Cutting up the melon: A case study of academic earmarking at selected institutions

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CUTTING UP THE MELON

A Case Study of Academic Earmarking at Selected Institutions

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Educational Policy, Planning, and Leadership

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements of the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Sherrell Anthony Foster

2004
APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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"When did we agree that the peers would cut the melon or decide who would get this money?"

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ABSTRACT

One of the most divisive issues confronting higher education over the past thirty years is the use of federal earmarks by academic institutions. Such funding bypasses traditional program authorization and peer review procedures and goes directly to institutions. Despite attempts to eliminate academic earmarks, data collected by the Chronicle of Higher Education show that the number of institutions receiving one or more individual earmarks grew by almost 600 percent between 1990 and 2002, with $2 billion going to such earmarks in FY 2003 alone. Such increases have fueled concern that earmarks threaten the welfare of the nation’s basic research infrastructure.

The purpose of this study was to investigate areas of the earmarking phenomenon that have been overlooked in past research. Using publicly-available data sets, this study first examined the scope of earmarking among different types of institutions based on Carnegie classification, and the kinds of earmarked projects institutions have engaged in. Next using a case study format, projects at six institutions were examined to understand the motivations driving participation in earmarking, as well as the processes by which institutions identify, develop, and promote earmark projects. Finally, the study attempted to assess at the institutional and program level the impact earmarks were perceived by participants to have had.

Findings from the study supported past research showing that use of earmarks has become pervasive among the nation’s most research oriented institutions, and has begun to penetrate into other categories of institutions as well. Earmarks now go overwhelmingly to support non infrastructure-related projects and, once embedded within an institution, tend to be used serially. Findings from the study also indicated that institutions were driven to seek earmarking by a variety of motivators. Resource constraints, opportunism, and individual entrepreneurship were found to be key factors. Findings from the study indicated that processes used to identify and develop earmark-supported projects vary widely by institution and may not be as strategic as implied in the literature. Finally, the study showed that the impact of earmarks tends to be perceived by participants in localized, project-specific terms that may be difficult to assess using traditional, research-oriented indicators.
CUTTING UP THE MELON

A Case Study of Academic Earmarking at Selected Institutions
Chapter One: Introduction

Earmark (ir’ mark’) n. To reserve or set aside for a particular purpose.

Pork Barrel n. Slang. A government project or appropriation benefiting a specific locale and a legislator’s constituents.


A. The importance of earmarking as a topic of study

On September 26, 2003, the Chronicle of Higher Education reported that academic earmarking—the process in which Congress awards funds directly to colleges and universities, by-passing the program authorization and peer review procedures for distributing research funds—had surpassed $2 billion for the first time in U.S. history (Brainard and Borrego, September 26, 2003). According to the Chronicle writers, the $2.01 billion that Congress directed to specific colleges and universities through earmarks in the fiscal year 2003 (FY 2003) budget represented a 10 percent increase over the year before, a 100 percent increase since 2001, and a 600 percent increase since FY 1996, a watershed year in which earmarks fell to their lowest level since the Republican party gained control of Congress, partly through the promise of controlling pork barrel
spending. Benefiting from this congressional largesse were 716 colleges and universities, located in every state in the union and American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Northern Marianas.

That record level of earmarks comes at a time of growing concern over a federal budget deficit that was expected to top $400 billion in FY 2003, driven at least in part by a slumping economy, tax rebates, and double digit growth in defense spending. To put the issue of earmarks in perspective, in FY 2001, spending for academic research by the federal government—the nation’s largest sponsor of basic research—came in at just under $20 billion (Brainard and Borrego, September 26, 2003), which included earmarked spending. This means that Congress, in its FY 2003 appropriation earmarked an amount equal to almost a tenth of its entire academic-based research spending. The $2 billion equates to 38 percent of the FY 2003 budget of the National Science Foundation and over 7 percent of the FY 2003 budget of the National Institutes of Health (Brainard and Selingo, January 30, 2004, p. A22).

It is not the size—or not just the size—of the earmarked spending that makes this an issue of concern for the higher education community. It is also the impact, whether real or imagined, that such spending is perceived to have on the nation’s research infrastructure, including the capacity of U.S. institutions of higher education to carry out high quality research, the ability of federal agencies to establish and adequately support research priorities, and finally the somewhat fragile reputation for objectivity and trustworthiness...
that higher education seeks to maintain, and operationally relies upon, among members of Congress, the executive agencies, and the public as a whole.

Nor is this a recent phenomenon. A quick survey of the literature shows that over the past fifteen years, earmarks going to higher education institutions have been the topic of three rounds of congressional hearings, ninety plus articles or commentaries or exposes in newspapers, magazines, and science or public interest journals (not counting all the articles and editorials appearing in the higher education community's trade paper, the *Chronicle of Higher Education*); numerous conference sessions; and at least one scholarly book. Academic earmarks have been denounced in State of the Union speeches by three U.S. presidents. Resolutions calling on member institutions to oppose earmarks and support peer review have been passed by eight major educational and scientific associations, including the National Academy of Science (NAS), the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS); the American Physical Society (APS); the National Science Board (NSB); the Association of American Universities (AAU); the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC), and last but not least, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) (Savage, 1999). Federal legislation attempting to derail academic earmarking by punishing earmark recipients has been passed at least once and legislation that would impose more serious sanctions threatened numerous times. And public discussion of earmarking continues today, with the latest flare up being an article by Irwin Feller, a visiting scientist at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and emeritus professor of economics at the Pennsylvania State
University, who accuses Congress and higher education institutions of helping to "subvert" the principles of open competition and merit through the use of earmarks, setasides, and carve outs (Feller, 2004).

Clearly, academic earmarking is an issue that—as its scope, size, and history shows us—is significant, entrenched, and inflammatory. It is also a phenomenon about which, after twenty plus years of debate and accusations, we are still lacking some basic knowledge, including such factors as the scope of the phenomenon, its documented drivers or motivators (at least on the side of the institutions), how it is undertaken at institutions, and its impact. For instance, despite exhaustive efforts of the Chronicle to document the number of earmarks going to academic institutions, we still do not have a firm grasp on how those numbers relate to the different categories of institutions—research institutions, community colleges, comprehensives, specialized institutions, liberal arts institutions, etc.—and how confined the activity is to certain types, or classifications of institutions.

Given the different missions that such institutions are typically assigned and the role they play in such areas as basic research, applied research, and economic development, a better understanding of the scope of earmarking among different types of institutions could contribute to our understanding of the impact and significance of the issue on higher education institutions, their states, and the nation.

At the same time, although the reasons congressional members choose to earmark monies for various projects in their districts or states has been extensively studied in the literature of political science and public policy, the motivations of the other actors in the process
are less documented. Though there seems to be agreement among both commentators and researchers that institutions seek out and accept earmarks for a range of reasons—building or rebuilding the nation's basic research infrastructure, redressing inequities in resource distribution caused by peer review, promoting economic development in distressed regions of the state, etc.—the dominance of particular motivators and the degree to which they apply to the different types of institutions seeking and/or receiving earmarks is, again, missing from the literature.

B. Purpose of this study

This was an exploratory study. Its purpose was to fill gaps that exist in our knowledge base with regard to the scope of the academic earmarking phenomenon, the various motivating factors that encourage institutions to seek earmarks, the processes they go through in doing so, and the impact that these activities have had. Specific questions that I asked in the study included the following. First, who is seeking academic earmarks? Specifically, what types of institutions (as defined by Carnegie classification) are seeking earmarks, and how has this changed over the last decade? Second, what kinds of projects are being supported through earmarks? Specifically, are institutions using earmarks to support facilities or research projects, and has that ratio changed over the past decade? Third, why do institutions seek earmarks? What are the self-professed motivators driving them to seek earmarks, and, based on the evidence available, do these motivators vary by institutional type? Fourth, how are these institutions going about securing earmarks? Based upon the cases examined, how does the process work at institutions, and do any instructive commonalities appear to exist across different categories of institutions? And
finally, to the extent it can be assessed, what impact have these earmarks had on their recipient institutions? What benefits appear to have accrued to institutions, or their communities and states, based upon the earmark-funded projects? A basic premise of this study is that earmarking has become a de facto system of federal support for higher education that, despite the openly expressed desires of many policy makers, is not likely to subside or disappear. Judging whether that is a positive or a negative development for the nation’s higher education is not the goal of this study. However, I do believe that before the academic community can reach a workable solution to—or perhaps just an "uneasy peace" with—this complex political-economic phenomenon, we must first seek to adequately map and document it in all of its facets, including such basic issues as its scope, its level of penetration into the higher education community, the processes by which institutions engage in it, and the complex motivations that give rise to it.

C. Structure of the Study

The following sections of this chapter (Chapter One) include a definition of what is meant by earmarking, a quick history of academic earmarks, and a snapshot of the policy controversies that surround the practice. In Chapter Two of the study, the mass media’s take on academic earmarks is presented, followed by a review of the academic scholarship on earmarks. In Chapter Three, the methods by which the study was carried out are outlined. These include both a quantitatively-oriented descriptive analysis of the scope of earmarks among various types of institutions, using available public and private databases that differentiate between type of institution based on Carnegie classification,
and a qualitative analysis that uses the information gleaned from interviews with academic leaders, faculty, staff, government relations officers, and others to fill out our knowledge of why institutions seek out earmarks, how the process works, and its impact on the institution and the surrounding community. Chapter Four presents the findings of the descriptive analysis and the case studies. Presentation of the case study data in Chapter Four is done using a narrative technique that, to the maximum extent possible, allows participants to tell about their earmark-related experiences using their own words and stories. Finally, Chapter Five examines and interprets the findings of the studies using the framework of existing theories, and summarizes the policy implications of those findings.

D. The definition of academic earmarking

“This is not...pork. It’s infrastructure.”


