

GOVERNANCE PRACTICES OF A PRIVATE NON-PROFIT  
SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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## **Abstract**

System Governance in higher education has long referred to state level administration of multiple diverse public campuses under the public's authority. Recent years have shown the development of similar multi-campus systems that remain under private control. Contrary to the for-profit trend seen in American higher education, these new private systems are categorized as non-profit entities that theoretically emphasize the public good of higher education. Furthermore, the growth and expansion of these private non-profit systems transcend state boundaries while pursuing diverse goals. The proposed line of research will seek to answer the following research questions: How does the Touro College and University System fit into the greater higher education enterprise? What policy or environmental considerations are most likely to influence private non-profit system governance? This study employs General systems theory as a theoretical framework in order to appropriately contextualize the governance practices of the private nonprofit system selected in this single case study design. The higher education ecosystem framework, originally developed for understanding policy influences on public state systems, will be amended and applied to this case with the same goal in mind. An understanding of the practices and perceptions of such system governance will likely inform administrators, faculty, and policymakers as to the rationale for some system behaviors and the sources of influence on such behaviors.

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## **Chapter 1: Overview**

### **Introduction**

At its core, American Higher Education exists at the intersection of a milieu of state, federal, third party, and self-imposed policies. The diverse, swirling, and ever-changing interests that influence American higher education are themselves subject to the passing whims of broader social, economic, and political actors. Simply stated, the following study is an investigation into how these influences translate into institutional action at a novel, but increasingly prevalent system type in American higher education, the private non-profit system.

Common practice in higher education systems research tends to focus its energies on the hallmarks of our national system, large public state systems and the private elite research universities. It would be difficult to categorize these efforts as misdirected since the vast majority of students enroll in institutions that are part of larger state systems, and considerable federal governmental support in the form of research grants is regularly absorbed by the elite private institutions (Lane, 2013). However, the opportunity to investigate a burgeoning system type in the private sector that adheres to non-profit principles and transcends the confines of state and local regulations may provide meaningful context into our scholarly understanding of the American higher education system as a whole.

### **Review of Literature**

As stated above, the trend in governance research focuses on the dominant institutions and systems in America, the public state system and elite private research universities. In the absence of literature specific to the system type at the focus of this study much may still be gleaned in review of current literature pertaining to system governance. Such a review has elicited four major findings that inform our understanding of the case at hand. First, the current

state of higher education in America is not a result of intelligent human design and planning, but more so the result of centuries of social, economic, and political evolution. Secondly, governance in practice is a balance of varied, diverse, and oftentimes conflicting interests. Third, higher education systems and their governance are intentional, and are intended to provide benefits to member institutions as well as society at large. Lastly, governance practices are changing across all kinds of institutional types and at multiple levels.

In summarizing centuries of institutional evolution in higher education, much of the meaningful nuance and context is lost for the benefit of brevity. Nevertheless, even the briefest review of the historical underpinnings of American higher education provide considerable insight into many of the current structures and processes we see today. Of considerable importance, higher education has always filled a peculiar role in American society in a space that tended to bridge governmental authority with that of the church. Even as religious influence and support for higher education began to wane, institutions of higher education have held firm and fought to preserve this unique niche even in the face of vast amounts of governmental support.

Trends in the amount and form of governmental support for higher education have shifted over time. During the first century of nationhood, American higher education was mostly comprised of privately held institutions supported by religious entities. The Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 began the steady transition to and federal support of state sponsored higher education. In the wake of the great depression and the 2nd world war, federal investment in higher education taking the form of the National Youth Administration fund and the GI Bill would provide for the college education of nearly three million students (Goodchild, 2002). In 1947, recognizing the new scale of the federal government's participation in higher learning, President Truman authorized *The Report of the President's Commission on Higher Education for*

*American Democracy*, informally known as the Truman Commission. The commission recommended sizeable increases in federal funding and the expansion of the existing junior colleges into the current system of community colleges we see today (Goodchild, 2002). Consequently, federal policy has since become a major driver of university actions, much to delight or dismay of those it employs and serves.

Challenges in governance are not merely dictated by state and federal policies however. Through the Higher Education Act of 1965, the federal government fundamentally shifted the way it provided funding to American colleges and universities. While the practices of making federal monies available for grants and research funding remained, the creation of federal student aid programs shifted the locus of control of vast sums of federal funding from bureaucrats to students (Goodchild, 2002). The resulting governance landscape that administrators are now asked to navigate may now include state lawmakers, federal policy, student preferences (however whimsical), and a cadre of conflicting societal goals for higher education such as democratic equality, social efficiency, or social mobility (Labaree, 1997). The resulting governance actions of America's higher education institutions may be viewed as an effort to balance the multiple demands of various stakeholders with the vision and mission specific to their institution.

As the study of higher education has evolved, so have the themes, methodologies, and lenses employed in its studies. Initial studies described higher education governance in three predominant ways, the rational bureaucratic model, the collegial model, and the political model (Baldrige 1971). While traditional organizational studies of bureaucratic models were first implemented in describing efficient divisions of labor in the factory setting, findings in early bureaucratic studies of higher education noted that many of the core assumptions of those models

did not apply or function as predicted in higher education (Hearn & McLendon, 2012). The collegial model of governance emphasized the importance of symbolic university communities and the importance of long-standing traditions and institutional culture. The collegial model more adequately described the non-rational aspects of governance practices, but failed to explain the conflicting interests of different entities participating in the governance system and thus gave rise to the political model of system governance (Hearn & McLendon, 2012). The political model is built upon three key concepts about American society at large: “the dispersion of political power, interest group competition, and political bargaining” (Baldrige, 1971). Contrary to the bureaucratic and collegial models, the political model embraced the role conflict plays in establishing effective compromises, governance activities. Criticisms of the political model are well-grounded in their assessment that it presents governance practices as wholly reactionary and cannot explain longer term, rational planning that is a clear function of governance entities (Hearn & McLendon, 2012).

Moving from traditional organizational theories developed elsewhere, higher education scholars began to view higher education in terms of organized anarchy. Two predominant theories justified such a belief, Cohen, March, and Olsen’s Garbage Can model (1972) and Weick’s, loosely coupled systems model (1976). These classic models more adequately describe the intense complexity of governance systems of higher education and simultaneously identify higher education as different from other governance structures found in business and government (Hearn & McLendon, 2012). A final note should be made about the emerging governance structures of for-profit education entities. Recent developments have created new “corporate universities” that operate in the same market as traditional private and public non-profit institutions and experience much of the same benefits due to economies of scale that large state

systems enjoy (Pusser & Turner, 2004). Additionally, these corporate universities benefit from Title IV programs such as Pell Grants and student loans, but also, by virtue of their practice, operate outside many of the strict regulatory controls imposed on their public and private non-profit counterparts (Pusser & Turner, 2004).

The state system or multi-campus system is a direct outgrowth of these governance challenges. Given higher education's "peculiar" role in society, many states developed system level governance to help manage the complexities of these partially autonomous entities that consume considerable amounts of the state budget. More than a mere bureaucratic tool, the advent of system governance has been argued to provide benefits to its member institutions. This benefit, systemness, is a concept defined as "the ability of a system to coordinate the activities of its constituent campuses so that, on the whole, the system behaves in a way that is more powerful and impactful than what can be achieved by individual campuses acting alone" (Zimpher, 2013).

By no means have the governance practices of American higher education system settled upon a universally accepted norm. State systems themselves vary widely ranging from meticulously planned and coordinated systems such as The California Master Plan or the establishment of constitutional autonomy of educational institutions as is found in Michigan. Even at the institutional level governance practices and the degree to which such autonomy is transferred to their faculty continue to change along lines of public vs. private control, non-profit status, and union vs. non-union faculties. The unique position of the case to be studied is due in part to its private and non-profit control over a multi-campus system that spans multiple states. Such a case provides an ideal opportunity to describe system governance practices outside the bounds of a state sanctioned entity.

In reviewing the literature pertaining to system governance, several findings, or areas of emphasis seem well suited to inform the understanding of the current study. These areas of specific focus include: Institutional strategy and isomorphism, the convergence of private, non-profit and for-profit governance, changing faculty roles in governance. Institutional strategy refers to the process and patterns of action that determine which goals a campus will pursue and by which means (Toma, 2012). Conflicting studies provide evidence of both a diversity of institutional strategies and a tendency for isomorphism – the pursuit of similar goals. The common aspiration of achieving the “next level” or garnering more prestige is a consistent theme in many governance studies. Much of the literature regarding strategy formulation in higher education is based on theoretical underpinnings from the business sector which has led to criticisms as to how appropriate such applications are to the predominantly non-profit entities of higher education.

Alongside strategy formulation, studies investigating day to day governance practices demonstrate a convergence between for-profit and non-profit institutions. In the wake of the great recession and a slow recovery, the sources of revenue between public and private nonprofits and for-profit institutions have become more similar over time (Pusser & Turner, 2004). In the era of ever competing demands for state appropriations, institutions have had to turn to tuition dollars as an ever increasing percentage of total revenue (Pusser & Turner, 2004). This can be seen in one of two ways. First, for-profit institutions adding additional degrees traditionally offered by nonprofit universities such as graduate or professional education (Pusser & Turner, 2004). Second, nonprofit institutions eliminating programs on the basis of efficiency or sustainability. It is the second possibility that causes the greatest level of concern of potential loss of public benefit of higher education (Pusser & Turner, 2004).

Lastly, the overall tone of faculty participation in governance is a key issue as it pertains to some of the starkest contrasts between nonprofit and for-profit institutions. The evolution of faculty participation in academic governance may best be perceived as an arc that follows a similar trajectory to that of the American higher education system. As the diversity, quality, and prestige of American universities grew through the colonial era to the golden age following World War 2, so did the extent of faculty involvement in governance practices. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries as American cultural and governmental priorities shifted away from higher education, the tide that had buoyed faculty autonomy and independence began to recede (Gerber, 2014).

This professionalization of faculty is at the heart of many of the complexities and tensions that arise in systems of shared governance. On the one hand, faculty are the frontline unit of labor at the university, on the other, they may be the foremost expert in their field. To use a crude analogy, faculty are the factory workers of the higher education enterprise creating and disseminating knowledge and information (Newfield, 2003). Paradoxically, their profession or expertise in their area also make them those most suited to manage or direct their efforts contrary to the traditional style of supervisory management of the front-line labor force (Newfield, 2003). As the faculty profession grew more established and revered in society during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, so did the pressure to increase faculty influence beyond the classroom. Faculty began to question the decision making processes of their governing boards comprised of laypersons with little to no academic experience (Gerber, 2014). The resulting concessions made by governing boards was to allow faculty to recruit and promote their colleagues. Over time, the faculty's dominion over the classroom and their considerable influence over their ranks became the core functions of faculty governance.



Perhaps the greatest influence on institutional governance practices in the last half century is due to cultural shifts in American society's approach to higher education resulting in the corporatization of higher education and the deprofessionalization of its faculty (Gerber, 2014). As Americans began to view higher education as a private good rather than a public benefit, the system of higher education began to take on the role of a marketplace (Gerber, 2014). As such, market forces and consumerism began to force governance decision making out of the hands of faculty and back into the hands of administrators. Gerber's assessment of current trends is clear: "the growing deference to market forces, the increasing deprofessionalization of large sectors of the faculty, and mounting pressures from governing boards and legislatures... have resulted in an overall weakening of the practices of shared governance that had developed over the previous century" (pg. 121).

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study's overarching research questions are grounded in the theoretical framework of general systems theory and further characterized and informed by the application of the higher education ecosystem model. Consequently, such theoretical concepts will guide data collection and analysis in aiding the author to generate a true systems understanding of the case. General Systems Theory was developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy combatting common scientific approaches to biological investigation that limited the scope of understanding. Originally developed in the biological sciences general systems theory has found widespread application in the study of other "organized entities" (von Bertalanffy, 1972). Through its extensive use in evaluating varied phenomena, general systems theory has established key concepts in its approach to explaining the system whole. The presence of a natural hierarchy and assumption of feedback processes reinforce the understanding that higher education systems are not mechanical

constructs, but entities that can intelligently adapt to changing internal and external environmental stimuli.

In congruence with general systems theory this study will not merely seek to identify and describe the system structure of the case, but will also analyze the permeability of system boundaries and the ways and means by which the larger system influences its actions and vice versa. Perhaps the two most relevant concepts of GST that relate to this study are multiple goal-seeking and the equifinality of open systems. Multiple goal-seeking refers to a system's ability to pursue multiple goals simultaneously even if contradictory. The equifinality of open systems "suggests that certain results may be achieved with different initial conditions and in different ways" (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972). Such an assumption gets to very heart of this study's purpose: Exploring alternate governance structures and their related outcomes. As a theoretical framework, general systems theory identifies that these private, non-profit systems exist within a larger system of higher education and pursue a state of dynamic equilibrium based on balancing feedback with the environment (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972).

The higher education ecosystem model provides a generalized starting point for analyzing our data by breaking system influences into three levels, Policy, System Governance, and the individual institution. There are some adjustments that will likely need to be made when interpreting the Higher Education Ecosystem model. The definition of a state policy level may be less influential on a private system or institution relative to federal or suprastate policies. Furthermore, some policy levels or actors may prove to be more important in describing organizational actions. Ultimately, the data will support or reject such initial assumptions of structure.

There are some expectations regarding the interplay of general systems theory and the higher education ecosystem in the study. The governance practices of the private non-profit system are assumed to be the result of influences and structures between individual campus and the system office. Those actions may also be characterized by viewing the private non-profit system as part of the larger higher education enterprise and the policy environment that influences all higher education institutions. The review of literature below has been aimed at providing an adequate frame of reference and a working vocabulary so that the environment, governance practices, and the interplay of institutions, systems, and environments may be thoughtfully discussed in the final report.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to describe the governance practices of a private, non-profit system of higher education as perceived by its administrators and faculty. An understanding of the practices and perceptions of such system governance will likely inform administrators, faculty, and policymakers as to the rationale for some system behaviors and the sources of influence on such behaviors. Furthermore, this study will inform future studies of system governance by providing meaningful context to an area of governance research that has not yet been explored.

### **Significance of Study**

The available research on higher education institutions is prolific. Public and private institutions, comprised of both two and four-year colleges, have been the subjects of higher education research for over a century. However, the private non-profit system is a relatively recent development in the higher education industry and has not been thoroughly evaluated.

Similarly, studies that characterize the perceptions of governance practices at the system level are few and far between.

At the convergence of these two fields of study we find a dearth of literature relating to the governance practices of private non-profit systems in the American higher education enterprise. The current absence of available research from both areas of expertise represents an opportunity for a meaningful contribution to the understanding of system governance in a novel setting, specifically, private non-profit systems of higher education.

### **Research Design**

In order to better understand the actions or lack of action seen in higher education institutions, this dissertation will focus its investigation on the University System. As a unit of analysis, the university system was selected due to their inherent responsibilities for resource allocation, program review, and policy development (Creswell et al., 1985). This study aims to describe the governance practices of a small, private, non-profit institution in New York City which has chosen to develop new campuses far outside of its original geographic area. In order to adequately demonstrate internal and external contexts, the study will employ a case study approach (Yin, 2014).

While the study of unique phenomenon such as the Touro College and University System may suggest the use of a phenomenological design, phenomenology is more appropriate for the use of shared individual experiences and not larger entities (Creswell, 2007). Other qualitative traditions such as ethnography or narrative do not adequately align with the studies intended focus. Even though shared cultures within these systems or a descriptive story are relevant and provide valuable insight, they are not as well suited as a case study to describe the whole of these systems and their interactions with their environment (Creswell, 2007).

## **Trustworthiness**

In completing a case study of a private non-profit system, several issues may arise that question the trustworthiness of my findings and my research methods. In order to appropriately account for such threats it will be necessary to address them explicitly in the final report. By addressing these concerns with the reader directly, my intention is to voluntarily provide an understanding of how and why certain decisions were made, and identify how, if at all, such decision may have affected the study's findings. As the etic perspective can heavily influence descriptions of case studies, it will be important that readers understand my positionality and that interpretations are supported by the data.

As a case study, a major source of concern may be the selection of the case itself. It is this study's intent to select a case that may be considered "extreme" or "exemplary", that also provides a source of willing participants. This selection marries purposive sampling with convenience sampling. Understanding the criteria used to select the case will be important to the readers in establishing trust and identifying any inherent bias due to the case selection. This also makes clear an interesting point, that elimination of bias in qualitative research may be impossible, but owning and identifying it to readers builds trustworthiness.

Lastly, I am aware of my role as both an insider and an outsider in investigating a private non-profit system. Professionally, I am and have been employed by such a system for over 8 years and understand the cultural norms within these organizations. Conversely, in my academic career, I have trained at two state-funded public institutions for my undergraduate, and graduate degrees. As much as I hope to find this diversity of experience helpful, it may make my positionality unclear to readers. Addressing this dual role and how, if it all, it impacts my choices

or interpretations will be an important factor in maintaining trust. Whenever possible it will be best for me to allow the data or thick description to speak for itself.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

The following terms are used throughout the study. The clarity of their definitions will go a long way in ensuring that the author's intended message and reader's interpretation of the content are not entirely misaligned.

*Governance* – refers to the structures and formal organizations of higher education institutions that exist to enable their operation

*Higher Education System* – “A group of two or more colleges or universities, each having substantial autonomy and headed by a chief executive or operating officer, all under a single governing board which is served by a system chief executive officer who is not also the chief executive of any of the system's institutions.” (NASH, 2011)

*Institutional Strategy* - the process and patterns of action that determine which goals a campus will pursue and by which means (Toma, 2012)

*Isomorphism* – The convergence of institutional characteristics as a result of their similar pursuit of prestige as defined by institutions at the “next level” (Toma, 2012)

*Non-Profit / Not-for-profit* – an entity that is organized for reasons other than to generate profit, surplus revenues are reinvested in the pursuit of the organization's purpose rather than distributed to shareholders

*Private* – institutions of higher education that receive little to no state level support

*Public* – institutions of higher education that receive a large portion of their funds from state appropriations

*Shared Governance* – “one of the key tenets of quality higher education, this term refers to governance of higher education institutions in which responsibility is shared by faculty, administrators, and trustees” (AAUP)

*Systemness* - “the ability of a system to coordinate the activities of its constituent campuses so that, on the whole, the system behaves in a way that is more powerful and impactful than what can be achieved by individual campuses acting alone” (Zimpher, 2013)

### **Limitations**

Even the most thoughtfully planned research study is subject to its own limitations. Using the case study design provides ample opportunities for depth of understanding regarding a particularly unique, exemplary, or extreme case of higher education system governance in America. However, such strengths are balanced by opposing weaknesses. By virtue of the uniqueness of the case selected, findings based on this particular case will not be altogether generalizable to all other systems. The transferability of this study’s findings will rest with the readers own interpretation.

An additional limitation to this study arises from its subject matter and the theoretical framework it is based upon. Generating a systems understanding of governance practices requires a broad understanding of the many and diverse influences that affect a higher education system. Even in the presence of willing interviewees and rich sources of data, adequate thick description clarifying every context of the case may prove too lengthy in a final report to transmit the most meaningful findings of the study. The responsibility for distilling the ocean of data down to representative themes and findings rests with the researcher.

As is the case with most qualitative research endeavors, the skills and biases of the researcher are additional limitations to the study. Interview prompts with subjects that may be

aimed at exploring new depths of understanding may in turn be evidence of inherent bias. While this researcher is well acquainted with the literature regarding system governance, he is also acquainted with the common practices of the case under study. Such an awareness inherently provides a bias as a result of the researcher. This bias or inherent limitation will be most effectively managed using clearly decided upon protocols and by emphasizing trustworthiness as noted in the section above.

### **Summary**

The intent of the chapter above is to provide a brief introduction to most fundamental elements of the current study's rationale and design. In identifying major findings in existing research, introducing the study's conceptual framework, and highlighting the study's purpose, design, limitations, and significance, this initial chapter should prepare the reader for further exploration into the more subtle implications of the study's findings in future chapters. The following chapters will first identify the specific findings in existing literature that create the foundation for this study's assumptions regarding system governance in American higher education. In the third chapter, specifics to the study's design, purpose, procedures, and intended analysis provide the reader an opportunity to identify any inherent bias while ensuring the trustworthiness of the author.



## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

Evaluating perceptions of governance structures and processes relies heavily on a contextual understanding of the vast and varied higher educational systems that make up the American higher education enterprise. In attempting to describe our higher education institutions as open systems that are influenced by each other and the policy environment that surrounds them, it is paramount that one establishes a historical context for the development of the status-quo. The dominant structures and norms of system governance present in the American Higher Education system did not blossom overnight, far from it. In order to properly contextualize private non-profit systems within the greater higher education environment, a thorough review of the historical foundations of the American higher education system is required.

This review of literature aims to inform the understanding of how and why existing structures and processes exist and function in the American higher education system in the following ways: First, a brief review will present the development of American higher education from its early inception in the colonies, to the mature, interdependent, public and private system that it is today. Second, this study will examine more closely the historical development of system governance structures and the forces that influenced their adoption. Third, an assessment of recent literature investigating systems governance practices will provide a contemporary context with which the current case study can be compared. Fourth, recent studies have shown that faculty roles as well as their roles in institutional governance have begun to change in recent years. A review of current literature will aid this case study in interpreting how these changes manifest themselves in private non-profit systems. Lastly, this review will describe and contextualize the theoretical frameworks of General Systems theory and the Higher Education

Ecosystem with the aim of creating a better understanding of private non-profit systems and their governance practices.

## **A Brief History of American Higher Education**

While the historical account of higher education could focus closely on any number of specific facets of the system, this review shall focus on the societal role of higher education through time. More specifically, how and why that role has changed over the centuries in America.

