never upset a Thunderbird because in addition to being omnipotent and omniscient, it also holds grudges and will exact its revenge.

Red Fridays (circa 2000)

Several years ago, then Athletic Director Tom Douple declared himself the Red Police and would wander around campus on game days rewarding people who were showing their school spirit by wearing red and chastising those who were not. Since many athletic events are held on Friday nights or Saturday afternoons, particularly football and gymnastics, the Red Police traditionally made his rounds on campus on Fridays. This eventually became known as Red Fridays. However, since the basketball

teams generally play on Thursday and Saturday nights when they are home, SUUSA has since instituted Thunder Thursdays in addition to Red Fridays so all the teams are supported.

The Howl (beginning unknown)

The Howl is a throwback to SUU's days as the branch campus to the Utah Agricultural College, now Utah State University (USU). The largest Halloween party in northern Utah, the Howl became an annual tradition at USU and continues to attract students from as far south as Provo and as far north as Boise, Idaho. On the SUU campus, the traditional party was recreated and now attracts students from all over southern Utah, southern Nevada, and northern Arizona. Each year, it becomes the goal of the student body officers to push the party a step further than the year before while staying within the bounds of what administrators and risk management personnel deem appropriate. This is an especially interesting tradition in light of the generally conservative nature of the institution.

The Carillon (circa 2009)

The newest tradition on the SUU campus is also among its most important. As one of his first acts as president, Michael T. Benson declared that every campus needs a bell tower and immediately secured funding to build a stately carillon standing atop four pillars right between the two oldest buildings on campus: Old Main and the Braithwaite building. Because it was a new addition to campus, students, faculty, and staff were unsure of how to treat it. It needed to be viewed as something special, but just how was not evident. One evening, two administrators were having dinner and discussing the need for some unique traditions for the SUU campus. Because the school started as a branch of

the University of Utah and later became a branch of Utah State University, many of the traditions currently being practiced were borrowed from those schools. SUU needed something uniquely its own. One of the administrators, Keri Mecham, director of Student Involvement and Leadership, suggested that a new tradition involving the carillon was in order. The other administrator, Dina Nielsen, then Assistant Dean of Students, recalled a tradition from another school in the east that involved students walking through the arches at the entrance of campus as freshmen and then not being allowed to walk through them again until graduation. The space between the pillars beneath the carillon could be used the same way.

Through the course of dinner, the details emerged. In keeping with the tradition of freshmen being served lunch on the upper quad as guests of the president just before the beginning of fall semester, the students could be escorted up the sidewalk leading to the carillon where they would walk beneath it and then asked to not walk beneath it again until graduation. They would walk east across campus, the direction of the sunrise, and the sidewalks would be lined with faculty and staff cheering on the new class of entering freshmen. Once they have crossed this threshold, the students are officially Thunderbirds. The tradition comes full circle at graduation when the graduates line up on the east side of campus and walk west beneath the carillon, this time toward sunset, again with the sidewalks lined with cheering faculty and staff, as they enter the venue for the graduation ceremony. As graduates, they are now free to walk beneath the bell tower.

Although the beginning of this tradition took place in 2009, already it is common to see people, students and staff alike, avoiding the space beneath the carillon, as though that space is hallowed. The student body officers and presidential ambassadors (student

tour guides) share the tradition with visitors and explain why it is special to the Thunderbird community. The President himself uses the Carillon Tradition as a selling point for the unique attributes of the campus and invites dignitaries to participate in observing how important it has quickly become to the campus community.

The Legend of Old Sorrel (circa 1897)

The Legend of Old Sorrel is the founding story of the university. In 1897 the Utah State Legislature agreed to create a branch of the state normal school in Cedar City. However, the building proposed to be used for school sessions was housed in a building owned by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. The state said this was not acceptable and demanded that a building be constructed that was to be used solely for the purpose of holding classes for the Branch Normal School. This demand came in the middle of one of the worst winters in recorded history, and the logging party sent up the canyon to harvest logs for the building found themselves snowed in, several miles up the canyon, with the deadline set by the state looming. Just when the group was about to give up, one old sorrel horse kicked up on his hind legs and tromped down on the snowdrifts in front of him. He tromped again and again until the drift was passable. When his efforts exhausted him, he would sit back on his haunches and rest awhile, only to get back up and take on another snowdrift. Through his efforts, the logs made it back to Cedar City and the construction of the schoolhouse was completed in time.

The Centurium (circa 1997)

As part of the centennial celebration of the university a collection of statues was erected at the western end of campus depicting some of the great minds of world history, including Galileo, Shakespeare, Madame Currie, and nine others. The statues stand in a

circle at the southwest entrance to campus and the Centurium makes a striking feature at that entry to campus. While this symbol is an attraction for visitors to campus, students do not pay it much attention. It has therefore been left out of this study. It is described here because it is important to note that students are selective about what they attach meaning to, and while the Centurium is a spot favored by faculty and visitors, students tend to choose to congregate at other locations.

Summary

A review of the literatures shows a wealth of information about organizations as culture, including universities as cultures, although literature regarding how campus legends, traditions, and symbols impact the university culture is missing. Additionally, much has been written about place attachment, although research regarding place attachment as related to institutions of higher education is limited. This study seeks to fill the gaps discovered in the body of knowledge regarding campus legends, traditions, and symbols as a part of campus culture and how they impact place attachment for students. Chapter three will outline the method of inquiry to be used in this endeavor.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter will provide a detailed description of the data collection and analysis used to advance this study of institutional cultural traits that impact student identification and place attachment, including a defense of why it was deemed appropriate. The chapter begins with an overview of case study as a methodology and how it can be used to reveal pertinent information. It defines a rigorous method of inquiry and explains how this study followed procedures meticulously to ensure reliability (Yin, 2009).

Overview of Method

The research was conducted using qualitative methodology, specifically a case study. The study was bounded using Southern Utah University as a single case. Babbie (2007) suggests that the process of selecting a research method should begin with a determination of what the research is designed to do: explain; determine cause and effect; define; describe; or explore. This study explored the institutional cultural traits that contribute to identification and place attachment, so by those standards a qualitative methodology is appropriate. Creswell (2007) states, “the focus of all qualitative research needs to be on understanding the phenomenon being explored rather than solely on the reader, the researcher, or the participants being studied” (p. 3). That said, each researcher brings his or her own worldviews and paradigms to the research process (Babbie, 2007).

Merriam (2009) expounds on Creswell’s assertion by suggesting that examining the philosophical paradigm under which the research will be taken helps to determine

which methodology best suits the study at hand. “In contrast to quantitative research, which takes apart a phenomenon to examine component parts (which become the variables of the study), qualitative research can reveal how all the parts work together to form a whole” (p. 6).

The focus of the qualitative researcher is on understanding how participants “make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (Merriam, 2009, p. 6). This requires understanding the data through two perspectives: that of the informant’s and that of the researcher. The insider’s perspective, or *emic*, reflects the informant’s worldview, while the outsider’s perspective, or *etic*, exposes what the researcher brings to the topic. Hence, developing an understanding of where the informant and researcher’s perspectives overlap and diverge is an essential factor in qualitative research.

Another important element of qualitative research is the use of the researcher as the collector and analyzer of the data. Because the focus of qualitative research is on understanding behaviors, much of the data is collected through fieldwork, either through direct observation or various types of interviews. Data resulting from observations and interviews are analyzed and used to define categories and themes. Thick descriptions of these categories and themes permit theories to evolve. Qualitative methodology is also flexible throughout the research process, allowing for the data collection and analysis to evolve as new information is brought to light (Merriam, 2009).

Yin (2009) states, “the distinctive need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena” (p. 4). Case studies are useful when seeking to create a detailed description of the case in question (Creswell, 2007). The end product is

the seminal definition of a case study, according to Merriam (2009). She states, "A qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 27). A thorough description of the case at hand will produce a narrative rich in detail.

Based on the work of Carr and Kemmis (1986), Merriam (2009) outlines three typologies of educational research: positivist, interpretive, and critical. Positivist research is generally quantitative, as the phenomenon to be studied is observable and measurable. Critical research, states Merriam, is usually designed as an "ideological critique of power, privilege, and oppression" (p. 4). This leaves interpretive research, which is designed to understand a lived experience through the multiple realities of the participants. This study fits into the interpretive orientation of educational research as defined and was based on a review of the literature on the topic, which helped to frame the methodology.

Case Studies

Using a case study as a method of investigation is appropriate when the researcher seeks to understand as thoroughly as possible the specific case in question. Merriam (2009) states, "the interest is in the process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights gleaned from case studies can directly influence policy, practice, and future research" (p. 19).

Yin (2009) suggests four types of case study design: Single-case (holistic), single-case (embedded), multiple-case (holistic), and multiple-case (embedded). This study is considered a single-case (embedded) study using the justification that follows.

Rationale for selecting a single-case versus a multiple-case must be determined prior to data collection. Yin (2009) offers some primary rationales for selecting a single case study. The first rationale is when the subject "represents the *critical case* in testing a well-formulated theory" (p. 47). The second rationale covers cases that represent either extreme or unique cases. A single case may also be rationalized when it represents a typical case. If the study is seeking to be revelatory in nature, a single case may be used to establish a baseline for future study. The last rationale is when the study is longitudinal in nature.

A single-case was selected for this study because prior research is void of information regarding the specific data sought. The case therefore sought to be revelatory in nature. Yin (2009) suggests that for the case to be revelatory in nature it should be "an opportunity to observe and analyze a phenomenon previously inaccessible to social science inquiry" (p. 48). Although the information sought here has historically been accessible to researchers, the question had not been asked. As original research on the influence of legends, traditions, and symbols on place attachment in college students, using this study as a revelatory case was appropriate and provided a solid rationale for selecting a single case.

Once a study has been defined as single- versus multiple-case, Yin (2009) suggests the researcher must determine whether the study is holistic or embedded. Yin states, "The same single-case study may involve more than one unit of analysis. This occurs when, within a single case, attention is also given to a subunit or subunits" (p. 50). This describes an embedded case study, whereas a holistic case study is appropriate when subunits are not easily identified. Because the case in this study was divided by grade

level as well as by involvement in extra-curricular activities, including clubs and organizations or athletics, it was defined as embedded.

Formulating Research Questions for a Case Study

Merriam (2009) suggests that the first step in qualitative research is to determine what question needs to be asked. The beginning of the study is expressing a curiosity about a topic and defining what the researcher wants to know about it. This creates the core of the research. "In crafting the research problem, [the researcher] move[s] from general interest, curiosity, or doubt about a situation to a specific statement of the research problem. In effect, you have to translate your general curiosity into a problem that can be addressed through the research" (Merriam, 2009, p. 58). In qualitative research, problem statements are generally centered around questions of process or questions of understanding. Such is the case with the current study.

Research Questions

Broad Research Questions

With the need for analysis of the university organizational culture through the concept of place attachment in mind, these questions were addressed:

1. *How do Southern Utah University (SUU) students describe the importance of institutional culture, to include legends, traditions, and symbols, in their formation of place attachment to the school during their college experience?*
2. *How do SUU students describe the formation of place attachment to the school during their college experience?*

3. *What role do the legends, traditions, and symbols of SUU play in helping students form an identity as SUU students?*
4. *How do these cultural elements influence the creation of identity with the institution?*
5. *How do students who are involved in student clubs and organizations describe their experiences with campus legends, traditions, and symbols differently than students who are not involved in student clubs and organizations?*

These questions were answered through a qualitative analysis of sixteen students who were enrolled at Southern Utah University at the time of the study.

Interview questions

The interview questions were used to guide the conversation, but participants were encouraged to take the conversation wherever felt natural to them.

1. *How do you identify with Southern Utah University?*
2. *How would you describe your experiences with campus legends, traditions, and symbols?*
3. *How have campus legends, traditions, and symbols influenced your sense of attachment to SUU?*
4. *How do you anticipate feeling toward SUU five years after graduation?*
5. *Will campus legends, traditions, and symbols be part of those feelings?*
6. *How do campus legends, traditions, and symbols impact your sense of belonging to the SUU community?*

In addition to the interview questions listed above, questions were asked in regards to various specific campus legends, traditions, and symbols, including:

1. *How familiar are you with this tradition?*
2. *What does this tradition mean to you as a member of the SUU community?*
3. *How did this meaning become attached to this tradition?*
4. *How do you feel this tradition connects you to SUU?*

These questions served to define "meanings of place" as represented by Gustafson (2001) in Figure 2.0, "Meanings of place." The questions were intended to determine the importance students placed on individual legends, traditions, and symbols in their own attachment to the institution (environment), as well as their connection to the community (others) while focusing on personal development (self).

Methodology and Approach to Data Collection and Analysis

Selection of Participants

Merriam (2009) states, "anthropologists and sociologists speak of a good respondent as an 'informant' – one who understands the culture but is also able to reflect on it and articulate for the researcher what is going on" (p. 85). The informants in this study were selected based on their involvement or non-involvement with student clubs and organizations, including athletics, as well as class standing. Involvement and class standing are both coded in the SUU student information system, so a random list was generated with the assistance of the SUU Information Technology staff, listing both class level and involvement. This list was provided to the director for Student Involvement and Leadership who randomly selected ten people from each section (freshman-involved, freshman-not involved, etc.) and sent a personal email invitation to participate (Appendix C). Responses to the initial email produced four students: one involved senior, one uninvolved junior, one uninvolved sophomore, and one uninvolved freshman. The list

was expanded and additional participants were sought. The second group produced two involved freshmen, one involved senior, and one involved junior.

At this point, there were no additional responses to the initial invitation so a snowballing technique was employed. Each of the prior participants was asked if they had friends who met the criteria and might be interested in participating. All additional participants were selected based on references from prior participants.

Demographic information was collected during each interview to account for other variables (age, gender, locality, status as a legacy, etc.) that may influence the phenomenon (Babbie, 2007). Student involvement in activities such as Greek life, intercollegiate athletics, and service with Southern Utah University Student Association (SUUSA) may create a sense of place attachment or collective identity (Gunsalus, 2004) so informants were selected to represent two groups: those who have participated in campus activities and those who have not. This study sought to explore the role institutional culture plays on place attachment and collective identity, so factors that may also contribute to the relationship were addressed as they presented with informants who describe themselves as involved and those who do not. Within these guidelines, informants were selected based on their ability to serve as a guide to the researcher through their personal experiences of the phenomenon and their ability to provide perspective on place attachment as it occurs for SUU students.

Data Collection

"Understanding the case in its totality, as well as the intensive, *holistic* description and analysis characteristic of a case study, mandates both breadth and depth of data collection" (italics in original) (Merriam, 2009, p. 134). Data were collected for this study

using semi-structured interviews (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009) and document analysis. Although direct observation of the informants' lived experiences over time did not take place within the scope of this study, personal recollections of experiences directly related to the case in question were used to establish context where it was appropriate.

The Interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted using open-ended questions. Merriam (2009) suggests three types of interviews: highly structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. In the highly structured interview, questions are specifically worded and asked in a predetermined order, mirroring a survey. The unstructured interview is more of a guided conversation, where flexibility in the questions is valued and exploration of the topic is encouraged. In between is the semi-structured interview, where questions are written to guide the conversation with an expectation of gaining answers to all the predetermined questions, but the informant is encouraged to expound on topics, and reactions and observations are included in the note-taking process. In order to investigate similar information from each informant, broad, open-ended questions were used to guide the conversation, but interviews allowed for digressions and following memories to other trains of thought was encouraged.

Data Analysis

Analysis of data collected is critical to the research process. It is more than a review of data. It is a strategy that requires the use of tools and action plans to create a sound foundation for the report of the findings (Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) suggests four principles that, when adhered to, ensure quality analysis. The first principle "should show that [the researcher] attended to *all the evidence*" (p. 160, italics in original). Developing

and refining suppositions as analysis is conducted should show that as much evidence as possible was considered throughout the process.

The second principle should also explore as many of the alternative interpretations as possible. In attending to all the evidence, other results should present and be confirmed or refuted. Any unresolved interpretations may be viewed as loose ends to be considered for future research, but addressing them as such will confirm the validity of the study (Yin, 2009, pp. 160-161).

Content Analysis

Content analysis was performed on both the interview transcriptions and historical documents, including the Fact Book and Leavitt's *Southern Utah University: A Heritage History of the First Hundred Years* (1997) to determine what can be learned through the manifest and latent data (Creswell, 2007). A complete description of this process is available in chapter 5. The data analysis process began with open coding of the manifest and latent data. Different colors were used for identifying themes such as traits of the student, traits of the institution, responses to specific legends, traditions, and symbols, and general comments regarding attachment to the institution. Selective coding allowed themes to emerge and be compared between informants (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). This process included building a table that defined each legend, tradition, or symbol in terms of each student's familiarity with it, its influence on their personal attachment to the institution, and their perception of its potential importance on the development of a relationship with the institution. The results of this process are represented visually in Figure 5.2.

Content analysis is the process of analysis by which raw data are reviewed for ideas or themes that are repeated and can be deemed as important to the findings (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Manifest content is that which is observable and quantifiable, while latent content is that which is implied through facial expressions, inflections, etc. (Gumperz, 1992). Manifest content analysis occurred within the transcripts of the interviews, using the students' words themselves. Latent content required more interpretation of contextualization cues, but provided equally valuable data. Although note-taking was performed discreetly in an effort to not distract the participants, gestures, facial expressions, and other types of nonverbal contextual cues were marked on the interview protocol worksheet, which outlined the questions to be addressed. After each interview, time was taken to add notes reflecting latent content through the overall tone of the interview and notable nonverbal responses.

Lastly, all these factors were considered together, reconnected to recreate the whole of each student's report of their experience, and analyzed to establish the essence of the experience that leads to place attachment and collective identity for students (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). A visual representation of this process is available in Figure 5.1.

Merriam (2009) suggests three features of qualitative research, specifically qualitative case studies. Case studies are particularistic in that "the case itself is important for what it reveals about the phenomenon and for what it might represent" (p. 29). They are also *descriptive,* meaning that "the end product … is a rich, 'thick' description of the phenomenon under study" (p. 209). Lastly, a qualitative case study should be *heuristic* by "bring[ing] about the discovery of new meaning, extend[ing] the reader's experience, or

confirm[ing] what is known" (p. 30). This study incorporated all these aspects by deconstructing the interviews through manifest and latent content analysis, then reconstructing them in descriptive narrative vignettes that served to provide the essence of many experiences and responses into one story.

While researcher experience was considered as part of the data analysis, the concept of *epoche*, or bracketing, was also employed. Epoche, a term commonly associated with phenomenology but useful in other arenas as well, serves to keep researcher experiences, assumptions, and opinions separate from the essence of the phenomenon as reported by the informants (Creswell, 2007). The concept of epoche created a level of trustworthiness in the current study by providing an avenue whereby research bias was kept in check.

Validation of Study

Triangulation

One method of validating the soundness of a study is through triangulation. Using triangulation, the researcher attempts to confirm a single point through two or more data sources, thereby creating trustworthiness in the study and integrity in the methodology. Marshall and Rossman (2006) state that the purpose of triangulation is "to corroborate, elaborate, or illuminate the research in question" (p. 202). In this study, triangulation was achieved through content analysis of the interview transcripts. The transcripts were compared with each other, but also to the findings of prior studies, specifically the work of Holmes, Patterson, and Stalling (2003). Although those findings were for a different study asking different questions, they served as a template for what might be expected

from this study. Specifically in regards to informant interviews, manifest and latent content were reviewed for corroboration of findings. Manifest and latent content analysis were exhibited through a domain analysis, a method of visually displaying trends and overlap in data collected through interviews and document analysis. Latent content was collected through note-taking on the interview protocol worksheet as well as through notes made after the interview, but while the interview was still fresh in the mind of the researcher. These notes were combined with the interview transcripts and used to create the narrative vignette for each student found in chapter four. Triangulation accounts for the heuristic approach used in this study (Glesne, 2003; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009).

Peer review

Having critical review throughout the research process lends itself to the credibility of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Peer review is a method by which reliable and unbiased outsiders review the methodological processes and findings to create clarity and consistency (Creswell, 2007). This study was presented to the dissertation committee at various intervals during the research process to ensure the given methods corresponding findings were sound. Additionally, colleagues were used to review the proposal, methodology, and findings for clarity and refinement.

Member checking

Throughout the data collection and analysis, informants were offered the opportunity to read how their contributions were being interpreted by the researcher and asked to clarify as necessary. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that member checking offers several beneficial elements to the study. The process allows the informant to clarify what she intended through the interview process as well as to correct errors. It is

an opportunity to add information and summarize and "confirm individual data points" (p. 314). Each student was provided with a copy of the transcript of their interview as well as the resulting vignette for review and comments. Only two students responded, both commenting that they felt they had been adequately represented. Other students were reminded to respond within two weeks of receipt of their documents but none did.