Savage has written that, “An ‘earmark’ is a legislative provision that designates special consideration, treatment, funding, or rules for federal agencies or beneficiaries....An academic earmark in particular is a provision inserted primarily in federal appropriations legislation that provides funding for specific university research projects or facilities” (1999, p. 6). For all the uproar they can cause, earmarks are frequently innocuous looking things. They typically consist of no more than a line or two—such as “$13,000,000 for the National Center for Acoustics at the University of Mississippi”—buried within a
committee report that accompanies one of the 13 federal appropriations bills. Although such reports do not have the force of law, they are usually honored (but not always) by the executive agencies as expressions of the will or intent of Congress (Frisch, 1998; U.S. House, 1994). Earmarks can be inserted in authorization bills, but seldom are for the simple reason that the appropriators would still have to fund the earmark. Thus, it is much more time and cost efficient to simply skip the authorization process and go straight to the appropriators (Frisch, 1998).

The actual process by which an earmark is inserted into a bill is, according to Frisch (1998), “an institutionalized process....Members of the House and Senate from both political parties typically notify their appropriations subcommittee chairs (through key staff known as clerks) in writing of their desire to include funding for specific local projects” (Frisch, 1998, p. 16). The decision of whether to fund the project is largely made by the chair of the appropriations subcommittee, who presents his/her list of projects to the full subcommittee during the mark-up session (Frisch, 1998; Savage 1999). As both Frisch (1998) and Savage (1999) have noted, chairs typically receive hundreds of earmark requests each cycle, but are able to fund only a small portion of them. As a result, political strategy—knowing who has the chair’s ear, who owes favors to whom, who favors certain types of projects and who does not—becomes paramount, and that is where lobbyists, hired by institutions to help them obtain earmarks, become useful. By helping the institution to understand how the political game is played; by using their Capitol Hill connections to identify and target a “home” for the project, i.e., a subcommittee that will be receptive to the earmark; and finally, by working with an
institution to package the project so that it shows to its best advantage, lobbyists earn the money they are paid. And they are generally well paid. A 1993 report by the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology on academic earmarks indicated that lobbyists charge retainer fees of $10,000 to $50,000 per month—or up to $600,000 per year—per institution for their services, and the number of institutions a typical lobbying firm represents may range as high as 40 or more (U.S. House, 1994; Savage, 1999).

Earmarks may be inserted into any appropriations bill, meaning that there does not have to be a direct match between the nature of the earmark, say energy research, and the agency-related responsibility of the subcommittee that funds it (U.S. House, 1993). However, since some subcommittees are much more accepting of earmarks than others (agriculture and housing and urban development are frequently the target of earmarks), simple political expediency means that those committees (and therefore the agencies whose budgets are controlled by those committees) receive many more earmark requests (U.S. House, 1993; Savage, 1999). To make matters more confusing, earmarks may or may not directly identify the institution or organization that is to be the beneficiary of the money. Thus the political “fingerprints” on an earmark, the indicators of who the patron and the beneficiary of the earmark are, may be difficult to discover, which, in turn, makes efforts to oppose the earmarks even more difficult and/or politically dangerous (Frish, 1998; Savage, 1999).

Troubling for the associations and universities that have sought to oppose earmarks, however, is the fact that there are a number of different kinds of earmarks, many of
which, for various reasons, have long been supported by the education community. For instance, earmarks (or a variation of them known as setasides) have been used to support historically Black colleges and universities under the Department of Education’s Strengthening Institutions Program (Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965 as amended) for decades, and in recent years this form of “earmark” has been expanded to include Hispanic institutions. Direct appropriations have also been used to support specific institutions, such as Howard University and Gallaudet University (Feller, 2004; Savage 1999). And finally, earmarked contracts have been used, historically, to fund special programs and facilities (such as the federally funded research and development centers or FFRDCs). This latest category has created specific problems for opponents of earmarks, since proponents have been able to claim that there is little difference between asking Congress to support through direct appropriations their pet facilities and those funded through “legitimate” mechanisms such as FFRDCs. The fact that the higher education community has given its approval, whether overtly or tacitly, to such earmarks for decades, has made it difficult to issue a blanket condemnation of all academic earmarks without losing the support of some institutions. Such political factors, in turn, played a key role in the AAU’s difficulty in mobilizing an effective coalition against earmarking after 1986, discussed in the next section (Savage, 1999).

E. Earmarking in context

Since academic earmarking is but a branch or subpart of a larger activity, it might be helpful to first contextualize it by looking at the overall level of earmarking activity for the federal government. Cochran and Taylor (2004) noted that earmarking, “has become
so routinized and so pervasive throughout the federal budget in the past decade that what was once a boon for the most powerful and favored has become an expected way for local governments and other institutions to get aid from Washington. Rather than just waiting for dollars to be distributed by formula or filing complex applications for competitive grants, more cities, universities, and others are lobbying lawmakers directly for funding for everything from harbor dredging to child immunization" (p. 324). Citing a 2003 Congressional Research Service study that used an admittedly more expansive definition of "pork barrel" than is typically used, the authors reported that approximately 10,631 earmarks appeared in the eleven federal appropriations bill in 2002. Those earmarks totaled $47 billion or roughly 6.4 percent of the nation's federal discretionary budget. Cochran and Taylor (2004) also noted that the dollar amount going to earmarks had increased by 60 percent since 1994 (growing from $29.1 billion in 1994 to $46.6 billion in 2002) but the overall number had risen 156 percent (from 4,155 earmarks in 1994 to 10,631 in 2002). In comparison, an analysis of data from the Chronicle's database showed that, over the same time period examined by Cochran and Taylor, individual earmarks directed to academic institutions increased from 250 in 1994 to 1,462 in 2002, an increase of close to 500 percent. Total dollars going to academic earmarks to individual institutions, according to the Chronicle database, went from $447 million in 1994 to $1.5 billion in 2002, an increase of over 236 percent.

Though the use of different definitions, and the inherent difficulty in accurately counting something that is as frequently and often purposefully obscure as earmarks makes comparison of the above numbers somewhat difficult, a rough but useful approximation
can be made. While earmarks going to all organizations increased a dramatic 156 percent over the nine-year period of 1994-2002, earmarks directed specifically to academic institutions increased to an even greater degree, growing by almost 500 percent. In actual dollars, the amount of money going to academic earmarks more than tripled between 1994 and 2002, easily outpacing the growth rate of the federal government’s spending on R&D, both defense and non-defense, over the same period (see http://www.aaas.org/spp/rd/trtot05c.pdf.).

F. The history of academic earmarking

“There is a current saying among government supporters of research that scientific research is the only pork barrel for which the pigs determine who gets the pork.”


Though the antecedents of academic earmarks are as old as the republic itself, with pork barrel politics involved in building everything from roads and harbors of the new nation to its capital city, the advent of academic earmarking—that is, earmarks going for research projects or facilities at colleges and universities—is much more recent (Brian, 1992). As Robert Rosenzweig (1998) noted, the remarkable thing about academic earmarking is not that it occurs but that it took so long to occur. Rosenzweig speculated that perhaps it was a sense of loyalty to the peer review process or a feeling of ownership by those who had helped create it after World War II, but whatever the reason, outside of

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agriculture, academic earmarks were not widely sought nor encouraged by academe and members of Congress until the end of the 1970s. When they did begin to occur, it was at a relatively small, regional university, Tufts, that was outside the top tier of research institutions (Martino, 1992; Savage, 1999). Beginning in the late 1970s, Jean Mayer, who was president of Tufts, and the "father of modern academic earmarking," according to Savage (1999), sought and received direct appropriations that allowed his university to build a nationally eminent graduate school of nutrition and "New England’s only school of veterinary medicine" (p. 44). Through the 1980s and into the 1990s, Tufts went on to tap its Washington sources—abetted by a lobbying firm that became the premier academic lobbyists in DC, Cassidy and Associates—for a constant stream of revenue, running into the millions of dollars, that was used to increase the school’s visibility and ability to perform research. By the time of his retirement in 1992, Mayer’s success had led to widespread recognition of the impact that earmarking could have on an institution’s ability to raise its research profile. Savage (1999) noted that, when Mayer stepped down from his position at Tufts, he was hailed as "a visionary, a leader who transformed his school from ‘a small liberal arts college...into a research university of renown,’ one that had emerged ‘from under the shadow of neighboring universities like Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology’" (Savage, 1999, quoting Fox Butterfield from the New York Times, p. 44). More importantly, Savage noted, nothing in the articles commemorating Mayer’s retirement, or in the eulogies published after his death in 1993, criticized Mayer for his role in earmarking. "Instead, the realization of his aspirations, ambitions, and vision was heralded," Savage wrote. "What the press noted
was Tufts' growing research capacity, not the methods by which Mayer encouraged that growth" (1999, p. 45).

The trail that Mayer and Tufts blazed was soon exploited by other institutions, many of which were pillars of the American Higher Education establishment. In 1983, in a move that awakened the academy to the dangers and the advantages of earmarks, Columbia University and Catholic University, both members of the Association of American Universities (AAU), sought and won direct earmarks of $5 million each to construct science facilities (Martino, 1992). This move—which was publicly decried by those scientists and agencies concerned about the future of peer reviewed science programs and silently studied by those institutional leaders recognizing a new way to get badly needed institutional resources—created a furor among higher education leaders and public policy makers for two reasons. First, it signaled a willingness on the part of two charter members of America’s most respected and exclusive higher education association, the AAU, to break ranks and seek earmarks. The defection of Columbia, a highly venerated institution, was especially problematic in this regard. In the words of Robert Rosenzweig, when being interviewed by Savage (1999), "Columbia was different...Columbia was an elite institution, and their participation was different from anything that had happened before" (p. 50). But it wasn't just the defection of the two institutions from the AAU "policy line" that brought attention. It was also where the money came from. Instead of doing as Tufts had done and seeking money out of the agricultural appropriations bill, which had historically served as a vehicle for awarding many kinds of earmarks,
Columbia and Catholic sought—and received—their earmarks from the energy and water appropriations bill. As Savage noted:

This funding supported more prestigious research: basic research involving high-energy physics—expensive research that wins Nobel Prizes, research that university presidents comprehend and value. Furthermore, earmarking in this bill threatened the programs and budgets of the Office of Energy Research in the Department of Energy, one of the federal agencies that truly employed peer review in its allocation of research grants (1999, p. 50).