### **Before America.**

In its very beginnings, higher education held a peculiar role in society in that it was situated in a position to serve the two dominant masters of societal control, the church and state. Within this niche the university was able to “evolve into an immensely flexible institution, able to adapt to almost any political situation and form of society” (Perkin, 1991). Within this jurisdictional ambiguity universities developed their own corporate structure that differentiated them from their state and church sponsors and preserved their independence. As such, they were able to debate secular and non-secular philosophies that contributed significantly to the course of human development from the 13th century through the protestant reformation (Perkin, 1991). Such debates were not generally well accepted by society at large, and as such, universities, their students, and professoriate were often the locale, instigators, or victims of varied “town and gown” conflicts that included riots and murders which had direct and deleterious effects on the surrounding economy (Perkin, 1991). Nevertheless, universities enjoyed relative autonomy in regards to their governance and how and what was taught until the protestant reformation.

Whereas the universities had successfully served as the source of rational thought that defended society against a corrupt religious practices such as indulgences, purgatory, grace, etc.,

they had sacrificed a measure of their own independence following the schism (Perkin, 1991). Universities became almost entirely under the control of the state or ruling monarch, or the church itself. Their function and purpose was no longer the debate and rationalization of doctrine, but had been relegated to “instruments of propaganda” for rulers or the church to promulgate their faith (Perkin, 1991). As the European continent waged its religious and cultural wars, universities fell into a state of ambivalence dedicated to preserving an increasingly aged and out of touch doctrines. It is in this state that European universities were first exported to North America.

### **Early American Colleges.**

The new colonies were quick to establish their own colleges and universities. Colleges were quickly founded “not because of the home government’s policy but because the English colonists, often dissenters in religion, needed to train their own pastors, as dissident and intolerant as themselves” (Perkin, 1991). These first colleges were primarily seminaries and grew to serve to instruct the children of the colonial well-to-do. As the religious zeal of the early colonists began to subside, the original colleges began to refocus their offerings to the traditional liberal arts curriculum while “loosening their ties” to their founding churches (Goodchild, 2002). These colleges persisted under joint authority of the state and associated church and served to educate a great number of the leaders in the American Revolution (Goodchild, 2002).

Following the revolution and as the new nation began to expand, so did the number of colleges. Even as a great number of the newly founded institutions had religious backing it was also during this time that the entirely secular state universities arose creating the first clear distinction between public and private institutions (Perkin, 1991). It was also during this time that many American colleges quite literally won their independence from state control. The

importance of the *Dartmouth College v. Woodward* case in 1819 should not be understated. It is through this case that the established institutions of the nation were able to fend off state interference for over a century while preserving independent control in their governing boards (Goodchild, 2002). As the needs of the expanding nation diversified so did the course offerings and services offered by the fledgling institutions. With the successes of the first state institutions and the seemingly limitless demand for college educated individuals necessary for the building of a new nation, considerable federal support for higher education in America was on the horizon.

### **Rise of Modern American University.**

In the changing nation following the American Revolution, societal expectations for institutions of higher learning began to shift. First in ways that asked more of the colleges and universities and second in providing much needed national support. The need for applied scientific understanding challenged the centuries old practices of recitation in the traditional liberal education (Goodchild, 2002). As more diverse courses of study became available in the newer, more secular state institutions American colleges began to adopt with fervor, the German model of graduate education. One of the German model's initial manifestation in the United States, Johns Hopkins University, brought with it a fundamental emphasis on original research and "the discovery, transmission, and application of higher practical, humanistic, scientific, and professional knowledge" (Goodchild, 2002). Colleges and Universities in America were no longer the dogmatic instruments of propaganda that had crossed the Atlantic nearly two centuries before, but had risen to respected institutions furthering the development of American society.

Amidst increasing public support for education, the US congress passed the Morrill Land-Grant acts of 1862 and 1890 cementing what would become a strong and indelible force in

American higher education, the federal government (Goodchild, 2002). Institutions and student enrollments exploded from 560 institutions serving 32,364 students in 1860 to 1,220 institutions serving 1,174,400 in 1928 (Perkin, 1991). As America moved into the 20th century 15% of youth aged eighteen to twenty-one attended college, “over five times the average percentage in Europe” (Perkin, 1991). Growth during this period was most certainly centralized in the public sector, however it is also important to identify the considerable impact private donors and their founded institutions have had on American society.

In the late 19th century industrial statesmen donated incredible sums to support some of the most established private colleges in addition to founding some of today’s most elite institutions such as Stanford and the University of Chicago (Goodchild, 2002). Similar philanthropic foundations spent the first part of the 20th century focusing their funds and efforts on improving higher education in America. When the proverbial dust settled from an age of unprecedented expansion, American higher education had been reborn. The modern state, land-grant, and research universities were the centerpiece of a thriving, well-funded, and integral part of American society (Goodchild, 2002).

Alongside the development of the modern colleges and universities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the United States also supported the expansion of higher education to those groups that have been historically disenfranchised and discriminated against: women, racial and religious minorities, and the poor. The development and origins of these democratic colleges and universities were altogether dissimilar. Historically black colleges and universities found support in the Morrill act of 1890, while women found their greatest opportunities to pursue higher education as teachers at state-funded normal schools (Goodchild, 2002). Religious minorities made of growing populations of Catholics and Jews as a result of European emigration founded

many of their own private institutions in urban centers. And the urban poor could access higher education at the newly developed junior colleges through local funding (Goodchild, 2002). The resulting amalgam and array of institutional types present in the early 20th century is not all too dissimilar from today. The next century or so of growth, governmental interference, and cultural upheaval would bear witness to the realization of some of the greatest promises of higher education and the formation of some of the deepest cracks in its foundation.

Through two world wars and the great depression higher education in America weathered the storm. Recognizing the inherent value in an educated citizenry and the considerable technological and scientific developments pouring out of colleges and universities public investment in higher education began in earnest. In the wake of the great depression and the 2nd world war, federal investment in higher education taking the form of the National Youth Administration fund and the GI Bill would provide for the college education of nearly three million students (Goodchild, 2002). In 1947, recognizing the new scale of the federal government's participation in higher learning, President Truman authorized *The Report of the President's Commission on Higher Education for American Democracy*, informally known as the Truman Commission. The commission recommended sizeable increases in federal funding and the expansion of the existing junior colleges into the current system of community colleges we see today (Goodchild, 2002). Consequently, federal policy has since become a major driver of university actions, much to delight or dismay of those it employs and serves. Following the Second World War, federal funding for scientific research actually expanded several times over. The National Science Foundation was created in order to oversee the growing grant programs and amidst the cold war, the US government once again looked to American Research Universities to compete with the Soviet Union via the National Defense Education Act. During

this “golden age” of higher education even more federal dollars poured in to help build capacity forever growing college enrollments as the baby-boomer generation approached college-age (Goodchild, 2002).

Such growth was not without cost, however. As colleges and universities reaped the benefits of considerable public support, they also weakened their long standing tradition of independence. During the McCarthy era, professors were too-frequently identified as dissidents and called to testify before the un-American activities committee. Academic freedom, a core component of the German model, was ultimately defended in front of the US. Supreme Court. Additionally, the sheer size of the foremost higher education institutions made them all the more susceptible to the bureaucratic tendencies of the state and federal governments. “The 1972 amendments to the Higher Education Act required states to establish governing, coordinating, or planning boards for expanding public higher education to facilitate the increasingly complex institutional relationships with state governments” (Goodchild, 2002). These boards would ultimately evolve into the structures of system governance seen today. Following decades of civil unrest and poignant incidents of student protest during the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War era, the flood of federal funding began to subside in the 1980s. America’s public institutions were now more clearly and directly controlled by state and federal policy actors. Although, private institutions had not necessarily escaped unscathed. The US federal government had grown to represent one of the strongest, and perhaps ubiquitous influences in American Higher Education.

### **Consumerism and the Competitive Marketplace.**

Through the Higher Education Act of 1965, the federal government fundamentally shifted the way it provided funding to American colleges and universities. Even though the

practices of making federal monies available for grants and research funding remained, the creation of federal student aid programs shifted the locus of control of vast sums of federal funding from bureaucrats to students (Goodchild, 2002). In so doing, the federal government had created an additional master for colleges and universities, their students. Independent actions by institutions could no longer be considered without first evaluating the potential reactions of their students and their affiliated resources. This paradigmatic shift made students consumers of what had previously been considered a social good, and the colleges, purveyors of needed educational resources.

Amidst the varying forms of national higher education systems throughout the world, the US system of higher education may be best described as a market (Marginson, 2007). This market is comprised of buyers and sellers in the form of students and colleges (Jongbloed, 2003). A truly “free market” is defined by a combination of the freedom of buyers and sellers to act in their own best interest (Jongbloed, 2003). Such a view ostensibly precludes one from acknowledging the social benefits of higher education, and perhaps advancing its support through state and federal policy. Nevertheless, such free markets are not always self-sustaining and can lead to a milieu of potential market failures and, at times, require government intervention through policy (Jongbloed, 2003).

From this market perspective, the major change in the American market for higher education over that past five decades has been an increase in competition (Hoxby, 1997). Historically, competition in the American higher education system was limited to local monopolies (regional and state institutions) until the cost of travel fell, standardized admissions testing became available, and information about multiple schools became accessible (Dill, 2003). The expansion and federal support of higher education following World War II sparked the



increase in competition among institutions, a flame that was fanned nearly 40 years later with the invention of the internet (Dill, 2003). Beyond the national boundaries of the US, many European nations are pursuing the deregulation of their higher education systems and trends in the globalization of higher education continue to make the market more competitive (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002).

Most recently, the Higher Education enterprise has undergone considerable change due to external and market based forces altering how higher education institutions are viewed by the public and how these institutions choose and pursue differing goals in the changing environment (Hoxby, 1997). Specifically, competition between institutions for prestige and resources has increased dramatically. Within this market of higher education, institutions may choose to pursue any number of goals based on their perceived needs and do so by interacting within the marketplace (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). The pursuit of such goals or actions is a carefully navigated path given the problems facing an institution such as “financial pressure, growth in technology, changing faculty roles, public scrutiny, changing demographics, competing values, and the rapid rate of change in the world” (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). The strength and influence of these issues have raised concerns as to the ability of institutions to maintain the traditional values of higher education (Newman & Coutrier, 2001). Beyond their own self-interests, institutions may also be led, or coerced, to change by governmental intervention or policy (Chatterton & Goddard, 2000).

In a rational society, state and federal policies are enacted based on a set of established goals and related outcomes. Exacerbating the complexities of implementing policies for such a diverse and interdependent system as the American higher education system is the lack of consistency when choosing policy goals for education. Labaree identifies three goals for education: “democratic equality, social efficiency, and social mobility” (1997). Independently,

each goal is not without merit while uniquely representing each of the “masters” of higher education. The goal of Democratic Equality is representative of Society’s need for a well-informed electorate (Labaree, 1997). Initiatives that adhere to this goal focus on free and open access to higher education for all citizens. Social Efficiency is best interpreted as the taxpayers’ goal for training workers with the necessary skills to fill needed roles in society (Labaree, 1997). The Morrill Acts and the Land-Grant Universities that they created are prime examples of the manifestation of social efficiency goals. The social mobility goal is representative of the individual student and their self-interest to better their standing in society by consuming education (Labaree, 1997). The marked increase in competition in recent decades and the intense focus on the social mobility functions of higher education in public discourse suggest a societal departure from the democratic equality and social efficiency goals of higher education in order to pursue goals pertaining to social mobility (Labaree, 1997). The increased competition and corresponding increased prices of higher education run the risk of decreasing or eliminating the public benefits of higher education enjoyed by all citizens (Dill, 2003).

### **The Development of System Governance**

There is very little, if any, substantive literature regarding the development of private non-profit systems of higher education in the United States (Creswell et al., 1985). However, the development and evolution of their state funded counterparts have been investigated to a much greater degree. Currently, nearly 75% of all college students (over 5.6 million) are enrolled in a public multi-campus system (NASH, 2015). The public university system is the primary form of governance structure employed by states today in order to manage the large, partially autonomous institutions that make up the system (Lane, 2013).

The vast majority of institutions that are part of these public higher education systems

were originally established as “Land Grant Colleges” through the Morrill Acts of 1862, 1890, or the Nelson amendment of 1907 (Klein, 1931). Prior to the establishment of these institutions, higher education in the United States was dominated by private institutions that reflected the European model and were totally reliant on private and local sources of support (Lee, 1963). The Morrill Act was a considerable departure from the states’ involvement in higher education of the past. Nonetheless, the federal support for state-run institutions set the stage for the predominant governance structure of today.

### **Control of the University and Shared Governance.**

Given the substantial support afforded to universities from state and federal sources it may seem logical that these entities would be entitled to a significant level of control when governing the institutions. However, in practice, these lines of authority are seldom clear and are often disjointed from the day-to-day practices of higher education (Newfield, 2003). In comparison to other publicly funded services, even primary and secondary education, institutions of higher education are given considerable flexibility in determining the goals they choose to pursue and how to pursue them. Justifications for such an arrangement can readily be found in AAUP statements on Academic Freedom and University Governance recognizing the importance of specific faculty knowledge regarding its creation and transmission (1915, 1966). Most succinctly, the AAUP stated its case for autonomy such that, “the conception of a university as an ordinary business venture, and of academic teaching as a purely private employment, manifests also a radical failure to apprehend the nature of the social function discharged by the professional scholar” (AAUP, 1915).

Authority for such a justification does not lie entirely with entities such as the AAUP, but may also be found in evaluating the type of work performed at American colleges and

Universities. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, American businesses had achieved particular success through its adoption of Taylorism, the scientific management of the division of labor (Newfield, 2003). Such administration and division of tasks was inconceivable at American colleges. As a “collection of often unrelated disciplines, projects, and research techniques that lacked a common culture”, universities “had a unique niche and played a unique role” (Newfield, 2003). The struggle to identify the best administrative model with which to govern the expanding complexities of American Universities was first borne out at the campus level before being translated to multi-campus systems. This model is most often referred to as “shared governance” (Newfield, 2003).

Until the 19th century, American institutions of higher education were most often led by a university president, who at times was appointed by a board of governors (Newfield, 2003). In comparison to the more democratic processes of their European counterparts, American institutions relied heavily on autocratic control of university business (Perkin, 1991). However, with the continued growth and adoption of the German model and its emphasis on academic freedom, more liberal-minded college presidents began to challenge the autocratic foundation of university leadership. Harvard’s Charles W. Eliot was clear in his statement:

The president of a university should never exercise an autocratic or one-man power. He should be often an inventing and animating force, and often a leader; but not a ruler or autocrat. His success will be due more to powers of exposition and persuasion combined with persistent industry, than to any force of will or habit of command (Newfield, 2003).

As American institutions continued to grow and develop into modern universities, the interdependent public and private partnerships within and without the campus community made autocratic leadership and management untenable. Reflecting the ideal that administering higher

education was indeed unique, “leaders were quite certain that the creation of new knowledge and its transmission of advanced skill required a kind of employee freedom not widely admired in business” (Newfield, 2003).

The resulting bureaucracy and division of control became the standard infrastructure for the modern American university. This model of “shared governance” kept in place the most important ideals of academic freedom that faculty held most dear while allowing administrators to conduct the “business” of running a university (Newfield, 2003). Given the considerable diversity of institutional types, missions, and structures, no unified standard for “shared governance” exists. However, in the most general terms, “shared governance” refers to the separation of business and academic affairs. The general model of shared governance is a remarkable development and can be viewed as tremendous success in the evolution of the American system of higher education and the preservation of academic freedom. However, this model should not be revered as a panacea for all governance issues. As university faculty were content to be left alone in their pursuit of knowledge and teaching, the preferred governance model was not without cost.

Newfield identifies three costs or risks associated with the common practice of shared governance: preference for bureaucracy over democracy, vulnerability to business influence, and the weakening of individual agency (2003). The preference for bureaucracy arises as a result of its extraordinary success at shielding faculty from administrative intervention, thus providing for the freedom they desire. That same shield also limits their ability to meaningfully participate in university governance. More democratic approaches to faculty participation run the risk of exposing faculty actions and therefore threaten cherished academic freedoms. Perhaps the most important concern regarding shared governance, as it relates to system governance, is the

vulnerability to business and outside influences. Following the faculty's exit from management, how will a system, or institution, respond in a changing environment or under new influences? Such a rhetorical question emphasizes the importance of current environmental shifts and the considerable control relinquished in the name of faculty independence. Lastly, diminished individual agency refers to a faculty member's preference for conformity with administration over protest and thus, lack of control. As faculty acknowledge no sovereignty over any other department, they limit their sphere of influence in favor of their own freedom. Newfield clearly identified the risks to faculty as he states that "Autonomy was not translating to into self-determination over general administrative matters, which were part of a separate and parallel governing system, one that could steer the professional and academic activities that claimed to be beyond its reach" (2003). Similar divisions of power and authority practiced at the institutional level would ultimately duplicate itself as bureaucratic management systems were devised to manage the expanding state systems of higher education in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

### **The Evolution of Public Systems of Higher Education.**

McGuinness identifies six eras of development and evolution as it pertains to public systems: The progressive era from the 1880s to World War I, The consolidation era from World War I through World War II, the capacity building era from World War II through the 1970s, The rise of decentralization in the 1980s, Restructuring from the 1990s to 2003, and the response to the great recession from 2003 to present (McGuinness, 2013). Overwhelmingly, the driving force for many of the changes and developments were in response to changing state environments and values over time (McGuinness, 2013). During the progressive era, the establishment of state systems of higher education coincided with state efforts to centralize state government and ease the tensions arising from local and regional politics (McGuinness, 2013).

During this time state systems were established in Montana, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, and South Dakota.

The consolidation era was heavily influenced by two world wars and the great depression as well as fears of political intrusion into higher education. In Georgia, financial pressures and an intrusive governor led to consolidation of 26 boards of trustees into one constitutionally affirmed board of regents (McGuinness, 2013). The capacity building era was marked by an explosion of enrollments with state governments moving to system governance in order to more efficiently meet the needs of the expanding institutions. By the end of the 1970s, one half of states had a system in place and the traditional system governance structure that we understand today was in place (McGuinness, 2013).

The next two eras reflect opposing transitions within systems of higher education. During the 1980s, centralization remained a common force among many states as existing universities were consolidated into systems under one board. However, at the same time a general movement toward increased system and institutional autonomy wrestled control away from state legislatures to provide more flexibility for the management of the university systems. The next era of restructuring refers to the changing nature of the state's role in education. As the federal impetus for the growth in higher education gave way to state led governance, governors and legislatures recognized their role in linking state priorities to the goals of higher education. These initiatives coincided with calls for increased accountability for the institutions that reflected political agendas that did not necessarily align with institutional goals (McGuinness, 2013).

The current era is marked by significant economic pressures exerted upon state budgets that have had extensive effects on the governance of the higher education system. Historically, the role of Higher Education in the state budget has been that of a balance wheel (Delaney &

Doyle, 2011). In this role, higher education institutions and systems receive excess funding during times of plenty and are thus expected to be more able to cope when state funding sources contract during times of recession (Delaney & Doyle, 2011). However, the great recession that began in 2008 has been plagued by a slow and weak recovery which has led systems to adjust practices for the sake of austerity (Hawkinson, 2014).

### **Traditional Forms of System Governance.**

State higher education system governance models vary considerably from state to state. There are a multitude of factors that can lead to any number of solutions to the governance parable: institutional leaders, state finances, state politics, economic considerations, historical context, etc. Amidst the considerable diversity of state systems, three major typologies are apparent (Holy & Browne, 1959). The first typology is one that involves no central governance mechanism whereas each state institution reports to its own governing board and seeks funds directly from the legislature (Douglass, 2000). The second typology is a central governmental board that coordinates and oversees all public colleges and universities. Such a system allows for the existence of sub-boards to coordinate sub-populations such as community colleges, but all sub-boards are subservient to the central “superboard” (Douglass, 2000). The third typology is defined by the existence of multiple boards representing state colleges, land-grant universities, and community colleges. This third type may also include a central “coordinating” board which does not hold direct authority over any of the sub-boards (Douglass, 2000).

Aside from these typologies, the specifics of state governance systems vary considerably. Membership on state boards may be determined by any number of means such as popular election or gubernatorial appointment for any term. State politics determine whether positions on such boards are viewed as valued civil servants, political gratitude, or political career



springboards. Furthermore, state finances, and the board's authority over them, significantly affect the board's ability to enact meaningful change within the state system. In such a diverse environment a study focused on system governance is apt to identify any number of features that may be unique or part of common practice. Below is a specific description of two governance typologies to serve as a reference point for this study's findings.

***The California Master Plan.***

The California Master Plan is considered a momentous achievement in higher education governance. In an era of system consolidation, the public institutions of California were able to jointly devise a system proposal that won approval by the board of regents, the board of education, the state legislature, and a constitutional amendment (Douglass, 2000). The system provides for the mutual autonomy of the public Community Colleges, State Colleges, and Research Universities of California. The California system of higher education which is often referred to as the Master Plan is a prime example of several state boards operating under a coordinating board, in this case, a "coordinating council" (Douglass, 2000).

The Master Plan is unique in its approach to higher education governance as it pertains to the multiple functions of differing system types. As a fundamental part of the Master Plan its developers identified the roles and governance bodies for all three levels of California public higher education. Community Colleges would serve as the primary access point to higher education for citizens. Its governance body, the state board of education was best suited to interpret and understand local needs. California State Colleges, governed by their Board of Trustees, would primarily offer "undergraduate education, teacher training, and graduate education through the master's degree, with the issue of doctoral training to be decided by the Coordinating Council" (Douglass, 2000). The University of California, and their board of

regents, would retain its reputation as the premier research university and graduate training institution of the state. The Coordinating council would govern “segmental functions, enrollment expansion, and budget coordination” (Douglass, 2000). The newly created coordinating council would be comprised of 3 members from each sections in addition to three members from the Association of Independent California Colleges.