Thick description

Creating a descriptive narrative of the case in question creates convergence of the worldviews of the informants and the researcher (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Thick description in this study highlights the cultural traits as viewed by the informants and the meanings associated with traditions, legends, and symbols of the institution.

Pilot study of questions

The interview questions were posed to two students not included in the informant group in an effort to create clarity and ensure that the questions would uncover the data sought. Research questions were revised based on a review of data collected from the pilot study of the questions.

Summary

Using a qualitative single-case study, this research explored institutional cultural traits that contribute to identification and place attachment. Informants were selected based on their level of involvement and grade level. The first eight students were selected based on data supplied by Southern Utah University's Information Technology staff, but when invitations to participate were not responded to, a snowballing technique was used to discover additional participants. The first eight participants were asked to refer other

students to the researcher. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions. Content analysis of the interview transcriptions was be used to reveal themes through manifest and latent content analysis.

Triangulation and peer review were the methods by which the study was validated. Informants were also offered the opportunity to review their contributions to ensure they were being interpreted correctly by the researcher. Lastly, interviews and historical documents were used to create a rich, descriptive narrative of the case and served to highlight the cultural traits and their meanings as perceived by the informants.

Ethics

An important part of any research is the protection of the participants. After completing the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) course and exams, this study was conducted with approval from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Institutional Review Board (IRB) in the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects and under close supervision of experienced researchers. IRB approval was also received from Southern Utah University to protect the interests of their students. Letters of Informed Consent were provided to each participant explaining the purpose of the research and assuring anonymity in the report (Creswell, 2007).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTING VIGNETTES OF INTERVIEWS WITH SIXTEEN SOUTHERN UTAH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

To gain a complete description of the case, sixteen students were interviewed. The group consisted of four students from each class level: freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior. Each of those groups was further divided into two students who were actively involved in SUU campus clubs and organizations and two students who were not involved at the time of the study. Involvement was determined using two methods: First, through coding in the Southern Utah University (SUU) student information system that captures membership in various clubs, and second, through screening conducted by the director of Student Involvement and Leadership.

The Legends, Traditions, and Symbols of SUU

Table 4.1 provides a reminder of what each cultural element means in terms of the SUU community. It is intended to be a quick reference for the remainder of this report. These definitions are provided in this chapter to reinforce the conclusive data and how they were used to answer the research questions. A more elaborate description of these legends, traditions, and symbols can be found in chapter two.

TABLE 4.1 - Descriptions of SUU campus legends, traditions, and symbols.

Legend, Tradition, or Symbol	Description
True T-Birds Beginning unknown	Students kiss at midnight on the Friday of Homecoming week around the statue of Old Sorrel, thereby making them True T-Birds for life.
The Ghost of Old Main Circa 1898	The ghost of a woman who was killed by a jilted lover allegedly haunts Old Main, which has burned down twice since being built.
Gunther the Rock Circa 2005	A large boulder that sits between the student union and the library which is painted with messages from various campus entities.
The Howl Beginning unknown	A large Halloween party thrown by SUU on the weekend of Halloween each year.
Red Fridays Circa 2000	The tradition of encouraging everyone to wear red on Fridays in support of athletic events.
Thunderbirds Circa 1969	The SUU mascot.
The Carillon Tradition Circa 2009	Freshmen walk under the Carter Carillon one time as they are welcomed to campus during orientation week. They are then forbidden to walk beneath it again until graduation.
Old Sorrel Circa 1897	The founding story of SUU about a horse that saved the party assigned with harvesting the logs used for the first college building.

These legends, traditions, and symbols may be described as “active” or “passive” depending on how involved the student becomes in them. Additionally, whether the trait is identified as “active” or “passive” may differ from student to student. However, the student’s own interaction with the legend, tradition, or symbol did seem to influence the overall attachment perceived to come from participation. The more actively involved a student was with a certain trait, the more attached they seemed to be.

Table 4.2 provides an overview of the participants for the study. Participants were broken down into two groups: those who participated in clubs or organizations and those who did not. Within each category, participants were identified by class level, pseudonym, age, whether they were from the local area, whether they were considered a

legacy attendee based on other family members attending SUU prior to them, and their attachment level based on their reported identification with the university. Class level and age components were retrieved from the data generated by the SUU IT staff from the SUU student information system, similar to student involvement. Locality and legacy status were reported by the participants themselves. Students were allowed to create their own pseudonyms. Feelings of attachment toward the institution and the individual legends, traditions, and symbols, were reported by the participants. This table is helpful in creating broad categories prior to data analysis, and this table served as the starting point for making comparisons between different groups.

TABLE 4.2 - Overview of Participants

Involved					
Class Level	Name	Age	From Local Area	Legacy Through Family Members Who Attended Prior	Overall Reported Sense of Attachment
Freshman	Leo	19	Not Local	No Legacy	Very Attached
Freshman	Belle	18	Not Local	Legacy Sibling	Attached
Sophomore	Mary	20	Not Local	Legacy Grandfather	Attached
Sophomore	Michelle	18	Not Local	No Legacy	Very Attached
Junior	Tyson	22	Not Local	No Legacy	Very Attached
Junior	Christina	22	Not Local	No Legacy	Very Attached
Senior	Terry	23	Not Local	No Legacy	Very Attached
Senior	Bob	25	Not Local	Legacy Siblings	Very Attached
Not Involved					
Freshman	Melody	19	Not Local	No Legacy	Very Attached
Freshman	Kobe	18	Not Local	No Legacy	Very Attached
Sophomore	Jay	20	Not Local	No Legacy	Attached
Sophomore	Stacy	19	Not Local	No Legacy	Attached
Junior	Andy	21	Not Local	No Legacy	Very Attached
Junior	Dawn		Not Local	No Legacy	Not Very Attached
Senior	Beth	23	Not Local	No Legacy	Attached
Senior	Sarah	20	Not Local	Legacy Cousins	Very Attached

Of the “Involved” students, one freshman was male, both sophomores were female, and one of each of the juniors and seniors was male, the other female. All were traditionally aged at the time the original list was compiled, but the male senior turned 25 before the interview was conducted. Because he was 24 when starting his senior year, he was determined to be “traditional age” for the purpose of the study. The male freshman was involved primarily in faith-based and mentoring-type clubs. Both juniors were involved in clubs related to their majors, but also multicultural clubs. The female junior was involved in a sorority. The female senior was involved in several multicultural clubs, dance clubs, a sorority, and a mentoring club, while the male senior was involved in the Southern Utah University Student Association (SUUSA), Presidential Ambassadors, Service and Learning, the English as a Second Language Club (ESL), and a faith-based club.

Of the “Uninvolved” students, each class ranking had one male and one female, except seniors, which had two females. All the students were listed as “uninvolved” per the SUU student information system. This information was confirmed by the director of Student Involvement and Leadership. None of the students was from the local area and only one had family members attend SUU before her.

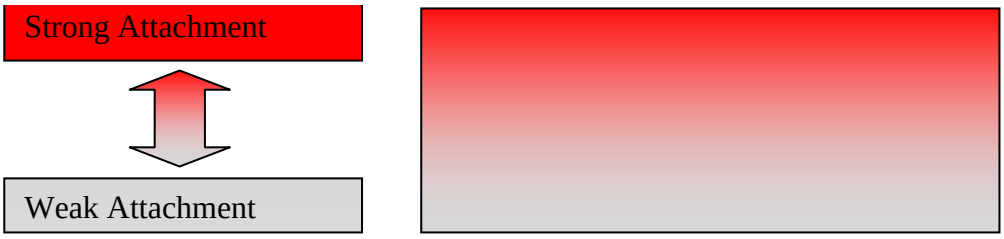
Although involvement in clubs and organizations was confirmed both by the student information system (which records involvement reported by paid dues and participation in club meetings and events) and the director of Student Involvement and Leadership who oversees all student clubs and organizations, every student but one who was listed as not involved claimed some level of involvement, using statements such as, “I’m looking at starting up a club,” and “I do all the theatrical productions that the

department offers." It would appear that students perceive involvement differently than the school does and prefer to be seen as "active."

The Participants

This section provides a brief overview of each participant, beginning with the freshmen and progressing through each grade level to the seniors. In additional to a narrative that summarizes the contents of the interview, each student's responses are represented in a graphic. The color chosen is red, representing a school color of Southern Utah University. The overall level of attachment to the university is represented by the shade of red used in the portion of the chart that outlines their demographic information. Their response to how attached they reported feeling to each individual tradition is recorded in the same way: the darker the color associated with that tradition, the deeper the level of attachment due to it. The graphic represents responses to all legends, traditions, and symbols. However, only the most poignant responses are represented.

Figure 4.0 - Color Legend



Freshmen - Involved

Leo

Leo is a 19-year-old freshman who came to SUU from out of state. He is the first member of his family to attend college. Having been influenced by a high school administrator, he came to SUU ready to get involved with the campus community, including spending one year as a red-shirt for the SUU football team. He is involved as a Mentor (students assigned to incoming freshman-level classes to serve as guides for new students), an iBuddy (students who are paired with incoming international students to help them acclimate to the United States, the local community, and the institution), and in the Newman club (a Catholic faith-based club). He also started two new clubs this year: the Pickleball Club and a club for Latino students to reach out to the Latino community surrounding campus and assist those students in creating a pathway to college.

Leo expressed a firm commitment to SUU. He referred to campus as "home" several times throughout the interview and made several references to "community" and groups of people "going for the same thing." He emphasized, "right now I do feel like I belong here and I love it."

Two statements stood out in Leo's interview and seemed to exemplify his level of attachment to SUU. When asked what prompted him to start a Latino-based service club he responded,

> 'Cause I want to give back … I was in a tough situation and then I met some good people. All I want to do is just give it back to them so they know how it feels and hopefully they will give back as well.

As he went on to describe how he anticipates feeling about SUU five years after graduation he made reference to "the man it made me and where I'm at," the implication seeming to be that he feels he has achieved adulthood here and will continue to grow that way over the course of his enrollment.

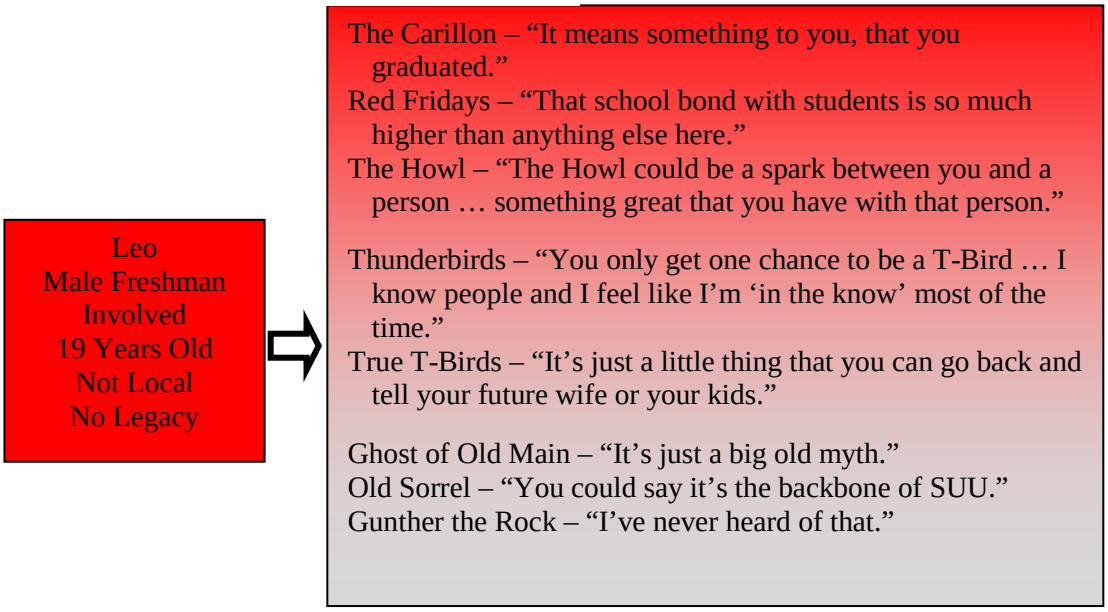
Leo linked his sense of attachment most strongly to the Carillon tradition:

> I'm all about tradition … Here at SUU you can only walk under the bell tower one time as soon as you start school, and then you can't walk under it again until you graduate and so just by that, by not walking underneath, is showing how committed you are and how focused you are on your goal to walk through there, or not walking through there and graduate. I like that. It keeps me … it keeps me focused.

Later, referring to the Carillon again, he stated,

> I don't really know about it until the time they're telling us about it, 'Oh! Oh! We're going underneath this bell tower!' I'm like, 'Who cares? It's a bell tower! Jeez! Let's get it over with!' You know? 'Cause it's like the third day or whatever. And then we walked underneath it and I finally got the understanding of it and to not walk under it again 'til you graduate and I was like, 'That's easy … I'm planning on graduating no matter what, whether I walk under there or not.' But just that fact: you can't walk under there, say, you waited four or five years to walk under there … shoot, I'd do it. I'll be happy when I walk under there again 'cause you know it means something to you … that just connects you to another person, to this place.

Figure 4.1 - Leo



Belle

After her sister attended SUU and had a positive experience, Belle knew that she would follow in her footsteps. Belle is an 18-year-old freshman who came to SUU from out of state and on the advice of her older sibling. She immediately got involved with the Thor Corp, a student spirit club that attends events of all kinds to support the students participating, and the Student-Alumni Club, which hosts events such as True T-Bird Night, Homecoming, and Founders' Day, an annual event that celebrates the founding of the university by inviting alumni to visit campus and revisit the legends, traditions, and symbols of their own experience. Although it is an important annual event, because it is an alumni event, Founders' Day is not considered a student tradition for the purposes of this study.

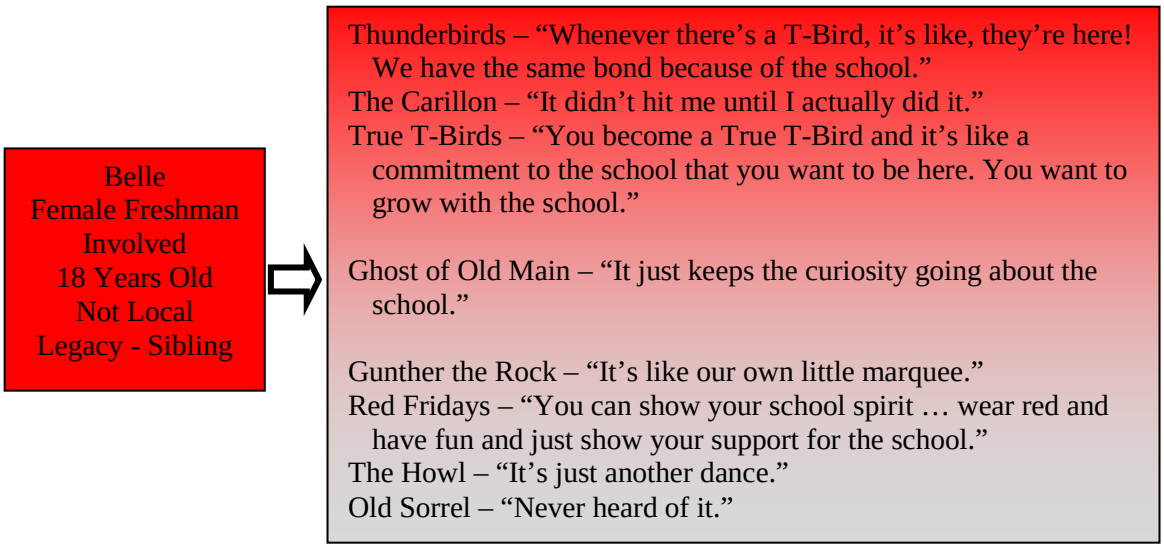
Belle visited campus a few years ago with her sister and found herself immediately attracted to the size of the campus. Coming from a large, urban high school in California, Belle felt she could not only fit in and make a name for herself at SUU, but she could also make a difference to the community. To that end, she enrolled and now works for the Alumni Office. She expressed a strong attachment to the institution and looks forward to sharing it with others. She summed it up: "It's very personal for me."

Because she is part of the Student-Alumni Club, Belle feels especially attached to True T-Bird Night. She described it as a fun activity but says it enhanced her connection to SUU "because you become a True T-Bird and it's like a commitment to the school that you *want* to be here … You want to *grow* with the school." She expressed similar action-themed feelings toward other traditions and symbols such as Red Fridays and Thunderbirds. She described school spirit as a storm: "In a storm there's thunder and lightning … the lightning comes before the thunder but the thunder is what wakes you up and BOOM! It's here! That's how we are!"

While not as action oriented, Belle felt the symbolism in the Carillon Tradition also connects her tightly to SUU. Not only did it represent a beginning and an end to Belle, she felt the introduction is also an important way for the school to show students as they are starting how much support they will have as freshmen march up the main corridor of campus through the cheering lines of faculty and staff. She reflected,

> It's a comfort because it's like you're walking out of your high school experience and into your college experience and having all the faculty there … that was fun just to … see how much support you can get because you can probably go to any professor and they can help you with anything.

Figure 4.2 - Belle



Freshmen – Not Involved

Kobe

As a transplant from Las Vegas, 18-year-old Kobe found the transition to rural Utah a challenge. Finding something to do after 6:00 pm, especially on a Sunday, left this freshman feeling a little disassociated from the Cedar City community. That said, he reported that he feels that there is much to love about SUU and the surrounding areas such as actively involved faculty and staff and kind citizens. While he is not currently involved in any student clubs or organizations, he hopes to be an iBuddy, participate as a volunteer with the Special Olympics, which are hosted on campus each spring, and start up a Latino community club. His singular goal while at SUU is to "change the world."

Kobe definitely felt a strong attachment to SUU but it is primarily through the people he has met, not through involvement or traditions. He commented on staff members across campus who have been very friendly to him and made him feel

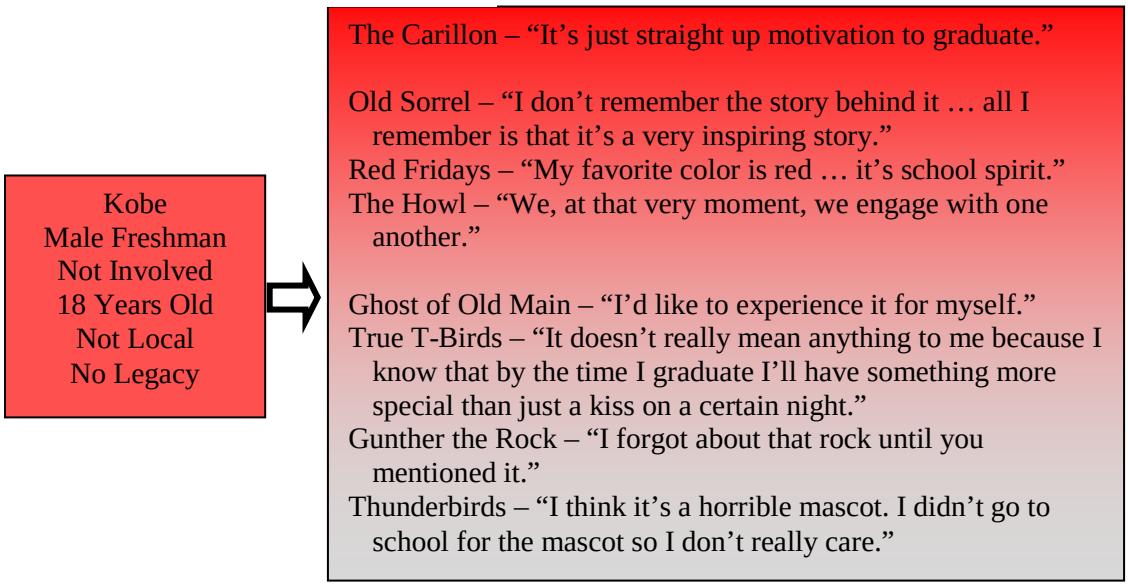
welcome. Coming from a desert environment, he also described the campus in terms of beauty with emphasis on the well-kept lawns in the summer. He said, “All the grass around … I really like all the grass.”

Two traditions stood out in Kobe’s mind as important to his sense of attachment to SUU: The Howl and the Carillon Tradition. The Howl represents to Kobe a time when all of campus can come together and mingle. It is a time when the boundaries that divide campus into grade levels, majors, and other elements are taken down and everyone is part of the same group. He stated, “A lot of people are going to go. So, I mean, it brings us … I wouldn’t say closer but, we, at that very moment, a lot of us are … we engage with one another … everyone from everywhere is there.”

Prior to being asked about the Carillon Tradition, Kobe volunteered that it was very important to him because it has a “motivational factor” for him. He said, “I don’t ever want to return to SUU and look at that building and know that I didn’t walk under it.” Kobe was led to believe, at some point, that the graduation rate at SUU was less than 33%. Although his graduation statistics were inaccurate, he seemed very focused on being one of the few who will earn the right to walk under the Carillon again. He saw the bell tower as a reminder of his commitment.