Finally, to add insult to injury, the money that Columbia and Catholic received came from funds destined for their fellow AAU member institutions, Yale and the University of Washington. The fact that it was Columbia, that it was Department of Energy money, and that the money was taken away from fellow AAU member institutions all conspired to gain the notice of the AAU presidents (Savage, 1999).

Following Columbia's defection to "the pork side" in 1983, academic earmarking rocketed upward, becoming almost business as usual on Capitol Hill. From approximately $12 million at the beginning of that decade, the amount being earmarked for colleges and universities quickly ballooned to $100 million by 1984, $250 million by 1988, and $763 million by 1993 (Martino, 1992; Chronicle, http://www.chronicle.com/weekly/v45/i46/46porktrends.htm). As impressive as these numbers were (whether for good or for ill), the number and geographic distribution of the
institutions that suddenly joined the earmarking gravy train were even more so. Florida State University, Boston University, the University of Oregon, the University of New Hampshire, the University of South Carolina, Georgetown, Oklahoma State, Boston College, Syracuse, the University of Nevada, Rochester Institute of Technology, Purdue, the University of Kansas, Northeastern University, Iowa State, and Arizona State—in addition to Catholic and Columbia, which received additional earmarks—all found ready allies in Congress and were able to obtain earmarked appropriations between 1983 and 1985 (Martino, 1992).

Backlash to earmarking

Though the impact of the 1983 earmarks for Columbia and Catholic was, to borrow an analogy from Martino (1992), like a “leak in the dike” suddenly “becom[ing] a flood,” not all institutions, and their member associations were willing to stand idle and watch earmarking occur, nor were some members of Congress (p. 2). Spurred by the direct appropriation to Columbia and Catholic, the AAU, whose 50 plus member institutions represent the cream of the nation’s research universities, circulated that same year a resolution calling upon “universities and members of Congress ‘to refrain from actions that would make scientific decisions a test of political influence rather than a judgment on the quality of work to be done’” (Savage, 1999, p. 52, quoting from the “AAU Statement on Decision Making in Federal Funding for Research Facilities,” October 25, 1983). Robert Rosenzweig, the AAU’s new president and the driving force behind the resolution, was able to get all but three of the AAU institutions to sign off on the earmarking moratorium called for in the resolution (the presidents of both Columbia and
Catholic chose to abstain from the vote). The AAU statement was subsequently echoed in a similar document from NASULGC’s members—though their statement also called on Congress to increase the amount of support going to academic facilities—and by similar resolutions that emerged from AASCU, NAS, ACE, AAAS, and the National Science Board (NSB). That Rosenzweig and AAU were able to negotiate that level of support for a moratorium was, according to James Savage (1999), a remarkable achievement. It also represented the high water mark in the academy’s attempt to present a united front on the issue. Never again would higher education be able to muster such unity among institutions in an attempt to halt earmarking.

By the end of 1986, AAU’s moratorium on earmarking had fallen apart. Watching as one after another of its members (including Brown University, Tulane University, Indiana University, the University of Minnesota, Northwestern University, and the University of North Carolina) ignored the 1983 policy statement and sought direct appropriations from Congress, AAU once more sought to stanch the flow of dollars by forging an agreement on earmarks. A committee, chaired by Dr. Donald Langenberg, Chancellor of the Chicago Circle campus of the University of Illinois, was formed in cooperation with NASULGC, ACE, and the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS). In the spring of 1987, the committee released a report that sought to find a middle ground in the earmarking debate (Langenberg, 1987). Unlike in 1983, when the equivalent of a “just say ‘no’” policy was acceptable to almost all of the AAU membership, there was much less consensus in 1986. The result was a concession to the earmarking proponents, by the Langenberg committee, that AAU and the other associations would reassess their previous policy on earmarks,
refrain from criticizing members of Congress and their pork projects, and "explore arrangements that would make the congressional earmark process more reflective of both national needs and the concerns of the research community for merit" (Savage, 1999, p. 56, quoting "Report of The Working Committee on Principles, Policies and Procedures in the Award of Federal Funds for University Research Facilities and Projects" March 1987, p. 11). In return, the earmarking proponents on the committee agreed that "Congress would be encouraged to incorporate some consideration for merit in its earmarking decisions, perhaps by employing agency evaluations in the appropriations process," and "merit" would continue to be the primary factor in allocating federal research funding decisions (Savage, 1999, p. 56). And, in perhaps its most controversial recommendation, all members of the committee agreed that any earmark "that came at the expense of peer-reviewed programs in six major research agencies or the two National Endowments" would be fought publicly and/or privately" (Savage, 1999, pp.56-57).

Not surprisingly, the committee’s report met with a mixed reception when it was presented to the AAU membership at their national meeting later that spring. After extensive debate in which some members portrayed the report as nothing less than appeasement and others claimed that it didn’t go far enough in trying to expand the definition of merit, the new agreement was finally adopted on a final vote of 43 to 10, with two institutions abstaining (Savage, 1999).

Those who criticized the new agreement as an unworkable attempt at compromise were soon proved right. By 1988, seven additional AAU institutions that had previously not
participated in earmarks (including Arizona, Brandeis, Michigan State, Nebraska, Washington, and Wisconsin) sought and received direct appropriations. Then, in 1989, the University of Pennsylvania’s president, Sheldon Hackney, announced that Penn had employed a lobbying firm to obtain a $10 million grant. Not only was Penn one of the most powerful and elite AAU institutions, it was also the first to openly reverse its position on earmarking (Penn had publicly voted for the 1983 and 1986 moratoriums; most of the other AAU institutions that had subsequently received earmarks had either voted against the moratorium or abstained). Within two years the agreement on earmarking produced by the Langenberg committee had begun to fall apart. By 1989, the AAU was forced to revisit the issue. The subsequent policy statement that was issued made no reference to the Langenberg committee’s moratorium on earmarking, instead simply calling on AAU institutions “to refrain from earmarking, ‘at least’ in the five major federal research agencies: NSF, NIH, NASA, the departments of Defense and Energy” (Savage, 1999, p. 61). When quizzed about the apparent change of policy, AAU chairman, Frank Rhodes, president of Cornell, simply said “it is difficult for us to go on making statements we do not intend to keep” (Savage, 1999, p. 61, quoting from the minutes of the “AAU Spring Membership Meeting, April 16-18, 1989” pp. 3-6 and 8-12). Subsequent attempts by AAU to cobble together some type of agreement that would halt, or at least reduce, earmarking also failed. Noting that these policy statements typically left large loopholes that institutions could, and would, take advantage of—for instance earmarks under the Department of Agriculture were acceptable under the rubric of the subsequent AAU policy, but those under NASA were not; or an earmark included in an authorization bill was “kosher” even if it was for funds from one of the “holy five”
research agencies, but an earmark in an appropriations bill was not—many of the institutions simply chose to ignore the unenforceable restrictions. By 1993, Savage wrote, AAU’s “active opposition to earmarking had virtually collapsed....[and] the proliferation of earmarking universities...made the AAU staff extremely reluctant to speak out or campaign against earmarking” (1999, p. 72).

The associations, led by AAU, were not the only ones in Washington trying to fight earmarks, however. Between 1983 and 1996, at least seven skirmishes occurred in the U.S. House or Senate as various factions tried to fight or insert earmarks into appropriations bills. Typically these occurred, Savage (1999) noted, between members of the appropriations committees, who jealously guarded their authority to use earmarks to reward friends and allies—or if seen in a more positive light, to advance meritorious and/or needed projects—and the authorization committees, who were envious of the appropriators’ powers to dole out rewards, dismayed by the impact earmarks had on the research plans laid out by them, and, in general, worried that earmarks represented poor policy and a waste of our nation’s science resources. Although the opponents of earmarks were able to gain an occasional victory in those skirmishes (usually through the intercession of a senior member like Sam Nunn (D-GA) whose reputation carried enough political weight to counteract the earmark goodies offered by the appropriators), they typically lost most floor fights. Contested earmarks simply reappeared in other spending bills, or as was often the case, were protected by procedural rules that made fighting the earmarks on a case by case basis almost impossible. As earmarks continued to increase at a rate that made it difficult for the “pork busters,” as some anti-earmarking members
called themselves, to try and combat them individually, earmark opponents in Congress moved to try other methods to stem the flow (Savage, 1999).

One of these methods was an attempt at dealing academic earmarks a knockout blow through legislative maneuvering. It occurred in 1989 when Senator John Danforth (R-MO), Sam Nunn (D-GA), and Terry Sanford (D-NC) cosponsored a resolution that would have modified the rules of the Senate in such a way that any Senator, by raising a point of order, could force earmarks for noncompetitive research to be stricken from legislation. This measure known as the Danforth initiative, failed, however, when the chair and ranking minority member of the Senate Rules Committee, Wendell Ford (D-KY) and Ted Stevens (R-AK), respectively refused to support it (Savage, 1999).