Conspicuous in the negotiation of the Master Plan was the presence of “status” relating to each institutional type. While the role and purpose of public community colleges as access institutions was wholly agreed upon, the functions and limitations of the state colleges vs. the University of California were hotly contested. Of primary concern of the state colleges was their ability to remain autonomous and independent of the University of California, and the expansion of faculty research and doctoral degrees. The contentious debate is reminiscent of many of the issues surrounding isomorphism discussed below, but was nevertheless resolved by the Master Plan’s creators. The end result was a statewide system that stratified public higher education within the state based on student achievement and institutional purpose.

### ***The State of Michigan.***

Although the state of California serves as an excellent example of a highly coordinated system that relies on a semi-autonomous and constitutionally created coordinating council to coordinate the actions of additional semi-autonomous systems, some states have chosen a far more laissez-faire approach. Public institutions in the state of Michigan have had full autonomy since the 1850 constitutional convention (Michigan, 2003). This developed in the presence of strong academic leaders in the state pushing for university autonomy following poor enrollments and growth as a result of political interference in the state board (Michigan, 2003). Over a century and a half, public institutions of higher education have maintained their constitutional

autonomy resulting in 15 public 4-year colleges and 28 public 2-year community colleges, each with its own governing board (Michigan, 2003).

For many, the concept of constitutionally guaranteed autonomy may espouse a sense of freedom in regards to institutional governance, in practice each institution's governing board must negotiate for state funding from the legislature. As such, institutions are required to submit "an annual accounting of all income and expenditures" allowing for transparency and accountability to the public (Michigan, 2003). Furthermore, the governor appoints many of the members of each governing board while some boards allow for membership by popular election (Michigan, 2003). The resulting governance landscape in the state of Michigan provides for a multitude of campuses and programs with limited governmental control over how and why state funds are allocated. One of the only unifying goals of higher education in Michigan comes from the 1986 Select Committee on Higher Education identifying three primary missions: instruction, research, and public service (Michigan, 2003). The degree to which each college or university chooses to pursue each goal is a matter of self-determination or market forces (Michigan, 2003). Critics and proponents of constitutionally autonomous universities typically trade arguments that do very little to move the state's population to venture a constitutional shift. Amidst criticisms of the inefficiencies of so many governing boards and rising tuition costs, proponents cite recent institutional cost-cutting measures and the talented administrators that chose to bring their skills to Michigan on the basis of autonomy (Michigan, 2003). Perhaps the greatest concern as it pertains to educational policy is the clarity, or lack thereof, given to determining which of the primary missions should be served. Are university administrators, or market forces for that matter the best means of determining institutional action?

## **System Governance Research**

### **The Evolution of Governance Models.**

The concept of governance lends itself to a considerable number of avenues for investigation and research. The sheer breadth of topics available for review in it of itself requires some level of refinement for a manageable study. As such, this study must clarify its definition of governance activities as well as the scope and boundaries of such an investigation. Therefore, this study's particular aim is to explore perceptions of governance as previously described by Hearn and McLendon, "the setting of purposes and goals of the organization and the creation of structures, policies, and programs in pursuit of those purposes and goals" (2012). Furthermore, the scope of this aim is limited to the functions and practices of governance systems. That is to say the target of our study is the supra-institutional level of governance in higher education. This narrowing of focus should not devalue the functions of institutional or departmental governance activities, but should more appropriately assess how those functions contribute to the state of overall system governance. Lastly, this study will directly investigate a relatively unique higher education system structure that is private, non-profit, and governs multiple campuses in multiple states. In the presence of a considerable dearth of available research regarding this particular system type, the following review will analyze governance literature for the public, private, non-profit, and for profit systems to provide context for the studies understanding of a relatively unexplored system type.

As the study of higher education has evolved, so have the themes, methodologies, and lenses employed in its studies. Initial studies described higher education governance in three predominant ways, the rational bureaucratic model, the collegial model, and the political model (Baldrige 1971). The rational bureaucratic model described plainly the lines of authority

stemming from institutional and/or state governing boards and the justification that all subsequent authority was delegated rationally down the line (Baldrige, 1971). Whereas traditional organizational studies of bureaucratic models were first implemented in describing efficient divisions of labor in the factory setting, findings in early bureaucratic studies of higher education noted that many of the core assumptions of those models did not apply or function as predicted in higher education (Hearn & McLendon, 2012).

To account for these theoretical shortcomings, investigators developed a collegial understanding of university governance (Baldrige, 1971). The collegial model emphasized the importance of symbolic university communities and the importance of long-standing traditions and institutional culture. As a strength, the collegial model adequately explained the non-rational behaviors and flattened hierarchies of institutions as well as more appropriately describing the functions of shared-governance within the higher education context. Albeit novel, collegial models were unable to explain the conflicting interests of different entities participating in the governance system and thus gave rise to the political model of system governance (Hearn & McLendon, 2012).

The political model is built upon three key concepts about American society at large: “the dispersion of political power, interest group competition, and political bargaining” (Baldrige, 1971). The significant contribution of the political model is its view of conflict as a necessary and expected part of governance.

Because constant negotiation among different centers of power are necessary in order to make decisions, citizens and leaders will perfect the precious art of dealing peacefully with their conflicts, and not merely to the benefit of one partisan but to the mutual benefit of all the parties to a conflict. (Dahl, 1967)

Contrary to the bureaucratic and collegial models, the political model embraced the role conflict plays in establishing effective compromises, governance activities. Criticisms of the political model are well-grounded in their assessment that it presents governance practices as wholly reactionary and cannot explain longer term, rational planning that is a clear function of governance entities (Hearn & McLendon, 2012).

Moving from traditional organizational theories developed elsewhere, higher education scholars began to view higher education in terms of organized anarchy. Two predominant theories justified such a belief, Cohen, March, and Olsen's Garbage Can model (1972) and Weick's, loosely coupled systems model (1976). These classic models more adequately describe the intense complexity of governance systems of higher education while also identifying higher education as different from other governance structures found in business and government (Hearn & McLendon, 2012). Cohen, March and Olsen described governance and decision-making activities as being composed of four separate streams of activity; the development of problems, the actions of participants, the formulation of solutions, and the opportunities for decision making (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972). The independent flow of these streams ultimately describes the haphazard and often disjointed process by which higher education systems tend to solve or not solve problems. A slightly more negative view, Hearn and McLendon note that "the ambiguity that runs rampant throughout the organized anarchy results in decision that are highly contingent, unpredictable, and rarely successful" (2012).

Perhaps giving more definition to the garbage can decision making model, Weick's loosely coupled systems characterized schools and colleges in terms of their irrationality, inefficiency, and the limited interdependence between various governance structures (1976). Hallmarks of loosely coupled systems include minimal coordination, high levels of

decentralization and delegation that result in governance practices in which structures interact with each other “suddenly (rather than continuously), occasionally (rather than constantly), negligibly (rather than significantly), indirectly (rather than directly), and eventually (rather than immediately)” (Hearn & McLendon, 2012). Although some may criticize the inefficiency of higher education systems as a result of their loosely coupled systems, Weick has also purported the governance model’s considerable ability to adapt, innovate, and isolate failures in one part of a system from spreading to another (1976).

A final note should be made about the emerging governance structures of for-profit education entities. Recent developments have created new “corporate universities” that operate in the same market as traditional private and public non-profit institutions and experience much of the same benefits due to economies of scale that large state systems enjoy (Pusser & Turner, 2004). Additionally, these corporate universities benefit from Title IV programs such as Pell Grants and student loans, but also, by virtue of their practice, operate outside many of the strict regulatory controls imposed on their public and private non-profit counterparts (Pusser & Turner, 2004). As for-profit corporations, these universities and their governance structures are best understood using traditional business and organizational theories in regards to profit maximization and strategy development. A closer look at these practices and their convergence with private nonprofits will be discussed in greater detail in the following section.

### **Governance Practices at Various Institutional Levels.**

Past studies of governance practices may focus on any number unit levels within the realm of higher education. The vast majority of governance practice arguably occurs at the program or departmental level. Furthermore, it is at this level that faculty, in their role as professional labor, are most able to influence policy outcomes as a result of their specific roles

and experience (Hearn & McLendon, 2012). However, much of the governance activities that take place at the unit level are not directly concerned with the steering, goal setting, or planning of larger institution or system-wide initiatives. As such, many of the important functions of unit level governance are outside the scope of this study.

At the institutional level, governance is often effected through a balance between administrative leaders such as a provost or president, and faculty participation in institutional committees. As stated earlier, this practice of shared governance may be conceived as an outgrowth of faculty demand for autonomy and their bureaucratic shielding from administrative intervention. Governance research at the institutional level has broadly focused on institutional strategy and its developers, school administrators, as well as strategy implementation (Hearn & McLendon, 2012). Empirical implementation studies analyzing programmatic creation and deletion demonstrate considerable value associated with power at the academic unit level as measured by total grant funding, enrollments, and reputation (Hearn & McLendon, 2012). The notion of power, its ability to garner resources, and its association with prestige will be discussed more thoroughly below. Of particular interest to the current study is the extent that faculty roles do or do not influence institutional and/or system action. Conflicting empirical studies argue the merits of traditional roles in faculty governance (Kezar, 2005) versus novel, more streamlined approaches (Benjamin & Carroll, 1998).

Research of institutional governing boards, their structure, and membership has attracted significant attention as a result of their role in significant decision making and governance practices (Hearn & McLendon, 2012). Critics of the available research cite its normative tones and lack of empirical rigor in describing the vast diversity in governing boards from one institution to the next (Hearn & McLendon, 2012). Most notably in this vein of research is



Toma's cross-sectional study of varying organizations (1990). The study determined "that public universities can be made to function more like private ones by placing them under separate governing boards" (Toma, 1990). Of particular interest to the current study would be whether the inverse could be true. Would the placement of multiple private institutions under one central governing board result in a private institution that looked more like a public one?

Governance at the state level, through a state coordinating board is an analogue for the central focus of this study. While considerable diversity exists amongst the way each state chooses to govern their public colleges and universities the state coordinating board, by any name, is typically tasked with overseeing, coordinating, regulating, and allocating state funds to state institutions (Lane, 2013). The current case study aims to describe these practices in the context of a private, non-profit, multi-state system of higher education. Lane quotes a Rhode Island Commission on higher education that succinctly describes the challenges of system governance (2013):

There is no preferred model or perfect system of public higher-education governance. The governing system in each state must reflect unique historical, economic, social, political, and geographic conditions. However, what is clear is that the governing of state public higher education systems is perhaps one of the most complex balancing acts in the field of public administration. Conflicting goals, objectives and interests are a reality. Systemwide interests are not always the same as institutional priorities, and despite claims to the contrary, systemwide interests are not necessarily the sum of the interests of each state institution (1987).

Accepting the emphasis of state priorities and the system's implied role in bringing those to fruition one can recognize the value in studying a private, nonprofit analogue to the public state

system. How and why do their governance practices differ? What lessons can public systems learn from private systems and vice versa?

Beyond the influence of state politics there exists governance entities that operate at the regional and national level. Of primary importance to most administrators and faculty would be the accrediting bodies that assess the perceived value of an institution's outputs (Hearn & McLendon, 2012). A review of the limited governance related literature as it pertains to accreditation would suggest that researchers undervalue its role in steering institutional policy. Justifying this position is often done by noting that accreditation is voluntary and that the alternatives to accreditation are mere marginalization or a more intrusive state coordinating board (Hearn & McLendon, 2012). In practice however, accreditation may be one of the single most important drivers of institutional policy. Professional schools such as Medical and Law schools rely on professional accreditation agencies to attest to their quality so that their graduates may continue their careers (Department of Ed, 2017). Furthermore, all schools are limited in eligibility for Title IV funds if they choose, voluntarily, not to participate with recognized accreditation agencies (Department of Ed, 2017).

### **Areas of Specific Focus**

In reviewing the literature pertaining to system governance, several findings, or areas of emphasis seem well suited to inform the understanding of the current study. The research and positions supporting these suppositions do not always align with each other, but are no less important in helping us to navigate the overall context and understanding of system governance. These areas of specific focus include: the concept of Systemness, Institutional strategy and isomorphism, and the convergence of private, non-profit and for-profit governance.

### **Systemness.**

Systemness is a concept defined by Zimpher as “the ability of a system to coordinate the activities of its constituent campuses so that, on the whole, the system behaves in a way that is more powerful and impactful than what can be achieved by individual campuses acting alone” (pg. 27, 2013). The concept might be better interpreted as the claim that state coordinating boards and the systems they represent are not merely efficient coordinators and allocators of state appropriations, but create additional value that would not exist in their absence. Or more colloquially, the value of the system is greater than the sum of its parts. By any definition, the concept of systemness suggests an inherent value in a regularly seen governance structure in American higher education.

Furthering the role systems play are the ever-changing expectations presented by states to their institutions of higher education. In recent decades, political leaders and legislatures have become to view institutions of higher education as drivers of social and economic development (Lane & Johnstone, 2012). These new goals represent a considerable emphasis being placed on the social efficiency and social mobility goals of education, with minimal stress on those of democratic equality (Labaree, 1997). In the face of these new goals, systems have the advantage of being able to bring to bear their systemness in a manner that marshals the resources of multiple campuses and focuses them for intended good to a given community (Zimpher, 2013).

As the Chancellor of the State University of New York, Zimpher identifies several key areas that systems may find an opportunity to make the most of their systemness (2013). Of particular importance to the case study of a private, nonprofit system would be her reflections on resource allocation, shared services, strategic enrollment management, and research and innovation (Zimpher, 2013). Resource allocation and shared services work hand in hand in

identifying areas of duplicative services, eliminating them, and redirecting those funds to initiatives that are more aligned with the system mission or strategic plan (Zimpher, 2013). Strategic enrollment management is another strategic objective aimed at identifying the educational and job training needs of a community and putting those programs in place. Zimpher is careful to note that strategic enrollment management is a continual process requires regular review and revision (2013). Research and Innovation are again two strategic principles that provide systems with an opportunity to harness their systemness. Recognizing the importance of research and innovation on the college campus, Zimpher emphasizes the needed support in building “innovation ecosystems” that provide tangible benefits to campuses, local communities, the state, and the system as a whole (2013). Indeed, a powerful case can be made for the potential benefits of system governance through the effective and deliberate use of strategy.

### **Institutional Strategy and Isomorphism.**

Institutional strategy refers to the process and patterns of action that determine which goals a campus will pursue and by which means (Toma, 2012). Within the market of higher education, institutions may choose to pursue a number of goals or actions based on their perceived needs or actions and do so by interacting within the marketplace (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). The pursuit of such goals or actions is a carefully navigated path given the problems facing an institution such as “financial pressure, growth in technology, changing faculty roles, public scrutiny, changing demographics, competing values, and the rapid rate of change in the world” (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). Beyond their own self-interests, institutions may also be led, or coerced, to change by governmental intervention or policy (Chatterton & Goddard, 2000). These interactions between the market and institutions are further conceptualized by identifying institutional culture as an important influence (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). Varying institutional

cultures will pursue change in different ways given different problems (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). The interactions of varied institutions in the marketplace have led to significant diversity of institutional type in the higher education enterprise.

Institutional type is an important factor in understanding how institutions interact with the higher education market. Institutional type is often defined across several variables such as institutional size, form of institutional control, range of disciplines offered, degrees awarded, and modes of study (Huisman et al., 2007). A study that conducted a thematic analysis of institutional mission statements found that variables associated with institutional control were more predictive of mission statements (Morphew & Hartley, 2006). Specifically, the most common item in a mission statement of a public institution was “serves local area”, while private institutions were more replete with statements pertaining to “liberal arts” (Morphew & Hartley, 2006). Even if this may be attributable to the closeness of governmental policy to public institutions, it reinforces the idea that institutional type may influence how one interacts with the higher education market.

Counter to the professed diversity of institutional strategy above, Toma chooses to describe it another way, “despite the impressive diversity of institution types, the relative autonomy of individual universities and colleges, and the vast differences in respective resources available to them, higher education institutions in the United States tend to arrive at a common aspiration” (2012). This common aspiration is the goal of achieving the “next level” or garnering more prestige. Much of the literature regarding strategy formulation in higher education is based on theoretical underpinnings from the business sector. Questions as to whether profit motives exist in the nonprofit sectors of higher education are answered by Toma, “prestige is to higher education as profit is to corporations” (2012). It is precisely this goal of maximizing prestige that

drives isomorphism within the context of higher education (Toma, 2012). In their efforts to outclass one another, institutions of higher learning tend to become more homogenous in their stated goals and in the ways they go about achieving them (Toma, 2012). Counter to the prevailing wisdom of the business sector where prestige and profit are earned through differentiation, institutions of higher education fall into the practice of pursuing parallel goals by the same proven methods used by those institutions one step above them on the ladder.

### **The Convergence of Private nonprofit and for-profit Governance.**

Many governance studies serve to test established models in a newly evolved context. Such is the basis of this case study as well. As described above, the American higher education system is in current state of flux whereby market forces are having a strong and continued influence on our institutions and their actions. These forces have resulted in a gradual change whereby internal environments of nonprofit institutions and some of their governance activities have begun to resemble their for-profit counterparts (Pusser & Turner, 2004). Specifically, institutional revenue streams, outputs, and division of labor of many nonprofit and for profit institutions are moving towards one another (Pusser & Turner, 2004).

In the wake of the great recession and a slow recovery, the sources of revenue between public and private nonprofits and for-profit institutions have become more similar over time (Pusser & Turner, 2004). In the era of ever competing demands for state appropriations, institutions have had to turn to tuition dollars as an ever increasing percentage of total revenue (Pusser & Turner, 2004). Although a considerable difference still exists in the sources of revenue for public versus private institutions, the shifting reliance on tuition and alternate income streams are not likely to reverse any time soon (Pusser & Turner, 2004).

Additionally, outputs, or the degrees offered by nonprofit and for profit institutions have also begun to converge. This convergence takes two forms. First, for-profit institutions have added additional degrees that are traditionally offered by nonprofit universities such as graduate or professional education (Pusser & Turner, 2004). Second, nonprofit institutions have eliminated programs on the basis of efficiency or sustainability. It is the second possibility that causes the greatest level of concern of potential loss of public benefit of higher education (Pusser & Turner, 2004).

In analyzing the changes in the division of labor of many public institutions indicate a consistent move towards the preferred methods of for profit enterprises (Pusser & Turner, 2004). In both public and private nonprofit institutions, governing boards are being forced to rely on professional managers and administrators who are not necessarily academically trained and who do not share the same devotion toward shared governance principles as those leaders who ascend from faculty ranks (Pusser & Turner, 2004). Furthermore, the proportion of tenure track faculty is steadily decreasing in favor of the more affordable, and dispensable, part-time instructor (Pusser & Turner, 2004). The overall tone of faculty participation in governance is a key issue as it pertains to some of the starkest contrasts between nonprofit and for-profit institutions. As such, the changing role of the faculty and their participation in governance is discussed at greater length below.

### **The Changing Role of Faculty in Governance.**

The evolution of faculty participation in academic governance may best be perceived as an arc that follows a similar trajectory to that of the American higher education system. As the diversity, quality, and prestige of American universities grew through the colonial era to the golden age following World War 2, so did the extent of faculty involvement in governance

practices. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries as American cultural and governmental priorities shifted away from higher education, the tide that had buoyed faculty autonomy and independence began to recede (Gerber, 2014). Below is a brief review of the evolution of faculty governance with additional attention given to the fundamental units and functions of governance systems, as well as the prevailing forces that influence faculty participation in governance activities.

Suffice it to say that college and university governance is a complicated task. In order to better understand where and how faculty may influence an institution it is easiest to create relatively broad categories of governance functions that faculty may or may not have any control over. Governance functions common to most institutions include: course development, original research, program creation and deletion, recruitment and promotion of faculty, budgetary planning and allocation, institutional policy making, selection of campus leaders, and selection of students. The extent to which faculty have participated in these functions varies from one institution to the next, and has evolved over time. Through most of the 19th century American colleges and universities were governed by autocratic university presidents appointed by the institution's governing board (Gerber, 2014). As the industrial revolution progressed, and the German model was adopted at America's universities, faculty began to specialize in areas that had yet to be explored. In lieu of the traditional liberal arts education based on a fairly unchanging curriculum, the new exploration of the sciences positioned faculty as experts in their fields and a profession unto themselves (Gerber, 2014).

This professionalization of faculty is at the heart of many of the complexities and tensions that arise in systems of shared governance. On the one hand, faculty are the frontline unit of labor at the university, on the other, they may be the foremost expert in their field. To use



a crude analogy, faculty are the factory workers of the higher education enterprise creating and disseminating knowledge and information (Newfield, 2003). Paradoxically, their profession or expertise in their area also make them those most suited to manage or direct their efforts contrary to the traditional style of supervisory management of the front-line labor force (Newfield, 2003).

Faculty professionalization and the German ideals of academic freedom provided the first inroads to faculty participation in institutional governance. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, forward thinking presidents at Cornell and Columbia recognized the changing role of faculty in their institutions and relinquished control over areas more suited to faculty direction, how and what to teach (Gerber, 2014). As the faculty profession grew more established and revered in society, so did the pressure to increase faculty influence beyond the classroom. Faculty began to question the decision making processes of their governing boards comprised of laypersons with little to no academic experience (Gerber, 2014). Governance crises of the time were often related to the summary removal of well-respected faculty, or the addition of those who were less deserving (Gerber, 2014). The resulting concession made by governing boards was to allow faculty to recruit and promote their colleagues. Over time, the faculty's dominion over the classroom and their considerable influence over their ranks became the core functions of faculty governance and continue to this day.