Although he reported that his attachment to SUU is not influenced by campus legends, traditions, and symbols, he felt there is value to keeping them and thinks they may influence others. He said, “If I were to go to a different school it just wouldn’t be the same … every campus, every place has its own tradition and … SUU has its unique little blend.”

Figure 4.3 - Kobe



Melody

Melody is a 19-year-old freshman who lived in Utah for a little over a year before starting at SUU but is originally from Arizona. She has no ties to SUU through friends or family members who attended before her, but reported feeling a strong attachment to campus and to the Cedar City community. She was involved in athletics in high school but has not participated since then due to injuries. She is part of the Honors program, an academic track offered to certain freshman upon admission as a result of their incoming academic records.

Melody expressed deep attachment to SUU, repeatedly saying she "loves" it and referring to it as home. She was especially impressed with the faculty at SUU and their willingness to be actively involved in the student experience. She was impressed that her professors know her name and are concerned with her well-being, suggesting that such attention is not available on larger campuses. Melody also recognized the student's

responsibility in his/her connection to campus. When asked whether these cultural elements influence her sense of belonging to the campus community she replied,

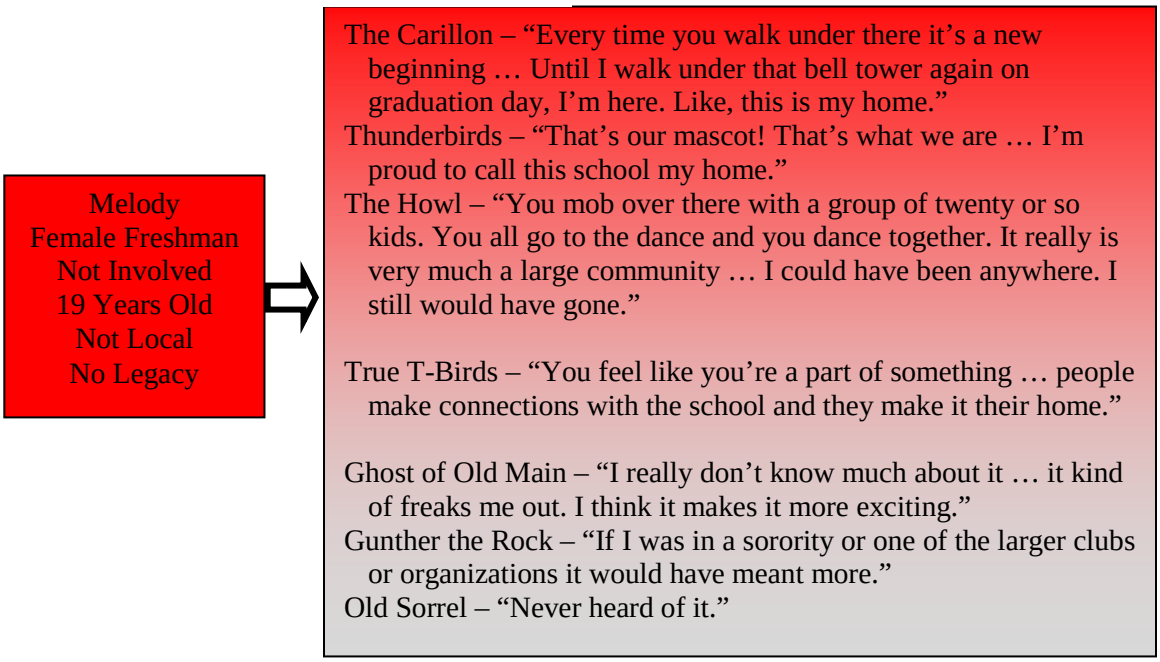
> I think the whole statement 'feeling like you belong' comes from the people that you're around and how much your professors care … and how much effort you put into making this your place. So the traditions definitely help you feel like you do.

SUU's legends, traditions, and symbols did not influence Melody's sense of attachment to any great extent, although she did feel that the Carillon Tradition is a reminder of her personal goal and commitment. She said,

> You're walking through it. This is a new beginning, a new start, and the next time you walk under it, it'll be another new beginning for you. I like that … Every time you walk under there it's a new beginning … Until I walk under [it] again … I'm here. Like, this is my home.

Although none of the other legends, traditions, and symbols created a strong reaction for Melody, she knows that she will feel attached to SUU long after she graduates and hopes to send her own children to the school someday. When she does, she says she will want to know about their experiences with the same traditions she experienced. She described her reason for that as a secret: "It's like a sorority, how you always have the secret pledge." The traditions represent a secret about campus that is passed on only to those who also attend.

Figure 4.4 - Melody



Sophomores – Involved

Michelle

Coming from northern Utah, Michelle was the first of her family and friends to attend SUU. She enrolled and immediately got involved with the Southern Utah University Student Association (SUUSA) and Alpha Phi, one of the sororities on campus. This involvement extended her identity from "student" to "sister" and "leader." She definitely felt a sense of attachment to SUU and believed that much of that is due to her involvement in student government and the Greek system. However, she also attributed it to the special connections she feels to learning about campus legends, traditions, and symbols, and passing them on as a Presidential Ambassador.

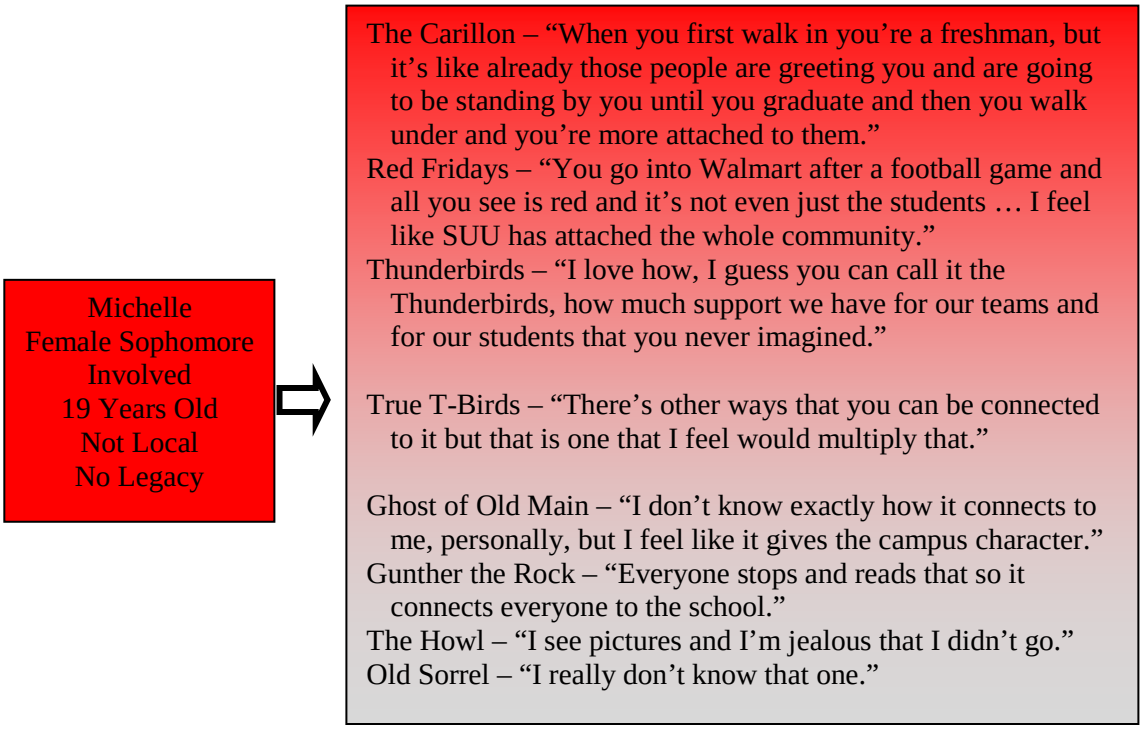
Michelle reported that she feels all the campus legends, traditions, and symbols play an important role in facilitating place attachment for students. Although she was not as familiar with the Legend of Old Sorrel or Gunther the Rock, she said, “I definitely feel like if I knew more about the symbols and … how they came a part of the school, I feel like it would give me a better experience.

Each of the traditions discussed evoked a different level of excitement from Michelle. Regarding the Ghost of Old Main she stated simply, “it gives the campus character.” About others, however, she was very excited. She was so energized by Thunderbirds that she has decided to try out to be Thor, the mascot, at some point before graduation. She also believes that becoming a True T-Bird is a very important part of the student experience, although she was out of town for True T-Bird Night.

As with other students, Michelle expressed strong feelings about the Carillon Tradition. She summarized her thoughts:

> It’s like already those people are greeting you and are going to be standing by you until graduation and then you walk under and you’re more attached to them. But they’re going to be at the end with you and it’s kind of like … a family.

Figure 4.5 - Michelle



Mary

Mary was following in her grandfather's footsteps when she decided to attend SUU. She is 20 years old and grew up in southern Utah, although not in Cedar City. She is actively involved as a student director for SUUSA, one of her responsibilities being to plan student events. She also serves as a Presidential Ambassador, one of the group of students trained to welcome guests to campus, give fact-filled tours, and represent the campus at high school nights. She tries to be well-rounded by also participating in intramural sports and community service through the Service and Learning Center.

The faculty at SUU has had a great influence on Mary's sense of attachment. She believes the size of the campus community allows her professors to know her personally

and gives her a better opportunity to be involved than students at larger schools would have. While Mary was probably the most adamant of the participants about having a great knowledge of campus legends, traditions, and symbols, Mary also, surprisingly, expressed that they influenced her sense of attachment much less than others who reportedly knew less about them. She felt more attached to the alumni who often share the stories than to the stories themselves. She stated, "As much as I love Old Sorrel and Old Main, I don't feel like that necessarily adds to it. It's more just like the history of my school. Not adding to *my* story, so to speak."

Mary noted that a primary challenge for getting people involved in traditions and events that happen in the evening is that many students commute from the local area and if they leave campus at 2:00 in the afternoon, they generally do not come back to campus for evening events. She perceives the Ghost of Old Main as a dying legend primarily due to the interests of the student body. She said,

> I feel like students … my age … don't do things like that anymore. Like, they don't go out and go ghost hunting or joke around or things like that. We sit behind a TV or play on our iPod or something.

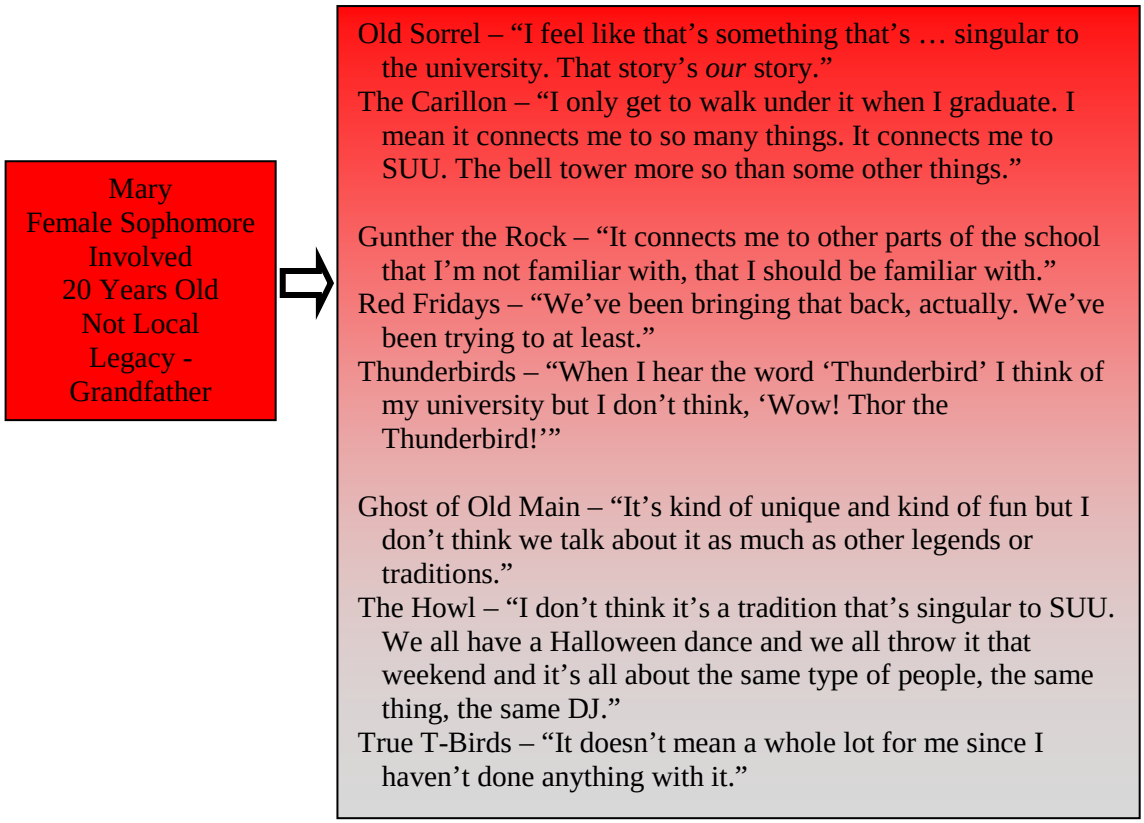
This is an especially interesting observation from a student leader. She even expressed that 'Thunderbird' is a weak concept for a mascot because students cannot readily identify what, exactly, a Thunderbird is. She feels the Carillon Tradition is not effective because it is not enforced. In her own experience she felt frustrated as a freshman after being told how important it was that students not walk under it until after graduation but then watching upperclassmen, who were not introduced to the tradition during their

freshman orientation, walk under it again and again. She said it is especially frustrating when she is giving tours to prospective students and someone walks under the bell tower.

The symbols that influence Mary's attachment most are both physical fixtures on the SUU campus: Gunther the Rock and the statue of Old Sorrel. With Gunther, Mary's attachment comes from a sense that she is constantly learning from the Rock as various groups paint their messages. She repeatedly expressed a desire to become more familiar with other parts of campus, and she believes Gunther connects her by allowing her to know their messages and learn what they are about. She reflected, "I think it connects me to other parts of school I'm not familiar with, that I should be familiar with. I would never have known about [Women's Awareness Week] if I hadn't read about it on Gunther the Rock."

Without doubt, the symbol that most influences Mary's sense of attachment is Old Sorrel. She pointed out that many of the campus traditions are centered around the statue. To become a True T-Bird, students must kiss while touching the statue. Freshmen begin their trek through the Carillon very close to the statue, and end it four years later when the statue is the last thing they see of campus before they enter the Centrum Arena for graduation. She points out that any campus can hold a dance. Many campuses have ghost stories. Becoming a True T-Bird is actually borrowed from when SUU was a branch campus of Utah State University, the source of the original "True" tradition. But Old Sorrel is singular to SUU. Other campuses do not have a legend like that so the horse and the statue are special and therefore make SUU special. Belonging to that makes Mary feel that she is special, too.

Figure 4.6 - Mary



Sophomores – Not Involved

Stacy

Coming from northern Utah, Stacy is a 20-year-old sophomore who loves SUU but is finding it difficult to afford to stay and is therefore contemplating a transfer to a school closer to home at the end of this academic year. She describes SUU as a second home, different from the unqualified "home" used by other participants. Stacy does not currently participate in any of SUU's clubs or organizations. Although she recently signed up with the Service and Learning Center she has not yet participated in any events or pursued active involvement. She was reminded as she was creating a resume' that she

had not performed service for a very long time and since she comes from a culture that promotes service, signing up with the Service and Learning Center seemed to her like the right thing to do.

Stacy conveyed a clear sense of belonging at SUU but her responses would indicate that home is still where her family resides. SUU is a stepping-stone on her way to whatever is next in life. She qualified many answers with phrases such as “I could probably get involved more” and “that’s on my bucket list.” It is as though she likes the idea of being involved in things but as of yet has not had the motivation to act. Although things like becoming a True T-Bird and attending the Howl are on her SUU bucket list, some of the traditions discussed were only vaguely familiar to her, most of them part of a campus tour she took more than two years ago. She states that her sense of attachment comes primarily from the size of the campus and the connection she feels with faculty and other students.

Three topics evoked spirited responses from Stacy. First, Stacy reported that she feels like Gunther the Rock makes her feel connected to campus for two reasons. It is a common place for her and her friends to take pictures, so she feels connected through those memories. Also, she stated, “I feel included and informed on activities coming up … it unifies us. It informs everyone around us.”

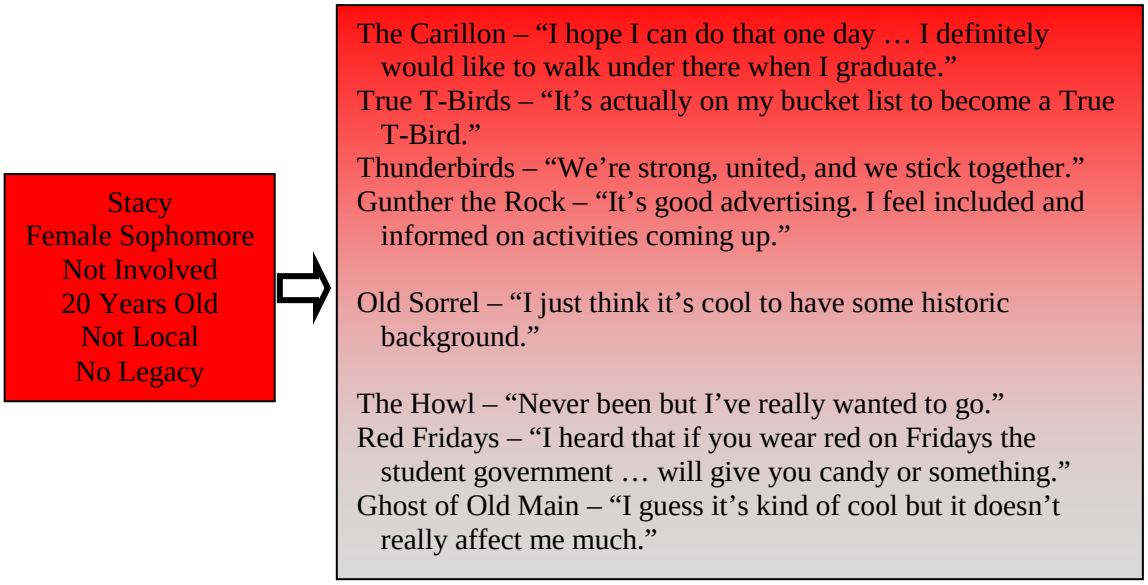
As a self-described history buff, Stacy also expressed a connection to SUU through the legend of Old Sorrel. She only vaguely recalled the story but remembered that she liked that part of the campus tour when she visited campus for recruitment. She said, “I don’t know how to explain how it attaches me, but it seems that every place has historical background and it just makes it more real, more personable.” This comment

came immediately after a description of her own homesickness and how she likes to go home on weekends because she feels she is missing out on her family's story.

The last tradition that Stacy feels attaches her to campus is the Carillon Tradition. Aside from the Legend of Old Sorrel, the Carillon Tradition was the only item mentioned that sparked an immediate reaction. She immediately expressed a desire to come up with enough money to stay so she can walk through it again when she graduates. When asked how it influences her sense of attachment to SUU she said, "Every time I walk by it … it just always reminds me of [my goal]. Every time I walk by it. Just a good reminder of what I'm striving towards."

Stacy summed up how the campus legends, traditions, and symbols influence her sense of attachment by describing them as an 'in:' "Everybody knows them pretty much and you can talk about it with other people, make jokes."

Figure 4.7 - Stacy



Jay

Jay is a male, 20-year-old sophomore who was briefly involved in the Acoustics Club but who does not currently participate in any student clubs or organizations. He is from northern Utah and came to Southern Utah University after a friend a year ahead of him attended and had a good experience. Jay feels a strong sense of attachment to SUU but it is primarily through his interactions with the Art Department. He described his sense of attachment as a vibe:

> There are actually many elements of SUU that I like … the art. I love that. That's wonderful. The vibe that all the students have here is wonderful … people are very professional here. They're very progressive but still young and having fun.