With legislative means for stemming earmarks failing, Representative George Brown (D-CA) decided to use one of the most powerful weapons remaining in the legislative arsenal: public hearings. As chair of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, a committee who believed its jurisdiction over science programs was being eroded by the appropriators’ porkbarrelling efforts, Brown and his colleagues on the committee grew determined to publicly expose the recipients and their projects. The result was a series of four hearings on academic earmarks beginning in June 1993 and continuing through 1994. Acknowledging in his opening remarks of the June hearings that earmarking was “an age-old political practice and one which may not be objectionable if practiced in moderation,” Brown went on to charge that the way it had begun to be practiced in the past decade “violate[d] the basic tenets of fairness, in both
the scientific and political arenas" (U.S. House, 1993, p. 8). Noting that $700 million had been earmarked to go to 209 colleges and universities in fiscal year 1992, a 70-fold increase in academic earmarking over a span of just twelve years, Brown argued that the academic porkbarrelling had “spiraled out of control,” thereby “distorting scientific and agency priorities and causing serious inefficiencies in the use of scarce research dollars” (U.S. House, 1993, p. 8). However deep or innocuous its historical roots, Brown told the committee members and audience, “academic earmarking ha[d] proliferated to the extent that the pork ha[d] turned rotten” (U.S. House, 1993, p. 6). He went on to promise that he and his colleagues were determined to explore the reasons that underlay the proliferation of academic earmarks; the way colleges and universities were using them; and the impact that they had on the research priorities of the federal agencies charged with overseeing or carrying out the scientific agenda of the country (U.S. House, 1993).

Over the 18 months that followed, the House committee called before it 28 witnesses, representing public and private academic institutions, private consulting (i.e., lobbying) firms, higher education associations, and federal agencies. It requested detailed information on research and lobbying activities at 50 institutions of higher education that had received an earmark in the 1992 fiscal year federal budget. And, finally, it commissioned a review of the issues and history surrounding academic earmarking in science by the Library of Congress' Congressional Research Service (U.S. House, 1993; U.S. House, 1994). By the end of the hearings, Brown and the committee members had publicly exposed many aspects of academic earmarking. They showed that just five percent of all higher education institutions in the U.S. received an earmark in 1992 (the
year studied); that 78 percent of all earmarks in 1992 went to institutions in just 20 states; that 17 of the top 20 states with institutions receiving earmarks had senators or representatives who were appropriations committee chairs or subcommittee chairs or ranking members on an appropriations committee; that 10 of the top 20 institutions, in terms of number of dollars received through dollar earmarking, also ranked among the top 20 institutions in terms of competitively awarded federal research projects; and that many of the institutions that were successful in receiving earmarks (approximately 21 of the 50 institutions surveyed) employed professional lobbyists that were paid anywhere from $10,000 to $50,000 per month (U.S. House, 1994).

The hearings finally concluded in October 1994, but not before several universities had been publicly embarrassed and higher education’s reputation, in general, had taken a number of hits. The ignorance of many institutional leaders with regard to basic legislative procedure was decried by the chair and members of the subcommittee. And a heated exchange between one congressional representative from Ohio and a university president led to charges that the university was willing to place its priorities and welfare ahead of those of the nation as a whole, an assertion bitterly denied by the institution’s president (U.S. House, 1994, p. 297).

Recent developments
Following the conclusion of the 1994 congressional hearings, academic earmarking continued to be a debated topic, but never again at the level of intensity displayed in the House hearings. Following the Democrat’s loss of power in the 1994 mid-term
congressional elections and the corresponding rise of a Republican leadership dedicated to curbing the federal government’s appetite for spending, academic earmarking declined dramatically from a high of $763 million in FY 1993 to $600 million in FY 1995 to $296 million in FY 1996. Fiscal year 1996 marked the high tide of congressional success in bringing spending through direct appropriations under control, however. By FY 1997, as a rapidly growing economy loosened the caps on domestic spending, academic earmarks once more began to rise, increasing to $440 million that year and to $528 million the next. By FY 1999, earmarking for college and university projects had returned to the levels seen prior to the Republican takeover of Congress, reaching $797 million that year before breaking the $1 billion mark in FY 2000 and the $2 billion mark in FY 2003 (http://chronicle.com/prm/weekly/v50/i05/05a01801.htm#escalating).

G. Funds, Facilities, Fairness, and Faith: The Debate Surrounding Peer Review vs. Earmarking

“I understand there’s something called a peer review system. I don’t know what peer review is, but it appears that we don’t have any of those pears in Louisiana.”

Senator Russell Long, commenting on a 1986 amendment to strip non-peer-reviewed appropriations, or earmarks, from the Defense bill (quoted by Rosenzweig, 1998, p.57)
The debate surrounding peer review versus earmarking

The concerns being voiced about earmarking—which is also called porkbarrelling or, on a less derisive note, direct appropriations—are not limited to the total amount of dollars going to academic earmarks. Instead, they relate to a host of issues, including such questions as the following: 1) Do academic earmarks have a destructive impact on our nation’s science infrastructure by siphoning funds out of the traditional, peer-reviewed (also called merit-reviewed) federal research and facilities programs, and the projects they support (Langenberg, 1987; Martino, 1992; U.S. House, 1993; Cook, 1998)? 2) Do academic earmarks distribute our nation’s finite science resources in a fair manner on projects that are of good quality (Savage, 1999; Cook 1998)? 3) Or finally, do earmarks represent an abrogation of higher education’s responsibility to be faithful to the nation’s larger interests? More specifically, is participation in such a highly politicized process as earmarking, especially when combined with the other examples of institutional misconduct that have emerged over the last two decades, corrosive of the trust the public places in higher education, believing that it serves as a faithful, objective steward of the nation’s dollars and welfare (Cook, 1998; Martino, 1992)?

Countering these concerns are the claims used to justify academic earmarking. They include the following charges: 1) Peer review, as a resource allocation system, is inherently unfair, either as a method for distributing our nation’s research dollars or as a method for distributing resources to the most deserving individual or research project. The evidence cited for the former is the severe inequities that exist in the distribution of federal research funds, where 46 percent of our nation’s basic research dollars are
concentrated in the hands of just 20 institutions (U.S. House, 1994), while the argument for the latter is that peer review is largely an "old boy's network" that favors well-known, or well-connected, researchers who conduct safe, "mainstream" research over young or relatively unknown researchers carrying out innovative, risky, or cutting-edge research) (Chubin and Hackett, 1990). 2) Merit, as defined and determined under peer review, was never intended to be the only determinant of who gets funding under our nation's basic research support system, and other distributional mechanisms, such as block grants or formula funding, and criteria, such as geographic and institutional variety, are equally legitimate to use (U.S. House, 1994). To support this argument, earmark proponents point to the long history of formula funds used by the Department of Agriculture, the non-competed contracts used to support the Department of Defense's national research and development labs, and language in the National Science Foundation's authorization calling for geographic equity in funding allocations (Savage, 1999). 3) Finally, the proponents of earmarking argue that the federal government has failed to live up to its part of the good faith bargain made with the higher education community in the middle of the last century that it would support the cost of carrying out basic research perceived as vital to the national interest, either through the creation of federally-financed research facilities on campuses or through the full and open reimbursement of indirect costs incurred by campuses as a result of carrying out federally-financed research. Given these failures, earmarking proponents claim, earmarking is a perfectly legitimate means for seeking redress from Congress (U.S. House, 1993; Savage, 1999).
The sides involved in the debate

The divisions in the policy debate are, at first glance, well defined. Aligned on one side of the divide are the foes of earmarking, many of whom see themselves as the watchdogs for good science and/or good government. Most of these groups also have been accused of having a vested interest in maintaining the status quo in the distribution of research resources (Savage, 1999). They include many of the nation’s top research universities (such as Cornell, MIT, Harvard, and Princeton); the national higher education associations to which the institutions belong (led by AAU, and including NASULGC and AASCU); the major scientific academies/societies (such as AAAS, NAS, and APS); the federal agencies (such as the Department of Defense and the Department of Health and Human Services), whose budgets and programs are affected by earmarks; and last but not least, members of Congress who oppose academic earmarking (Martino, 1992, Savage, 1999).

On the other side of the policy debate are the supporters of academic earmarking. The motivation for earmarking proponents runs the gamut from believing earmarks to be a legitimate way to redress inequities caused by the peer review process to fully supporting peer review but also wanting the flexibility to do an end run around the process when a political opportunity arises. Supporters of earmarking include a growing number of college and university presidents and trustees (though not all, by any means), influential lobbyists (such as Cassidy and Associates, and Patton, Boggs, & Blow), and a number of powerful members of Congress, especially the chairs of the appropriations
subcommittees, otherwise known collectively as the Cardinals (Savage, 1999; Martino, 1992; Frisch, 1998).

Confounding this simplistic dichotomy are a number of factors that tend to blur the lines of ideology and support. Institutions may take a public stance against earmarks, usually as a member of one or more of the educational associations (such as AAU, NASULGC, AASCU, etc.) while seeking, in private, an earmark from their congressional delegation (frequently these institutions maintain some degree of “plausible deniability,” such as the justification that they are only subgrantees on a project that was funded through an earmark and therefore not the instigators of the process) (Savage, 1999). At the same time, faculty may belong to a scholarly academy that publicly opposes earmarks, while working for an institution that energetically espouses them. Finally, confounding many attempts to project sides in the debate with complete accuracy is the inability to easily predict which institution or member of Congress is likely to support or fight earmarks based upon their profiles or histories. Earmarks are sought by some of the country’s richest institutions, whether defined in terms of endowments, academic reputation, or R&D performance, as well as some of its most resource starved institutions (U.S. House, 1994). Earmarks are inserted—either by or at the request of—members of Congress who come from some of the richest states, both in terms of per capita income and R&D resources, as well as from states that rank at the bottom in most measures of wealth and power (except, perhaps for political influence) (U.S. House, 1994). And to throw matters into complete chaos, both congressional and institutional leaders who have led the fight
against earmarking have been known to switch their positions when an earmark becomes a matter of political or institutional convenience.