Faculty influence outside of the classroom on matters relating to institutional governance never truly became an established norm. Even the 1966 *Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities* was more reflective of a professional desire for faculty participation in shared governance rather than a prescribed structure for all governance activities (Gerber, 2014). Considerable variation in practices and influence existed across institutional type and prestige. It is important to note that during the golden age, at the height of its international preeminence in

higher education, “the nation’s most highly regarded colleges and universities were the institutions most likely to grant faculty a primary role in academic decision making” (Gerber, 2014). Justification for such a relationship often refers to institutional competition for the best faculty suggesting that administrators are more willing to loosen their control to attract the best faculty as it suits the needs of the institution. Further, the less prestigious 4-year institutions and community colleges, where the professionalization of faculty was not as complete, were far less likely to adopt a fully integrated shared governance model (Gerber, 2014). As the golden age of higher education in America drew to a close, several forces both from within and from without the university began to reshape governance practice to this day.

From within the faculty ranks, frustrations with governance practices translated into a tide of faculty unionization at many of the less prestigious institutions across the country. Arguments against unionization often reference an incompatibility with the principles of shared governance with the practices of unionized labor. However, in practice, most institutions developed a “dual-track” system whereas existing governance structures maintained their control over academic matters while the union negotiated matters of employment (Gerber, 2014). Even though unionization was most prevalent in the public 2-year and 4-year institutions, the ability to unionize at private institutions was virtually eliminated by the *NLRB v. Yeshiva* ruling by the US Supreme Court in 1980 (Gerber, 2014). The basis for this ruling has its foundation in the “managerial” aspects, or self-directed responsibilities common to faculty members which preclude faculty member’s right to unionize in the private sector. This issue again speaks to the paradox of the faculty position of the front-line labor force that are also best suited to manage their work effectively.

Several key factors also continue to influence governance practices from outside institutional boundaries. As competing demands for state resources from other sectors increased, state funding for higher education began to fall while interventional legislatures and governors began to implement accountability measures tied to state funding (Gerber, 2014). These legislatures and governors represent added parties to the governance process that demonstrably affect the way institutions operate and the extent to which faculty may influence those decisions. Federal policies and student aid programs continue to exert their influence on required institutional practice in creating student consumers that institutions aim to attract whether or not those goals are in line with faculty priorities. Perhaps that greatest influence on institutional governance practices in the last half century is due to cultural shifts in American society's approach to higher education resulting in the corporatization of higher education and the deprofessionalization of its faculty (Gerber, 2014).

As Americans began to view higher education as a private good rather than a public benefit, the system of higher education began to take on the role of a marketplace (Gerber, 2014). As such, market forces and consumerism began to force governance decision making out of the hands of faculty and back into the hands of administrators. Responding to reduced resources and in line with typical supply and demand models, traditional full time tenure-track faculty were replaced with part time or contingent faculty (Kezar & Sam, 2013). The prevailing environment of today's higher education system has considerable influence on how and why governance decisions are made. Gerber's assessment of current trends is clear: "the growing deference to market forces, the increasing deprofessionalization of large sectors of the faculty, and mounting pressures from governing boards and legislatures... have resulted in an overall weakening of the practices of shared governance that had developed over the previous century"

(pg. 121). Although this study makes no normative assumptions regarding the capitalist model or any other socioeconomic systems, it is important to identify that the current American zeal for market-based approaches to problem solving have had real and strong influences on the governance practices of American higher education institutions.

## **Theoretical Frameworks**

### **General Systems Theory.**

Following a thorough review of literature pertaining to the institutional strategies and transformational change of higher education institutions, the theoretical framework of general system's theory was found best suited to the study's focus. This study will explore the interactions of the higher education environment with the governance practices of private, non-profit systems. As a theoretical framework, general systems theory identifies that these private, non-profit systems exist within a larger system of higher education and pursue a state of dynamic equilibrium based on balancing feedback with the environment (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972). General Systems Theory was developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy combatting common scientific approaches to biological investigation that limited the scope of understanding. von Bertalanffy wrote: "Since the fundamental character of the living thing is its organization, the customary investigation of the single parts and processes cannot provide a complete explanation of the vital phenomena" (von Bertalanffy, 1972). Originally developed in the biological sciences, general systems theory has found widespread application in the study of other "organized entities" (von Bertalanffy, 1972).

Through its extensive use in evaluating varied phenomena, general systems theory has established key concepts in its approach to explaining the system whole. Initially, GST identifies the existence of interrelated components and subsystems with the assumption that the whole

cannot merely be described by the sum of its parts (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972). The existence of system boundaries and how permeable they are to the exchange of resources are essential elements to describing the successes and failures of large open systems (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972). The presence of a natural hierarchy and assumption of feedback processes reinforce the understanding that higher education systems are not mechanical constructs, but entities that can intelligently adapt to changing internal and external environmental stimuli. Perhaps the two most relevant concepts of GST that relate to this study are multiple goal-seeking and the equifinality of open systems. Multiple goal-seeking refers to a system's ability to pursue multiple goals simultaneously even if contradictory. The equifinality of open systems "suggests that certain results may be achieved with different initial conditions and in different ways" (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972). Such an assumption gets to very heart of this study's purpose: Exploring alternate governance structures and their related outcomes.

As a theoretical framework, general systems theory is flexible enough to broadly describe large systems of higher education while providing needed specificity in explaining how private, non-profit systems seek multiple goals simultaneously (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972). The use of this theoretical framework also serves two broad purposes. First, an accurate description of how private, non-profit systems are situated within the larger higher education enterprise provides contextual understanding of institutions that differ from the "typical" model of higher education. Second, general systems theory identifies feedback processes that serve as a roadmap for understanding how differing systems interact with each other and their environment. This roadmap will likely provide greater clarity in understanding how and why private, non-profit systems pursue their course toward dynamic equilibrium.

### **Higher Education Ecosystem.**

To further describe the case, this study will also aim to apply the Higher Education Ecosystem model to the private, non-profit system (Martinez & Smith, 2013). The higher education ecosystem model has its roots in the Burke-Litwin Model of Organizational Performance and Change which is itself based upon an open system understanding of organizational behavior (Burke & Litwin, 1992). The Higher Education Ecosystem model proposes three levels beginning at the state policy level situated above the state system level over the individual institution level (Martinez & Smith, 2013). Each level is comprised of differing components that result in different outputs that influence the other levels (Martinez & Smith, 2013).

As the selected case for this study is a private non-profit multi-state system there are some adjustments that will need to be made when interpreting the Higher Education Ecosystem model. The definition of a state policy level may be less influential on a private system or institution relative to their public counterparts. Additionally, policy implications at the federal or suprastate level may prove to be important in describing organizational actions. Lastly, the definitive boundary between system and institution may need to be reevaluated based on the independence of institutional action. Ultimately the viability of the Higher Education Ecosystem model to describe private non-profit system will be determined by the data. However, the emphasis in using such a model is to examine the importance and effect of policy and policy actors on the behaviors of governance systems and their constituent institutions.

In congruence with general systems theory this study will not merely seek to identify and describe the system structure of the case, but will also analyze the permeability of system boundaries and the ways and means by which the larger system influences its actions and vice

versa. The higher education ecosystem model provides a generalized starting point for analyzing our data by breaking system influences into three levels, Policy, System Governance, and the individual institution. Ultimately, these data will support or reject such initial assumptions of structure.

## **Summary**

From its earliest inception in the colonies to its current form, Higher Education in America has sought to serve society through the pursuit of knowledge by producing meaningful original research and by educating citizens to take on the needed roles that an ever changing country and economy requires. Historically, by virtue of their valued position in society, colleges and universities have largely been left to govern themselves with minimal interference and considerable support from state and federal policymakers in addition to society at large. In an increasingly competitive environment exacerbated by reduced resources, institutions find themselves beset by calls for increased accountability and transparency while being asked to meet new productivity and efficiency benchmarks related to conflicting policy goals.

This dissertation aims to describe the intersection of federal and state policy with institutional actions - system governance. The following chapter aims to provide a distinct plan for a single qualitative case study of a private non-profit system of higher education. In identifying the specifics to the study's design, purpose, procedures, and intended analysis as guided by the theoretical framework of general systems theory provide a foundation of methodological rigor that supports the study's credibility and trustworthiness.

## **Chapter 3: Methods**

### **Introduction**

The preceding chapter set forth to describe the evolution and historical underpinnings of the American higher education system as it currently stands. The intent was to provide a rich understanding of the varied contextual factors that influence system and institutional governance. This emphasis on contextual understanding is based on the study's reliance on General Systems Theory as its theoretical framework and provides an initial understanding of how private non-profit systems fit within the larger higher education enterprise. The following chapter intends to outline how a single case study may be structured to provide clarity and greater depth of understanding when interpreting the governance practices of a relatively new and unique multi-campus system of higher education.

### **Ontological and Epistemological Assumptions**

This study aims to describe the governance practices of a private, non-profit system of higher education as perceived by its administrators and faculty. The evolution of such system and institutional type is relatively recent in the American higher education system and has little if any existence as a subject in previous literature. Such a study is governed by a constructivist paradigm that emphasizes the importance of context in understanding the behaviors of such a system. The importance of context emphasizes the subjective nature of qualitative research (Creswell, 2007). The themes and constructs developed as a result of this line of research are due to the both the individual experiences of the subjects, but also the interpretations of the researcher who himself, is also influenced by his own experiences.

### **Design of Study**

In order to better understand the actions or lack of action seen in higher education



institutions, this dissertation will focus its investigation on the University System. The university system is defined as:

A group of two or more colleges or universities, each having substantial autonomy and headed by a chief executive or operating officer, all under a single governing board which is served by a system chief executive officer who is not also the chief executive of any of the system's institutions. (NASH, 2011)

As a unit of analysis, the university system was selected due to their inherent responsibilities for resource allocation, program review, and policy development (Creswell et al., 1985). This study aims to describe the governance practices of a small, private, non-profit institution in New York City which has chosen to develop new campuses far outside of its original geographic area. In order to adequately demonstrate internal and external contexts, the study will employ a case study approach (Yin, 2014). Even though the study of unique phenomenon such as Touro College and University System may suggest the use of a phenomenological design, phenomenology is more appropriate for the use of shared individual experiences and not larger entities (Creswell, 2007). Other qualitative traditions such as ethnography or narrative do not adequately align with the studies intended focus. Albeit shared cultures within these systems or a descriptive story are relevant and provide valuable insight, they are not as well suited as a case study to describe the whole of these systems and their interactions with their environment (Creswell, 2007)

### **Purpose.**

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to describe the governance practices of a private, non-profit system of higher education as perceived by its administrators and faculty. An understanding of the practices and perceptions of such system governance will likely inform

administrators, faculty, and policymakers as to the rationale for some system behaviors and the sources of influence on such behaviors.

### **Research Questions.**

In congruence with the theoretical framework and organizational model that guide this study, two overarching research questions have been developed to guide the current investigation. The proposed line of research will seek to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the Touro College and University System fit into the greater higher education enterprise?
2. What policy or environmental considerations are most likely to influence private non-profit system governance?

### **Site Selection.**

As this line of research will be employing a case study approach it is important that the data collection process be thorough and well-planned (Creswell, 2007). The selection of the case for this study is based on purposeful and convenience sampling. The unit of analysis or case for this study will be the Touro College and University System (Yin, 2014). In order to appropriately understand system behaviors, the study will retrieve data from embedded units of analysis, the system administrators, faculty, and campus-level administrators (Yin, 2014). This unit of analysis is well-suited for investigation by case study as it represents a “bounded system” with clear and distinct boundaries of both time and place (Creswell, 2007).

The selection of the Touro University and College system was purposefully selected as an extreme and exemplary case where the system pursued the expansion of new campuses housing expensive medical programs during a time of overall stagnant growth (Creswell, 2007). The case’s convenience arises from the author’s familiarity and access to key informants. This

convenience risks credibility and must be discussed in the final report (Creswell, 2007).

Furthermore, the nature of the Touro College and University System lends itself to investigation by case study due to its clear and identifiable boundaries.

The Touro College and University System (TCUS) was originally founded in 1971 in New York City as a small private liberal arts school with the intent to “strengthen the Judaic tradition and serve the broader community with compassion and dignity” (Touro, 2017). As the small campus grew, a new law school was opened on Long Island, NY, and the first medical programs were established at a distant campus at the newly formed Touro University California in the early 1990s (Touro, 2017). Following the turn of the millennium, the pace of expansion quickened with new health campuses in Nevada and New York, and additional campuses in Los Angeles, Miami, Paris, and Berlin. In 2011, the Touro College and University system came to an agreement with the Archdiocese of New York and purchased the New York Medical College in Valhalla, NY (Touro, 2017). At present, the Touro College and University system is the “largest not-for-profit independent institution of higher and professional education under Jewish auspices” and serves roughly 18,000 students in 30 schools across 4 countries (Touro, 2017).

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection for the case study approach is typically extensive and involves multiple sources (Creswell, 2007). An accurate and in depth understanding of the behaviors and characteristics of such a system must be contextualized through observations, in depth interviews with multiple representatives, historical documents, and artifacts. The reliance on multiple sources of data ensures that study’s findings are an accurate representation of the case.

During the case study, the researcher will collect an abundance of data from varied sources, such as institutional documents, memos, public records, press releases, media articles,

biographies, observations, board meeting minutes, and interviews. This broad spectrum of data sources is consistent with rigorous case study research (Yin, 2014). The selection of interviewees was purposive and aimed at identifying individuals with knowledge of system-wide behaviors as well as those that have a historical perspective. This sampling of interviewees resulted in a unique set of participants that participate in system governance, but are all situated at one local campus. This unique perspective allows for our participants to speak directly on the actions and interactions of the system while also clarifying the local perspective.

The general process by which data collection will take place will begin with non-human sources. This is to say that documents, media articles, and public records will be collected and analyzed to inform the direction of future lines of inquiry. This portion will provide a foundational understanding of the case that can be explored further through interviews with knowledgeable informants. The foundational understanding will seek to describe the historical development of the system and where and when it chose to expand. This portion of data collection will very clearly emphasize the etic perspective in understanding the case (Creswell, 2007).

When progressing to data collection through interviews, the researcher emphasized the emic perspective using open ended questions (Creswell, 2007). These lines of inquiry focused on contextualizing the themes identified in analysis of non-interview data in conjunction with a General Systems Theory framework and the Higher Education Ecosystem model.

### **Selection of Participants.**

Participants were purposively selected based on their position and ability to provide data that addresses the research questions. Overall, eleven individuals were invited to participate in the study, ten accepted. As a result of the purposive and convenience sampling, a large

proportion of participants are connected to the TCUS through campuses outside of the New York area. As such, the findings below should be understood in the context of potential sampling bias.

To guide the inquiry, a list of participants is provided below with a brief explanation of why they were selected. In the interests of preserving participant anonymity, names and titles have been removed and replaced with a generic title of Admin or Faculty. Member checking was completed in two ways. First, during interviews, participant explanations were often clarified and distilled to be sure there was no misunderstanding. Secondly, participants were offered the opportunity to review the transcripts of their interview prior to the final writing of this study.

*Table 1: Participant Selection and Rationale*

<i>Participant</i>	<i>Rationale</i>
Admin #1	Provide system level understanding of the role and functions of institutions as well as supracampus policy influences on governance practices
Admin #2	Sits at the intersection of system and institutional level governance. Able to characterize the nature of governance between system and institutional offices
Admin #3 Admin #4	While predominantly functioning at the campus level, these academic administrators share administrative roles and responsibilities with members of the system office.
Admin #5	Involved in the budgeting process conducted between system and institutional representation. Will provide specific context as to how,

	where, and why resources are allocated.
Admin #6	This individual will has a considerable understanding of the surrounding policy environment and the associated institutional practices.
Admin #7	This individual has a diverse background working at several different institutions of higher education. Their role is unique in that it is both administrative, while also being student centered.
Faculty #1 Faculty #2 Faculty #3	Faculty perceptions of system governance provide an important source of data as to whether system governance practices are interpreted as intended by campus and system administrators

**Interview Questions.**

Participants were asked questions based on their role, experience, and expertise. In accordance with IRB procedures, a separate set of questions was created for participants who were faculty versus administrators. Sample interview questions associated with overarching research questions and theoretical frameworks are below:

Table 2: Interview Questions

Question	RQ 1 or 2?	Who will be asked?	Theoretical Framework
Why has the Touro College and University System (TCUS) chosen to expand outside of its original geographic area?	1	Admin	GST & HEE
Which educational goals are of greatest importance to the system?	2	Admin & Faculty	GST & HEE
What institutions are most similar to TCUS?	1	Admin & Faculty	GST
Which state and federal policies are most important to TCUS ability to thrive as an institution?	2	Admin	HEE
What benefits do institutions receive from system membership?	Both	Admin & Faculty	GST
How do system and campus-level governance affect each other?	Both	Admin	GST & HEE
What challenges and barriers does TCUS face?	Both	Admin	GST & HEE
What role does faculty play in campus and system governance?	1	Admin & Faculty	GST
How do you perceive the long-term aspirations of the TCUS?	1	Admin & Faculty	GST

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Can you think of an anecdote that exemplifies TCUS governance at the system or campus level?	Both	Admin & Faculty	GST & HEE
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### **Data Analysis Procedures**

Analysis of the collected data was conducted concurrently with the collection in a constant comparative process (Thorne, 2000). Data collection and data analysis was completed in three phases. The first phase included the collection of multiple sources of data, excluding interviews. Analysis from the first phase informed the process that was followed in phase two, in-person interviews. Pertinent open-ended questions for in-person interviews with administrators and appropriate participants were formulated following the initial phase. Interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. Initial analysis was also conducted following each interview through a reflexive journaling (Creswell, 2007).

The final phase of analysis consolidated the findings of the first two stages into an overall understanding of the context of the case. Deductive and inductive coding will be used to organize and understand the data, with deductive codes derived from the literature. A list of inductive codes will be devised through the reading and rereading of interview transcripts and other collected data (Creswell, 2007). Coding and analysis will be completed with the help and use of the Dedoose software package. This final stage included the writing of a final report to present the data and findings. This process also carries with it a form of narrative analysis (Thorne, 2000). The process of re-contextualizing the data for the reader in a well written form is innately analytical and has required the author to accurately portray data in a way that is to be understood by the reader, while also truly representative of the case study (Thorne, 2000).



### **Connecting to Theory.**

It is important to reiterate that this study's overarching research questions are grounded in the theoretical framework of general systems theory and further characterized and informed by the application of the higher education ecosystem model. Consequently, such theoretical concepts played an important role in guiding the data analysis and in aiding the author to generate a true systems understanding of the case. In congruence with general systems theory this study did not merely seek to identify and describe the system structure of the case, but also analyzed the permeability of system boundaries and the ways and means by which the larger system influences its actions and vice versa. The higher education ecosystem model provided a generalized starting point for analyzing our data by breaking system influences into three levels, Policy, System Governance, and the individual institution. Ultimately, the data amended such initial assumptions of structure.

### **Credibility and Trustworthiness**

In completing a case study several issues arise that question the trustworthiness of findings and research methods. In order to appropriately account for such threats it will be necessary to address them explicitly in the following report. By addressing these concerns with the reader directly, my intention is to voluntarily provide an understanding of how and why certain decisions were made, and identify how, if at all, such decisions may have affected the study's findings. As the etic perspective can heavily influence descriptions of case studies, it will be important that readers understand the author's positionality and that interpretations are guided by the established theoretical framework of General Systems Theory that is further informed by the Higher Education Ecosystem model (Creswell, 2007).

Lastly, I am aware of my role as both an insider and an outsider in investigating the Touro College and University System. Professionally, I have been employed by this system for over 9 years and understand the cultural norms within the organization. Conversely, in my academic career, I have trained at two state-funded public institutions for my undergraduate and graduate degrees. While this diversity of experience could prove helpful, it may make my positionality unclear to readers. Specifically addressing this dual role and how, if at all, it impacted choices or interpretations will be an important factor in maintaining trust. To mitigate any concerns of author bias it will be best to allow the data or thick description to speak for itself whenever possible.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The two primary ethical considerations of this study are focused around the pursuit of truth and the protection of subjects/interviewees. While the concept of pursuing truth for what it is may seem straightforward, the practice in a qualitative case study built on a constructivist paradigm emphasizes the importance of describing the perception of truth as experienced by each subject. Ethically, it is not the author's role or duty to downplay controversial opinions or actions, nor to ignore the description of practices that might be viewed or interpreted in a negative light. In the same way, the author has not inherently assumed, as in other research methodologies, a critical approach to his interpretation of system governance and behaviors. The pursuit of truth in this case study is that accurate depiction of the experiences and perceptions of those participating in system governance at a private non-profit system.

The second ethical consideration is straightforward and potentially at odds with the first. In this study there is the potential for subjects and interviewees to present information that portrays their institutions or the larger system in less than favorable terms. As the system under

investigation is a non-tenure granting institution, faculty, administrators, and other employees may place themselves at risk by sharing some perspectives. Clearly preserving anonymity is of the utmost concern for the researcher. However, by nature of the information shared it is entirely possible that anonymity may not be assured and in such instances protection of the subjects and interviewees takes priority over the pursuit of truth. As a result of this study's unique pool of participants, great lengths have been taken to preserve the anonymity of the participants. No titles, names, or roles have been shared in the final presentation of data.