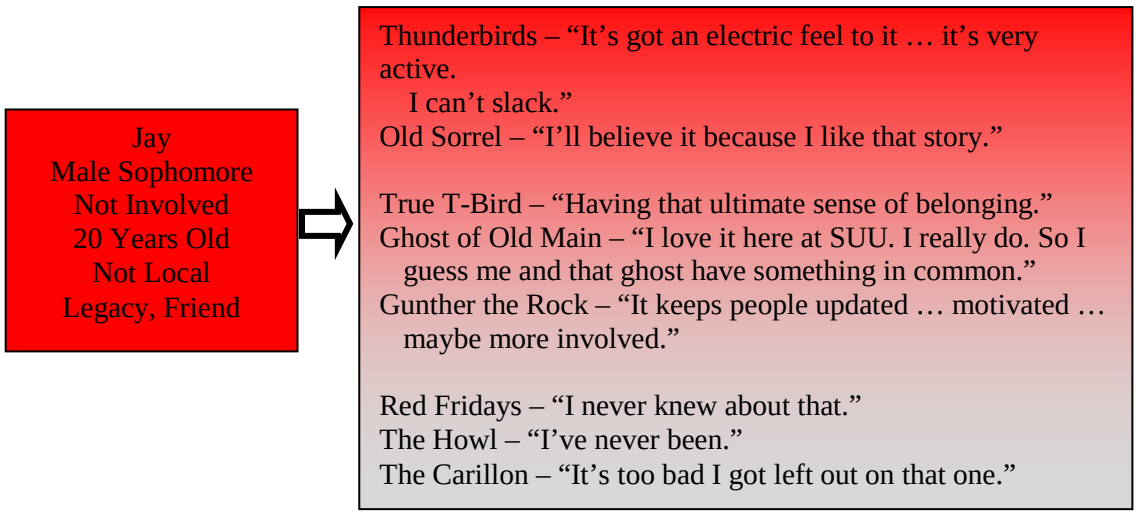
At the onset of the interview Jay stated that he was unfamiliar with any of the legends and traditions, with the exception of True T-Birds, which he claimed gave him a sense of belonging. However, as legends and traditions were brought up, he was able to connect with almost all of them. Although he was not aware of the Carillon Tradition prior to the interview, he was visibly saddened when he learned of it and commented, "It's too bad I got left out on that one." It is important to him to complete the other half of the tradition upon his graduation.

The symbol for which he had the strongest connection was Thunderbirds. When asked what "Thunderbirds" meant to him he immediately brought up an April Fool's joke played by administration on the student body last spring where a fake press release was posted to the SUU website stating that the Board of Trustees had approved a mascot change from Thunderbirds to the "Fighting Prairie Dogs" in reference to the fact that an endangered species of prairie dogs inhabits the Cedar City area. He said, "I caught onto

[the joke] but when I first saw it I was let down. I was like, 'That's really lame.'" As we talked further about people who didn't realize it was a joke he said, "Well, you can't [change it]. It's T-Birds. That's what it is." When asked what the idea of "Thunderbirds" means to him he said,

> It's got an electric feel to it. So I like that. Yeah, of course the colors are nice, too. Very … I guess the word's electric. It keeps you, well, it keeps me at least wanting to go forward … it's very active.

Figure 4.8 - Jay



Juniors – Involved

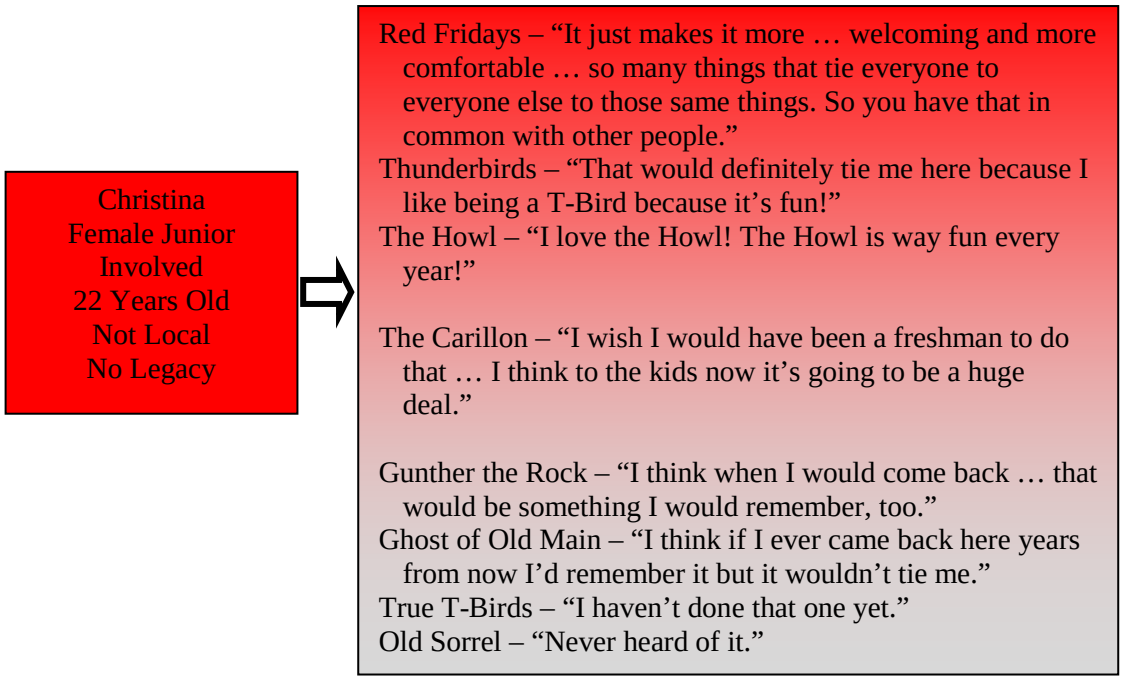
Christina

Christina is a 22-year-old junior who came to SUU from northern Utah with some friends although none of them knew very much about the campus. She was timid when she enrolled and did not participate in anything during her first semester but then

discovered several clubs and organizations that met her needs. She joined the Service and Learning Club, the Polynesian Club, Alpha Phi sorority, the Americorp program, and several clubs associated with her major. She identifies with SUU as home and attributes her feelings toward the campus to the beautiful surroundings and the friendly faculty and staff. She reported knowing about only one campus tradition at the onset of the interview but as different traditions were discussed she remembered them and felt very familiar with all the legends and traditions discussed in the interview and described how she felt they created a sense of community: "Everyone's all on the same page … it's just kind of … just kind of comfortable." This was especially interesting as she reported that none of them influenced her sense of attachment.

Christina felt most influenced by Thunderbirds and Red Fridays. In both cases she reported a sense of community and feeling like she belonged. They became something that she had in common with other students as well as faculty and staff. She expressed sadness that her class did not get to walk beneath the Carillon and stated that she feels walking under when she graduates will mean less to her because she did not get to begin the tradition as a freshman. Her strongest connection, however, is definitely her participation with the clubs and organizations.

Figure 4.9 - Christina



Tyson

Tyson is a 21-year-old junior who enjoys being actively involved in almost everything. He is the first in his family to attend SUU but he vows he is not the last. His family lives in northern Utah but he readily identifies SUU as his home. In addition to being employed on campus and volunteering for several campus offices, Tyson is actively involved in the Polynesian Club, the Native American Club, the Black Student Alliance, the Acoustics Club, the French Club, and a variety of other smaller clubs that are just getting started and need assistance learning to navigate the system through SUUSA, another group with which Tyson is actively involved. Tyson looks at his involvement as a network and views SUU as a database with which he can expand his own knowledge base.

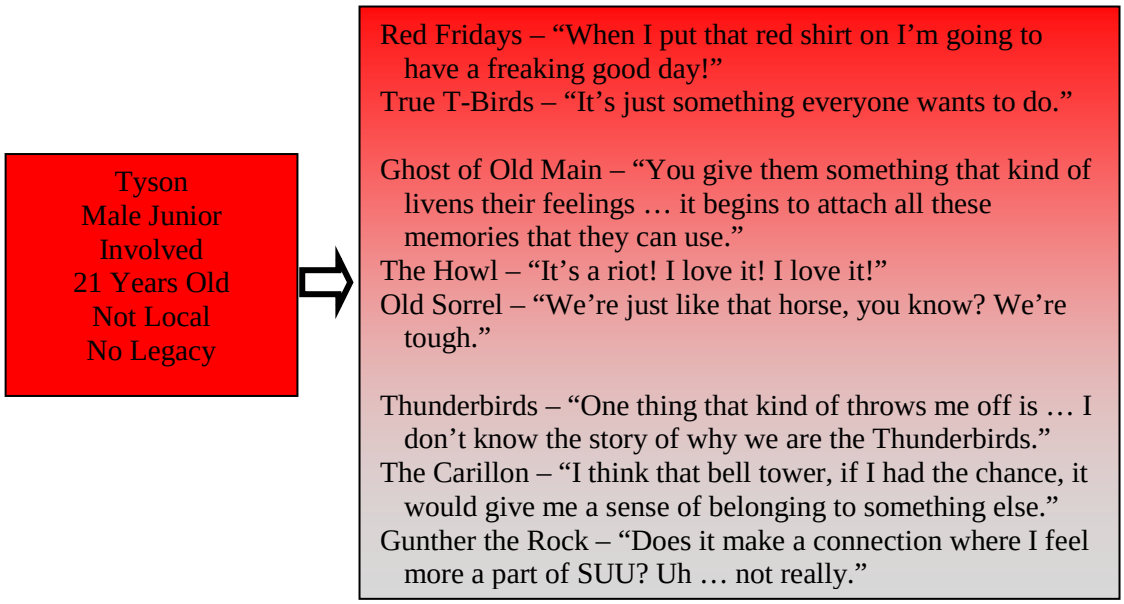
Tyson seems to be attached to SUU through almost every element of campus, which describes perfectly the type of person he is. As he discussed each of the individual legends, traditions, and symbols he was very animated and expressed how important each element was to a different time in a student's development, starting with the True T-Bird night and how it gives freshmen the first fun connection to campus, all the way through the Carillon Tradition and the sense of belonging it instills in students from beginning to end. He expressed strong attachment to the Ghost of Old Main through his involvement with the campus Public Safety Office stating that every small town has "got to have a ghost story." Even Gunther the Rock, the symbol with which Tyson feels least attached, is important to him because of the psychology behind a painted rock. He states, "just passing by your mind is attracted to that rock. Part of the reason is probably just because of how it changes all the time."

Perhaps the deepest attachment to SUU for Tyson comes through Red Fridays. His own words best describe what this tradition means to him:

> We've taken ourselves out of the whole identity of some *one* and created one identity at SUU … The collective. You come together. You're not really focused on how you're dressed that day 'cause we're all a Thunderbird that day … when I put that red shirt on I'm going to have a freaking good day.

His feelings about his college experience as a whole can be summed up in a statement that is probably used on every campus and is used on the SUU campus regularly, but from him comes with a conviction that makes one believe he means what he says: "Once a T-Bird, always a T-Bird."

Figure 4.10 - Tyson



Juniors – Not Involved

Andy

At 21 years old, Andy is in many ways a typical college junior. He left his home in northern Utah to come to SUU with his cousin right after high school. While he reports being involved in clubs such as the Queer Straight Alliance and clubs within his major, he is not listed on the membership roles of any clubs or organizations. Coming to SUU was a major transition for Andy in many ways, and being away from the influence of family for the first time prompted him to be himself and make SUU his "place to be." He reports a very positive experience at SUU. Although he has not participated much with the SUU legends and traditions, he was able to identify many of them and feels that it is important for the campus to continue working to build new traditions. When asked why he feels this way he said,

> I think it builds a bond with the university … when you have traditions like True T-Bird and the Rock and different things you have all the different students in clubs and organizations and the faculty and things that get involved in those and so you tend to mix and intermingle everyone and so I think that is just one more link in the chain of what keeps you here, because you're going to meet other people not just in your degree or in your organization … you're meeting people from other ones and you're networking with other people.

He later went on to say that the legends make him feel pride for the university. He said,

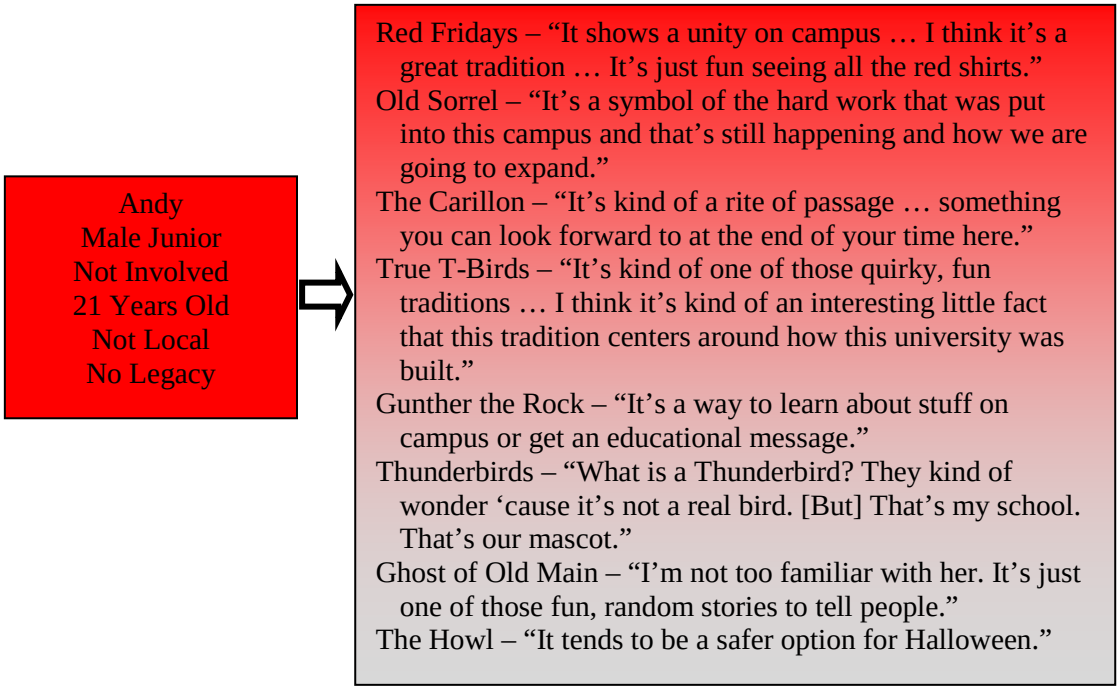
> I do [think it gives me a sense of pride] and when [friends and family] come and I'm giving them a tour and telling them about the university and they want to know weird little things like that, I find it interesting that I, even though I have not participated in a lot of them, I enjoy telling them about those things, you know? 'Cause they want to know and it's a way to get them engaged with the university and interested.

Andy brought up two interesting points. First, he stated that the most important part of True T-Birds is the fact that it takes place at the base of the Old Sorrel statue, indicating that the "true" in True T-Birds comes from the fact that it happens around the history and the founding story of the institution. He believes that this is a very important fact and much more important than the fact of the kiss that makes one a True T-Bird.

The second interesting part of the interview is that the "tradition" or "legend" that Andy feels creates the greatest sense of attachment for him is one that has not been discussed in the other interviews, and in fact, one that was not considered in the introduction of the topic: that of the time capsule buried beneath the Carillon that is the

center of the Carillon Tradition. When thinking about his life beyond SUU, the event he most looks forward to is being present for the opening of the time capsule several years in the future.

Figure 4.11 - Andy



Dawn

Growing up just fifty miles south of Cedar City, Dawn is as local as a student can be without coming from Iron County. She is a 20-year-old junior who is not involved in any formal clubs and organization. She does, however, participate in many extracurricular activities through her major in the College of Performing and Visual Arts. Although she is proud of her association with SUU, she does not feel a strong attachment to the campus. SUU is, in fact, widely renowned for its performing arts department, so

she feels that she is so busy with theater productions that she does not have time to be involved in other elements of campus. She states,

> I feel like I don't get a chance too often to get out and see sporting events because I'm always in rehearsal in the evening or running a show … sometimes I feel like I have no idea what's going on at this school because I'm always on that end of campus.

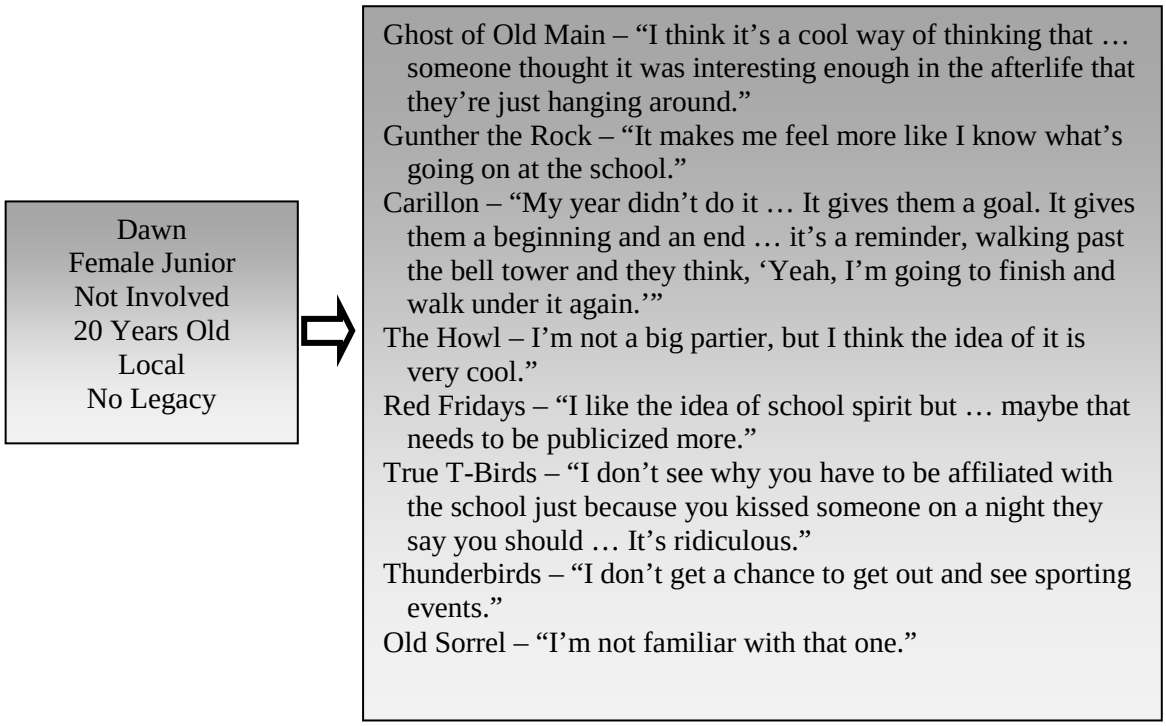
The one legend that Dawn feels very familiar with was the Ghost of Old Main. Dawn works for the Utah Shakespearean Festival which is held on campus during the summer season. The primary outdoor stage for the Festival is very close in proximity to Old Main. Dawn reports personal experiences of seeing lights turned on after a security sweep of the building ensured they were all off. Even with her conviction of the presence of a ghost, however, Dawn did not report any special attachment to the institution because of it. She said, "I think it's just a cool way of thinking that … someone thought it was interesting enough in the afterlife that they're just hanging around."

Dawn also reported feeling let down by the hype surrounding Red Fridays during her freshman year. She says, "I like the idea of school spirit but … maybe that needs to be publicized more."

One tradition with which Dawn is not familiar but felt could have created a sense of attachment is the Carillon Tradition. This tradition started after Dawn began her college career, although the Carillon was in place at that time. In the discussion she seemed visibly upset by the fact that no one had told her about it as a freshman, and then somewhat relieved to discover that the tradition had only started the year before and she was, therefore, not left out of anything. She said,

I think it gives people … a goal … It gives them a beginning and an end instead of, you know, a lot of people don't finish or they wander around doing different things and I think it's a reminder, walking past the bell tower and they think, 'Yeah, I'm going to finish and I'm going to walk under it again.' So I think … it could be a good thing.

Figure 4.12 - Dawn



Seniors – Involved

Terry

As a 23-year-old senior, Terry is by far the most involved of the student participants in this study. She comes from northern Utah, and while none of her friends or family members came before her, Terry came to SUU with her best friend and

immediately got involved in everything that interested her. Although she has stepped down from much of her involvement to focus on academics during her last term before graduation, Terry has been involved in the ROTC, Alpha Phi sorority, student government, REAL Peer Health Educators, the Polynesian Club, the Native American Club, and the Orientation Leaders who assist in new student orientation each summer. She is actively involved in various clubs with in her major and has participated in events such as the Miss SUU Pageant.

Terry reports feeling very strongly attached to SUU and attributes that to her involvement and, in part, to the legends and traditions that make SUU home to her. Although she has not participated in all the traditions discussed and, in fact, does not appreciate some of them, she is very familiar with each of them. She attributes her knowledge of the legends, traditions, and symbols to her involvement with the Orientation Leaders but reflected on the True T-Bird tradition by saying, "I am not in that sense a True T-Bird. I think it's just being loyal to SUU and having a true sense of pride in being an SUU student. That's how I interpret it." Regarding the legend of the Ghost of Old Main she said, "It's something I'll always remember … It's not my definition of my experience here, but it's something fun to do."