The evidence presented by the various sides in the debate

Unfortunately, at least from the standpoint of those charged with developing policy, each side in the debate has arguments that can be supported and countered by persuasive evidence. The charge that earmarks cannibalize resources that, in the absence of the earmarks, would go to the federal government’s established peer-reviewed programs, has been a staple of debate ever since serious discussion of the issue began to occur in the mid 1980s (see, for example, U.S. House, 1993; Rosenzweig, 1998; Savage, 1999).

Evidence offered in support of this charge has typically included data showing the increase in the percentage of funds earmarked under a program versus the increase—or in some cases decline—in the overall level of funds awarded to the program. For instance, in the 1993 House hearings on academic earmarks, data were provided that showed the percentage of funds earmarked in the Department of Agriculture’s Cooperative States Research Service (CSRS) budget increasing from 10 percent in 1985 to approximately 30 percent by 1993, despite an overall decline in total funding for the CSRS programs during that same time period. In 2001, Norine Noonan, the assistant administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Research and Development from 1998-2000 brought the issue back into the spotlight within the higher education community when she claimed that earmarks had siphoned away dollars that would otherwise have gone into the peer-reviewed research programs at her agency. Speaking at a national meeting of the AAAS in Washington, DC in May 2001, Dr. Noonan, a scientist and
university administrator before entering public service, estimated that as much as 11 percent of her former agency's annual research and development budget of approximately $500 million had been "consumed" between 1995 and 2000 by academic earmarks. And since Congress generally "has...not provided extra money to pay for the earmarks," she stressed, these earmarks "cut into funds that would otherwise have paid for peer-reviewed research" (Brainard, May 18, 2001, p. A30).

Although charges like those advanced by Dr. Noonan and other opponents of earmarking are widespread and well cited, the overall impact of earmarking on the health of peer reviewed research programs can be, in the final analysis, difficult to assess. The reasons are simply that money is a fungible resource, easily shifted between programs (at least at the congressional level), and it is difficult to prove intent with regard to why Congress may choose to fund an agency or program at one level one year and at another level the next (a difficulty compounded by the fact that most appropriation committee mark ups—when the appropriation decisions are actually made—are closed to the public) (Frisch, 1998). And though earmarks may violate the spending levels drawn up by congressional authorization committees, such violations occur whether or not the programs contain earmarks. Many programs, such as the Pell Grant, have never been funded—or, some might argue, ever really expected to be funded—at the level prescribed in their authorizing legislation. Thus, it is difficult to make the case that earmarks are a primary cause of programs never attaining their authorized spending level. On the other hand, the wishes of congressional members attempting to insert earmarks may be thwarted by other
members of Congress, officials of the executive agency charged with administering the programs, or the peer review process itself.

In one such case, the U.S. Department of Education in 1999 canceled a decades old, merit-based (peer-reviewed) grant competition sponsored by the Department’s Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (or FIPSE) after Congress ordered FIPSE to focus awards under the competition upon fourteen “target areas” in its FY 1999 appropriations bill for the Department. The earmarking language in the bill even went so far as to specify eleven institutions that would be “especially suited to carry out” projects under the program (Healy, Chronicle, Jan 22, 1999). Convinced that it could not find a way to reconcile the traditionally open-ended competition with the directives included by Congress, the Department canceled the original competition and announced another competition, one that closely followed the expressed wishes of Congress (Brainard, Chronicle, March 16, 1999). The result, not surprisingly, was a backlash of bad publicity, with at least one member of the FIPSE Advisory Board, Gordon Davies, publicly charging that Congress had “replaced the Fund’s 27-year old merit based competitive grant program with a pork barrel of political favorites,” thereby “destroying the very notion of merit and fair competition” (Letter from Davies, Chronicle, March 12, 1999).

When the final awards under the program were announced, however, only one of the eleven institutions specified by Congress in the appropriations bill received a grant under the 1999 FIPSE competition, and awards were made in only 10 of the 14 topical categories Congress specified (Brainard, Chronicle, December 3, 1999). If the
congressional attempt to intervene in the process was, as Davies accused, a pork barrel attempt, it was a dramatically unsuccessful example of one.

The above example is indicative of just how hard it can be to tease out the impact of congressional earmark attempts on established programs. Would any of the institutions funded as a result of the second FIPSE competition have received an award if Congress had not attempted to direct, or earmark, the funds? Would the FIPSE program have received the same level of funding in FY 1999 if Congress had not intended that at least a portion of that funding go toward targeted projects at specific institutions? Such questions can be difficult to answer, and the difficulty has been increased by the dramatic growth in research funding some agencies have experienced over the past few years. Also confounding our ability to measure the direct impact of earmarks on programmatic budgets has been the natural share shift that occurs in priority areas both within an agency and between agencies (with some agencies, or specific research fields within those agencies, increasing their share of the available research dollars at the expense of other agencies or other research fields). Such growth may or may not be tied to earmarks under those programs. In many cases the answer is simply not clear. What is clear is just how difficult it can be to measure the direct impact of an earmark, or in this case an attempted earmark, on peer-reviewed competitions.

If the impact of earmarks on the budgets of traditional peer-reviewed programs is of primary importance to the faculty and researchers—the fairness, efficiency, and quality of earmarking versus peer review as a system for distributing research funds—may be of
greatest importance to the nation as a whole since it focuses on the impact of earmarks on
the nation's research support system. Simply put, the arguments made for peer reviewed
research programs are that 1) they ensure fairness in the research system because any
individual from an accredited institution can compete openly for funds and the worthiness
of his/her proposal will be judged by an objective panel of qualified peers, 2) they ensure
the optimal use and efficiency of our nation's limited resources because they allow long-
term plans to be established by congressional committees, with input and advice from
qualified scientific advisors, and executed by the appropriate federal agencies without
external interference (such as earmarks); and finally, 3) they ensure quality because the
"best projects" are selected on the basis of head-to-head competition in which the merits
of each project are objectively weighed and evaluated by those with training and
experience to make those judgments, fellow scientists (Chubin and Hackett, 1990; U.S.
House 1994).

Once again these arguments have a long history and appear, at first glance, to be well
supported by the evidence. Unlike earmarks, which may undergo little to no scrutiny
before being funded, all peer review programs, by definition, undergo a process of merit
review that serves as a quality check, assuring that for each award the research goal of the
project is nationally significant, the methodology appropriate, and the ability of the
investigator(s) to carry out the project sufficient. Earmarks, on the other hand, are
typically inserted into an appropriations bill—either the bill itself, or more likely, its
accompanying report—with as low a profile as possible in an attempt to deflect attention.
The only review process earmarked projects are likely to get, unless they are held up to
public scrutiny, is among members of the appropriations committee or their staff (See Frisch's 1998 description of the typical process by which earmarks are requested and approved in the appropriations bills). Furthermore, any individual who meets the minimum requirements for participation in a peer reviewed grant program—typically association with an accredited institution of higher education, no history of convictions for drug use or distribution, and no history of academic malfeasance—is eligible to apply for a grant under the program, lending strong evidence to the claim of fairness under peer reviewed programs. Earmarks, in contrast, depend upon the ties a particular institution or researcher has to a powerful or well-positioned member of Congress (U.S. House, 1994).

But our nation’s peer-review process, and the programs and processes that utilize it are not without their critics. The fairness of peer review as a method for distributing the vast majority of the federal government’s funding for basic research has been attacked for almost as long as the system has been in place (Chubin and Hackett, 1990). Though peer review is so entrenched in our current academic and research systems that Savage (1999) referred to it in Kuhnian terms as a “dominant policy regime,” we sometimes forget that this has been the case only for the last half century and significant debate has always existed over whether science and our nation’s interests would be better served by a system that distributed science resources on the basis of some other criteria (such as the formula grant program employed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture). Chubin and Hackett writing in their book, Peerless Science: Peer Review and U.S. Science Policy, noted that:
Today, peer review is besieged on both practical and symbolic grounds. In their complaints, critics point to the operating characteristics of peer review: low levels of consensus among reviewers, inconsistencies in judgment, errors of omission (when a flawed or fraudulent manuscript slips through) and commission (when a competitor’s manuscript is blocked or delayed, or its results or argument are stolen), the partisan flavor of reviewer comments (which seemingly violates principles of impartiality), and the unsettling influence of author’s characteristics on the fate of their manuscripts. These are neither a blueprint for selecting the best science or an enactment of the values we hope science will honor (1990, p.122).

Perhaps even more illustrative of the concerns that exist, even within the academy, with regard to peer review are findings from a 1988 report, “Researcher perspectives on the Federal Research System,” prepared by the Political Economy Research Institute for the Office of Technology Assessment. According to this study, analysis of a survey of between 3,800 and 4,000 scientists and engineers who were members of Sigma Xi, the Scientific Research Society, found that “fewer than 8 percent [of the scientists and engineers surveyed] indicated that ‘peer review works well as it is’” (1999, p 16). The report went on to state that:

[T]he two most frequently cited responses by those who perceived problems in the peer review process were particularly troubling.
These items were 'Reviews are marred by cronyism, old boy's networks, and insider politics' and 'Original, non-mainstream ideas are unlikely to be funded.' If one adds 'Original ideas are sometimes 'appropriated' or 'leaked' by a reviewer or program officer,' to those two responses the Survey results indicate a concern of scientists about fundamental problems (64 percent cited these three choices) rather than technical problems of the peer review process (28 percent) represented by the other critical responses" (Political Economy Research Institute, 1988, p.16).

Even a 1987 study of peer review by the General Accounting Office (GAO), though positive overall, indicated that there was room for improvement. Particularly troubling for those who question the fairness of peer review as a mechanism for distributing research dollars were the study's findings that "at NSF, 20 institutions supplied 25 percent of the members of all peer review panels; and these same institutions submitted 24 percent of all proposals submitted to NSF and obtained 44 percent of all the funds distributed by the agency" (Savage, 1999, p. 40).