### **Summary**

The chapter above has presented a distinct plan for a single qualitative case study of a private non-profit system of higher education. The purpose of this case study is to describe perceptions of the governance practices of a relatively new and unique system in American higher education. The data collection and analysis procedures guided by the theoretical framework of general systems theory provide a foundation of methodological rigor that supports the study's credibility and trustworthiness. The findings from this study aim to accurately portray how such a system fits into the larger higher education enterprise while also providing higher education leaders and policymakers with an in depth description of governance practices at a non-traditional university system.

## **Chapter 4: Presentation of Data**

In accordance with the procedures set forth in the preceding chapter, what follows is the result of extensive data collection aimed at answering this study's two research questions: How does the Touro College and University System fit into the greater higher education enterprise? What policy or environmental considerations are most likely to influence private non-profit system governance? The findings of this case study begin with a brief introduction regarding the size and scope of the system under investigation to an understanding of the status quo. Built upon this understanding is a description of the system's historical evolution from its inception to current form with emphasis on events that connect to the stated research questions. Lastly, the system's interdependence, perceptions of environmental influences, and governance practices will be further contextualized through participant interviews.

### **Introduction to the Case**

The following case study focuses on The Touro College and University System (TCUS). TCUS is the "largest not-for-profit independent institution of higher and professional education under Jewish auspices" and serves roughly 18,000 students in 30 schools across 4 countries (Touro, 2017). The system is more aptly subdivided into five distinct divisions and/or campuses: Touro College, Touro University California, Touro University Nevada, the New York Medical College, and Touro University Worldwide (Touro, 2017). As a system, TCUS holds no consistent Carnegie classification, but its five major divisions and/or campus are all present in the classification's listings (Carnegie, 2018).

The eldest and most diverse of the five is Touro College located in New York City. It is home to a student population of 12,381 and is classified as a Master's College with a majority of undergraduates (Carnegie, 2018). Touro College is fully accredited by the Middle States

Commission on Higher Education and provides undergraduate offerings in business, education, Jewish studies, social work, health sciences, and technology are spread over 20 different locations on Long Island and the five boroughs of New York. Its graduate programs extend training in the undergraduate disciplines and also include law, pharmacy, allied health professions, dentistry, and the college of osteopathic medicine. Touro College also serves as the point of origin for three accredited branch campuses in Moscow, Berlin, and Israel (Touro, 2017).

Administratively, Touro University California and Touro University Nevada comprise the western division of TCUS, and are home to 1,378 and 1,319 students respectively. Both institutions are categorized as Special Focus Four-Year: Medical Schools & Centers and are comprised of a large majority of graduate students with an overwhelming focus on medical and health professions. Both campuses are currently accredited under the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and receive professional accreditation for programs in osteopathic medicine, pharmacy, physician assistant studies, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and nursing. While geographically closer to Touro College, the New York Medical College in Valhalla, NY also maintains its independent classification. It is home to 1,482 students, shares the classification of Special Focus Four-Year: Medical Schools & Centers, but houses graduate programs exclusively (Carnegie, 2018). The New York Medical College also maintains separate institutional accreditation from Touro College through the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Interestingly, the Touro College of Dental Medicine is housed on the campus of the New York Medical College, but administrative oversight is maintained by Touro College.

Touro University Worldwide is TCUS' second foray into the online education space. Headquartered in Los Alamitos, California, Touro University Worldwide reports a student

population of 541 and is categorized as Master's Colleges & Universities: Small Programs with a Majority of Graduate students (Carnegie, 2018). It too, is fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Touro University Worldwide's online offerings include bachelors and master's degrees in Schools of Business, Psychology, Health and Human Services, and General Studies (TUW, 2018). Uniquely, Touro University Worldwide also operates the Touro College Los Angeles Division, an on-campus program designed to "combine Judaic studies with liberal arts and pre-professional courses in a supportive, Torah-observant environment" (TUW, 2018).

The varied and diverse program offerings, areas of specialization, and geographical distribution of the TCUS's member campuses may seem peculiar when compared to *traditional* four-year campuses and systems seen in the United States. As a non-profit system, the ubiquitous forces of financial scarcity must certainly play a role in the system's actions, but fail to adequately account for many of its operations if it were a purely profit driven enterprise. What follows below is a description of the system's historical evolution from its inception to current form. That description is then given further context by an analysis of system, institution, and program-level mission statements. Lastly, the system's interdependence, perceptions of environmental influences, and governance practices will be further contextualized through participant interviews.

## **Historical Context**

Without question, the Touro College and University System was founded with a defined purpose. While that purpose can be characterized by a dominant religious tradition, it should be noted that the purpose itself formed as a reaction to the perceived shortcomings of American higher education in the late 1960s. Of primary concern to the founders was the erosion of the

Jewish community through the secularization of college-aged students amid the shifting morals and civil unrest on college campuses at the time. Given the country's transition to mass higher education, the founders believed that the Jewish community's reliance on elementary and secondary education as the only means to socialize tradition and culture was untenable in the longer term (Weisz, 2012).

Comparatively, at the time of Touro's charter, 58 Christian churches had established over 700 colleges and universities while only two institutions had been founded under Jewish auspices (Weisz, 2012). The new college aimed to combine the important elements of a liberal arts education without sacrificing the continued study of the Torah and Talmud. In lieu of separating students from their Jewish identities through college education, Touro aimed to provide an alternative that actually strengthened a student's religious foundation while simultaneously preparing them for a career or graduate study. Its clear mission, religious overtones, and slight social conservatism were proclaimed by the first Chairman of the Board of Trustees in 1971:

We promise you a kosher school. Here you will not find promiscuity. You will not find the drugs and political turmoil that exist at other colleges. Here you will not find the nihilism nor the negativity about Judaism that drains the life of our people. Here you will find learning and *Yiddishket*. And this will make you not only wise, but also strong.

It is quite apparent that at its inception, Touro College pursued a course that was mission centric as it aimed to provide a unique educational service to a specific population. However, even at its founding, administrators had aspirations of a larger system of colleges that shared core values delivered in a way that benefited their local communities.

The systems' charter board of trustees was equipped with considerable wealth and political power. The chair was a successful philanthropist, real estate investor, and pioneer in the nursing home industry. Two, well qualified academics gave credence to curricular offerings of the new school. Similarly, important leaders in the Orthodox community were also named. A US Congressman, local assemblyman, several successful attorneys, and a number of extraordinarily successful industrial leaders filled out what became an effective, and motivated board of trustees for the new college (Weisz, 2012). With the board's support the college grew quickly. In 1972, Touro opened its first School of Physician Assistant studies only 7 years after the first program of the profession launched at Duke University. At the start of its fourth year it opened a women's division and a school of general studies for the underserved. Simultaneously, planning for a new law and medical school were underway and slated to begin in the fall of 1975 and 1976, respectively.

The young system's growth was stopped suddenly in the fall of 1974 in the wake of the New York nursing home scandal of 1975. Touro's chairman of the board of trustees was indicted and ultimately convicted and sentenced to prison. Although the institution was never a party to any of the crimes, the press routinely used the chair's title and his affiliation with the college in its reporting. A \$450,000 donation along with the vast majority of its well-connected trustees resigned (Hess, 1975). In the wake of the scandal the young college lost its funding and community support for the medical and law schools, but persisted on its path in pursuit of its mission. However, the next few years provided evidence of a resilient institution adapting to its changing circumstances.

In what was to become a recurring theme in its governance practices, Touro diversified its service mission and began to reach out beyond the Jewish community in providing service to the



community, in particular the underserved. Its first endeavor came in the form of the Adult Program for Excellence (APEX). APEX was designed for disadvantaged adults from communities of lower socioeconomic status. Adults could attend classes in the humanities while also earning course credit towards their Associate Degree for work and life experience. The program identified potential students through several social welfare programs in the city and did not rely alone on its appeal to students seeking a Judaic education. Ultimately, APEX succeeded in fulfilling the institution's mission of social responsibility while also serving as a successful profit center for the young institution (Weisz, 2012).

Presented with the success of APEX, additional programs for retired adults and new immigrants (new Americans) were created and whose students were eligible for governmental support through the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). The Retired Adult Program (RAP) was well attended by a diverse group of about 400 students in its first year, followed by 750 students in its second year taking courses in the humanities, Jewish studies, and the sciences (Buder, 1977). The Educational Program for the Advancement of New Americans (EPANA), also supported by government tuition programs, served the growing immigrant population fleeing Soviet Russia. EPANA provided courses in English, humanities, and career specialties aimed and providing newcomers with the necessary skills to succeed in their new country. These three programs, APEX, RAP, and EPANA were all housed in the school of general studies which grew to become the "financial engine" of the College (Weisz, 2012).

Following the nursing home scandal of 1974, the growth and financial security of the new institution took on a new direction. Instead of what was determined by the new board to be an overreliance on external fundraising, the institutions shifted its operations in 1975 to reduce its operating budget's dependence on philanthropy from 63% to 10% by 1978. The shift in the

institution's philosophy toward financial independence supported its founders' beliefs "that a school governed mainly by its largest donors was an invitation to corruption" (Weisz, 2012). Finding itself on stable financial ground allowed the institution to pivot yet again and return to original mission of providing educational opportunities for the city's observant Jewish population. In the mid-1970s, as the City University in Brooklyn began to fall out of favor with the more orthodox segments of the population. Touro expanded again to provide opportunities for students seeking both education in the Torah and career studies. Different from its original design, Touro amended its program offerings to meet the need of the "yeshiva students and seminary graduates" who often rejected contemporary college education in any form (Weisz, 2012). The emerging balance between service to a devout Jewish identity and the commitment to social justice through more secular academic programs became the hallmark and foundation of what the system would become.

Continued expansion in the 1980s and 1990s strengthened the commitment to financial independence while maintaining the institution's balance of religious purpose and secular existence. This time frame saw the establishment of Touro's Law School, biomedical programs in occupational and physical therapy, and a college of advanced Jewish studies all in the greater New York City Area. These decades also witnessed TCUS' first expansions outside of New York and the United States. As the Soviet Union was nearing collapse, Touro established its first international campus, and the "first American sponsored degree program" in Moscow (Weisz, 2012). The new school included programs aimed at business administration as well as a thriving Jewish studies program. The same model, based on local need, was later exported to other international sites: Paris, Berlin, and Israel.

In the early 1990s, the changing tides of governmental tuition support programs and the rising demand for health professions provided an opportunity for Touro to “refocus toward proven profit centers, such as Touro’s professional schools in health, education, and business” (Weisz, 2012). In 1997, the first of Touro’s medical schools opened in the San Francisco bay area. Shortly thereafter, at the forceful direction of the leaders and amongst strong misgivings from the board, the system allocated funds for the development of an entirely online school, Touro University International. The online university forged successful relationships with the active military who often struggled completing college degrees due to frequent relocations. By 2001, Touro University International was up and running and the California medical school had recently moved to its permanent home at Mare Island, a decommissioned naval base. Both were now generating revenue that covered the entirety of their operating costs.

Touro’s expansion into medical education continued in 2004 with the founding of a campus in the suburbs of Las Vegas, NV. At the time, Las Vegas was the largest metropolitan area in the United States without a medical school, and the state ranked very near the bottom of national health indicators such as physician to patient ratio. Three short years after the opening of the Nevada campus, another osteopathic medical school was opened in the Harlem section of Manhattan. The Harlem campus followed the same model as those set by the California and Nevada campuses. The Harlem campus would later double in size and expand to a branch campus in Middletown, NY about 65 miles north. By the close of the decade, the system’s multiple thriving medical campuses provided enormous financial stability and positioned Touro for its next great undertaking. In lieu of founding a new school, TCUS arranged to acquire a large and historic medical school. The New York Medical College in Valhalla, NY was owned by the archdiocese of New York and found itself in a precarious financial position (Weisz, 2012). The

acquisition and affiliation was completed in 2012 allowing the Touro College and University System, for the first time, to grant Medical Doctorate (M.D.) degrees.

The financial stability and prestige brought to the system by the expanding medical programs was complemented by plans to make a measurable increase in the system's endowment. After courting several offers, the system chose to sell its successful online division, Touro University International, to a private entity for \$190 million (Chronicle, 2007). The large sum more than quadrupled the system's existing endowment and provided the foundation for future growth and stability (Weisz, 2012).

At the time of this study, the description above is very much the current structural reality of the Touro College and University System. However, as the data will show, there is no shortage of opportunity or intent for the system to continue its expansion in any number of ways. In the following section, interview data will be presented to demonstrate the perceptions of how and why a small, private, non-profit system chose to expand and pursue such a path.

### **Interview Data**

Perceptions of private non-profit system governance manifest in various ways. Furthermore, the breadth and variety of institutional actions and behaviors that constitute "governance" pose a unique challenge in presenting a rational description of participant interviews regarding the topic. Inductive coding of interview data driven by interview questions derived from the review of literature elicited several contextual areas or themes in which governance actions were perceived by the participants: Coordination of Resources, Establishing Goals and Priorities, Faculty Role in Governance, Importance of Leadership, and Managing External Influences. These themes naturally reflect common issues, responsibilities, and functions that are understood to be part of system and institutional governance in higher

education. However, at times, there exists a considerable diversity in how these governance practices are perceived by participants.

With the intent to provide a rational framework to inform the presentation of the interview data, the study's research questions will serve as guideposts. This chapter will be broken into three major sections, one section for each of the research questions and a third section to highlight additional findings that fall outside of their scope. The themes, their related interview data, and the author's contextual description, where necessary, will serve to provide the reader added clarity on the TCUS system governance. As a qualitative case study, the author has chosen to provide thick description and allow the data to "speak for itself" whenever possible.

### **How does the Touro College and University System fit into the greater higher education enterprise?**

The above research question should be understood in the context of the study's guiding theoretical framework, general systems theory. As such, the data below describes participant perceptions of the TCUS in relation to other analogous higher education institutions and systems. Within the national higher education landscape, data will also be presented to provide added context and nuance to the understanding of governance structure and practices of the system under study to include goal setting, coordination of resources, faculty participation, and governance styles.

#### ***Analogous Systems.***

Perhaps the best starting point for this discussion begins with an aphorism regarding system governance shared during the study, "everything is unique in higher education and nothing is unique in higher education. There are only certain number of ways you can organize

things when systems and institutions each want to imitate one another.” (Admin #6, personal communication). Even with such a nod to the isomorphism ever present in American Higher Education, study participants universally identified the peculiarities and uniqueness of the Touro College and University System when comparing it with other systems in the nation.

I don't know if there are very many institutions that are like this or similar to Touro in its entirety. I mean, there, there are definitely different osteopathic schools that are kind of branching out into the same branch campus model that we have. They don't necessarily have all of the diversity of programs that the Touro college system has... for example, Rocky Vista was started in Colorado, opened just recently opened a branch campus in Utah, so very similar model where they have a DO program in each place and I think a pharm program in each, but they're kind of more specifically in the health sciences realm. Whereas Touro has health sciences, but it also has, you know, the Jewish men's school in New York and they also have the campus in Israel. (Faculty #2, personal communication)

As noted above, a common practice of participants searching for similarities in other institutions focused on the system's course offerings and large number of health sciences universities:

You could look at A. T. Still, you could look at a New York Institute of Technology that has two or three campuses, or other institutions that have two or three campuses. But really when you look at it, you know, from a religious standpoint, as a Jewish institution, there aren't other Jewish institutions that do this. Almost everybody else who does this is private non-sectarian or public... you can look at a university system of a state. Texas has the UT system, the tech system, so we're similar to that, but I would dare say that when you're looking at healthcare as being the primary focus, at least as far as the budget goes,

um, you know, you'd have to look at A.T. Still or Midwestern. (Admin #3, personal communication)

Below, *Table 1* provides a breakdown of the multistate and multi-campus osteopathic medical schools in the United States.

*Table 3: Multistate and Multi-campus Osteopathic Medical Schools*

<b>System</b>	<b>System Control</b>	<b>No. of Campuses</b>	<b>No. of States</b>	<b>States</b>
Western	Private, non-profit	2	2	CA, OR
TCUS	Private, non-profit	4	3	NY, NV, CA
Rocky Vista	Private, For-profit	2	2	UT, CO
Midwestern	Private, non-profit	2	2	IL, AZ
A.T. Still	Private, non-profit	2	2	MO, AZ
KCUMB	Public	2	1	MO
Ohio Univ.	Private, non-profit	3	1	OH
Nova	Private, For-profit	2	1	FL
Mich. State	Public	3	1	MI
NYIT	Private, non-profit	2	2	AR, NY
LECOM	Private, non-profit	3	2	PA, FL
PCOM	Private, non-profit	3	2	PA, GA
Edward Via	Private, non-profit	3	3	VA, AL, SC

*Note:* Data for this table was retrieved from <http://www.aacom.org/>

In comparing to public institutions, another participant shared:

There's portions of systems that are similar... for example, within the Touro College University system, there are now five schools of medicine. We are the second largest

producers of medical students in the country, second only to the California State University system (Admin #5, personal communication).

This assertion is not merely a marketing line. UC Health is home to 6 medical schools at the Irvine, LA, Davis, San Francisco, Riverside, and San Diego Campuses matriculating a total of 751 students in 2018 (UC Health, 2019) . Touro by comparison, matriculated a total of 802 first year students across its 5 campuses (Touro, 2018). A meaningful conversation cataloging the differences and similarities between the publicly funded and research focused allopathic schools of the California System with those of the osteopathic dominated programs of TCUS may be warranted, but is outside the scope of this study. To be clear, the TCUS' emphasis on medical education makes it one of the largest players in this academic space.

Returning to system structure however, beyond their course offerings and medically focused campuses, participants compared the TCUS with other systems within the private sector:

In terms of other private not for profit systems that go beyond the state type of system, you have National University, right? They have a, they have their headquarters in California, have campuses throughout California, have some up in the Pacific northwest, I think at least one on the east coast. Mixture of liberal arts professional programs. Um, structurally size wise, that's about the same. (Admin #2, personal communication)

Are there other private not for profit systems that exists kind of on, on the meta-level?

Yes, I believe that there are, but then when you get down to kind of being Jewish sponsored and kind of having the level of breadth [of Touro] I think we have as far as kind of the academic offerings across the 30-ish campuses or sites that exist... I don't know of another. (Admin #4, personal communication)



One participant chose to express similarities based on geographic distribution:

I'm thinking the University of Texas actually not from governance, right? But from a, from a structural perspective that you've got sort of urban, urban focus where you've got a bunch of institutions densely and then you're going to have satellite areas around the large geographic area provides a different kind of management governance and student service problem... so there I think on any given attribute, there are similarities with other systems. Having said that, I think we're, we're a little bit unique in that combination of that and being religiously informed. (Admin #6, personal communication)

Ultimately, conversations regarding the Touro College and University System and its similarities followed a similar formula. Participants were quick to identify areas where Touro's campus were similar to others while adding the caveat that Touro functions slightly different. Commonly, those differences emanated from the historical and religious underpinnings of Touro College's original founding and diversity of programs present at the original campus.

Touro is unbelievably unique in the sense that you might have a religious faith based institution that has other programs that you would find at any other university. Chapman University for example is a faith based institution. Your religion doesn't make any difference to go there. They're not producing priests and nuns and rabbis and other clergy, but they're producing people who that work in film and Law and pharmacy and so on and so forth. Touro produces rabbis and produces other clergy type related people but also produces educators. It produces masters in business administration, nurses and PA's and physicians and all kinds of different graduates out there. I don't know a lot of other institutions that are our size, 20,000 total students that produce that variety. (Admin #5, personal communication)

### *System Structure.*

Virtually all of the participants echoed the findings from earlier in this chapter describing the TCUS system structure - a central system office with five or so geographic hubs operating amidst one another. However, there exists within that structure a culture of understanding that the system office is known as “New York”. Furthermore, that understanding is not entirely a reference to the office’s geographic location but also to its internal closeness via personnel and history with the original Touro College campuses. While governance styles and practices will be discussed later, several participants emphasized the importance of Touro College serving as the context for the system office.

The system is organized in such a way that there's very much a focus around Touro college in New York... it's more kind of the New York group is trying to organize itself more centrally as a university and then there are the satellite geography groups, and each of those is highly professional focused in small topical areas. (Admin #6, personal communication)

I think to me the thing that is distinctive about the system as opposed to the institution is the geographic dispersion and the fact that this New York side is a deconstructed university, which is incredibly impactful in how they do things and how we experience what they do. (Admin #6, personal communication)

The concept of a deconstructed university is exemplary of this chapter’s earlier description of Touro College noting the considerable breadth of program offerings at 20 different locations across the five boroughs and long island. Furthering the importance of Touro College or “New

York” as the center of the system, participants identified that system leadership often emerged from the original Touro College:

It's set up from the top down. So having one president who makes decision and the board of [trustees] and the deans and all of that, how they make decisions, but they're not necessarily making decisions together... So there are two portions of the system hierarchy right now. There is the good old boys club and those founding members, some of them still exist within Touro from the original they are still there, and they still exist, and then there is the new regime, let's say, which has different ideas and yet they are trying to coexist together. (Admin #1, personal communication)

Understanding the organizational context of the system office provides greater understanding of how and why it operates as it does.

A final note regarding the system’s religious affiliation is likely best categorized as a structural component of the system and should be discussed briefly here. As an institution founded on Judaic principles there exist a number of system-wide rules that govern all of the TCUS campuses. Examples of such rules include keeping kosher food on campus and adhering to academic calendars and testing schedules that do not conflict with High Holidays. The intent of these rules is not to exclude students of differing faiths, but to maintain an academic environment that does not conflict with the religious requirements of an observant Jewish Student.