The one tradition that Terry feels strongly connects her to SUU is the Carillon Tradition. Although she did not get to participate in this tradition as a freshman, she is looking forward to participating when she graduates in April. Her tone became almost reverent as she described her feelings about it:

> As a new student I don't know if I would understand it completely … it wouldn't be special to me but as I started to make my connections at SUU and I had the

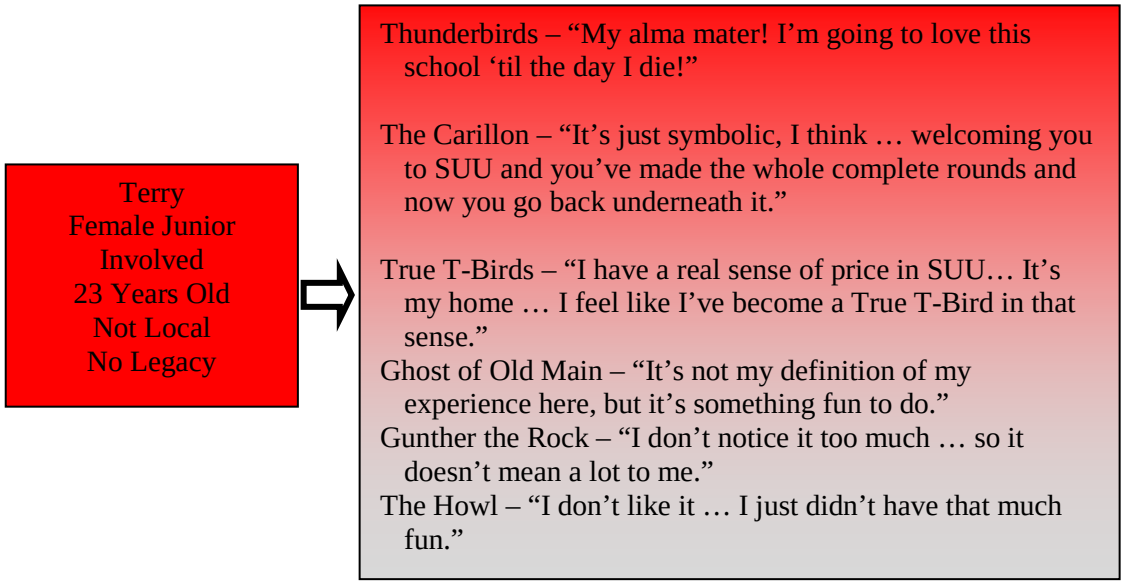
experience that I've had here walking underneath it would mean so much … It's a tradition that could tie me to SUU, saying, 'Okay, this is what I've done and I'm leaving.' It's just symbolic, I think, welcoming you to SUU and you've made the whole complete rounds and now you get to go back underneath it.

Terry's overall feeling about the legends and traditions are summed up in her experience with the Orientation Leaders during her freshman year:

> They really made sure that we were prepared to handle the course load and handling things like that but they also made sure to instill a sense of… a little bit … like a seed of being involved and what being a T-Bird means and how it's changed other people … I can make something of myself here so it was just that little seed that was planted at Orientation that got me going.

As a current Orientation Leader, she feels a strong sense of responsibility to share these traditions with new students and pass on her sense of belonging to others.

Figure 4.13 - Terry



Bob

Hailing from northern Utah and following in the footsteps of an older brother and sister, Bob is a 24-year-old senior who has always been actively involved in student clubs and organizations, including SUU Presidential Ambassadors, the Southern Utah University Student Association (SUUSA), the Service and Learning Club, the English as a Second Language club, and various organizations associated with his major and his affiliation with the predominant religion in the area. He describes his relationship with SUU as "homey" and "a good personal fit." He states, "I view life … like this holistic pursuit, you know. You develop academically, socially, emotionally, spiritually, and that kind of thing. I mean, I kind of feel like SUU has provided that for me."

While Bob does not directly attribute any of his sense of attachment to the legends, traditions, and symbols of SUU, he feels that his involvement in SUU's clubs and organizations go hand in hand with them. For example, he does not necessarily have a fondness for the actual Ghost of Old Main, but he feels a connection to the story because his role as a Presidential Ambassador enabled him to share it with many people while he gave campus tours to prospective students and others. In regards to that he states that his attachment is based on, "a personal connection of being able to, you know, be involved and take part in so many things … you want to be a part of what you helped create."

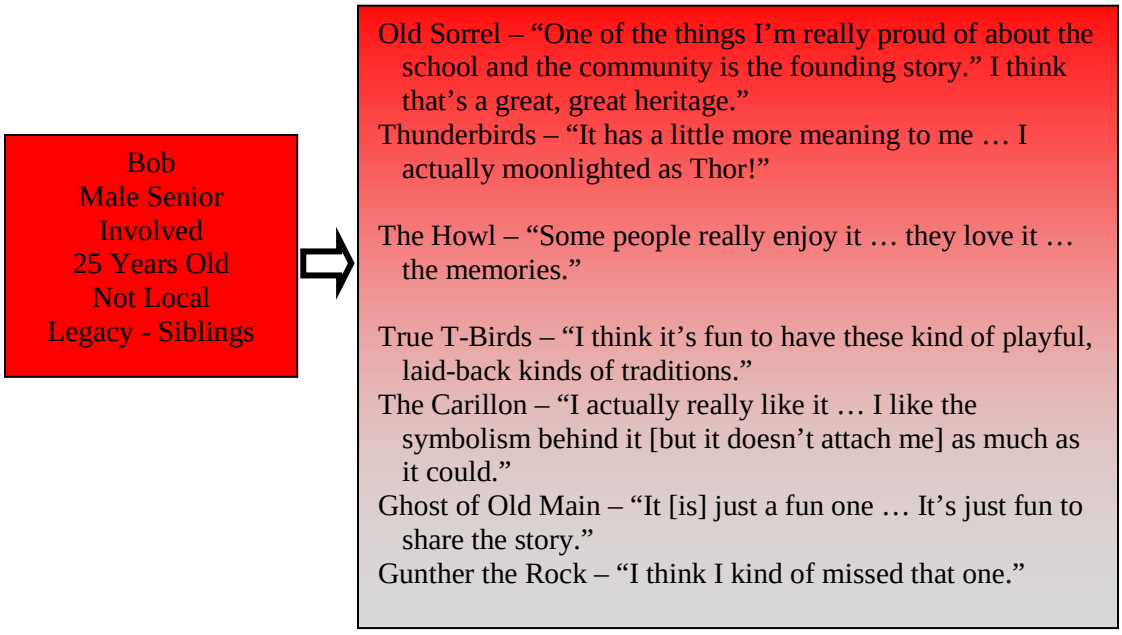
Bob also has a strong association with the idea of Thunderbirds and the Legend of Old Sorrel. He feels attached to Thunderbirds because he served a year working part time as the school's mascot, "Thor the Thunderbird," at athletic events and other functions and he enjoyed working with the SUU and local community behind the mask. The ties to the

Legend of Old Sorrel come from his construction management background as well as his religious affiliation because the legend is centered around the community coming together to construct a building for classes to be held in before a deadline laid by the state. He describes this as, “a great heritage … I worked in construction … I understand how arduous it can be.” He described the joined efforts of the community and the founding families as “a confirmation of your choice.” This legend is also important to him because he was able to share it on tours as a Presidential Ambassador.

Two elements of Bob’s interview were surprising. First, Bob stated that he was not familiar with the Red Fridays tradition. The expectation was that as Thor and a member of SUUSA he would have not only been a part of instituting such a tradition but also seen the throngs of people wearing red every Friday. This was not the case, according to him. The second surprising element was that he felt the traditions became less important to him as he progressed through his academic career even though he became more involved. He described this:

> Early on when I began here they were a little more important ‘cause they were, like, fresh on my mind. I knew about them. I was taught about them and as an Ambassador I taught others about them … then as time kind of went on those things faded into the background as I began to focus on these extracurriculars.

Figure 4.14 - Bob



Seniors – Not Involved

Sarah

Sarah is a 20-year-old senior on the academic fast track who comes from a small town about two hours northeast of Cedar City. She came to SUU after several cousins attended and had good experiences, and while she has not been involved in clubs and organizations in the past she reports that she would like to get involved during the coming year and to that end has recently signed up for the Ultimate Frisbee Club and the Triathalon Club. Sarah's primary impetus for such involvement comes from her on-campus job where she is able to interact with students from all over campus, particularly the student leaders.

Similar to others involved in this study, Sarah reports her attachment to SUU as home.

> It … felt like home. It was small. All my class sizes were small and people were very welcoming and friendly and I made so many friends and I know so many people. It really felt like home. It's still kind of a small town. I just love it.

Along with this she reports a strong sense of belonging through the stories that surround the campus, including the legends, traditions, and symbols. She is particularly fond of the Legend of Old Sorrel, the founding of SUU and the "history of SUU and why we're such a great school and how it became that way … that's a part of campus or a part of the school that not everyone knows about. And that's so important. It really is." She reports being "proud to be part of such a rich heritage." The importance of the history of SUU came up repeatedly as an important element in her attachment throughout the interview.

Sarah reports her sense of attachment most strongly related to Red Fridays and the Carillon Tradition. While she didn't get to participate in the first part of the Carillon Tradition because it evolved after she started at SUU, she reports,

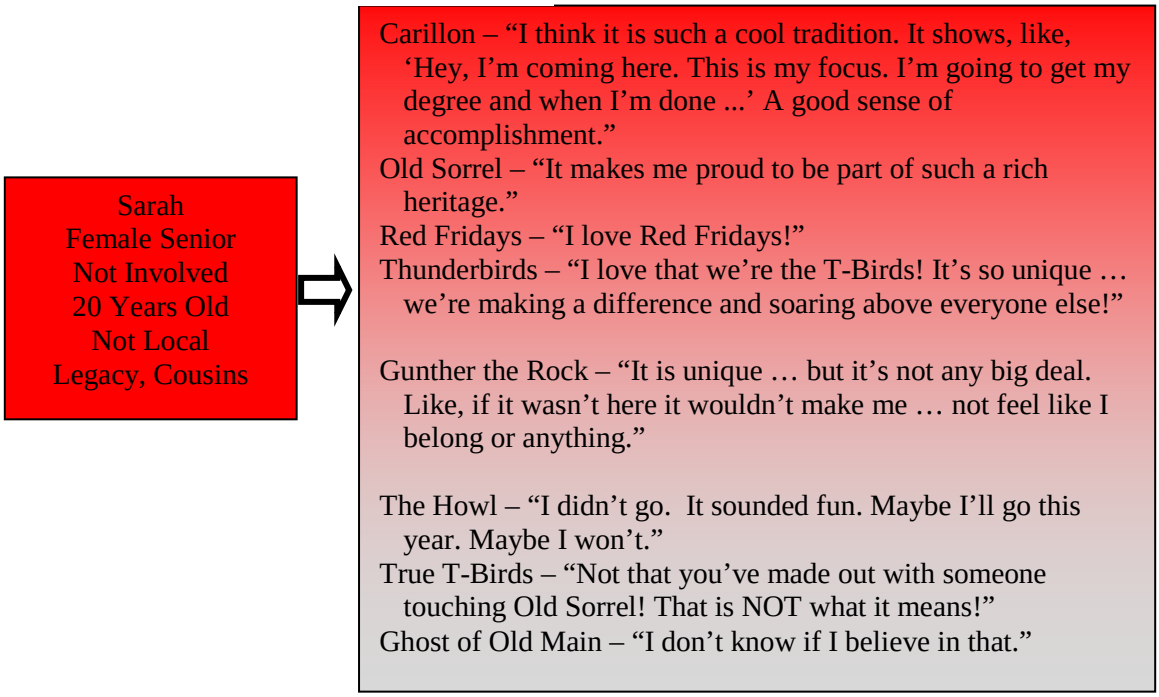
> I think it is such a cool tradition. It shows, like, 'Hey, I'm coming here. This is my focus. I'm going to get my degree and when I'm done …' It's a good sense of accomplishment … that's the thing I'm looking forward to second-most, other than accepting my degree when I graduate.

Red Fridays also have special meaning to Sarah. She says,

> It's very connective between the faculty and the students … the greatest thing … is to go to, like, big football games and … everyone is standing up. It's like an entire sea of red! Like, that's all you see, is red! It's that's school spirit. And not only do you run into students there. You run into community members who are supporting SUU. You run into alumni. You run into faculty and staff. Like, no

matter who it is they still, they feel that connection with SUU. That's what ties us all together. That's what makes us all appreciate SUU and the opportunity we have to come here. We appreciate it together!

Figure 4.15 - Sarah



Beth

Beth, 21, moved from her home out of state to SUU because it was the compromised reached between herself and her parents when they wanted her to go to their alma mater, a religious school approximately 200 miles north of Cedar City, and her desire to attend school on a smaller campus. She is actively involved in various music organizations, as is required by her major, but has not participated in any clubs not related to her major. She recently signed up for the Swing Club and the Ballroom Dance

Company Club but has not participated in any events or rehearsals as of yet, nor has she paid the required dues for these clubs. Her reason for joining these clubs, she stated, is that she can finally slow down a little bit in her final year.

SUU is home to Beth. She thinks the campus is beautiful and loves the small size of the campus, and also feels that SUU students have a benefit of knowing professors more closely than students at larger schools might. She feels that the size of it also contributes to how friendly everyone seems to be. Although Beth's involvement is within her major, she feels that getting to know people pursuing similar goals across the state has helped her form a connection, not just to SUU but to Utah in general. She stated, "I feel like I'm a part of something that's not only great but it's getting even better. The university, every day, is improving … It's always progressing, which is great."

Beth attributes some of her connection to SUU to the legends, traditions, and symbols that are part of campus. She expressed a deep appreciation for the Legend of Old Sorrel and likened the dedication of the people who participated in that fateful event to the faculty and staff who continue to work hard at making SUU a better place. She said,

> I think it's so interesting that the people of Cedar were so dedicated to building this university that they were willing to go … into the mountains in the worst snow storm, get caught in that, and make it back to finish the building, to finish Old Main in get the funding. And that just shows the dedication and it continues today with the faculty and staff.

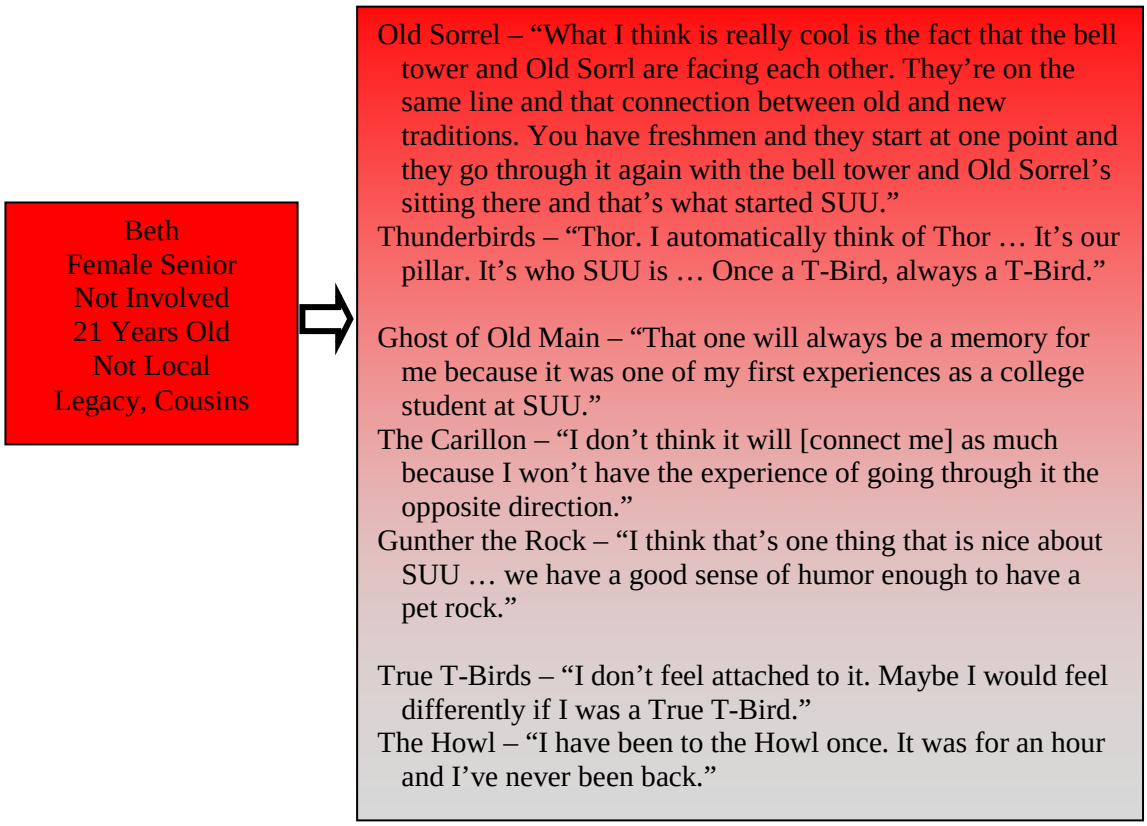
Another symbol Beth relates to is Thunderbirds. She enjoys the antics of Thor, the mascot, and feels the campus community is energized by him. She firmly avowed that

she anticipates that she will always be connected to SUU as a Thunderbird, just as she still feels connected to her high school and junior high school through their mascots.

Beth also identifies with Gunther the Rock, but more as an information source and proof that SUU has "a good sense of humor enough to have a pet rock." She expressed that she thinks it is important to share information across campus, recognizing that many students are stuck in the buildings that house their programs once they have entered the depth portion of their studies. The Rock informs them of events in other colleges that they may otherwise miss because they are not advertised in the common areas of their own college.

Other traditions did not influence Beth's sense of belonging at SUU. She considers True T-Bird Night something of a joke and mention of the Howl invoked a decidedly negative reaction. Because her reaction to the Howl was so strong it seemed pertinent to ask whether she feels disassociated from the campus. Her response was, "I still love SUU and I'm … everything but that one event and it doesn't affect my opinion of SUU because that's really not what SUU is. That's not what it stands for and tries to project." Even the Carillon Tradition, which seemed to have a strong influence on other participants, didn't create a connection for Beth. She likes the idea behind the tradition and feels it may have meant something to her had she walked through as a freshman. In her current situation, it has little meaning for her.

Figure 4.16 - Beth



Summary

A quote from Terry serves to sum up the overall impression received from the participants in this study:

> I don't know if I can explain it but it's like an instant sense of belonging when you are a part of something that everyone else does. I mean, I guess it's peer pressure, but a positive peer pressure. Everyone does this, and if you do it you automatically belong in that group. And when, again, it's just another connection made when people have things in common they tend to get along better. And so you belong, you get along better with people … I think just showing up and being

present and enthusiastic about traditions and different things … that's what made me feel like I had my sense of belonging.

With this introduction of the students and their experiences in mind, chapter five will explore the data more deeply and seek to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS: ANALYSIS OF THE EXPERIENCES OF SIXTEEN SOUTHERN UTAH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Introduction

Yin (2009) suggests that the best way to begin analysis of the data is to arrange and rearrange the data in different ways, looking for patterns in different arrangements. "All empirical research studies, including case studies, have a 'story' to tell. The story differs from a fictional account because it embraces your data, but it remains a story because it must have a beginning, end, and middle" (Yin, 2009, p. 130). If research has been conducted with analysis of the data in mind, analytical strategies will have already been considered in data collection. In the instance of this study, data were collected and analyzed with the idea that a story could be told about each participant's experience with the legends, traditions, and symbols of Southern Utah University, or the story of each legend, tradition, and symbol could be told through the collective memories of each participant. Interview questions were written and interviews conducted around these perspectives.