Of more practical concern to peer review opponents than the ethical and procedural fairness of the peer review process, however, is the inequitable distribution of resources that has resulted from the use of peer review as the dominant mechanism for distributing our nation's basic research resources. By almost all attempted measures of the research output of American universities, the vast majority of basic research funds is concentrated
in the hands of a few, resource-rich institutions (Geiger and Feller, 1995; Savage, 1999; U.S. House, 1994). In his 1994 testimony before the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Boston University's president, John Silber, a leading proponent of earmarking, cited NSF figures showing that as of the early 1990s “31 institutions clustered in just 3 geographic regions receive over half of all federal research support” (U.S. House, 1994, p. 241). In addition, just ten institutions received one quarter of all NSF research funds and 20 institutions received close to half (46 percent) of all the NIH research funds (U.S. House, 1994). And though research has shown that a trickle down effect is occurring with more institutions receiving more federal research funds than ever before (see Geiger and Feller, 1995), the top recipients of federal research awards/dollars are still pretty much the same handful of institutions that have been at the top for the last half century.

The result is that many in the academy, and in Congress, see peer review as a process that is not so much meritocratic as elitist, concentrating ever more resources on a monopolistic group of institutions that is numerically small but economically powerful (U.S. House, 1994; Savage, 1999). This dramatically skewed distribution of resources has created a "have" versus "have not" situation that is reflected not only in the amount of federal dollars going to institutions but also who sits in judgment on the awards (see the previous reference to the GAO findings on peer review committee assignments). The easily-anticipated result of this perception of unfairness has been calls for methods to redress the imbalance of resources and "level the playing field" for all institutions. One way Congress and the executive agencies have sought to satisfy these petitions was to
create sheltered funds programs, such as those offered by the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) (offered by seven federal agencies, including NSF, NASA, Energy, Defense, and EPA) and AREA (the Academic Research Enhancement Award Program), which is offered by NIH. These programs seek to stimulate research at the "have not" institutions, those located in states with less than a specified amount of federal R&D funding, in the case of EPSCoR, or, in the case of NIH's AREA program, an institution with less than $2 million in NIH sponsored research grants and/or cooperative agreements per year in direct or indirect costs in at least four of the preceding seven years by sheltering funds for research at such institutions (http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/area_faq.htm). This research funding, it is hoped, will in turn allow recipient institutions to expand and enhance their ability and capacity to compete under the regular peer review programs. Importantly, the shelter grant funds still represent peer reviewed research, since they are awarded on a competitive basis. The competition is simply restricted so that the institutions do not have to compete against faculty or institutions significantly more resource rich than themselves. Such programs have remained fairly small, however, and their impact is largely unproven. The result has been that institutions, and their allies in Congress, have sought alternative ways to address the perceived imbalance of research funding and that has been through earmarking.

Despite these limited attempts by Congress and the executive agencies to programmatically redress the inequities in research funding caused by peer review, proponents of earmarking have continued to use the inequality of federal funding as
justification for earmarking. In the words of John Silber, "...federal policies toward scientific research have operated to create in effect two castes of research universities, and it is not merely appropriate but in conformity with national goals established by Congress for 'have not' institutions to seek federal support to redress the imbalance that currently exists" (U.S. House, 1994, pp. 243-244). Such arguments have been undercut, however, by research showing that the political process through which earmarks are created has actually "led to the concentration of academic earmarks in a relatively small number of geographical, state, and universities....[Thus] rather than increasing equity in the allocation of federal research funds, academic earmarking may actually intensify their concentration" (Savage, 1999, p. 126).

As for the final issue, the impact of earmarking on the image of responsibility, objectivity, and self-regulation that higher education had cultivated among the public and policy makers, Cook (1998) claimed, "One cannot fully understand the erosion of confidence in higher education without understanding earmarked funding. Members of Congress regularly received requests from higher education institutions for academic earmarks, or 'pork' as opponents of the practice called them, and those requests made academe look just like other special interest lobbies" (p. 39). To back up her claim, she cited comments by members of Congress and their staff that earmarks represent "purely selfish" attempts by higher education to lobby that have "decreased the impact of higher education overall....and hurt the long-term improvement of higher education" (Cook quoting Representative Vernon Ellers of Michigan, 1998, p. 41). Other writers have noted that earmarking is just one in a series of recent blunders by higher education that
has led to a decline in the public standing of colleges and universities. In his book, *The Political University*, published in the same year as Cook's, Robert Rosenzweig, former AAU president and a veteran of Washington politics, summed up his view of where higher education now stands:

But it is also true that years of prosperity and preferred treatment have bred elements of carelessness, self-indulgence, a sense of entitlement, and not a little arrogance. Carelessness about faculty misconduct, inattentiveness to the educational needs of undergraduates, disingenuousness about the ability of university research to produce economic benefits,...the use of political tactics like the pork barrel that undermine the image of universities as something more than another self-interested supper at the public-trough—while none of these fairly describes all institutions, all are real, and the cumulative effect has produced a level of cynicism about universities that can only be destructive and that, if nothing else distracts, attention from efforts to make the case that is so badly needed. (1998, p. 192).

**H. Summary of the first chapter**

The number of earmarks going to individual academic institutions increased exponentially over the past decade, growing by almost 500 percent between 1994 and 2002. By comparison, the percentage growth in the total number of earmarks, academic or nonacademic, awarded over the same time period was just 156 percent. This dramatic
growth in academic earmarking has occurred despite a twenty-year history of public and frequently bitter debate over the factors that drive the practice (whether they are real or perceived, justified or not), the governmental and institutional policies and practices that encourage it, and the impact it has on the authority of Congress to set national priorities for basic research and for agencies and institutions to carry them out. Many observers of higher education and science policy worry that left uncontrolled academic earmarking will, if it has not already, undermine the interests and reputation of higher education on Capitol Hill and in the White House. More importantly, they worry that it will damage the long-term competitiveness of America’s university-based research system. Calls for restraint on the part of both congressional appropriators and institutions have been numerous, as have suggestions for reforming the system by which federal research and development dollars are appropriated. So far, such efforts have failed to permanently inhibit growth in earmarks going to institutions. As the federal government’s current budget deficit grows, however, new initiatives aimed at curbing the practice are rumored to be under consideration. It is against this context of history, policy debate, and increased concern that this study was carried out.
Chapter Two: Past Research on Academic Earmarks

"The more gardens there are out there, the greater the probability that that unique flower is going to bloom someplace."

Charles Backus, Dean of Arizona State University's College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, on reasons for earmarking quoted by Cordes, 1989.

The discussion in Chapter One sought to illuminate the historical development of academic earmarking, as well as the policy debate that surrounds the practice. As a political patronage system that has significant impact on the nation’s system of distribution of research resources, provokes extreme debate on both sides of the political and higher education spectrum, and currently dispenses over $2 billion annually, it is topic worthy of study. The following section outlines the research that has been done on this topic. This research, in turn, helped establish the goals and parameters for the study.

A. Mass media's perception of academic earmarking

Despite the record number of dollars being diverted to colleges and universities through earmarks, the increasing number of institutions soliciting and/or receiving those earmarked dollars, and the concern over the impact of earmarking on academe’s bread and butter research programs, relatively few “scholarly” studies have been devoted to the topic of academic earmarks. As the topic captured the public’s attention, articles and
commentaries describing the phenomenon were published throughout the country in newspapers and mass media journals as ideologically and geographically diverse as the *Sacramento Bee*, the *Hawaii-Star Bulletin*, the *Arkansas Democrat*, the *Washington Post*, *Common Cause*, the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *National Journal*. Typically, many of these stories played off academe's growing addiction to earmarking and its swine-related appellation. The result has been a number of amusing headlines, such as:


"In Space, No One Can Hear You Oink" by Christopher Anderson, *Nature*, October 10, 1991


And though many of the articles featured hard hitting commentary, frequently pointing out the hypocrisy of some universities' public condemnation of earmarking under cover of their national associations while stepping up individually to take their own turn at the government trough, few were designed to offer deep insights into the nature of the phenomenon, including its complete scope, the drivers motivating it, or the impact it has had.

B. Scholarly studies of academic earmarking

Within the academy, a number of scholars have focused in increasingly greater depth upon the phenomenon. The history, aggregate impact, and motivations behind academic earmarking have been examined and debated, in varying detail, by Langenberg (1987), Martino (1992), Rosenzweig (1998), Savage (1999), and most recently Payne (2002, 2003) and de Figueiredo and Silverman (2002, 2004). Other authors, including Cohen and Noll (1991), Chubin and Hackett (1992), Kelly (1992), Geiger and Feller (1995), Ferrin (1996), and Frisch (1998) have addressed the issue tangentially, as it related to the larger topics of their research. In addition, at least four government agencies—the Congressional Research Service (CRS), the General Accounting Office, the White House’s Office of Science and Technology Policy, and the Department of Defense—and one private group, the Carnegie Commission on Science, Technology, and Government (1994), has investigated academic earmarks and issued reports of varying detail. Though these reports may not be considered by some as “scholarly works,” they do represent much of the extent research conducted on academic earmarks, and several of them either utilized the work of scholars, such as Savage, or employed those scholars as consultants.
In turn, some of these documents served as references for the House subcommittee’s interim report (U.S. House of Representatives, 1994) and later works by academic researchers.

One of the first attempts to document the scope of the growing phenomenon began in 1989. That year the “first study of the distribution of academic earmarks” was conducted by the University of California System Office, at the request of its president, David Gardner, a staunch opponent of earmarks. The study was carried out by a young government relations staff member for the University of California System, James Savage. Although the study was not publicly released, the study did cause consternation among the AAU members who saw it, due to its findings that many of the institutions benefiting most from earmarks were AAU institutions (and not the “have nots” institutions generally thought to be the earmarking transgressors) (Savage, 1999).