One of the populations that they're really trying to serve is observant Jewish students. That's one of the key educational goals is to make an educational setting that is fully accessible to observant Jewish students. And that's a driving structural goal at the system level that'll trickle down everywhere else. (Admin #6, personal communication)

The system has unique goals that include sort of the Judaic tradition of intellectual pursuit, social justice and service to humanity, which kind of shapes the mission of all the campuses... I know there is a sense of we want to be excellent in teaching, we want to maintain the highest excellence and in ethics and values, we want to serve humanity and we want to respect the background and culture of the faculty and students. And this is particularly important from the Jewish perspective, in that many [other] campuses ignore things like high holidays and the need for keeping kosher and so forth. (Admin #2, personal communication)

Participants were very careful to ensure that the characterization of TCUS' religious influence was not diminutive or overly prescriptive, but a structural policy aimed and preserving opportunities for students of Jewish faith.

It's not like there's a dictated perspective on education that is required for all. I mean, there are some faith based campuses and systems where you have to sign basically a loyalty oath that you respect certain things that are pushed down from whatever faith based group is supporting the system. You will not see that here... it is making it so that people from all sorts of different faiths can study here and succeed here and they will not be penalized for, you know, their faith. (Admin #2, personal communication)

### ***Goal Setting.***

As explored in the literature review, “the setting of purposes and goals of the organization” is a core function of system governance (Hearn & McLendon, 2012). In recounting their perceptions of system goals, participants diverged, sometimes with vigor, in how the system

establishes and pursues its goals. Additional coding of the goal setting context reveals two major areas of emphasis, mission centered and market oriented goal setting. A third area also emerged which has been tagged as participant cynicism - relating to dissatisfaction with system goal setting. In reporting these perceptions it is not within this study's epistemological assumptions to assess the veracity of any participant's perceptions. Instead this study aims to describe the reality of the context in which each participant resides, identifying that their perception is their truth.

Conversations that discussed system goals as being mission centered reflect a structural understanding of how those goals influence system governance. The alignment of member institutions and how they acclimate to the system mission goals results in how these participants experience the system goals.

The system's mission statement... are these three pillars, service to humanity, social justice, intellectual pursuit. And so that's the alignment that we all are required to align our goals and we have all done. We've grown or had our culture adjusted in some cases when schools had been acquired to align in those ways. So that's where it's a meaningful thing to see educational goals go across the system in that way. It's mission. We're very mission driven as a system. (Admin #6, personal communication)

As suggested, some participants perceive system goals as pursuing service to humanity:

The mission kind of speaks to providing individuals who identify as Jewish a place to go to school and have a variety of different career paths open to them and to be able to practice their faith that is in line with an orthodox tradition. (Admin #4, personal communication)

My perception is that the system overall is still really committed to helping students who do not have the same opportunities that other students have. Meaning a low income or certain religions or things like that, they really are still committed to finding diverse groups of students that they can help in a meaningful way. (Admin #1, personal communication)

Others focus more broadly on a combination of the social justice and intellectual pursuit mission points.

They're trying to graduate good, competent, primarily health care providers and they're trying to help others. So I think if you look at that, and not being skeptical, it's a good vision, it's a good mission. We're trying to educate, we're trying to lead, we're trying to serve. So those things. I think overall or what we do, and I think that's why faculty keep working. That's why faculty stay, they feel like there's a good end result for every time they impart knowledge and that the student, you know, goes through their class successfully, and the end result is an educated practitioner who's going to do good. I think overall there are very good motives and beliefs behind the system and the campuses. (Admin #7, personal communication)

So I think again it is not growth just for growth sake, but growth to develop a portfolio of institutions that have similar values, know the idea of we're not here to be in the AAU ranks of research university systems which drives a lot of, a lot of campuses. We are here primarily for the students and for support, for service to the underserved and giving the students the sense that that's important. (Admin #2, personal communication)

The three pillars of the system mission clearly translate to some participants understanding of the system goals.

Juxtaposed to the aspirational goals set out in mission statements, many participants viewed system goals in a far more pragmatic, market oriented way. After all, as a private, non-profit system, TCUS relies almost entirely on tuition revenue to fund its operations. The perspective that TCUS, its campuses, and their students participate in a marketplace is not uncommon amongst study participants.

When you look at the outcomes, I think our educational goals are, as crass as it may sound, is to prepare these students for the marketplace. (Admin #3, personal communication)

We're looking at how can we expand to meet the needs of the marketplace. They need more people doing autism work in the district. We're creating an autism program. They need more nurse anesthetists were trying to find out how we do that now. (Admin #3, personal communication)

I think their philosophy is you need to be growing or you're shrinking. And I think they're just looking at how they can look for marketplaces. They saw that a medical school in [California] would be good... there's no medical school in Las Vegas, so they did that. I think they saw the opportunity to take a failing medical school at New York medical college and turned it around to become a successful one, which they've done... So what we have is opportunities and how can we expand. (Admin #3, personal communication)

The growth mindset is clearly an important part of how participants perceive system goals. Expansion has been an ever present force for every participant, but not all chose expansion as their point of reference. Some view system goals as being aimed toward maximizing efficiencies:

I think a goal is [asking] how do you create better efficiencies, how do you, help campuses function and have technology that is consistent with the times that we're living in. So I think that's been what I've seen a lot at the system level. (Admin #4, personal communication)

Or encouraging an entrepreneurial spirit that benefits the system.

No one says it this way, but I think that the kind of idea is, you know, let the flower bloom, wherever they, wherever they spring up is pretty much what fits in line with how things evolve here. (Admin #4, personal communication)

I just know that they want to make sure whatever enterprise we go into will help support the bigger system so that it, you know, helps everybody. The rising tide floats all boats sort of thing. (Admin #2, personal communication)

Even at a private, non-profit system, the framing of these market oriented goals did not always sit well with all participants.

Cynicism regarding system goals was at times blatant. Participants that shared these feelings were, at moments, emphatic and clearly felt that their position was justified with experiences to support their claims.

We are trying to get as many students through the door so that we can have a solid bottom line. (Faculty #2, personal communication)



I think the end game is for the system to educate as many students as they can with the smallest amount of resources that they can provide. (Admin #1, personal communication)

New York, it seems to me, and this again may be my inner cynic, the goal seems to be to make as much money as possible to sink into everything in New York. (Faculty #3, personal communication)

The foundations of these perceptions were often rooted in experiences where the needs of the system outweighed the needs of a subunit.

The clash between system mission and market oriented goals was best framed in a holistic understanding that justified the market orientation as a method to serve the system's diverse mission.

I know it's not money, it's money, but it's not. Nobody makes money. We don't have shareholders. We have a nonprofit, so the money goes back into the system and we try to utilize it as best we can. But the more money, the more students we bring in, the more growth you have, the more money you have to make the place nicer, to hire the people you want, the talent you want to hire, to make the facilities what you want them to be. Those kinds of things are all part of the sustainability and the growth of the programs. And if we just sat on our laurels and just have this constant influx, we could survive and manage well. But when you can grow, you can do things. When you have money, you have an instrument with which you can do more things to improve quality. (Admin #3, personal communication)

Specifically, the expansion of medical and health sciences programs aligned perfectly with the system's need and mission. According to one participant, those expansions "serve two purposes. It helps the health [of the community], helps people, provides opportunities, and it makes, makes money for the system." (Admin #7, personal communication)

### ***Coordination of Resources.***

While highlighted above in reference to the goal setting activities of the system, the coordination of resources is a central function of the system at the behest of its board of trustees. This contextual area served as a dominant source of understanding and sometimes angst in how the participants articulated their perceptions of system governance. Participants shared a myriad of examples in which the coordination of system resources benefited individual campuses. These topics also tend to lend great insight into the mechanisms and processes by which the system balances the relative need for resources across multiple institutions. These processes are by no means perceived in the same manner or positivity by each participant. In the competition for scarce system resources, each campus, college, program, or subunit experiences their need for resources in a uniquely personal context.

In an attempt to underscore the importance of this system function, and the importance of context to the study's participants, what follows is a comprehensive description of the perceived benefits of system resource allocation, the methods by which the system balances those resources, and the resulting frustrations this governance task creates. This subsection will close with participant acknowledgements as to importance of understanding "relative need".

First and foremost, the benefits of a large system managing and coordinating resources are perceived as generating efficiencies or access to capital that are typically unavailable to smaller, individual campuses:

I've been on a tiny little campus this size and there's a lot you can't buy. There's a lot you just cannot afford, no access to it, you're not going to get qualtrics. So, so there's a real benefit there from that perspective. Um, the system really benefits partly from, again, this kind of activity, the system benefits because it can spread out the inefficiencies if it's got inefficient units or units that are less effective. (Admin #6, personal communication)

So being part of a larger system does have some really great advantages first and foremost from where I sit, um, it is, it has assisted us greatly with access to capital and access to financing and financing capital expansion. (Admin #5, personal communication)

You know, you have the money to get big, big things. So in a sense like capital, you have the capital funding to do big changes. (Admin #7, personal communication)

As technology continues to evolve and integrate into the classroom, all institutions struggle with the realities relating to the significant cost and scope of information technology upgrades.

There's been a lot of efforts made as to how can we use technology in order to improve our delivery of services, education, etc. (Admin #4, personal communication)

Another component is purchasing power. So for example, we transitioned from blackboard to canvas. Okay. If we were to do it on a standalone campus level basis, it would be probably double the cost, but we did it at a system level and not saying that the canvas expansion wasn't a multimillion dollar expansion, but we only needed to pay a percentage of that. (Admin #5, personal communication)

Many of the other software programs that have a universal need, can be purchased that way and supported that way rather than have everybody have their own bid system going out and trying to get these piecemeal. (Admin #2, personal communication)

Even for relatively small campuses, the opportunities that economies of scale offer are real, tangible benefits to member campuses and programs.

You wouldn't think that Toner and copy paper are a big deal, but you know, we spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on simple expenses. But if we can get a group purchasing contract at the system level for paper, that'll save us five, \$6,000 a year just in copy paper, multiply that by six or seven different office supply items. You just saved 50,000 bucks, which is the equivalent of maybe hiring another administrative assistant in the department. (Admin #5, personal communication)

Beyond the benefits enjoyed by individual campuses, the geographic dispersion and diversity of institutional specializations has resulted in externalities that benefit the system in synergistic ways. Previous literature has referred to these synergies as "Systemness" (Zimpher, 2013). For the system under study, such benefits include added stability in a changing higher education environment.

I think the system's always interested in opportunities for expansion simply because, as with many systems, they are facing challenges, particularly at the undergraduate level, you know, undergraduate, liberal arts based education is a real challenge these days just in terms of enrollment, in terms of support. So I think they want stability by having a diverse portfolio. (Admin #2, personal communication)

Also, in finding opportunities to further support the mission

We just acquired a school of radiology that was originally run by [another school] in New York. Okay. And so they kicked the program because it's a two year program and that type of student doesn't really fit in with their other programs. And so by type of student, I mean it's more of a low income student maybe a first generation. But you know, Touro looked at this program and said, 'hey, you know what, we want to give these students a home. We want to give them a chance to finish their degrees. (Admin #1, personal communication)

Beyond financial benefits, a system is also poised to benefit from the coordination of academic, research and human resources.

I mean you have potential research teams on, you know, got five medical schools, you've got many other healthcare programs that can share ideas, share resources that, that would be much, much more synergistic than if just one group at one campus trying to do it on their own. So that's relatively lower hanging fruit in that it's just a matter of trying to get those groups of people matched up and, the research infrastructure such that we can make it transparent. (Admin #2, personal communication)

In theory there is an ability to leverage assets across the system, in practice, each program, even down to the smallest program... each program has grown up in a silo... and it's not happening yet, but in theory we could do classes for medical students that are produced out of one campus and then used in all campuses. You could, we could drive efficiencies. The problem is, is that that was not thought of before. (Admin #3, personal communication)

### *Governance Styles.*

The sheer complexity of the varied forms and frameworks used to evaluate governance and management styles inherently makes the perceptions of participant experiences uniquely difficult to describe. In accordance with the study's theoretical framework, General systems theory, these descriptions aim at providing the contextual understanding of how the TCUS governs and manages its member institutions. The emphasis of this subsection will be to describe perceptions of the directionality and character of the controls and decision making mechanisms of the system and its member institutions. Descriptions of the role of faculty and the external forces that shape the system and its behavior will be described in greater detail in the sections that follow.

Perhaps it is this topic of governance styles that revealed the greatest variation in participant reports over any other subject. Even as a number of participants may find consensus in one area, there are other members who share experiences directly contradicting such a consensus. One participant's observation is particularly demonstrative of the data at hand: "a lot of people throwing a lot of spaghetti at a lot of walls, and it's, it's not clear who's talking to whom" (Admin #6, personal communication). Speaking generally, perceptions of system governance ranged from intensely micro managerial to structurally laissez-faire. Some described a rational division of responsibilities between the system and its campuses while others described the system office as an omnipresent and overbearing force disrupting the regular functions of the institution. The truth here varies, based on the lived experiences of each participant. What follows in the remainder of this subsection is the presentation of data that sufficiently offers a view into the breadth and depth of participant perceptions of how the TCUS tackles the challenge of system governance.

Several interviews painted a picture of a rational system with differentiated responsibilities among system administrations and the member institutions. The system office typically handles the fiduciary responsibilities while the campuses are left to self-direct their programs within the system mission.

The campuses are, are expected to, are required to align their missions to the system mission and then they're required to align their activity to their own missions. (Admin #6, personal communication)

Our system is different than most of the others I've been in. The others that I've been involved with, the boards, whether the board of trustees, board of regents, board of directors... all the same thing in governance board. Our board is largely, a fiducial board, they want to make sure that whatever we do, we stay in budget so we don't get into trouble. So they're relatively, not relatively, they're very hands off now. (Admin #2, personal communication)

The hands off nature of the system office was echoed in a number of ways as participants described considerable independence at the campus level in the way they pursued their mission.

We pretty much have free reign of setting up our own goals... I think one of the things that the system allows us to do is to be nimble. I think they value entrepreneurial programming... And so even though the system may be headquartered in New York, there are, what feel like local endeavors... (Admin #3, personal communication)

There's no interference academic academically, educationally. The campuses are very independent. I think they're even independent within the New York umbrella. So those

small little pieces, our schools run, the schools run themselves and then the programs run themselves... I don't think they could dictate if they wanted to, but they don't. And that's important. That's really important. I would say the system really does a laudable job of knowing when to keep his hands off. But that means that everybody has to carry their own weight. (Admin #6, personal communication)

It's not difficult, but you still want to maintain your own identity, but you're still a part of this bigger system. And so wanting to maintain your identity, but participating in a larger system, sometimes you just have to recognize that, hey, we're all in this together. (Admin #5, personal communication)

Contrary to the examples of campus independence above, a number of participants viewed the system policies and actions as interference or micromanagement outside of their scope.

From the way that it's set up from the top down. So having one president who makes decision and the board of governors and the deans and all of that, how they make decisions, but they're not necessarily making decisions together. (Admin #1, personal communication)

I think this system at Touro is always battling that it is a business model and nonacademic model. And so I think that's just because people who started Touro, as a business model and nonacademic model and so they're always struggling on, on that issue. So, uh, in a business model, the president runs everything and then, you know, the managers go down from that. (Faculty #1, personal communication)



They want to do things quickly, but yet they don't think about all of the impact on students and faculty, and change in general, and sometimes it takes time to implement change properly by making sure that all of the a players know what's going on. (Admin #1, personal communication)

I feel like not even angry deans shift the values of the system, so the system is fairly strong in its directionality. (Faculty #2, personal communication)

In search of a middle ground a number of participants acknowledged the sense of managerial oversight that they experienced, but were quick to point out that the experience at Touro was not unique, and was better in many ways than other systems they had experienced.

New York is definitely involved, but I [worked at a] state university system and we had four campuses and I worked on the campus of 11,000 in size and we were much more micromanaged and much more, kind of, a lot more control from the system, from other campuses, from the main campus. (Admin #4, personal communication)

I think we figured it when I was [at another university] the president's cabinet spent probably 20 percent of our time just on regent management, just going, doing things. We were being asked by the board to justify programs to present programs to, you know, fight the political battle between campuses over programs which wouldn't have existed if we didn't have that kind of political infrastructure. (Admin #2, personal communication)

Now we have a relatively simple university level shared governance system in terms of the executive council represents the various groups. My last institution, [Midwest State], the similar sort of university level governance structure... that represented all the various groups had 66 members and you talk about trying to get something done. It was, it was... the inertia. (Admin #2, personal communication)

Additionally, some participants didn't need to look beyond the TCUS system for evidence of positive progress.

Historically one of the challenges has been for the remote campuses to get into the conversation in an effective way. And that that's where 10 years ago it was one way, now it's another way and things are much better. But that's the overriding challenge: are we in the room and do we have any, do we have an impact in the room. (Admin #6, personal communication)

System membership means that you have a community of institutions where you have some shared assumptions, shared understandings of things, shared goals, and so you can talk about, you can look at best practices, you can talk about how we do it, how they do it, you can learn from one another. (Admin #6, personal communication)

In some cases, participants provided rationale for such drastic differences in the way people experience system governance.

I think it goes back and forth. I think that at the campus level, you know, the campus level doesn't exist in many places. The campus level exists here and the campus level exists in California. But the way that campus level exists here is not the same way that exists in, in New York. (Admin #1, personal communication)

It seems, depending on where the campus is in Touro College, the governance is different. Because it seems like if you're a New York school and you've been there forever, there's different policies and practices for New York and entities that are not medical schools and the schools that are medical or healthcare have different, have more similarities... (Admin #7, personal communication)

When asked for specific examples of system governance in action, participant responses cut across the spectrum of higher education initiatives. Three such examples are included below.

A poor example of how it works is that a dean comes to the vice president and the president and says, 'I have this great opportunity with a company A and company A is going to pay for their employees to get undergraduate degrees with Touro. They're going to give us 200 students a term. This is a great opportunity, but we have to have everything in place within the next 10 business days.' And so the vice president and the president listen to the dean because he's worked there a long time and they have a great relationship and hey, you know what, if he says it, it must be true. So the people who are responsible for getting the things in place must stop what they are doing and this is top priority and everything needs to get done... It didn't come to fruition. (Admin #1, personal communication)

Alternatively, another participant shared a more methodical and practical approach to program creation.

When I put together [a new program]... there's an internal form for program review. They want to see academically are you doing everything properly? Um, internal of our campus. And then it goes to, there's another form for TCUS which is much more, it talks about

some education but is much more business and sustainability oriented. So we send that to the system. There's a committee of a dozen people in New York that is the new initiative committee. They look at it, they ask questions, they make comments, we respond back to them. And then of course we have to go to [regional accreditors] with it as well, but see if I want to just start a new program, I have checks and balances across the system to make sure that what I'm saying is making sense. (Admin #3, personal communication)

Lastly, policy implementation provides a terrific example of how individual campuses manage system-wide policies.

The best example of how on some levels we do function like one of those other systems is probably the academic integrity policy. Okay. Everybody implements it the way that they want to implement it. Everybody, we have one policy that's across the system which [state systems] have stuff like this? Right? So, you know, we have policies like this that are across the system, and as far as kind of standards of behavior, etc. But each campus implements it differently and then there are conversations at the system level about how, you know, how our implementation was different and then there's disagreements about 'that you should've done it that way' or 'that's not really, you know, that's inconsistent', 'that response to that type of an issue was too different than what we did. You know, across the country at different campus and, and so, so that's interesting. (Admin #4, personal communication)

As a final note on perceptions of the system's governance style, some participants were keenly aware of the differing opinions surrounding the system office and its practices and the tendency to funnel blame in that direction.

You know, usually college campuses or sub campuses has to have that evil unknown to kinda throw everything on. So, I think that's used a lot here, you know, 'Oh, New York made us do it or New York wants us to do it or New York has us doing this.' So they can kind of villainize the main campus, as big brother making us do all these things. When maybe it's not so true. (Faculty #1, personal communication)

The system is constantly used as a scapegoat. So much that they don't even identify people by names. They say, 'well, New York.' Well who in New York!? the whole state is against us!? The whole state has not made a decision on this. Why don't you just say 'no, Fred hasn't made his decision. (Admin #1, personal communication)

### ***Faculty Participation in Governance.***

Understanding the faculty's role in governance practices places a normative emphasis on the ideology or practice, often stating that faculty "should" be involved or consulted in university and system governance. As found in the review of literature, faculty roles in governance are ever changing and are subject to many of the influences that change our academic institutions, systems, and the greater higher education enterprise. Below is a description of the faculty roles in governance at the Touro College and University System. Much of what is discussed represents the usual contexts of collegiality and conflict that often accompany conversations regarding faculty participation in governance at any institution. This section will highlight participant perceptions regarding campus and system governance as well as the inherent difficulties and challenges these units experience.

At the campus level, all participants are referencing their perceptions that occur at one of TCUS's health science universities. It is important to note that these perspectives of campus governance should not be immediately transferrable to other campuses within the system.

I think I've seen it starting to evolve here is that faculty basically own the curriculum and the administrators have to make sure that that curriculum is number one, is financially feasible. And number two, that the hard decisions, you know, the kind of personnel decisions, someone has to be the decision maker. You can't work those out by, by voting around the table. Now you get input. I mean that's, that's the, the sense of shared governance. You get input for the major stakeholders in any type of decision for the university wide things we want to hear obviously from the faculty and most of the time they are the majority of the people on some of these university level committees. (Admin #2, personal communication)

Because faculty governance is, I think governance at the campus level is actually, it's actually fairly inclusive... But I think structurally there are real structural efforts to make sure that the representative constituent groups are in the decision making rooms. (Admin #6, personal communication)

For the campus level, I think one of the things that I believe exemplifies it at least [in terms of] communication and inclusivity is executive council. Because I've been on [another campus] that's part of Touro, and in the absence of communication and regular meetings at that type of level, it created significant issues amongst faculty and staff because they would just fill in the blanks. (Admin #5, personal communication)

Not all perspectives on faculty governance are as positive as those above. Those criticisms are typically aimed at expanding faculty influence and power.