This study was designed to explore institutional cultural traits such as legends, traditions, and symbols, and how they influence the development of place attachment. The goal of exploratory research is generally to understand the phenomenon as well as the participants (Creswell, 2007). A qualitative researcher seeks to understand how participants "make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (Merriam, 2009, p.6). Chapter four provided descriptions of the participants themselves. This chapter provides *thick descriptions* of the categories and themes that emerge as the

data are analyzed and explore possible theories about the influence of legends, traditions, and symbols on identity development and place attachment. According to Denzin,

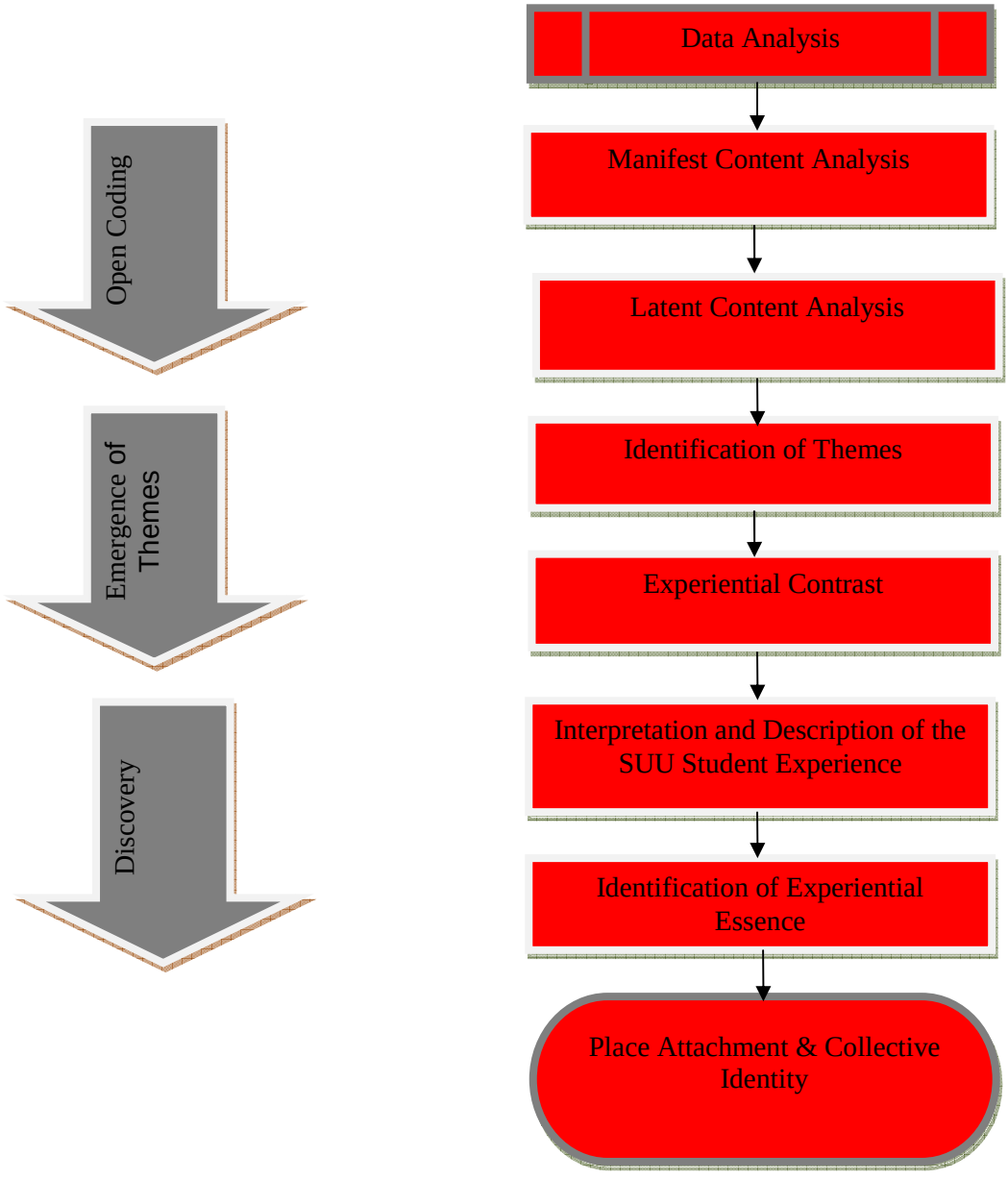
> A thick description … does more than record what a person is doing. It goes beyond mere fact and surface appearances. It presents detail, context, emotion, and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another. Thick description evokes emotionality and self-feelings. It inserts history into experience. It establishes the significance of an experience, or the sequence of events, for the person or persons in question. In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals are heard. (1989, p. 83)

Analysis is the process by which data are organized and coded in such a way that will allow themes to emerge and be represented in tables, discussions, and other figures (Creswell, 2007). In the review of several instances of the same occurrence such as this study, Stake (1995) recommends categorical aggregation, whereby patterns relevant to the issue begin to emerge. On this foundation, the goal of this chapter is to convey the exploratory results of the analysis of data in an organized and meaningful way, thereby showing how campus legends, traditions, and symbols played a significant role in students developing place attachment to the Southern Utah University campus. The exploratory nature of this study is not intended to provide a conclusive answer as to whether these elements cause the development of place attachment but rather to explore the patterns that evolve and create a foundation for future study (Yin, 2009).

Chapter Organization

This chapter will outline how analysis of the data took place in a heuristic manner that lead to learning and discovery. First, a review of the research questions will be the setting for data analysis. A description of the coding process used and analysis of the data and contextual cues through open coding will reveal manifest and latent content. Finally, the results will be discussed in a manner relating them to the prior literature as discussed in chapter two. Figure 5.1 represents the procedure used to arrive at the findings of the study. Figure 5.2 represents student self-reported familiarity with different legends, traditions, and symbols, the influence those cultural items have had on each student's attachment to the university, and the potential importance of each cultural item to the student experience. Figure 5.3 is the heuristic model used to illustrate the conceptual flow and data analysis process resulting in students' place attachment and collective identity among SUU students. The process is heuristic in that it integrates the researcher's *etic*, or experience-based, knowledge of SUU, with *emic*, or participant's experience with SUU place attachment and collective identity with legends, traditions, and symbols of SUU.

Figure 5.1 - Heuristic Data Analysis Model: A single case study embedded process used to analyze the evolution of themes.



Analysis of Data

This case study was conducted using Merriam's (2009) interpretive orientation of educational research because it was designed to understand a lived experience through the multiple realities of the participants. Part of the analysis process is using the data to create a rich description of the case in question. Since there is currently no literature available on this topic, this study is expected to be revelatory in nature, which will require a description that is rich and deep in details.

A total of sixteen participants were interviewed, four from each grade level, freshmen through seniors. Within each grade level, two of the students were considered to be involved in student clubs and organizations and two were not. Although no preference was given to gender when selecting participants, freshmen and juniors each produced two males and two females. Sophomores and seniors were represented by three females and one male. When divided by "involved" versus "not involved," each division was represented by three males and five females.

The interviews came to a total of 201 pages of transcription and approximately 79,604 words, including those of the interviewer. Referring to the example of Michelle's transcription in Appendix E, each interview was coded using different colors of highlighting for traits of the student, traits of the institution, and various responses to each legend, tradition, or symbol covered in the interview. Yellow represented general comments in relation to a sense of attachment to the university. Pink represented something that was fun or seemingly trivial to the student. Green represented the traits of the student and blue represented traits of the institution.

While efforts were made to keep note-taking to a minimum so as not to distract the participants, when contextual cues (Gumperz, 1992) were observed (gestures, facial expressions, changes in inflections, etc.) notes were made on the interview protocol sheet. After each interview time was taken to add to the notes as best possible and account for latent content through the overall tone of the interview and notable non-verbal responses to the questions and contextual cues. As interviews were transcribed, notes taken during and after the interview were inserted in appropriate places to create a comprehensive document to be used for data analysis. An example of the transcription with interview notes is available in Appendix E.

To begin to analyze the data it was important to be acutely mindful of the research questions. Analysis of the data was completed with the original broad, overarching questions in mind.

1. *How do Southern Utah University (SUU) students describe the importance of institutional culture, to include legends, traditions, and symbols, in their attachment to the institution?*
2. *How do SUU students describe the formation of place attachment to the school during their college experience?*
3. *What role do the legends, traditions, and symbols of SUU play in helping students form an identity as SUU students?*
4. *How do these cultural elements influence the creation of identity with the institution?*

5. *How do students who are involved in student clubs and organizations describe their experiences with campus legends, traditions, and symbols differently than students who are not involved in student clubs and organizations?*

Although these research questions drove the data collection and data analysis, it was difficult to answer them individually. Throughout the interview process, answers given by participants overlapped questions and blurred the lines of which question was being answered. Although this was often confusing in the data analysis process, it created a rich tapestry of how the student experience is intertwined with legends, traditions, and symbols, and how each legend, tradition, and symbol influences place attachment individually, but also as part of the whole mystical presence of the institution. The stories blended together, so the data blended, too.

Manifest Content Analysis Results

Manifest content analysis, which is an analysis of data elements that can be counted and represented visually (Berg, 2001; Creswell, 2007), was the first step of the content analysis process used to arrive at a description of the case through the experiences of the 16 SUU student participants. Through the manifest content analysis themes emerged regarding how deeply attached each student felt toward SUU, whether each legend, tradition, or symbol influenced that sense of attachment, and how important the student thinks that legend, tradition, or symbol can or should be in developing a sense of attachment. Words such as “home,” “community,” “spirit,” “pride,” and “included,” among others, were included in determining the level of influence and importance for each student.

The second step of the process was defining the patterns, those that were expected at the onset of research and those that emerged as a result of data analysis (Yin, 2009). The assumption at the onset of this study was that there would be a difference in the responses from the students who were involved in campus clubs and organizations versus those who were not. Surprisingly, with the exception of Gunther the Rock, this was not the case. The level of attachment was fairly consistent across the participants with only one student, Dawn, an uninvolved junior, stating that she did not feel particularly attached to the university. Not surprising was the fact that the Involved students expressed more attachment due to their involvement in clubs and organizations. Not Involved students, however, definitely expressed attachment to the stories and traditions that made them feel a part of something. A pattern emerged with Not Involved surrounding Gunther the Rock in that each of them expressed that Gunther has the potential to be very important to their attachment to SUU as students, perhaps due to the nature of the Rock being a central source of communication between various parts of campus.

Latent Content Analysis Results

Latent content refers to observable messages conveyed through contextualization cues such as facial expressions, gestures, vocal inflections, etc., during the interview process (Berg, 2001). Notes were kept throughout the interview process to account for visual cues that were not captured in the audio recording. Some interpretation, therefore, was based on tacit communication and contextualization cues. In particular, because

much of the discussion was based on the participants reflecting on their feelings, attention was paid to where their eyes were directed, posture, and facial expressions.

Coding

Students' reactions to the legends, traditions, and symbols were not quantified. However, care was taken to observe reactions to each so they could be "ranked" as something that strongly influenced the participant's sense of attachment, something that influenced their sense of attachment to some extent, or something that did not influence their sense of attachment to the institution. Responses were rated equally based on the words used to describe the students' feelings about the trait, but also on tacit, or non-verbal signals such as gestures, facial expressions, and changes in tone or volume.

Students occasionally indicated that they had not heard about a certain legend or tradition. If the discussion led to a description of that trait and their reaction was strong in response, consideration was given to that response. For example, Leo had not heard of the Legend of Old Sorrel. He asked what it was and after a brief retelling of the legend felt an immediate connection to it. Although the Legend of Old Sorrel was ranked as an item that created no sense of attachment for Leo, it was ranked higher than Gunther the Rock, something with which he was familiar but had not really paid attention or shown interest until it became a topic of discussion in the interview process.

Figure 5.1 is a visual representation of the participants' *familiarity* with each cultural trait, the level of *influence* that trait had on the participant's level of attachment as reported by the participants, including observable non-verbal responses, and the potential *importance* the participant felt the trait had in their sense of belonging. Further,

the figure provides a level of triangulation on certain traits such as Red Fridays, Thunderbirds, and the Carillon. Again, the Legend of Old Sorrel seemed to be important to everyone who was familiar with it at the onset of the interview, but some of the students had not been introduced to this particular legend at the time they were interviewed.

Figure 5.2 - Analysis of Interviews with 16 SUU Students.

Dimensions of Contrast	16 SUU Student Experiences															
	Involved								Not Involved							
	Leo	Belle	Michelle	Mary	Christina	Tyson	Terry	Bob	Kobe	Melody	Stacy	Jay	Andy	Dawn	Beth	Sarah
TRUE T-BIRDS																
Familiarity	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Influence on Attachment		X				X					X	X				
Importance	X	X	X			X				X	X	X	X			
GHOST OF OLD MAIN																
Familiarity	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Influence on Attachment														X	X	
Importance		X				X						X		X	X	
GUNTHER THE ROCK																
Familiarity		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Influence on Attachment											X			X		
Importance		X		X	X					X	X	X	X	X	X	X
THE HOWL																
Familiarity	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Influence on Attachment	X				X				X	X						
Importance	X				X	X		X	X	X				X		
RED FRIDAYS																
Familiarity	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X
Influence on Attachment	X		X		X	X		X					X		X	X
Importance	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X				X	X	X	X
THUNDERBIRDS																
Faniliarity	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Influence on Attachment		X	X		X		X	X		X	X	X			X	
Importance	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X			X	X
OLD SORREL																
Familiarity				X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
Influence on Attachment				X			X	X							X	X
Importance				X		X	X	X	X		X		X		X	X
CARILLON TRADITION																
Familiarity	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Influence on Attachment	X		X	X					X	X	X					X
Importance	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X

Referring to Figure 5.1, a distinct pattern emerged among the freshmen and sophomores regarding attachment, regardless of level of involvement. Of the students

who participated in the Carillon Tradition (freshmen and sophomores, as the tradition only started two years ago), five of eight expressed that this tradition strongly influenced their sense of attachment to Southern Utah University by creating a sense of commitment to their goal, as well as expressing the support of the institution to their successful completion of the goal. One of the sophomores who did not feel attachment due to the Carillon Tradition had not participated in it and did not know what it meant. When it was explained to him, he appeared visibly sad and he remarked, "It's too bad I got left out on that one," indicating that he would have liked to participate with his freshman class.

Belle, an involved freshman, expressed great attachment to both the Carillon Tradition and Thunderbirds. However, when latent content was considered, Thunderbirds definitely created a sense of excitement within her. The Carillon Tradition struck a chord with her while she experienced it for the first time. It would seem, however, that her attachment to it has diminished as she gets further away from the actual event. In discussing the memory she looked off into the distance and said, "It didn't really hit me until I actually did it." She then quickly focused back in on the discussion and smiled and said, "It was fun."

One of the remaining students in the Freshman/Sophomore classification cited strong connections to the Legend of Old Sorrel as a source of attachment to the university. Mary, an involved sophomore, expressed a strong connection to both the Carillon and Old Sorrel but ultimately preferred Old Sorrel because, "I feel like that's something that's … singular to the university. That story's *our* story."

The pattern among the students in the junior and senior classes was not as central regarding their sources of attachment. This is also depicted in Figure 5.2.Three juniors

felt a strong sense of unity when they considered Red Fridays as part of their experience at SUU. One junior, a female theater major, felt most strongly connected to the Ghost of Old Main, primarily due to Old Main's proximity to the outdoor stage used for the Utah Shakespearean Festival and the alleged experiences of the performers in the Festival.

Terry, a senior and by far the most involved of all the participants, expressed no real connection to any of the cultural traits of the university. She made it very clear that her connection comes directly from her involvement with the various clubs and organizations to which she belongs. While she enjoys many of the stories, she has actually opted to change the meaning of "True T-Birds" to suit her own feelings for the school, and she actively dislikes the Howl. Her strongest reaction was latent in manner through her facial expression when she discussed Thunderbirds. She discontinued eye contact immediately and firmly said, "My alma mater. I'm going to love this school 'til the day I die." When asked if she knew where the term 'alma mater' comes from she said no and after a brief explanation she looked away again and said in a quiet voice, "Oh … that's nice … mother dear." Even this, however, led back to a conversation about her experiences with Orientation and how being involved has made a difference for her.

Perhaps the strongest reaction, both manifest and latent, was the response of Bob to the Legend of Old Sorrel. Bob repeatedly expressed a strong sense of pride in the heritage of SUU. Indeed, 'pride' and 'heritage' are words Bob used frequently in his interview. When asked to describe his sense of attachment to SUU he stated,

> It's mainly based on, I guess, a personal connection of being able to, you know, be involved and take part in so many things … you want to be part of what you

helped create. And so having been involved in that kind of thing has helped me feel like I've helped contribute and create.

As the interview progressed, Bob talked about all the legends, traditions, and symbols through the perspective of someone involved in facilitating events for other students. He clearly enjoyed sharing the things that made SUU special to him with the generations of students who came after him, and therefore took an administrative role in various traditions and events. His responses, by and large, centered around making the events fun for other students. However, when asked to describe how he thinks legends, traditions, and symbols tie a community together he had a very strong reaction:

Bob: That's … actually I really like that questions because one of the things I really enjoy about SUU and one of the things I'm really proud of about the school and the community is the founding story. And about how much the community pulled together to make everything happen. And that's actually one thing that I wish was more … I guess more apparent on campus and within the community because I think a lot of people have forgotten that, especially as, you know, new people have moved in and some of the … I don't know if you'd call them traditional families of Cedar City, have moved out …

Me: The founding families?

Bob: Yeah. I think that something that's kind of almost separating, but again, you know, I've been a student and haven't seen from the community's perspective as well. I think that's one of those, you know, great legends that I think, you know, more people knew about … I think that's a great, great heritage.

Bob went on to describe his own experience working summers in construction and knowing how difficult the tasks of the men sent to harvest the logs in the middle of winter must have been. He almost reverently described the dedication of these founders as a "confirmation" that he had made the right choice when enrolling at SUU.

Also noteworthy in the latent data is the idea that attachment may come from the meaning behind the legends, traditions, and symbols, rather than the items themselves. For example, Bob's attachment to the Legend of Old Sorrel comes not from the story of the horse, but rather the story of the community members who sacrificed so much to secure the building of the school. Stacy and Dawn both reported an attachment to Gunther the Rock not because of the rock itself, but the fact that they feel it connects them to other people on campus. Beth does not care about the Ghost of Old Main as much as she care about the experience she had with friends when she first came to campus and happened upon a séance. This suggests that the underlying attachment to campus is still through human interaction, and the legends, traditions, and symbols are simply a conduit for connecting people to people.

It is important to note here that for the six people who indicated that the Legend of Old Sorrel created no sense of attachment for them, 100% of them indicated that they had never heard the story. All the participants who were familiar with the founding story indicated that it did influence their sense of attachment in some way. Kobe, a freshman who is not involved in clubs and organizations, stated, "I don't remember the story behind it. All I remember is that it's a very inspiring story."

Also noteworthy is the fact that students who are not involved agreed unilaterally that Gunther the Rock is potentially very important to connecting them to campus and

creating a sense of place. Students who are not involved in clubs and organizations may not feel included in some of the events that occur on campus, and Gunther the Rock serves as a source of communication for them.

No distinct pattern emerged in an analysis of the involved students for which events most strongly influenced their sense of attachment. Excluding the participants who were not familiar with the Legend of Old Sorrel, the involved students seemed least influenced by Gunther the Rock, True T-Birds, and The Howl. Though all the students expressed some level of attachment to Southern Utah University, many expressed their attachment most strongly influenced by other factors such as faculty, setting, or involvement.

Not surprisingly, participants who were involved in clubs and organizations described the formation of their place attachment through their involvement. Also not surprisingly, many of the students expressed attachment based on their interactions with faculty, staff, and friends. All of the students felt it was important for the institution to work to create a sense of place attachment, although there was disagreement on whether it was the responsibility of the faculty and staff or the upper classmen.

In general, students who were not involved seemed to feel legends, traditions, and symbols were very important to their sense of attachment. Although none of them stated specific reasons for this, one possibility may be that hearing the stories and knowing what these traits mean to their peers are passive ways of being involved in their community. This is important for institutions because it adds another level of attachment, beyond faculty, staff, campus environment, or other elements, by which to solidify the student-campus relationship.

Emergence of Themes

Several themes emerged from the data through the process of manifest and latent content analysis. They are depicted in Figure 5.2. Perhaps the most apparent was the idea of "home." Every student used the word "home" to describe his or her attachment to SUU at some point in the interview, although one uninvolved sophomore described SUU as her "second home." This supports Tuan's (1980) description of "at-homeness" and the importance it plays in creating a sense of identity through pleasant memories. At some point in every interview participants verbally identified SUU as a type of "home" (manifest content) but also visually appeared to have sense of calmness, as if suddenly recognizing what their own feelings about SUU mean to them as individuals (latent content). Tuan states, "People may not even be aware of home when they are truly at home, wrapped in the small satisfactions of day-to-day affairs, unconcerned with the past's heritage or the future's promises," (p. 6). This theme became very apparent as they identified SUU as their "home" at the beginning of their interviews, many of them stating that they were not very aware of SUU legends, traditions, and symbols, but as those items were later discussed, without fail, they became visibly excited when something came up that was special to them.

This sense of "at-homeness" was repeatedly attached to other campus elements, such as faculty and staff, physical surroundings, and quality of education, but it was also attributed to the sense that they all have something in common with other students and that their stories are, to some extent, intertwined.