Subsequently, as concern about the increase in academic earmarks grew, and members of Congress began to push for information on them, Savage was asked to conduct a larger study of the topic in 1992 under the auspices of the Congressional Research Service (CRS). That study and a second one following it served as the reference documents for the series of hearings held in 1993 and 1994 by the House Committee on Science, Space and Technology. Savage subsequently updated and expanded the information contained in these reports in his full-length monograph on the issue, Funding Science in America: Congress, Universities, and the Politics of the Academic Pork Barrel, in 1999.
One of the first non-governmental, widely-marketed study of earmarking appeared in 1992, when Martino's *Science Funding: Politics and Porkbarrel* was published. This book, which was written just as the large increases in earmarking were beginning to occur and the debate over them was rising, traced the history of the federal government's support of big science. Although Martino (1992) provided one of the earliest historical accounts of academic earmarking as it emerged in the early 1980s and grew through that decade, he contributed little in the way of insight into the overall dimensions of the issue—not providing, for instance, comparative data showing the number of earmarks going to institutions from all federal agencies, or the states/institutions receiving the greatest number of earmarks, and no information on the impact of earmarks upon those recipient institutions. Further, because the scope of his history was entirely focused on the issue of "big science," he overlooked the role that non-research institutions may play in the earmarking process, as well as the motivators that could drive such institutions.

Instead, Martino's work focused upon earmarking as a logical outgrowth of the recognition by the public that large scale, federally-supported scientific laboratories would "create hundreds of new jobs in the chosen region and...involve millions of dollars each year through salaries and local spending." The result, Martino hypothesized, is that earmarking, which is but one of several problems with "big science" he examined in the book, should be considered as another in a long line of problems arising out of the research establishment's dependence on federal dollars. It is a process that "cannot be reversed," Martino concluded, and the only relevant question to ask is "Why did it take
so long for it to happen?” (1992, p. 13). In the end, Martino argued, science must find a new source of funds separate from the federal government.

Martino’s question, “why did it take so long?” was a refrain picked up by Rosenzweig in his 1998 book, *The Political University*. This memoir-style study drew upon the author’s battles as AAU president during the 1980s and early 1990s to provide background on the issues affecting America’s top research universities in the mid to late 1990s, as Rosenzweig saw them, and as a basis for speculating on what will happen in the future. Calling earmarking “a disease waiting to happen,” Rosenzweig (1998) argued that it is a logical, if unfortunate, outgrowth of the close ties between universities and the federal government and of the growing perception of research universities as key engines of economic growth. This later point, in particular echoed the findings of an earlier, 1994, study by the Carnegie Commission on Science, Technology, and Government. Quoting his own testimony before Congress, Rosenzweig stated: “There, Mr. Chairman, is the root cause of earmarking: It is in the political interests of Members of Congress to help their constituents, and it is in the institutional interests of university presidents...to find ways to help their Congressmen to help their constituencies. No proposal I have seen for limiting earmarking addresses the root cause, and so none seems to me to have much chance of success....What has been unleashed in the last decade into the middle of science policy is one of the most powerful impulses of our entire political system, namely that of constituency interest. The wonder is that for so long, science seemed to be largely exempt from its operation” (1998, p. 65).
Although Rosenzweig gave a nod to the arguments of earmarking proponents that peer review has given those institutions with an established track record of research a built-in advantage over institutions without such a history, he justified that outcome with the statement: "quality begets quality and, over time, clusters in a relatively small number of institutions" (1998, p. 55). Rosenzweig (1998) then went on to argue that other factors, as well as peer review, lead to institutional success. These include location in an area that has a strong base of constituent support, whether for raising private funds or for gaining increased state appropriations; the support of strong leaders (both political and institutional) who have a vision of where an institution can go; and the benefit of a region with an economy strong enough to support institutional needs and the vision of its leaders. As proof that institutions can overcome early disadvantages and increase their share of research dollars, Rosenzweig cited Geiger and Feller's 1995 study showing that the top 10 research institutions have lost ground relative to other top 100 institutions in terms of their share of federal research dollars received over the past five decades (to be more specific, Geiger and Feller's study showed that where the top 10 research institutions received over 43 percent of federal research funds awarded to colleges and universities in 1952, by 1990 they received only 20 percent of those funds). Rosenzweig noted, however, that "in politics, deprivation is not absolute, it is relative" (1998, p. 56). Despite this gain in research share, many institutions believe themselves to be unfairly victimized in the competition for merit-based programs and, as a result, have turned to Congress for redress. This impulse toward a political solution, combined with the rising belief in Congress that a strong university with a large research budget is the key to economic vitality, turned an issue of science policy into politics. "What had been
an issue of science policy became an issue of economic benefits and, in our political system, economic benefit becomes political currency. When constituency benefits were perceived, research funds became fair game for political trading” (Rosenzweig, 1998, p. 57).

While Rosenzweig’s 1998 study, which drew largely on his personal experience, effectively added to and expanded on the economic and political motivations for earmarking posited by Martino (1992) and the Carnegie Foundation (1994), several weaknesses in his work were also apparent. The frame of analysis in Rosenzweig’s 1998 book, like Martino’s, continued to be America’s research institutions. It was with the motivations of this relatively narrow group of institutions that Rosenzweig was exclusively concerned. While this may not have been unexpected, given Rosenzweig’s former position as president of the AAU, it did mean that he overlooked the participation and motivations of a majority of America’s higher education institutions in the conclusions he drew. In addition, although his arguments were persuasively presented, they were largely speculative since he offered no evidence from institutions—even those in the AAU—to support his conclusions.

Focusing on a different aspect of the relationship of higher education and the federal government than either Martino (1992) or Rosenzweig (1998), Constance Cook (1998) looked at the mechanisms and organizations that higher education uses to influence federal policy. In her book, Lobbying for Higher Education: How Colleges and Universities Influence Federal Policy, Cook devoted less than five out of 200 pages to
the "growth and practice of earmarking" (1998, p.39). In those five pages she efficiently summarized the history and issues surrounding academic earmarks: the rapid growth in such earmarks from 1982 to 1992 ($11 million to $700 million); the justifications given for earmarking (the need to right the inequities caused by peer review and spread the research wealth, the need to recompense for the lack of a national facilities program, etc); the opposition to earmarking by some presidents and congressional members; and the steps they have taken to try and abate or control it. Like Martino (1992) and Rosenzweig (1998), however, Cook treated earmarking as just one small sidelight, or symptom, of a much larger issue: how universities lobby Congress. As a result, her interest in earmarks was primarily related to 1) the impact such activities have on congressional perceptions of colleges and universities, and 2) the individuals universities employ to lobby for earmarks, or to use her phrase, the "hired guns." Though Cook's (1998) work helped to identify the growing scope of the phenomenon of earmarking, as well as the dangers that the practice may entail for academic institutions, her work did little to advance our knowledge of the motivations behind it or the processes institutions engage in as part of it beyond the traditional arguments regarding equity and facilities. In addition, no case-specific data were provided.

While earmarking played but a marginal role in the studies of Martino (1992), Rosenzweig (1998), and Cook (1998), it was the main focus of James Savage's excellent 1999 book-length study, *Funding Science in America: Congress, Universities, and the Politics of the Academic Pork Barrel*. Savage, a professor of government and foreign affairs at the University of Virginia at the time, stayed true to his training as a political
scientist and congressional scholar in carrying out his study of the topic. Much of the research in the book focused on the historical and political aspects of earmarking—how it began, why it survived and thrives, and what impact it has had on both the institutions that accept earmarks and the agencies that the money flows through. After over a decade of work on the topic, Savage believed that with a few notable exceptions, “earmarking has not on balance improved the ability of recipients to compete, relative to their peers” (Brainard, May 18, 2001, p. A30). Thus the primary reason given by proponents of earmarking—that it levels the playing field, enabling “have not” institutions, those institutions with little history of competing for and winning sponsored research to compete for research funds on an equal footing with the big boys (the top 50 recipients of federal R&D funding)—has not proven to be true. In past remarks before the American Academy for the Advancement of Science, Savage pointed out that his research showed that of the institutions “that had received a total of more than $50 million individually in pork over the past 20 years,...[b]y 1998, only six had moved up by five or more spots in the annual rankings of the 100 top recipients of peer-reviewed, federal research funds” (Brainard, May 18, 2001, p. A30). This was true despite the fact that the federal government had spent approximately $8 billion over that same time period on various academic pork barrel projects (Brainard, May 18, 2001).

Of particular importance to this study, Savage’s (1999) work was one of the first to offer summary data, collected by the author from congressional appropriation bills, showing the scope of academic earmarking and its impact on top research institutions. Drawing on his years of experience working with administrators at some of the nation’s top research
institutions, Savage went on to speculate that the motivators driving the phenomenon were more varied and complex than had traditionally been acknowledged in public debate on the topic. For Savage, these motivators came down primarily to fiscal constraints and institutional ambition. "Earmarking takes place," Savage wrote, "because universities are, in the best sense of the word, ambitious, and they seek the rewards that come from greater prestige and status" (1999, p. 20). The impetus for this ambition lies first and foremost with the head of the institution, the president, but it also can reside in the faculty of the institution, its trustees, its alumni, and even members of the related community. Contributing to ambition is the increased importance attached to national rankings, such as those published in *U.S. News and World Report* and the National Science Foundation’s (NSF) ranking of the top recipients of federal research support. Being ranked in the top 100 or, even better, the top 50 or top 10 recipients of federal research and development (R&D) support by NSF "is...the pinnacle of ambition in the academic community" according to Savage, (1999, p. 25). However, Savage acknowledged that at the same time that more universities aspire to such status, they also face increased fiscal constraints, particularly in the amount of funding available for faculty conducting basic research (Savage 1999). For those institutions to move up the status ladder, they must seek alternative sources of revenue. They do this through earmarking.