I think that faculty have a, a decent voice on the campus. They're not always consulted and matters that they probably should be consulted in. (Faculty #2, personal communication)

I think the faculty Senate here does not have the power of the faculty senates I've seen in other universities, especially state universities, especially other larger universities where you have a liberal arts undergraduate, programs. Usually the faculty senate is a lofty position that can make decisions and can change policy throughout the whole university and is probably on equal level of the provost. (Faculty #1, personal communication)

In regards to faculty participation at the system level, there was very little variation in the way participants perceived faculty roles at that level.

So for the faculty, from what I see, the faculty don't really get much penetration into the system except at the dean level - and depending on who your dean is and how they can effectively advocate for you truly defines your path, your outcome at Touro as a faculty member. (Admin #1, personal communication)

So the system level, I'm not really sure how it plays out. I mean certainly we have a provost but I don't know of any sort of centralized, organized system wide [faculty] governance. (Admin #4, personal communication)

As far as system governance, goes, I don't think that the faculty play any role in system governance...so in a sense this is very good. ... You don't want to get caught up in that because in the worst case situation, oftentimes the faculty representative is a target, you know? (Admin #2, personal communication)

I would say faculty governance at a system level is very rare, but faculty governance has an impact on system level governance both when there are problems and via the program leadership. You know when deans are on these committees and program directors are on these committees and in that space. (Admin #6, personal communication)

The Touro College and University System is not without its own challenges as it pertains to faculty governance. There are a number of structural issues such as the geographic distribution of campuses and the generally small campus sizes that pose challenges to faculty participation in governance. These challenges are by no means specific to TCUS, but are likely shared by any number of institutions or parts of institutions that share similar characteristics.

I think we are moving towards a more real faculty shared governance model. I think that's what we've always wanted all along. But part of it is you don't have, you don't have enough faculty to make that work. You don't have enough faculty who want to be involved to make that work until you get enough faculty, until you get a critical mass. I think the faculty does a good job on the campus level of bringing concerns to [executive council]. I know that there are competing powers.... But I think part of the problem is colleges don't necessarily play nicely together and so faculty, it depends on what faculty are in what committee and which faculty have a expectation of spending time solving



problems and speaking up. And I think that changes year to year. (Admin #3, personal communication)

Several participants emphasized the unique make-up of faculty at the health sciences campuses along with the specific challenges those campuses face.

Faculty that are not in program leadership. I think that we generally have, we have a very practitioner heavy faculty body which is understandable as a graduate professional institution and so we have a lot of people who do not have experience or training in the kind of traditional faculty model of academic shared governance. (Admin #6, personal communication)

So it's not that anyone is not willing, but everyone is working like crazy. Right? So there's, there's always willingness, but you just have people who are maybe more experienced at it or more focused on making sure that that faculty are participating in decision making and governance and communication. But the mechanisms exist. (Admin #6, personal communication)

The role of faculty governance is actually, I think structurally there's a decent amount of access. There's a strong amount of access, but in practical fact, it's a small number of faculty members who for whatever reason are in a position of taking advantage of it. And I think that's, that's workload. That's time. You know, nobody has extra time. There's no release time for anything, but I think what it means is you end up with kind of a small group of people in the know and then another group of people who feel that they're not in the know now - that's Higher Ed. (Admin #6, personal communication)

I think that that, because it's such a weird institution in there is no tenure. Sometimes the voices and the work of faculty isn't as obvious. I think you see it in small sections. You see when changes are made, you see it when there's things that are upsetting to faculty and then they want to make a change... but I've also been in those kinds of meetings where the dean will say something and the faculty will be like, 'that's not something we wanted to do'. (Admin #7, personal communication)

Overall, the importance of faculty participation in governance was universally appreciated by all participants. Some variation in what are believed to be the best structures and practices certainly exist, but it should be noted that the value and respect for the American model of faculty governance was consistent. The faculty governance model was even supported as a method by which institutions may remain effective in changing times:

That model of people being around for a long time. I think that is the strength. Having that creative, critical mass of people working on their mission areas is a strength of higher education, but it also makes it a target. 'Look at all those people, high paid people. They just hang around.' We don't have tenure, but in most cases tenure is the whipping post, you know, 'they just sit around, the dead wood sit around forever and they can't get rid of 'em.'... The academic freedom and the critical mass of having people who have common values, common support for each other in their curriculum or their service or their research efforts gets fragmented and it's being fragmented by all this disruption coming from all sorts of different quarters. One wonders what the creativity and the economic advantage will be for the future generation. (Admin #2, personal communication)

**What policy or environmental considerations are most likely to influence private non-profit system governance?**

This study's second research question grew out of the higher education ecosystem model which was originally designed to provide greater understanding to public university systems. The Higher Education Ecosystem model proposes three levels beginning at the state policy level situated above the state system level over the individual institution level (Martinez & Smith, 2013). Through participant interviews and inductive coding of the responses, this study identified a slightly different strata of external influences that shape system and campus governance. In addition to campus and system level influences the major influences on the system and campuses were state and federal policies, accreditation concerns, and competition.

***State and Federal Policy.***

The perceptions of how state and federal policy influence governance manifest themselves differently based on an individual's past experience. In practical reality, the importance of policy implications are both muted and expanded as a result of TCUS' private non-profit status. As a private institution with campuses distributed across the United States, state policies become a local concern while federal policies affect all campuses equally. Since these institutions are tuition dependent, all federal policies that may influence the availability of federal student aid funds are taken very seriously.

Each campus being in a different geographic locale has to deal with its own state setting and a local setting. So that tends to just be whatever the characteristic of where you are, but being a private nonprofit insulates us tremendously from a lot of state and local issues... That's not the case in New York, but that's mostly because the New York

context is that higher education in New York is highly regulated. (Admin #6, personal communication)

We rely heavily on federal aid. So we follow everything that falls under title four. That is either is where title four is either policies that stem from title four, which is really just financial aid stuff, or stuff where title four is leveraged by the federal government... you know, the higher ed act, title nine, even various, you know, title seven employment policies which transcend higher ed, but nonetheless, your federal aid is leveraged to make sure that you're implementing those and in a way that's consistent with the department of education's expectations. (Admin #4, personal communication)

So the federal government at any point could change the rules on financial aid lending and that would have a huge negative impact depending on what those changes are... amongst all higher education across the country. (Admin #5, personal communication)

What is seen above is a general concern regarding access to funding. In the absence of any formal funding relationship with a state entity, the federal policies that determine financial aid eligibility become paramount for such an institution. However, that does not prevent the system or campuses from finding benefits from its position outside state and federal lawmakers.

I think that what's freeing is that there's no legislative oversight. Having worked in systems where we were two miles down the road from the state capital, that was on everybody's mind *all the time*. The oversight that was there, and I was not a director of a program, I was not an assistant director of a program, I was a staff member rank and file.

But nonetheless, that was something that we were all highly in tune with there. (Admin #4, personal communication)

The multi-state nature of the TCUS also poses unique challenges.

A lot of times the [policies] that come out of New York are based on New York law.

Okay. Which is older, more mature and often more heavy handed than we're used to here.

So sometimes things will come down and we can say, 'Hey, wait a minute, that doesn't apply to us here.' (Admin #3, personal communication)

There's a tremendous variation in what states will put up with and how much it will cost if you want to operate in the state. And so for online education, a lot of people think of it as being a great money maker, but it's got its peculiarities and it's got certain barriers you have to overcome. (Admin #7, personal communication)

I think the other [confusion] is that for title 4 regulations, when a student withdraws, the state regulations are different for the amount of tuition that you have to pay back. So if you withdraw after the first 30 days in New York, [the school] gets 100 percent and you get no refund of your tuition. Here it's prorated up to 60 percent of the term. So sometimes that causes issues too. (Admin #1, personal communication)

### ***Competition.***

As a system of private institutions, TCUS seems to be particularly sensitive to the changing trends in the American higher education enterprise. When questioning participants

about barriers that the system faces, many identified competition or competitive forces that cause concern. Firstly, market viability:

I think that as a system there is attention paid to making sure that there is market viability for programs for them to begin... I think that it bothers a lot of folks (Admin #4, personal communication)

All of higher education is facing [issues]. Higher education is getting extraordinarily expensive, reflected in the student loans, it's reflected in the tuition going up. [These] types of systems have even more of a challenge because basically 90 percent or more of their resources come from tuition. (Admin #2, personal communication)

TCUS' health science universities are in a unique position to command high tuition fees as a result of the competitive marketplace for their graduates. Contrary to state funded programs, these universities must first establish market viability to fulfill a community or education need. Tying the fulfillment of those needs to market viability does not enjoy unending support from faculty and staff.

Competition also serves as a major justification for the continued expansion of the system. Furthermore, that expansion often encourages further growth beyond that which was originally expected.

At the system level they are absolutely looking to continue to grow and expand. And part of that is because as we continue to move forward, the competition for some of our existing programs is getting more intense. (Admin #5, personal communication)

In California, five years ago there were six schools of pharmacy. There's 14 now. Same with the amount of osteopathic medical schools in this country, you know, there's two more in Utah that have opened up or have been approved to open up in the last five years. So there's more schools opening medical schools in southern California, medical schools opening up in northern California. So competition for existing programs is getting harder, which means we have to make sure that we have that quality product and graduate quality individuals because that will help us maintain a quality program and competitiveness.

(Admin #5, personal communication)

We have to distinguish ourselves as to why people choose us. It's not just enough just to say, well, you know, we get x number of applicants for so many positions. That's terrific. You'll lose all day long if you take that attitude. I think you always have to have an attitude of how can we be better and why are we better than fill-in-the blank and what makes us stand out. So if you can distinguish yourself between you and another institution, monies aside, then I'd compete with just about anybody. (Admin #5, personal communication)

### ***Accreditation.***

Based on the interview data, nothing poses a greater threat to the local campus, or the system as a major shift in accreditation status. The Touro College and University System manages a complex web of accreditation requirements from a myriad of regional accreditors as well as the more rigorous professional accreditations for its medically focused programs. In practice each campus is typically receives individual regional accreditation based on its location

while each professional program, whether it be Osteopathic Medicine, Allopathic Medicine, Physician Assistant, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Nursing, or Pharmacy must also attain ongoing professional accreditation. As many of the campuses house several of these professional programs, accreditation requirements often drive campus and system governance.

I think since we are such a big healthcare provider, our educational goals are heavily decided by our accreditors and so, although we have system governance and campus governance, we also have accreditation, and sometimes it seems like all we're doing is collecting data for one thing or the other. (Admin #7, personal communication)

Accreditation standards are much stricter than the system standards in my experience. So that accreditation is constantly keeping programs in line and I can see that throughout the system. Since we are one of the biggest health care providers that's going to drive a lot of the system governance. (Admin #7, personal communication)

This is unique to us, but I think state, regional accreditors, a lot of what we do or is based on what we have to do to maintain accreditation. And I've worked with four different regional accreditors and they do things differently. (Admin #2, personal communication)

The way in which accreditation affects governance is rather peculiar. Arguably, accreditation standards are put in place to ensure program and institutional quality. However, in a multi-state system that is balancing resources, some campuses or programs may not always receive what is perceived to be adequate resources. Accreditation actually empowers faculty and campus administrators to advocate for more resources.



It's almost like you're trying to compete with another process that actually trumps the system governance because if you're not accredited you can't have a program. So if your program isn't accredited, you can't enroll students. So if you can't enroll students, you don't have the program. But then the system's busy telling you other stuff you have to do. (Admin #7, personal communication)

Things are done and fixed and get managed a certain way because accreditation says you have to do it that way. (Admin #7, personal communication)

I think accreditation is your best friend so the system cannot impose something on you that you cannot, that will cause a conflict with accreditation. And since most of us have accreditation programs that are the same, that drives the quality. And so I think that the accreditations in a way prevents the system and in some cases a campus from undue hardship [on those programs]. (Admin #7, personal communication)

Describing the relationship between accreditors and their programs and the implications for campus relationships with the system may over emphasize a competitive or conflicted environment. In actuality, accreditation is not always a burden to the system.

It is an interesting fact that this particular system, it has so many components that are graduate health, professional and graduate professional health profession... It takes the burden off of the system in a lot of ways. All these program accreditation takes a burden off the system in a lot of ways. That's an interesting part of the unique nature of this system... I certainly feel that the burden, the burden of running an institution that is

composed of almost entirely accredited programs is much lighter. (Admin #6, personal communication)

### **Additional Findings.**

During analysis, one recurring theme fell outside the planned scope set forth by the theoretical frameworks of general systems theory and the higher education ecosystem. The code, identified as “importance of leadership” focused on individuals and their skills rather than organizations or parts of the system. Instead of campuses, committees, or boards, participants referenced specific people in leadership roles that played important roles in shaping the course of system governance. The importance of leadership is likely not unique to the case being studied, but is not entirely supported by the chosen theoretical frameworks. The excerpts below provide greater context for the case study while also raising questions that may be better answered by future studies.

As far as governance goes, we have the board, the president, and then all of the different leaders of the different campuses who report to the president. So, um, how they affect each other really has to do, you know, with our, with our personal interactions. (Admin #3, personal communication)

We may have a new dean that comes in here, let's say [at our campus] and because he hasn't formed those relationships, he may have great ideas, but it will take longer for him to make his way because of the relationships with the [system office]. (Admin #1, personal communication)

And so yeah, it is generally leadership. I mean, that's one of the big things that faculty and students would never know this, that this battle is occurring in the airwaves [across the country]. You would never know it, but from the administrative side, it's a very significant fact of life when you're in the administration looking up or out, it's a driving factor. Part of our job is to keep the programs from experiencing that. Right? (Admin #6, personal communication)

Previous sections of this chapter emphasized the ways in which campuses compete for resources shared amongst the system. The perceptions below clarify that those competitions occur between people and that it matters who those people are in determining outcomes.

There's drawbacks to having more than one campus as you fight, you fight for capital, you know, the needs of one campus can overwhelm the needs of another if you have more powerful players on that campus. I think it depends on who's in charge. Leadership, I think, is very important and I think it depends on where their leadership comes from. (Admin #7, personal communication)

We get a lot of push down from the main campus, but I also think that, [our leader] does a lot of pushing back and I'm not sure if that would happen if it wasn't who [they are] a and if it was someone who was just more of an administrator or a businessperson that didn't have already a hierarchy already developed. (Faculty #1, personal communication)

In regards to both campus and system level leadership, concern or angst is palpable in participant discussions regarding their potential departure. Considerable value is placed on the skills and talents that these individuals bring to the campuses and system whether their roles are inherently contradictory of one another.

It does worry me that, you know, when the [campus leader] leaves, or does something else, or decides [they] don't want to do this anymore, how would they find someone who can stand up to the home campus and say, 'no, that's not what we're gonna do'. (Faculty #1, personal communication)

I actually think, I think the system is in a good direction and I think that's really the direction that it is going to go. But it is very dependent on the particular leadership... It's a group formed over time with existing relationships. And so you know, the risks, if you're doing a risk-benefit, of leadership change in New York is a huge risk, potentially. Because one [option] would be that it would be someone sort of from the inside group, but someone who doesn't maybe have either the same vision or skills that the current leadership really has. I mean they're, they're skilled, they're a skilled group, they really are. Or somebody comes in from the outside and does something different and, or kind of break something or whatever. (Admin #6, personal communication)

## **Summary of Findings**

As part of a qualitative case study, this chapter intended to set out and describe in great detail how the Touro College and University System is situated amongst the greater American higher education enterprise. In providing a historical context for its rapid and diverse growth since the 1970s, a broader context for understanding was established before presenting contemporary participants' interview data. These data present an expanded understanding of the complex and multifaceted nature of system governance. Touro's unquities drive its governance

practices in ways that are both similar and dissimilar to its more common state sponsored cousins.

In summarizing the findings, the Touro College and University System has more characteristics in common with other systems of higher education than elements that differ. The relatively large number of health sciences students are not uncommon in state systems or other private, multi-campus universities. However, the TCUS does appear to be relatively unique in the way that one campus, Touro College in New York, has such a dominant influence over the rest of the system. In prioritizing its goals, the system appears to strike a balance between pursuing the three pillars of its mission, social justice, intellectual pursuit, and service to humanity, while also remaining economically viable through market oriented endeavors. System governance is often experienced by its members in the context of its role in coordinating resources. Whether the perception of this function is viewed positively or negatively by a participant appears to align with their perception of whether their relative needs are being met during this process. Faculty participation in governance at the system level is relatively scarce, and this appears to be by design. Faculty ownership of curriculum and the administration thereof are often left to the campuses, while system governance emphasizes the fiduciary responsibilities of the board and system leadership.

When discussing external influences on system governance, participants identified three major areas: State and Federal policies, market competition, and external accrediting bodies. As a private non-profit institution, state policies typically hold relatively little sway over governance, but the federal policies that govern accessibility to financial aid are a primary concern. The competitive marketplace drives a number of governance actions especially when determining the location and which fields the system chooses to expand. Third party

accreditation bodies exert a tremendous amount of influence on the TCUS. The system and campuses must manage relationships with multiple regional accreditation bodies as a result of the geographic distribution of all the member campuses. Additionally, the large number of graduate and medically oriented programs require additional professional accreditation in order to continue accepting students. The considerable burden of ongoing accreditation at the campus level drives many of the ways individual campuses advocate for resources from the system office. Furthermore, the added oversight of academics, by the accreditors, provides a structural way to lessen the administrative load of the system office. Lastly, the data suggests that individual leadership plays an important role in system governance. Contrary to a structural or a systems based approach, this finding emphasizes the importance individual contributions can make in determining the system's action and priorities. Specifically, in the system under study, individual leaders are credited with shaping the ways in which goals are set, pursued, and how resources are allocated.

The following chapter will attempt to provide a thorough discussion of these findings and create a generalized understanding of the case under study. Additional discussions regarding the applicability of the Higher Education Ecosystem model to private non-profit systems such as Touro will also be presented. Lastly any threats to credibility or recommendations for future research will be shared.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions

### Overview of Study

The study at hand intended to focus its energies on providing a broad, yet thorough description of the governance practices of a novel, but increasingly prevalent system type in American higher education, the private non-profit system. As a qualitative case study, findings were generated through the collection and analysis of data retrieved from numerous and varied sources. In addition to information gathered from historical documents and internal artifacts, this study engaged ten willing participants (7 administrators, 3 faculty) in face to face interviews designed to elicit their perceptions of system governance at the Touro College and University System.

Two overarching research questions guided the study's investigation and analysis of the data which were, in turn, derived from the theoretical frameworks of general systems theory and the higher education ecosystem model. A discussion of each research question and the study's findings are included below. This chapter concludes with additional discussions regarding any implications for theory as well as recommendations for future research.

### Research Question #1

*How does the Touro College and University System fit into the greater higher education enterprise?*

Providing a response to this research question in the context of existing literature poses a special difficulty due to the relative dearth of previous research addressing private non-profit systems. By comparison, the available literature regarding governance and higher education at publicly sponsored institutions is relatively plentiful. In discussing this research question, this study will lean on general systems theory to provide a suitable framework. Identifying the Touro

College and University System as a “system within a larger system” provides a structure from which to build understanding (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972). This discussion will first describe the system under study and the nature of its governance practices. The characterization of this system will then be addressed in the context of the greater American Higher Education enterprise.

Structurally, the Touro College and University System is very similar to most systems in American higher education. The TCUS, like most state systems, provides guidance and direction through a central system office that sets goals and coordinates resources to benefit the system and its constituencies (Goodchild, 2002). As a private system, the TCUS is not confined by state boundaries, nor is there undue political influence by state legislatures aimed at adjusting any of its chosen goals. Even as a private entity, its multi-state, multi-campus approach, and its emphasis on health professions is not entirely uncommon. In fact, a growing number of private non-profit and for-profit systems operate in the same academic space in similar ways. The only structural characteristic that sets Touro apart from any other system is their commitment to its core missions that support Judaic values and ensure equitable accessible to academic training for students of Jewish faith.

Much like their public counterparts, the coordination of resources at the system level creates tension between the system office and its member campuses. Governance at the TCUS is achieved by a fairly simple division of labor. The system office and the board of trustees serve as fiducial chaperones while member campuses pursue their own academic missions within the parameters set forth by the system. Faculty participation in governance also follows a similar division where faculty are intimately involved in the development and delivery of the curriculum at the campus level, while remaining relatively absent from the budgetary discussions at the



system office (Newfield, 2003). As a result of this division, system budgets and limitations are often met with considerable consternation, especially at the resource rich and revenue positive health professions universities. The setting of the annual budget and coordination of system resources occurs at the intersection of campus leaders and the system office. Perceptions of the nature of this governance strike a delicate balance between the collegial and political models found in the literature. The data suggests that the boundaries that exist within the system allow for strong pressure to be exerted by the central system downward to the individual campuses by virtue of the budget process. However, those boundaries certainly allow for upward pressure, especially when campus needs are supported by external influences.

In attempting to describe how the TCUS fits into the greater higher education enterprise, this study finds that Touro's unique alignment of mission and institutional action provide the best holistic explanation . Beginning with its Judaic affiliation and the three pillars of its mission, service to humanity, intellectual pursuit, and social justice, the TCUS blends well with the wide diversity of institutional missions across the country. Many of its undergraduate programs that cater more specifically to orthodox populations may, at first, seem to stand apart from the graduate programs, law schools, and health professions universities. However, those institutions continue to serve the system's missions in two very distinct ways. First, every graduate and professional school provides additional opportunities for observant Jewish students to receive training in areas that would otherwise not be accessible in the same way. Second, these health professions universities and the stated values of the member professions align with all three of Touro's mission pillars.