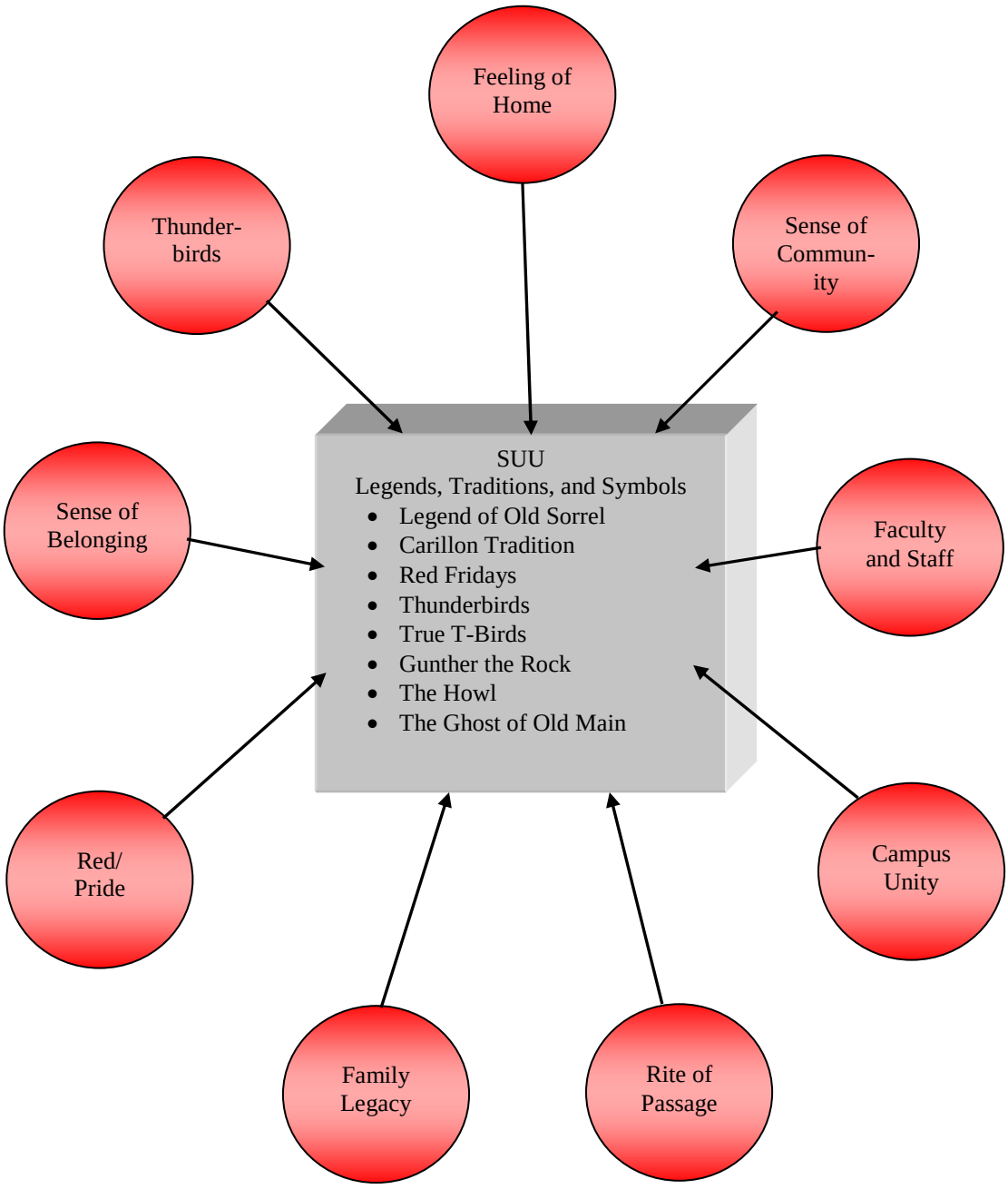
Another common theme was a sense of belonging to a community. While a general sense of belonging through Red Fridays was not surprising (it stands to reason

that people who dress alike are doing so to create a sense of unity), their connection through other elements was surprising. To some, Gunther the Rock provided a sense of community as the "SUU billboard," a place where all members of the community shared and received information. Holmes, Patterson, and Stalling (2003) describe the process by which the lines that isolate an individual from a community begin to fade as the individual becomes familiar with his or her surroundings and begins to feel "at home." They cite "identity, belonging, groundedness, meaning, growth, and spiritual well-being," (p.241) as among the most critical developmental functions that arise as a person develops a sense of place. Based on the data provided by the participants, it would seem that Red Fridays and Gunther the Rock fulfill that need in these traditionally-aged college students.

Interestingly, twelve of the sixteen students felt that "Thunderbirds" should be an important part of the process of identification and development of place attachment, but only nine of them felt that the mascot had influenced their own sense of attachment. The Thunderbird theme is also illustrated in Figure 5.2. This may be attributed to the fact that many students do not understand exactly what a Thunderbird is or why it is the SUU mascot.

Figure 5.3 represents the themes that emerged through discussions about SUU legends, traditions, and symbols. The themes were discovered through manifest and latent content analysis using both verbal and tacit data. The legends, traditions, and symbols are listed in order of importance based on the perceptions received from students. The themes are represented with the most common at the top. This represents the essence of data discovered in sixteen interviews.

Figure 5.3 - Thematic representation of Southern Utah University student testimonials of place attachment due to institutional legends, traditions, and symbols.



Summary

Through interviews with sixteen Southern Utah University students data were coded and analyzed, revealing the perceived influence of campus legends, traditions, and symbols on the development of place attachment in students. Figure 5.2 displays the self-reported levels of attachment through each legend, tradition, or symbol, as well as the importance of that trait to each student. Figure 5.3 provides a visual representation of the themes that emerged from manifest and latent content analysis. It is clear that these cultural traits do influence the development of place attachment and identity in students. It would appear that legends, traditions, and symbols that create some form of unity, whether through a shared story or a shared experience, are most influential, while those that happen passively are less influential.

Regardless of which cultural trait was most influential for each student, the overarching message seemed to be that students feel most influenced by things that happen *with* them, as opposed to things that happen *to* them. The institution, then, has the opportunity to develop legends, traditions, and symbols that actively bind the student's story with that of the campus.

The most striking observation in comparing involved students to students who are not involved is most certainly that there were no discernable differences in their level of attachment as influenced by campus legends, traditions, and symbols. As is exhibited in Figure 5.2, each of the cultural traits associated with SUU show that influence on attachment to the university is fairly evenly reported by students from each category, although two uninvolved students did report that the Ghost of Old Main and Gunther the Rock attached them to campus, where none of the involved students reported attachment

based on those items. In the cases of the Ghost of Old Main, Dawn's attachment stemmed largely from her involvement with the theater department and Beth's attachment came from the fact that she happened upon a séance her first night on campus. Neither reported attachment due to the story itself. With Gunther, however, it was interesting to note that both Stacy and Dawn, two uninvolved students, felt influenced by that because Gunther represents a method by which campus communicates with them. Additionally, all the uninvolved students reported that they felt Gunther could be an important connection to campus for them due to a feeling of inclusion through the messages left on the Rock.

At this point in the report of this study, it is important to note a conversation with a student leader at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). A question about campus legends, traditions, and symbols revealed that the student leaders at UNLV did not think the creation or assignment of meaning was a student responsibility. When questioned about UNLV traditions, the student said, "We don't have any traditions. We're only 50 years old." The results of this study show that legends, traditions, and symbols can and do evolve at every point in an institution's history, and often the most poignant connections come from the meanings the students themselves attach to them.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Introduction

Completion of any research should include a summary of the study itself, the relevance of the study to the body of knowledge on the topic, and suggestions for future study (Calabrese, 2006). This provides an opportunity for the researcher to add her perspective to the findings and make tentative conclusions about the findings (Morris, Fitz-Gibbon, and Freeman, 1987). Yin, (2009), suggests that the summary chapter can be seen as the primary resource for non-specialists because "the description and analysis of a single case often suggests implications about a more general phenomenon" (p. 168). These ideas give great significance to the importance of the conclusion of this study.

Organization of the Chapter

Chapter six begins with a summary of the study itself, including a brief overview of the literature on place attachment and student identity in relation to campus legends, traditions, and symbols. A summary of the findings of this study is next, followed by a discussion of the relevance of the study and its implications for practitioners. The limitations of this study will be addressed with recommendations for future efforts on similar studies using similar or alternative methods. Finally, an overall conclusion representing a comprehensive summative statement of this study will be presented.

Summary of the Study

Creating a sense of attachment through campus legends, traditions, and symbols may be an important step as students develop a collective identity with their institution and those who are also part of that community. While much research is available on the examination of universities as cultures (Considine, 2006; Schein, 1986; Silver, 2003; Tierney, 1992), student development and involvement (Astin, 1993; Hayek, Carini, O'Day, & Kuh, 2002; Knox, Lindsay & Kolb, 1992), and motivating alumni through social exchange theory (Gunsalus, 2004; Mael & Ashforth, 1990; Okunade & Berl, 1997, Pike and Kuh, 2005; Pike, Kuh, & Gonyea, 2003; Taylor & Martin, 1995; Weerts & Ronca, 2007), an exploration of the influence of campus legends, traditions, and symbols on place attachment in students is missing. This study has addressed the importance of these relationships, not only in retaining current students, but in creating bonds that last beyond graduation and encourage alumni to maintain relationships with the university, potentially recommending the institution to family and friends, advocating for the institution, and even providing in-kind and monetary support.

This study examined Southern Utah University (SUU) and the connections it creates with students through campus legends, traditions, and symbols. Additionally, it built upon the current literature by examining place attachment on a college campus and the influence of cultural traits such as legends, traditions, and symbols on place attachment. In a qualitative bounded case study, interviews with 16 Southern Utah University students were conducted, four students from each grade level, two of whom were involved in student clubs and organizations, two of whom were not.

Summary of the Results

Analysis of data collected from 16 SUU students revealed that legends, traditions, and symbols may influence a student's sense of attachment to SUU. With one exception, all the students in this study expressed that they felt attached to SUU. Of those that felt attached, all identified at least one legend, tradition, or symbol that they felt strongly influenced their sense of attachment. Prominent themes emerged around the Carillon Tradition, the Legend of Old Sorrel, and Red Fridays showing that these three cultural traits are especially important in creating an even stronger sense of attachment than others. Although themes were less consistent and conclusive around the other legends, traditions, and symbols, a definite interest was shared among involved students: active cultural traits were more strongly associated with attachment than were passive, and even those that were passive were important if they somehow attached people to people, i.e., former students to current students, or founders to the current population. Gender, ethnicity, religion, and background, including location of home and legacy status, as possible sources of place attachment or institutional identity were not considered in this study.

Relevance and Implications

Holmes, Patterson, and Stalling (2003) describe place attachment as a "primary developmental influence across the human lifespan," (p. 238). The work of Breakwell (1992) founded upon noted psychologists such as Maslow (1943), Erikson, (1968), and others, argues that adolescence is the most critical time in an individual's life in relation to developing a balance between the social and personal identity. Understanding that

having a sense of place is critical in the development of young adults, and that young adults often find their identity at institutions of higher education (Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Scanlon, Rowling, & Weber, 2007), creating a connection between students and campus is an important element of the development of the student and the sustainability of the institution through student support.

Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) may find elements of both place identification and place identity at SUU. As described here and in chapter two, place identification refers to a social identification and "would express membership of a group of people who are defined by location," (p. 206), whereas place identity describes a person's "socialization with the physical world," (p. 206) and would include identification with the campus rather than with the group. Thunderbirds and Red Fridays would be examples of place identification, where Guther the Rock and the Carillon itself would be examples of place identity.

Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) suggest the use of Breakwell's (1992) four principles of identity development that serve to encourage attachment to place: distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. Through campus legends, traditions, and symbols, SUU has accomplished all four principles in developing place attachment with students, but it would seem different cultural traits fulfill different principles. For example, the Legend of Old Sorrel adds a sense of distinctiveness to the SUU campus, but it would appear that it has not been effectively conveyed to each student, so tying individuals to their own pasts does not occur, i.e., there is no continuity. The Carillon Tradition, on the other hand, creates a tie for the student to his or her past and future, thereby transcending time.

Intentionally implementing legends, traditions, and symbols using Breakwell's (1992) four principles (distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem, and self-efficacy) to create a collective identity and sense of place with students is an effective way to build a bond that will last beyond graduation. Students who have had a positive and engaging experience with the campus are more likely to develop a loyalty (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Assoc., 2005), which is likely to encourage behaviors that eventually benefit the institution, such as referrals, advocacy, and donation or philanthropic activity (Leslie & Ramey, 1988).

Practitioners in higher education can learn much regarding recruitment and retention in relation to campus legends, traditions, and symbols. Providing an additional layer of attachment may solidify the student/institution relationship, so it becomes important for faculty and staff to contribute more to the student experience by engaging students in the stories and rituals that create a collective identity. The challenge for professionals is to identify those campus elements that may make a connection for students and then actively and intentionally introduce them to the students in such a way that the students become part of the story.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Study

This study is not intended to be a conclusive statement about legend, traditions, and symbols and the influence they may have on place attachment in students. Throughout the study notes were made about questions and concerns that were not initially considered, some of which prompted potential opportunities for further research. To begin with, this study is limited by the scope of the data pool. Analysis of the data

revealed a definite influence of campus legends, traditions, and symbols on place attachment and identity development. However, the data also revealed many other sources of attachment with no clear determination on whether any single trait or combination of traits predicts the strongest influence.

Another limitation was the inability to uncover, evaluate, and assess the full richness of the data provided by 16 participants in the period of time allotted for this qualitative study. The data could be enhanced by having a smaller participant pool or by evaluating the data over a longer period of time. Conversely, a quantitative study using a large data pool and a Likert-scale rating system may reveal additional information about the depth of influence legends, traditions, and symbols have on the development of place attachment in students. This would also allow for a broader view of the campus as a whole, both adding validity to the current findings.

This topic would also lend itself well to a longitudinal study whereby progression could be tracked on individual students through their college experience in terms of place attachment, from freshman year through senior year. Through a longitudinal study, outliers could be tracked to determine how they are influenced or not influenced by other institutional traits or in other ways. Both cases would establish a solid baseline for future studies to be used on other campuses and in other settings. Researchers may also want to consider qualitative and quantitative studies on campus place attachment in relation to legends, traditions, and symbols and how it relates to graduate-level studies, including attrition and retention rates.

Another suggestion for future study is conducting similar research using grounded theory as a method of inquiry. Grounded theory may allow for research beyond the given

etic and *emic* descriptions presented in this study by seeking to generate or discover a new theory. (Creswell, 2007). Grounded theory may also be a method of inquiry design more conducive to providing a process, action, or interaction shaped by the views of a larger number of participants such as those used in this study, (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Additionally, the use of axial coding, a qualitative tool used in grounded theory, may permit further discoveries in terms of place attachment and collective identity in relations to campus legends, traditions, and symbols.

Finally, an examination of the relationship between place attachment through legends, traditions, and symbols in terms of philanthropic activity among alumni could provide valuable information about in-kind and monetary donation, advocacy, and referrals. As higher education budgets are cut by economic constraints, understanding how place attachment can be enhanced through meaningful experiences may be an increasingly important factor for policy makers to consider.

As indicated in the fifth research question, it was originally anticipated that involved students would experience place attachment through legends, traditions, and symbols differently than students who were not involved. Figure 5.2, however, reveals a conclusion contrary to this assumption. Rather, there were no significant differences between involved and non-involved students, and the influencing power of legends, traditions, and symbols on place attachment was equally profound among the participants.

Conclusion

This study was not intended to be conclusive, but rather to explore the possibility of place attachment through campus legends, traditions, and symbols. It is clear that place attachment is, to some extent, influenced by these campus cultural traits, but the level depends on each individual student. However, it is worthwhile to note that these traits may influence attachment in students who are not involved in clubs and organizations, thereby creating a second level of attachment beyond influencing factors caused by faculty members, the campus environment, or other campus traits as outlined in Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, and Associates (2005).

The findings of this study support those of Breakwell (1992) and Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) by showing that campus legends, traditions, and symbols can have a notably positive influence on the development of place attachment and a sense of identity in traditionally-aged students. The specificity of this study goes beyond prior sociological research on place attachment, which focuses primarily on the development of neighborhoods, cities, and communities (Hammit, Backlund, & Bixler, 2004; Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004; Holmes, Patterson, & Stalling, 2003; Lounsbury & DeNeui, 1996). It includes the examination of universities as cultures (Considine, 2006; Schein, 1986; Silver, 2003; Tierney, 1992) as well as student development theory (Astin, 1993; Hayek, Carini, O'Day, & Kuh, 2002; Knox, Lindsay, & Kolb, 1992). By including these elements, it focuses on the cultural element emanating from campus legends, traditions, and symbols and how they influence place attachment. Specifically, it is not just "Cedar City" for SUU students. It is the longstanding Legend of Old Sorrel. It is the connection of the Carillon. It is the inclusion of Gunther the Rock and the pride of Red Fridays.

Although SUU's student population is just over 7,000, campus culture is alive and well, and part of the development of an institutional culture that bonds students throughout their college experience and possibly beyond.

As stated at the onset of this study, bricks and mortar make up the physical presence of the university, but campus folklore may be responsible for making it come alive and become part of the students who share the university experience. This study was driven by my own experiences as an administrator on the Southern Utah University campus. The spirit and passion of the student body is palpable on campus, and in a role where I addressed many students from different backgrounds and different majors, I was constantly in awe of the inescapable spirit that pulls people together and unites them through common experiences and common beginnings. One can observe this seemingly common behavioral trait by simply walking through a campus bookstore and noting the racks and shelves lined with university apparel, mugs, pens, class rings, and other memorabilia. Why is there a fascination with attaching oneself to a place of education? If the implication of legends, traditions, and symbols emanating from this study can so profoundly influence place attachment at a small, rural campus, one can only imagine the impact on a larger campus. Consider Harvard, Stanford, the University of Utah, and the like. Do SUU's legends, traditions, and symbols as they relate to place attachment significantly differ in magnitude? And if so, in what regard? Personally speaking, the SUU spirit, pride, and place attachment make SUU a unique place to develop personally and academically, and all campuses should be challenged to find away to make their students' experience a bond that lasts beyond graduation.

Go T-Birds!

APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL

UNLV
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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: October 1, 2010

TO: **Dr. Robert Ackerman**, Educational Leadership

FROM: Office of Research Integrity - Human Subjects

RE: Notification of IRB Action by Dr. Ramona Denby Brinson, Chair
Protocol Title: **Set in Stone: Legends, Traditions, and Symbols Influencing Place Attachment for South Utah University Students**
Protocol #: 1007-3520M

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 September 26, 2011. Work on the project may begin as soon as you receive written notification from the Office of Research Integrity - Human Subjects (ORI Human Subjects).

PLEASE NOTE:
Attached to this approval notice is the **official Informed Consent/Assent (IC/A) Form** for this study. The IC/A contains an official approval stamp. Only copies of this official IC/A 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 ORI Human Subjects. 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 September 26, 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 of Research Integrity - Human Subjects at IRB@unlv.edu or call 895-2794.

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

UNLV
UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA LAS VEGAS

UNLV Department of Educational Leadership

TITLE OF STUDY: Set in stone: Legends, traditions, and symbols influencing place attachment for Southern Utah University Students
INVESTIGATORS: Dr. Bob Ackerman, EdD
Claudine (Dina) Nielsen, Doctoral candidate
CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: 435-770-6128

Purpose of the Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to complete the dissertation research for a doctoral degree. This study will investigate the influence of campus legends, traditions, and symbols on place attachment in students who are involved in clubs and organizations and those who are not involved in clubs and organizations. This research is being conducted to more can be learned directly from you and your SUU peers how SUU's legends, traditions, and symbols have served to influence your attachment to the institution, if at all.

Participants

You are being asked to participate in the study because you are an undergraduate student at Southern Utah University between the ages of 18 and 24.

Procedures

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to submit to an interview that will consist of questions regarding your sense of attachment to Southern Utah University, as well as your thoughts regarding various campus legends, traditions, and symbols. The interview will be audio recorded. Audio recordings, field notes, and transcribed data will be kept in a secure place on the UNLV campus for a period of 3 years and destroyed thereafter by erasure of digital recordings and shredding of field notes.

Benefits of Participation

There may not be direct benefits to you as a participation in this study. However, we hope to learn how campus legends, traditions, and symbols contribute to creating a sense of place or attachment to this institution.

Risks of Participation

Please know that your participation is voluntary and involves minimal risks. The confidentiality of your data will be preserved at all times, and you may rescind your permission at any time with no negative consequences. There is no physical risk associated with the interview process and no anticipated psychological risk. If any question makes you uncomfortable, you are under

no obligation to answer it. All information gathered in this study will be kept confidential. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study.

Cost/Compensation

There will be no financial cost to you to participate in this research. The research interview will take approximately 30 to 60 minutes of your time, depending on what you choose to contribute. You will not be compensated for your time, but a small incentive ($10 gift certificate to the SUU Bookstore) will be provided upon participation. Opting to not complete all the questions in the interview will have no impact on the incentive offered to participate.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this doctoral dissertation study, you may contact Dina Nielsen at **435-770-6128** or the Principal Investigator and UNLV Professor, Dr. Bob Ackerman, at **702-895-2740**.

For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, any complaints or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted you may contact **the UNLV Office of Research Integrity - Human Subjects (ORI-HS) at 702-895-2794, toll free at 877-895-2794, or via email at IRB@unlv.edu.**

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without effect to your relations with the university. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or at any time during the research study.