Beyond the pursuit of its mission, the health professions universities are also comprised of highly competitive programs that draw large tuition revenues. These revenues, a result of the

system pursuing its own worthwhile mission, are then reinvested across the system with the continued purpose of supporting the mission. From a systems perspective, this characterization quite nicely encapsulates the cycle of growth and development of any successful higher education system, especially those of private entities that are tuition dependent (Pusser & Turner, 2004). It is important to note however, that at the individual level some participants expressed some discomfort when attempting to align the higher tuition rates with the social justice mission of the system. Ultimately, such an alignment requires a balancing of mission priorities with the realities of operational costs. Additionally, the struggle to maintain that balance succinctly characterizes the way in which the Touro College and University System has chosen to pursue its governance in the greater American higher education enterprise.

The findings associated with this research question do much to support previous literature except in the direct findings regarding private non-profit systems where the literature is silent. Structurally, the TCUS conforms to the common conception of a multi-campus system (Douglass, 2000). In the way it coordinates system resources, the TCUS operates similarly and differently than the older and more established private institutions with large endowments (Goodchild, 2002). Both institutional types show a strong preference for pursuing mission driven goals, a luxury not always afforded to public institutions (Perkin, 1991). In contrast to the more established private institutions, but in support of existing literature, this study found that system governance aims were also heavily influenced by market viability and revenue driven needs (Pusser & Turner, 2004).

In the context of governance practices, models, and faculty participation, the findings again supported previous literature. Multiple lenses were easily applicable to the governance practices of the TCUS. The rational bureaucratic and political models were readily visible in the

way participants described their perceptions of system governance (Baldrige, 1971). In accounting for the pursuit of multiple and differing goals, Weick's loosely coupled systems model represented a rational understanding of the multiple pursuits of the geographically dispersed and discipline diverse campuses that make up the TCUS (1976). Faculty participation in governance again supported prior research exemplifying the division of labor between university business matters and curriculum and instruction (Gerber, 2014). In summary, the ways in which the Touro College and University System approaches governance demands is not unique, but in congruence with those previously researched and established in the literature.

### **Research Question #2**

*What policy or environmental considerations are most likely to influence private non-profit system governance?*

The findings of this study suggest that three major external influences shape the governance of the Touro College and University System: Federal and State Policies, Competition, and Accreditation. As a private entity, the TCUS experiences these forces in very different ways than their public counterparts. Since the system is largely dependent on tuition revenue to fund its operations, the accessibility of federal financial aid is essential for the system's survival. Additionally, the large proportion of high-tuition, revenue generating, graduate and professional degrees throughout the system encourage the system to remain vigilant and constantly aware of any shifts in policies that implicate these sources of funding. In contrast to state sponsored systems who receive portions of their funding directly from state legislatures, the TCUS experiences state policies in a very different context (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). State policies merely take on a regulatory role rather than a political fight for survival. Even with campuses in multiple states, these regulatory policies are no more burdensome to the TCUS than

any other institution in the same state. To be clear, state policies certainly impact the local behaviors of campuses, but the importance of access to federal aid for the system as a whole is paramount (Goodchild, 2002). The way in which the TCUS balances multiple state influences, while remaining truly independent, fully supports the unique flexibility of higher education and the committed delineation between private and public institutions described in previous research (Perkin, 1991).

Again, as a private entity, competition exerts its influence differently than in public systems. Existing literature contextualizes competition in the public domain as competition for students, research dollars, and capable faculty, which may be better described as a competition for prestige (Toma, 2012). This unending battle amongst higher education institutions has been both denigrated as the source of isomorphism, and lauded as a catalyst for America's global dominance in research and innovation. This study's data suggests that competition, as experienced by private, tuition-dependent institutions, is not entirely about prestige, but also about survival. Public systems who receive considerable resources from state governments are in many ways insulated from such risks. For the TCUS, the development or expansion of new programs often must not only meet the threshold of local need, but more importantly, the threshold of economic viability. As a result of perceived threats to survival, competition serves to influence system governance by generating concerns at the local campus which then funnel upward to the system office. This particular finding runs counter to previous studies focused on the more prevalent public state systems or traditional private liberal arts institutions (Toma, 2012). Specifically, in the system under study, competition is not primarily based on the pursuit of prestige, but is more accurately described by studies identifying the convergence of private non-profit and for profit governance (Pusser & Turner, 2004).

Accreditation also serves to reverse the usual top-down directionality of governance at the TCUS. While rarely characterized as a threat to survival because of its quality control responsibilities in higher education, regional accreditation is a prerequisite for access to federal financial aid (Department of Ed, 2017). Additionally, professional accreditation agencies and their ability to withdraw program accreditation can cripple a program and its parent institution. Even when professional accreditation is not revoked, probationary accreditation status severely limits individual programs' access to qualified students, especially in highly competitive fields such as healthcare. The geographic distribution of the system under study necessitates multiple relationships with several regional accreditors as well as professional accreditation agencies. The importance of accreditation and the large number of professional programs in the system portfolio have made the system sensitive to individual campus and program needs as they relate to accreditation. From a governance perspective, accreditation allows individual campuses to advocate for their needs from a greater position of power. Alternatively, campus priorities that fall outside the scope of accreditation review face much greater pushback from system administrators. As noted in chapter two, it appears that existing studies undervalue the influence of accreditation bodies on private non-profit systems such as the one under study here (Hearn & McLendon, 2012).

Holistically, none of the external influences that shape the system governance of the TCUS are unique to the system alone. All of American higher education must balance the demands of State and Federal policy, competition, and accreditation (Hearn & McLendon, 2012). However, the findings of this study suggest that these influences have a different impact on the governance of private non-profit systems when compared to state systems. The way in which these influences fundamentally threaten the survival and existence of the system empowers

individual campuses when advocating for their interests. As was evident in the discussion of the first research question it appears that governance is achieved through a carefully devised equilibrium of competing demands. Findings suggest that external influences are strongest at the individual campus and program level, but are incorporated into a governance model at the system level that is designed to balance the needs of the system with the needs of its member institutions.

### **Implications for Theory**

Two theoretical frameworks were used in the design and analysis of this study: General Systems Theory and the Higher Education Ecosystem model. General systems theory was selected for its flexibility and its inherent ability to rationalize multiple systems working in and around each other (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972). Just as general systems theory proposes that systems tend toward a dynamic equilibrium so did the case under study (von Bertalanffy, 1972). The Touro College and University System's dynamic equilibrium, the balancing of mission priorities, operational costs, system needs, and campus needs is achieved as a result of its governance practices. Furthermore, as part of an open system, those governance practices are shaped and formed by the greater higher education context.

As a theoretical framework for qualitative research designs, general systems theory's greatest strength may also be its greatest weakness. The remarkable flexibility of an open-systems and context based understanding provides researchers the opportunity to investigate multiple avenues of considerable breadth and depth (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972). That breadth and depth may also lead to data that is difficult to categorize or articulate into meaningful findings. In the current study, the complex nature of governance and the perceptions thereof, conjoined with an emphasis on situational context, made analysis difficult at times. It is likely

over-presumptive for the researcher involved in this study to suggest alterations to a longstanding and well received framework such as general systems theory. However, future qualitative studies of system governance would likely benefit from theoretical frameworks with more rigid constructs with which to anchor their findings.

As predicted, the Higher Education Ecosystem model required some amendments to adequately adjust to the context of this study, a private non-profit system. Most notably, state policies were superseded in their influence over system governance by federal policies. The model's proposed boundaries of system governance and their interactions with institutional demands were supported by this case (Martinez & Smith, 2013). The additional environmental influences of accreditation and competition suggest the addition of another level of influence that impacts campuses at the institutional level directly. Federal policies typically affect all campuses equally, and thus their influence is translated into system governance and policy at the system level. Accreditation and competition, however, are experienced locally at the institutional level which is compounded by the multi-state nature of the system under study. Those concerns, and the policies that they drive, are pushed upon the system office as a result of institutional need. Clearly, the model has its foundations in public higher education systems (Martinez & Smith, 2013). The suggested amendments posited above are based on this study's findings showing that private institutions experience some policy influences differently than public systems and aims to translate the model into a private non-profit context.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

As a qualitative case study, the findings above are explicative of the Touro College and University System. The transferability of these findings appears to carry weight with the caveat that individual system context is a mitigating factor. The TCUS governance is a product of a

dynamic equilibrium whereby strong, religiously-affiliated, and mission-centric ideals are balanced against the demands of the higher education marketplace. Future studies may well provide additional insight into governance of private non-profit systems should they investigate institutions that are not religiously affiliated, that do not specialize in the health sciences, or who predominantly serve undergraduate students.

Outside the context of the specific case, this study identified leadership as a fundamental element that shapes institutional and system governance. As a topic for future research, the literature is replete with leadership studies. However, in the context of higher education governance, individual leadership is conspicuously absent from most models. While bureaucratic models do emphasize a structural hierarchy, they do little to acknowledge the importance individual skills play in achieving organizational goals. Future qualitative or quantitative research would serve the discipline well by incorporating leadership into future models for understanding university and system governance.

### **Credibility and Trustworthiness**

The above case study was completed by a full time, regular faculty member at a member institution of the TCUS. As such, the validity of the findings above, and any analysis may be called into question, justifiably so. The TCUS does not grant tenure and faculty contracts are not set for extraordinarily long terms. Such a precarious position may suggest that the researcher would be pressured to dismiss or “sugarcoat” any findings that portrayed an institution, individual, or system in a negative light. Such pressure, while not overly extensive, is real. Alternatively, readers may infer that any negative findings are purely the result of a disgruntled employee with an axe to grind.



In order to avoid the appearance of any such biases, two methods were employed to protect the researcher and the integrity of the findings. First, greater than normal lengths have been utilized to preserve the anonymity of participants. As meaningful as names, titles, or pronouns may have been to the final report, this study chose to eliminate them entirely in order to protect participants. Second, data analysis was completed while attempting to remain value-neutral. Qualitative research is always subject to the normative assumptions and beliefs of the researcher. In preventing the injection of such bias, the final report intentionally avoided normative assessments of system governance. The result of a value-neutral analysis is a relatively matter-of-fact data presentation and discussion. In lieu of normative conclusions, this study chose to present data, when available, demonstrating multiple positions taken on a particular issue. Value laden assessments such as what *should* be done are left to the reader to make on their own.

### **Final Conclusions**

Leaning again on a participant's aphorism, "everything is unique in higher education and nothing is unique in higher education" (Admin #6, personal communication). In completing a qualitative case study of a private non-profit system, this line of research has demonstrated how the Touro College and University System is incredibly unique while also incredibly similar to other systems of higher education in America. Fundamentally, the TCUS experiences many of the same influences and pressures that any other public or private non-profit institution do. Federal policies, resource scarcity, competition, accreditation, multiple goals, and differing constituencies all influence the governance of the system under study. In drawing a comparison between public institutions and a private non-profit, it appears that these influences are experienced differently by the two groups.

In the private context, even in the absence of a profit-motive, resources are always a top concern of system and campus administrators. Such an emphasis is apparent throughout the study's findings as administrators and faculty alike routinely referenced money, revenue, economic viability, and capital investments in describing system governance. This emphasis is consistent with findings in the literature that suggest that American higher education writ large is being fundamentally transformed by market based forces (Marginson, 2007). Such forces are often portrayed as being diametrically opposed to the long held belief that education is a social good (Labaree, 1997). For its part, the Touro College and University System has thrived whilst balancing market forces with a social justice mission. The system's emphasis on high tuition health professions meets a desperate need of many regions in the United States while simultaneously serving the financial needs of other mission driven programs.

Of concern to policymakers, administrators, and faculty alike should be a number of questions raised by these findings. What about lower margin degrees? As an example, teachers and social workers are in dire need across the country, but such programs are revenue negative for any institution. Are such programs destined to be the responsibility of taxpayer funded state systems? Is such a model sustainable? What happens when those programs compete for resources with other degrees whether they be revenue positive or negative? Ultimately, these are value laden questions that are left for our leaders to decide. Much like the context of this study, one can hope that social justice missions, or the greater societal good, are the determining factors in the way these questions are answered.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A: Interview Protocol for Faculty**

#### **Tape Recorder Instructions**

*If it is okay with you, I will be tape-recording our conversation. The purpose of this is so that I can get all the details but still be able to maintain a meaningful conversation with you. All your comments will remain confidential.*

#### **Consent Form Instructions**

*Before we get started, please take a few minutes to read and review this information sheet. Please let me know if you have any questions.*

(After participant returns consent form, turn tape recorder on)

#### **Questions for Participants**

Q1. Which educational goals are of greatest importance to the system?

Q2. What institutions are most similar to TCUS?

Q3. What benefits do institutions receive from system membership?

Q4. What role does faculty play in campus and system governance?

Q5. How do you perceive the long-term aspirations of the TCUS?

Q6. Can you think of an anecdote that exemplifies TCUS governance at the system or campus level?

## **Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Administrators**

### **Tape Recorder Instructions**

*If it is okay with you, I will be tape-recording our conversation. The purpose of this is so that I can get all the details but still be able to maintain a meaningful conversation with you. All your comments will remain confidential.*

### **Consent Form Instructions**

*Before we get started, please take a few minutes to read and review this information sheet. Please let me know if you have any questions.*

(After participant returns consent form, turn tape recorder on)

### **Questions for Participants**

- Q1. Which educational goals are of greatest importance to the system?
  
- Q2. What institutions are most similar to TCUS?
  
- Q3. What benefits do institutions receive from system membership?
  
- Q4. What role does faculty play in campus and system governance?
  
- Q5. How do you perceive the long-term aspirations of the TCUS?
  
- Q6. Can you think of an anecdote that exemplifies TCUS governance at the system or campus level?
  
- Q7. Why has the Touro College and University System (TCUS) chosen to expand outside of its  
  
original geographic area?
  
- Q8. How do system and campus-level governance affect each other?
  
- Q9. What challenges and barriers does TCUS face?

## **Appendix C: Recruitment Email**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Taylor Hough. I am a PhD student completing my dissertation at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in the Educational Psychology and Higher Education Department. I am also a colleague of yours in the Touro College and University System. I am conducting research on private nonprofit system governance, and I am inviting you to participate because of your knowledge and experience in the topic.

This line of research will be completed under the supervision of Dr. Vicki Rosser, a full professor in the UNLV department of Educational Psychology and Higher Education.

Participation in this study would mean agreeing to participate in an interview at a time and place of your choosing. In the event you choose to participate this should not take much more than one hour of your time.

Participation is completely voluntary and all records will remain anonymous.

If you have any questions or would like to participate in the research, please feel free to contact me at [hought2@unlv.nevada.edu](mailto:hought2@unlv.nevada.edu) or (702) 439-3118. You may also contact the principal investigator at [Vicki.rosser@unlv.edu](mailto:Vicki.rosser@unlv.edu) or (702) 895-1432.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Taylor Hough

**Appendix D: Informed Consent Information Sheet**

**UNLV**  
**EXEMPT RESEARCH STUDY**  
**INFORMATION SHEET**

**Department of Educational Psychology and Higher Education**

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**TITLE OF STUDY: Perceptions of Non-Profit Governance in Higher Education**

**INVESTIGATOR(S) AND CONTACT PHONE NUMBER: Vicki Rosser, (702) 895-1432;  
Taylor Hough, (702) 439-3118**

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The purpose of this study is to describe the governance practices of a private, non-profit system of higher education as perceived by its administrators and faculty. You are being asked to participate in the study because you meet the following criteria:

- At least 18 years old
- Participants will have knowledge and/or experience in the governance practices of the private non-profit system at the institutional or system level.

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:

- Participate in a tape-recorded interview discussing campus and system governance.

This study includes only minimal risks. The study will take about 1 hour of your time. You *will not* be compensated for your time.

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 at 702-895-2794, toll free at 877-895-2794, or via email at IRB@unlv.edu.**

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw at any time. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.

**Participant Consent:**

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I agree to be audio taped for the purpose of this research study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

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## Curriculum Vitae

Taylor Hough

### Contact Details

taylorhough@gmail.com

### Education

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Ph.D. in Higher Education (*anticipated May 2019*)

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Nevada  
Master of Health Care Administration  
Graduated December 2011

College of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina  
Bachelor of Science in Economics  
Bachelor of Science in Psychology  
Graduated May 2006

### Professional Experience

July 2013 – Present

Assistant Professor and Director of Clinical Education in the School of Physician Assistant Studies

Touro University Nevada  
Henderson, Nevada

- Coordinate clinical rotation placement for 60 students completing 12 rotations during the 12-month clinical phase of the Physician Assistant program
- Coordinate and oversees the Service-Learning course of the clinical year curriculum
- Courses taught: US Health Care and Biostatistics
- Supervisory responsibilities over the Associate Clinical Coordinator and Administrative Assistant for the office of the Clinical Coordinator
- Actively participate in program evaluation for continuing accreditation processes

March 2012 – June 2013

Associate Clinical Coordinator in the School of Physician Assistant Studies

Touro University Nevada  
Henderson, Nevada

- Coordinate clinical clerkship placement for 60 students completing 10 clerkships during the 12-month clinical phase of the Physician Assistant program

- Coordinate and oversees the Service-Learning course of the clinical year curriculum
- Coordinate grading, testing, and student evaluations during the clinical year.
- Management and supervisory responsibilities over the Administrative Assistant for the office of the Clinical Coordinator
- Participated in design, selection, and implementation of new software program, eClinical, used by students during the clinical phase
- Actively participate in program evaluation for continuing accreditation processes.

October 2010 – March 2012

Admissions Counselor for the College of Osteopathic Medicine

Touro University Nevada

Henderson, Nevada

- Arrange and host 32 separate interview sessions between faculty, staff, and prospective students while providing an environment that appeals to our targeted applicants
- Travel to recruit talented and capable applicants from local and regional institutions of higher education
- Build working relationships with faculty and staff from around the university to meet the needs of the office of admissions and Touro University as a whole

July 2009 – October 2010

Assistant Bursar in Student Services

Touro University Nevada

Henderson, Nevada

- Serve as a resource for students seeking information relating to financial obligations, student health insurance, and general student services
- Facilitate financial interactions between students and the institution
- Professionally engage with other areas of the university to help meet its mission
- Extensive experience with AS400 and other software programs used by TUN

## Professional Activities

- Chair, Faculty Rank and Promotion Committee (Jan 2019 – Present)
- Vice Chair, Faculty Senate Executive Committee (Jul 2018 – Present)
- Vice Chair, Committee on Development of Excellence in Research and Teaching (Nov 2017 – present)
- Co-Chair, Faculty Handbook and By-law revision committee (Nov 2015 – June 2017)
- Current Member of University Faculty Senate Executive Committee (Jan 2014 – Present)
- Current Member of University Assessment Committee (Jul 2013 – Present)
- Current Member of Student Promotion & Advancement Committee for Physician Assistant Program
- Current Member of Physician Assistant Admissions Committee
- Former Member of Medical School Admissions Committee

- Six-Month Internship with University Vice President of Administration
  - Collaborated on University Expansion Plans including facilities development and pro forma creation for new academic programs.

## Publications and Presentations

Bennett, L., Bragg, K., Caridine, E., Gardner, C., Gates, R., Hough, T., Neff, W., Tian, L., Zenteno, A.P., & Nehls, K. (2016). Case Study of Disconnected Youth Reconnecting through YouthBuild Las Vegas. Research paper presented at the 28th annual Ethnographic and Qualitative Research Conference, Las Vegas, NV.

Nehls, K., Zenteno, A.P., Tian, L., Neff, W., Hough, T., Gates, R., Gardner, C., Caridine, E., Bragg, K., & Bennett, L. (2016). Beyond the Textbook: Learning Case Study Method through a Comprehensive Class Research Project. Symposium presented at the 28th annual Ethnographic and Qualitative Research Conference, Las Vegas. NV.

## Professional Affiliations

- Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA), Member
  - Completed Clinical Coordinator Certificate Program (2012)
  - Completed Faculty Basic Skills Certificate Program (2013)
- National Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals (NAGAP), Member

## Conferences Attended

- Oct 2018 – PAEA Educational Forum, Anaheim, CA
- Feb 2016 – Ethnographic and Qualitative Research Conference, Las Vegas, NV
- Nov 2015 – PAEA Educational Forum, Washington, DC
- Nov 2013 – PAEA Educational Forum, Memphis, TN
- Nov 2012 – PAEA Educational Forum, Seattle, WA
- Mar 2012 – Alpha Epsilon Delta biannual conference, Cincinnati, OH
- Sep 2011 – National Association of Minority Medical Educators (NAMME), UCLA, California
- Jun 2011 – National Society of Nontraditional Premedical and Medical Students, Las Vegas, Nevada
- Apr 2011 – National Association of Graduate Admissions Professional (NAGAP), Washington, D.C.

## Service Activities

- Board Member – Southern Nevada Homelessness Continuum of Care Board (January 2016 – December 2018)
- Education Committee Member – Volunteers in Medicine of Southern Nevada (April 2015 – present)

- Intimately involved with the planning, development, and implementation of the PA program's Free Mobile Healthcare Clinic serving the homeless and needy populations of Las Vegas
- As coordinator for the service-learning course completed by Physician Assistant students, I collaborate with several community based organizations and direct student projects
  - Volunteers in Medicine of Southern Nevada – Las Vegas, Nevada
  - The Shade Tree Shelter – Las Vegas, Nevada
  - Nevada Health Centers – Las Vegas, Nevada

## Interests

Professional interests include integrating community service and service learning initiatives into medical and professional education. Additional interests include the various impacts of the Affordable Care Act on institutions of Higher Education that train medical professionals.

Personal interests include a myriad of outdoor activities: Hiking, Camping, Backpacking, Boating, and Mountain Sports. I'm also a regular participant in several organized team sports, such as soccer and softball.