Confidentiality

All information gathered in this study will be kept confidential. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All records will be stored in a locked facility at UNLV for 3 years after completion of the study. After the storage time the information gathered will be destroyed.

Participant Consent

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this doctoral dissertation study on outstanding Southern Utah University students. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

_____

(SUU student signature)

_____

(SUU student printed name)

I agree to be audio recorded for the purpose of this research study.

_____ _____
(SUU student signature) Date

_____
(SUU student printed name)

Participant Note: Please do not sign this document if the Approval Stamp is missing or is expired.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW INVITATION LETTER

Email sent from Keri Mecham, Director of Student Involvement and Leadership at Southern Utah University, to potential participants. Dates changed with each trip to Cedar City and each pool of participants.

Dear Student,

Dina Nielsen is a doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. For her dissertation she is conducting research regarding the influence of campus legends and traditions on place attachment in Southern Utah University students. I have been asked by Dina to reach out to students who may be willing to participate in her research by submitting to an interview regarding your experiences with and opinions of SUU campus legends, traditions, and symbols, and how they have influenced your sense of attachment to SUU. Interviews will last approximately 45 minutes, perhaps a little more or less depending on your input.

A $10 gift card to the SUU Bookstore will be provided to participants.

If you are willing to participate in this research and are available to be interviewed on September 28 – October 1 in Cedar City (or any time of your convenience in Las Vegas), please contact Dina directly by phone at 435-770-6128 or via email at dinanielsen1@gmail.com.

Thank you in advance for considering this opportunity to assist with this research.

Best wishes,
Keri

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND PROTOCOL SHEET

Basic demographic information will be collected at the beginning of the interview to qualify each participant.

1. *What is your class level?*
2. *What is your age?*
3. *Have any close friends or family members attended SUU? If so, who?*
4. *Are you from the local area?*
5. *Do you participate in any SUU student clubs or organizations? If so, please name them. What prompted you to join?*

Participants will then be asked the following questions. These questions will serve only as a guide for the conversation. Participants will be encouraged to say anything they feel is pertinent to the topic.

7. *How do you identify with Southern Utah University?*
8. *How would you describe your interactions with the University?*
9. *Describe some of the elements of campus that make SUU special or unique to you.*
10. *How would you describe your experiences with campus legends, traditions, and symbols?*
11. *How have campus legends, traditions, and symbols influenced your sense of attachment to SUU?*
12. *How do you anticipate you will feel toward SUU five years after graduation?*

13. *Do you think campus legends, traditions, and symbols will be part of those feelings?*
14. *How do campus legends, traditions, and symbols impact your sense of belonging to the SUU community?*

The following questions will be asked in relation to each of the legends, traditions, and symbols described in chapter 2, including:

- True T-Birds
- The Ghost of Old Main
- Gunther the Rock
- Thunderbirds
- Red Fridays
- The Howl
- The Carillon
- The Legend of Old Sorrel
    1. *How familiar are you with this tradition?*
    2. *How was it introduced to you?*
    3. *What does this tradition mean to you as a member of the SUU community?*
    4. *How did this meaning become attached to this tradition?*
    5. *How do you feel this tradition connects you to SUU?*

APPENDIX E

MICHELLE'S TRANSCRIPTION

Today is January 14th, 2011, and it is ten after 10:00 PM and I am talking to Michelle about the traditions, legends, and symbols of Southern Utah University and how they've influenced her place attachment. You understand that you are being audio recorded for this interview. Is that correct?

Yes.

Okay. Wonderful. So let's start out with some basic demographic information. What is your class level?

I'm a sophomore.

Okay, and your age?

18.

And do you have any close friends or family members who have attended SUU?

No, I do not.

Oh, you're a first time.

Yep.

Okay. Good. Are you from the local area?

Uh, Lehi.

Oh! Lehi. So up north a little bit.

Yeah.

And do you participate in any SUU student clubs or organizations?

I do. I …

Go ahead and list them for me …

I am in a sorority called Alpha Phi and I am in SUUSA.

Wonderful. Okay. What prompted you to join those?

Um, mostly with the Alpha Phi, I have family members who were in the Greek fraternities and sororities and Keri Mecham actually got me into SUUSA. She told me to come out and I did, so … *(smiling)*

Wonderful.

Yep.

Okay. So we're going to talk first a little bit about SUU in general and then we're going to get into some specific campus legends, traditions, and symbols.

Okay.

Let's start with how do you identify with Southern Utah University?

Like what dragged me here or what, like …

Identify that however you want. Obviously you identify as a student.

Um-hmm…

In what other ways do you identify?

Um, mostly, a lot of people have come up to me and said, "Oh, you're with Alpha Phi. You're a sister in Alpha Phi." I hold positions within that and I'm also on the Freshman Board so people … I don't know. Everyone tells me I'm very involved and that's how they identify me. *(smiles, touches hand to heart)*A lot of people actually know my name that I didn't even know they knew my name, so … I don't know exactly how to state that. I guess I'm just always out there. I'm also a student in the College of Humanities, which, they're trying to put me as a representative so … yeah …

Good. Okay. Wonderful. And how would you describe your interactions with the University?

Um, I've actually had amazing interactions with them. They have … they welcomed me with open arms and all that. I'm … professors are amazing here. They know my name that I didn't even think out of … one class I have 180 kids in my class and my professor knows my name and knows my nickname and all that, so…

That's fantastic.

Some of my teachers will come, sit down and have coffee with me. So it's pretty amazing. I love it.

Good. Okay. Um, describe for me some of the elements about campus that make it unique to you or special to you.

Let's think … (long pause) … well, first of all the Shakespearean Festival. I didn't know that we were that big in the region but my aunt has come here ever since it started. Didn't even know she came here at all and that's how she … when I told her I was going to SUU she's like, "Oh my gosh! Southern Utah University!" and she lives in Kentucky so that's like …

Wow!

… pretty big! Another thing was the education department. I heard they were one of the best in the nation so I think those are two big things.

Okay.

And gymnastics team, I guess…

Yeah, gymnastics team! Gotta love that!

Yeah!

Yeah. And how would you describe your experiences with campus legends, traditions, and symbols?

Can you state that in a …

Um, I want you to think about some of the campus legends, traditions, and symbols that you're aware of and tell me about your experiences with those.

Well, I don't know if this is a good one but the Thunderbird, Thor … this is going to sound stupid but I want to be Thor! *(throws hands up in excitement)* He's so much … we don't know who it is but he/she is so much fun! Makes the school amazing! One of the biggest symbols you an think of when you come here so…

Okay, that's really good!

That's the only one I can think of, so…

No, that is excellent! That is excellent! I like that a lot! And do you feel like any of the legends, traditions, and symbols have influenced your sense of belonging here?

Well, I'm trying to think of the best way to put it … I think, when I first came here for my first big Orientation the first symbol they ever talked about was Sharwan Smith and I wasn't exactly educated about her but there's something, like, whenever I come here that's always the first thing I take them to because I lead Orientation, too, sometimes and they're like "What's Sharwan Smith?" I'm like, "She's one of the biggest symbols." You take her over to the board and everybody's like, "Who … I don't know this lady but already she's influenced me." But another one is, once again, the Thunderbird, Thor, because he brings so much involvement throughout the school and the students and so … he's given me the most fun!

Okay. Good. And we're going to go into these specific things so you're going to have a lot of opportunity to expound on what we're talking about…

Okay! (laughs)

Tell me, how do you feel you're going to feel about SUU five years after you graduate?

I want to say this has been … I mean, it's my second semester here but it's probably been the best choice I … it was here or the U. My parents are like, "Go to the U. It's a big school. You'll have fun there." I was like, "No. SUU." And so far being here I've met the best people and had the best experiences. Like, the teachers are amazing, too. I love it. It's so much fun …

Okay. Excellent. So, I'm going to follow up those questions with a couple other questions at the very end, but what I want to do now is talk about some of these traditions, legends, and symbols and I'm going to ask you some questions. I'm going to tell you the one that I'm talking about and then I'm just going to ask you a few questions about it. Okay?

Okay. I'll try my best!

You're going to be just fine. There are no wrong answers.

Okay.

Literally, this is … I want to know your opinions.

Okay.

And if your opinion is that you have no opinion, that's an opinion! That's good. That's what I want to hear. So let's start with True T-Birds.

Now are you saying the True T-Bird Night type deal?

Um-hmm.

Well, I wanted to participate in that as bad as I could but I was in Vegas that weekend. But I've heard about the whole Utah State with the Aggies. One of my high school teachers did that and from the very beginning I was like, "I want to do that!" And from people talking about it, they said, like, older … upperclassmen, they said that's the best thing they've ever done. That you walked in as a freshman but after you did that you felt so much more involved, like, belonging in this school. Wish I could have done it but …

Interesting …

… wasn't there.

Okay …

That was one of my biggest things at the beginning of the year that I wanted to do, too. Because it was advertised, like, "You have to do this" type thing. Like, that is one of the biggest things.

So, so what does it mean to you as a member of the community? The SUU community?

I feel like it would be like that you were an actual True … that you were a Thunderbird. *(stabs finger on desk to emphasize point)* Like you are actually part of this school. Not saying that you had to do it to be a part of the school but I feel like if I would have done it I would have been a Thunderbird. I would have been part of SUU. So…

Okay.

I still feel like that even though I didn't get to do it but …

Well, and there's time. There's time!

Yeah … there's a lot of time!

You're not graduating tomorrow so you've got time! Um, do you feel like it connects you to SUU?

I feel like in a sense it does. I mean there's other ways that you can be connected to it but that is one that I feel would multiply that. You would … it would connect you the best.

Okay.

I don't know if that makes sense. I mean it makes sense in my head but yeah. True T-Bird. You get the card. You're like, "You're a True T-Bird now." I feel like that would be one of the biggest ways to be connected to the school. So …

Okay. Wonderful. Okay. So let's move on to the Ghost of Old Main.

*(sits back in chair)*This creeped me out when I first heard this story. I want to say … 'cause when I came here for my freshman leadership weekend and all that they were like, "This building's haunted." They told us the story of it and I feel like that gives the campus character. Like, the story about it. I mean it's a legend and it's a symbol, too, so …

Do, do … What does it mean to you as a member of the SUU community?

That's a hard one. 'Cause I know that when I pass the building … the building kind of creeps me out because the way it's set up … but I mean, I heard that story and it's just … I don't know exactly how it connects to me, personally, but I feel like it gives the campus character.

Okay.

I'm not sure about an opinion on that one, but …

Okay. And that's fine. That's just fine. Um, what about Gunther the Rock?

I've never heard of Gunther … that is one …

I bet you've heard of the rock, though …

The rock I've heard of.

His name is Gunther.

Now, is that the rock out in front of the library?

Uh-huh.

See, that one, I feel like it's more of an advertising spot for students to see what's going on throughout the campus. The way it connects to me is just trying to get me out there and being involved. Didn't know it had a name, but now I know! It's Gunther, so…

In all the interviews I've done I've had one person who knew the name, so …

Really? I knew someone named a rock Gunther but I didn't know it was that rock.

It's that rock.

Okay. Now I know. (laughs)

Gunther the Rock! So do you feel like Gunther attaches you to the campus?

Yeah. That rock gets me out, involved and stuff. I come out and I see, like, SUUSA is throwing and event. Delta Psi Omega is throwing an event. It makes me want to come out and get involved, so I guess that you could say that rock gets me out and having fun and stuff, so … who would have thought …

I had someone earlier today tell me that it's a big, purple newspaper for campus.

(laughs)

It pretty much is! I mean, we have one going out into the dorms but that is just there. And then the one in front of the library, everyone stops and reads that one so it connects everyone to the school.

Okay. Excellent. We've talked a little bit about this one. I want you to expound on it just a little bit. Thunderbirds.

Thunderbirds. Now, are you saying, like, the school as a whole or …

Anyway you want to interpret that. The school mascot. The concept of Thunderbirds. What does it mean to you?

Well, a good example is tonight at the gymnastics meet. Never have I seen … I go to every single game. I've never seen the stands filled. *(hands up in excitement, as if to show the scope of how filled the arena was; eyes wide)*

That was amazing … I've never seen a wave go all the way around that stadium!

Three times, too!

That was amazing!

My friend texted me. She's like, "The stands are filled." I was like, "Not at SUU." And you walk in there and there was almost every … you could see, like, it was filled. *(eyes wide)* And it's amazing that you can get that many people out there.

And what the Bruins' coach said …

Yeah …

I almost cried. "I know! I know! That's how great they are!"

And I love how, I guess you can call it the Thunderbirds, how much support we have for our teams and for our students that you would never have imagined.

Right.

But, yeah …

Along those same lines, let's talk about Red Fridays.

I dress up. I mean, now that I'm … people know, "Hey, dress up." Or people know not to, or just don't get the aspect of dressing up, but it's cool when you walk around campus and you just see a whole bunch of red. And I wish more people would do it 'cause it does show, like, you're into your school. You do love your school. You love your colors. But

when you see the red at the basketball games, the football games, and you just see a whole crowd of red it's crazy and it's so much fun, but …

So what do you think Thunderbirds and red mean to the SUU community?

I think, well, I mean … I guess it's … this is going to be a weird example … you go into WalMart after a football game and all you see is red and it's not even just students. It's little kids wearing red. Parents wearing red. I feel like SUU has attached the whole community and you see people there at the gymnastics meet tonight that you've never … there's so many little kids and so many parents out there supporting. Even though they don't go to the school, they're still attached to the school. It's just like a little town that's all attached together, I guess you could say. But it's definitely made a difference to me because I came in here thinking I would never, ever wear the colors and go out to the football games and … it's been so much fun. I love it.

I can tell!

Good!

Okay. How about the Howl?

I did not go to the Howl but I heard … most people were like, "Okay, we'll go for five minutes. It won't be that great. We'll just see what it's all about." I had … my roommate stayed for the whole thing. She went in there thinking, "This is going to be the dumbest thing ever." She called me right after and said, "You should have gone! Why are you in St. George? You should have gone to this!" and I still hear stories about it, that it was one of the funnest things … I see pictures and I'm jealous that I didn't go. But …

Well, your time here is not over yet! You're not graduating tomorrow!

It's still not over! Yeah! It's still not over. (laughing) But next year I'll definitely go.

What do you think the Howl means to the SUU community?

One, it's a way to express, well, being that it was Halloween it was a way for students to express … for them to go out and have fun. Like, I don't even know. Like, the way they set up the events … how there was not just dancing. There was the drawings. There was the fun games and stuff. It brought a lot of people out that you never would have thought would've gone to that dance or anything, so …

Okay. Does it attach you to campus?

I know … I bought a costume for it. I was about to buy my ticket and then I went to St. George, which was … I feel like that would have made it even more of an experience here for me at SUU because I still hear stories, how much fun it was and I wish I would have really gone! (laughs)

Next year.

Next year! A lot of fun!

Next year there'll be another one. There you go. How about Old Sorrel?

You're going to think I'm dumb but is that the statue out …

The legend of Old Sorrel …the horse.

I have no opinion because I really don't know about that one.

And I don't think you're stupid! I'm asking your opinion! If you have no opinion, that's okay!

Okay (laughing)

Okay, so the legend of Old Sorrel is something you're not familiar with.

Um-mmm…

Okay, so you really have no attachment to it.

Nope.

Okay. That is just fine. How about the Carillon Tradition?

I don't know about that one …

The bell tower. Walking under the bell tower and then you can't go again until …

Okay. Now I know about it. I actually have a class … at Flight School they showed us a video and "If you go under that bell tower you're going to get attacked by the football team." And I actually have a class out by the Braithwaite Center and I make sure I go around the clock tower. But I thought walking out there and having all the school greeting you at your first entry in, first entry out type thing… I thought that was amazing and I can't wait until I can graduate and walk back under it, so…

What does it mean to you as a member of the SUU community?

I feel like when you first walk in you're a freshman, but it's like already those people are greeting you and are going to be standing by you until you graduate and then you walk under and you're more attached to them. *(pounding chest with fist)*But they're going to be at the end with you and it's kind of like … kind of like a family type thing *(touching hand to chest)* I guess you could say but I thought the experience of having, like, the cheerleaders on the side, all the professors and faculty on the side was an amazing experience, so … I called my mom as I was going under and she was like, "This is such a tradition!" and I don't know … I'm just excited to graduate right now. That one I don't want to wait for! But …

So, so you seem to feel attached to SUU because …

Yeah. Yeah. I definitely do. There's so many other schools I could have gone to but I'm definitely glad I made this choice. It's been so much fun so far.

Okay. So, now that we've talked about a few of these, you know, I asked you before how you thought you would feel about SUU five years after graduation…

Um-hmm…

Do you think any of these legends, traditions, and symbols will influence how you feel about SUU five years after?

I definitely think they will. Um, when I was in high school, my math teacher, she was actually, she graduated from SUU and so did my cooking teacher and she still feels the same way as she did when she went her, oh, I don't know how many years ago, but I actually saw her when I went home and she was wearing all her Thunderbird stuff. Her whole desk is Thunderbirds and I feel like five years from now I'll be the same way. It's definitely been a great choice for me, 'cause I feel like if I went to the U I would just be one in a million where I come here and there's 8,000 students but half of them I know so it's, it's been a lot of fun. I love it. *(looks down and to the right, as if reminiscing)*

Okay. And how do these legends, traditions, and symbols influence your sense of belonging to the SUU community?

Um, with, like, Thunderbird and Thor, I can go to a basketball game and there will be five people, but he still makes it … and the community makes it so much fun. It makes me feel like I need to come out to more games. I need to belong. He was dressed up today outside of the library and came up to me and I was just, like, "Okay." And he's trying to get everybody pumped up for the rest of the year and he's doing a great job. He makes me feel like I want to be Thor!

You'd better start learning some back flips and stuff!

Yeah! (both laughing) That's what my friends were telling me!

Back flips with a big beak!

Oh, yeah. That'll be hard.

Throw off your weight there …

And I love how tonight he also interacted with the other team. The other team was dancing at the gymnastics meet. The other coach was dancing. *(eyes wide)* But he was trying to involve himself … get them involved with us, too.

Wonderful. Can you think of anything else that you think is important to address as you're thinking about these legends, traditions, and symbols, anything else that you think is important to talk about?

Well, I feel like, myself, I need to be more knowing of what the symbols are. I need to know more about the Old Sorrel because I feel like it's such a landmark here that I want to know why it's connected with the school. I guess I should have known who Gunther was. And now that I know I can tell people who Gunther is and that rock has a name. But I definitely feel like if I knew more about the symbols and what they … how they came a part of the school I feel like it would give me a better experience. So …

Okay … one of the things that I've talked about with other students is how you go to your family Christmas party and there's always something at the party that is just so whacky that your family does that anybody looking in from the outside would look at your family and go, "You people are crazy!" But to your family, it wouldn't be Christmas without that particular thing, right?

Yeah.

Same thing on campuses and that's what makes it interesting to me. What is it about the campus that has people five, ten, fifteen, twenty, fifty years out of college coming back for

Homecoming? Why do you … Why would you leave your home in Boston and come all the way across the country to go to a football game at SUU fifty years after the fact?

Yeah. Well, one of the big things is, I was in the parade for Alpha Phi. We had girls who now live in Africa come back …

Wow!

Yeah. We had one girl who lives in Africa and she came back. And like my dad scheduled off three months in advance to come down here 'cause he's just heard that we're … I mean, it's a small school, but we take this stuff seriously. And he's a crazy guy but he, like, looked up the stats of the football team and he showed that we are, like, stepping up our game and, like, (names a student) was a big one … now that he's gone …

Huge year!

Yeah. It was a huge year for us!

Huge year for the T-Birds.

And my brother, he's 8 years old but he goes to school wearing his Thunderbird stuff.

That's cute!

Yeah, his teachers, I saw some of them in the parade, like, come back for the parade and I didn't realize how many people move away but come back for it. Do I know exactly what drags them back? No. I just think it's that their experience here was that great that they just don't want to leave type deal so…

Okay. And that's what I'm looking at. Do any of these things influence that experience in such a way that they come back. And that's what I'm looking at for the overall picture for the dissertation, so you've contributed some really good stuff for that. That's going to be very helpful for me. My next step is I want to talk to alumni.

I think that would be … I want to know what they think! Yeah!

What is it that makes you keep going back? What… and is it these stories? Do you remember any of these stories and are they important to you? So that's perfect! Okay, do you have anything else you want to add?

That's really it. I'm just … I'm … SUU has just been like a big … you don't know half the people here but by the first week you know half of them. It's just like you can go to a football game with someone you don't even know. By the end you do everything with them. It's just the experience here has been really great and I love it, so …

It's a unique environment, that's for sure…

It really is. And it's like… I mean, the U would have been a great school to go to but I feel like I could've stood in those football stands by myself the whole game. No one would have talked to me. But here? You stand next to the person and they're cheering just as loud as you. I definitely love this small community and stuff, so…

Excellent. Okay. It is 10:31 and I'm going to go ahead and press stop.

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