While Savage’s thesis concerning the final impact of earmarks on the R&D rankings of research institutions appears to be supported by his data, the bounded focus of his work meant that it contributed little to some obvious blank spots in our knowledge base. Like Martino (1992) and Rosenzweig (1996), Savage (1999) focused on the nation’s research
institutions, excluding other institutional types that may participate in, and be affected by, earmarks. Further, because he used total institutional R&D as the outcome measure of his analysis—the measure by which he assessed final impact—Savage overlooked the possibility that earmark-supported projects may have a beneficial impact on the research capacity of a specific department or college within an institution, but, due to a variety of factors, may not result in an overall increase in the institution’s R&D expenditures.

Finally, although Savage’s speculations as to the motivational drivers of earmarks among institutions were cogently presented, and more expansive than Rosenzweig’s or Martino’s, they remain primarily speculation, with no institution-specific or project-specific data given to support his conclusions as to the underlying motivators.

Following Savage’s 1999 book, a brief respite occurred in research related to the topic, with no major study published until a series of quantitative studies were published, or made available online, by Payne (2002, 2003) and de Figueiredo and Silverman (2002, 2004). Like Savage, whose data she used as part of her own study, Payne (2002, 2003) focused on the impact of earmarking on research institutions. However, Payne went beyond the aggregate R&D analysis conducted by Savage to creatively find a way to measure the impact of earmarks on scholarly activity. Using regression analysis, Payne measured the impact of earmarked dollars going to each institution on the quantity and quality of research output at recipient institutions, as measured by the number of articles published by their faculty and the number of times those articles were cited in research journals. Payne’s analysis suggested that earmarked dollars going to institutions may increase the quantity of research at recipient institutions, at least in terms of publications,
but also may result in decreased quality (measured by a decrease in the number of citations found per article). Importantly for this study, Payne’s (2002, 2003) work also was the first study to analyze earmarking using the Carnegie classification of institutions, the first to extensively use information on higher education earmarks tracked by the Chronicle of Higher Education, and one of the first to present a rudimentary process by which institutions identify candidate projects for earmarks and push to get those projects funded by Congress. Finally, Payne’s (2002, 2003) work was the first to try and assess the impact of earmarks on scholarly activity at institutions.

However, Payne’s work, like Savage’s, was not without its limitations. Despite using the Carnegie classification as a way of distinguishing institutions, Payne (2002, 2003) focused only on research institutions (using the 1994 Carnegie classifications of Research I, Research II, Doctoral I, and Doctoral II). She purposefully excluded from her analyses other Carnegie types, such as master’s level universities, liberal arts colleges, or community colleges. In addition, though Payne’s analysis represented one of the most extensive longitudinal studies done on the topic (she was able to use multiple data sets covering 16 years of earmarks), the most recent data she was able to use concluded in 1998, just as some of the heaviest and most widespread earmarking to academic institutions was beginning to occur. In addition, Payne (2002, 2003) did not attempt to address the motivation of institutions to participate in earmarking, an area that, she acknowledged, remained to be explored. Finally, and perhaps most critical to the actual interpretation of her findings, Payne’s use of broad, indirect measures of impact and
quality (publications and citations) for a phenomenon that may or may not result in such output measures represented a major weakness of her approach.

As with Payne's work, de Figueiredo and Silverman (2002, 2004) also drew on the *Chronicle's* database of earmarks to help examine the scope of earmarking activity as part of their larger effort to measure the impact external lobbying has had on earmarked dollars going to campuses. Describing the use of earmarking as "pervasive" among higher education institutions, the researchers analyzed earmark data for the 1997-1999 fiscal years against lobbying expenditures by higher education institutions over the same time frame (these data were taken from the public information disclosures required by the 1995 Lobbying Disclosures Act) (de Figueiredo and Silverman, 2004). Factoring in whether participating institutions were located in districts or states with representation on the House Appropriations Committee or Senate Appropriations Committee (HAC or SAC), de Figueiredo and Silverman (2004) found that "universities that lobby Congress receive dramatically higher earmarks than their non-lobbying counterparts — if the lobbying university is in a state or district of an Appropriation Committee member." The payoff for lobbying activity was considered more marginal if institutions were in states or districts without representation on the HAC or SAC, since their research showed that "some earmarking would persist even without lobbying due to legislators' supply-side pressures" (de Figueiredo and Silverman 2004; see http://srn.com/abstract=521130).

More importantly for this study, de Figueiredo and Silverman (2004) were able to support findings from prior studies regarding the saturation of earmarks among key research institutions (they noted, for instance, that in FY 2003, 90 percent of AAU member
institutions accepted at least one earmark). They also provided some of the first initial information on the scope of lobbying by institutions (they found that between 1997 and 1993 nearly 300 universities lobbied, with most employing outside firms for the effort), and the first detailed information, since the House Hearings in 1993-1994, on the processes institutions used to lobby for earmarks. This information was collected through interviews with congressional staff members and professional lobbyists.

Despite the advances their work made to our knowledge of the scope of earmarks in general, and the use and impact of lobbyists by earmark-seeking institutions in particular, de Figueiredo and Silverman (2002, 2004) also left a number of issues unresolved. First, was the question of scope. As with each of the researchers discussed earlier, the major focus of the research by de Figueiredo and Silverman was on AAU institutions (generally considered to be the sixty top research institutions in the U.S.) and Carnegie I research institutions, so earmarking activity by other categories of institutions was neglected in their research (though to give them their due their 2002 paper did claim to have incorporated all categories of institutions in its first level of analysis). In addition, their information on the processes institutions used to engage in earmark seeking activity, while drawn from personal interviews, focused on the “back side” of the process, i.e., the ways in which university lobbyists engaged Congress on behalf of university projects. So, its usefulness in helping us to understand the processes institutions, especially different types of institutions, used to identify, select, and prioritize candidate projects before involving the lobbyists was limited. Finally, as de Figueiredo and Silverman readily admitted in their most recent paper (2004), their work, like so much of the past research,
did little to resolve, or even address, the question of the impact academic earmarking has had on academic institutions participating in it.

C. What is missing from past research and what more needs to be done

Although much useful research has been carried out by a number of scholars over the past two decades, the tendency of those researchers to focus almost exclusively on one particular category of institutions (research institutions), using broad and indirect measures of impact (such as overall institutional R&D) in order to explore outcomes that may or may not be connected to the particular motivators driving institutional participation (such as resource inequities created by bias in agency peer review processes) has meant that significant gaps exist in our knowledge of the phenomenon. This study was designed to address those gaps. In it, I sought to carry out the following:

1. To explore topics related to academic earmarking that have been overlooked or ignored in past research. These topics included: 1) the scope of participation in the phenomenon throughout the higher education community as a whole, 2) the institutional motivations that are driving institutions, whatever their type, to participate, 3) the processes that institutions use to seek earmarks, including the identification, development, and promotion of candidate projects, and 4) the impact that academic earmarks have had on the institution and the community.

2. To expand the research frame to include other institutional types. As the review of the literature has shown, earlier researchers, from Martino (1992) through
Payne (2003), focused almost exclusively on the category of research institutions. While understandable given the critical place these institutions hold in our nation's basic research structure, this exclusive focus also has meant that a growing aspect of the academic earmarking phenomenon—participation by non-research institutions—has been missed. This gap in our knowledge base needed to be filled.

3. To shift the research focus from a national perspective to an institutional perspective. Past research on the motivations for and impact of academic earmarks has viewed these issues from the outside in—from the perspective of "Capitol Hill" rather than "Old Main"—and from a macro level (assessing the impact on higher education as a general unit) rather than the micro level (assessing the impact on a particular institution). This "macro perspective" has dominated studies from Cook (1998) through Savage (1999) to Payne (2003). However, the "missing data," the perspective on earmarking that can be supplied only by doing in-depth qualitative case work at individual institutions was an area that begged for further exploration.

4. The data from past research needs to be expanded and updated. Recent fiscal years have witnessed historic highs in earmarked funds. However, the most recent published scholarly studies of academic earmarks were carried out by Savage (1999) using financial data from FY 1996 and NSF rank data from FY 1994, and Payne (2003) using financial data and faculty publications data from FY 1998.
Given the age of these studies, the bounded institutional focus that they used, and the rapid rise in earmark-related spending that has occurred, the data related to earmark spending needed to be reviewed, updated, and expanded.
Chapter Three: The Research Plan

A. The research questions

To begin to address some of the gaps in the knowledge base cited in Chapter Two, this study looked at five research questions, which can be grouped, roughly, into four categories: scope, motivation, process, and impact. These categories, and the questions that fall under them, were developed from the initial review of the literature and then reshaped and refined as the study progressed. The specific research questions that guided the study were as follows:

1. Who is seeking academic earmarks? Specifically, what types of institutions (as defined by Carnegie classification) are seeking earmarks, and how has this changed over the last decade?

2. What kinds of projects are being supported through earmarks? Specifically, are institutions using earmarks to support facilities or research projects, and has that ratio changed over the past decade?

3. Why do institutions seek earmarks? What are the self-professed motivators driving them to seek earmarks, and, based on the evidence available, do these motivators vary by institutional type?

4. How are these institutions going about securing earmarks? Based upon the cases examined, how does the process work at institutions, and do any instructive commonalities appear to exist across different categories of institutions?
5. And finally, to the extent it can be assessed, what impact have these earmarks had on their recipient institutions? What benefits appear to have accrued to institutions, or their communities and states, based upon the earmark-funded projects?

B. The research design

Because no single research method sufficed to answer all of the questions posed in this study, I undertook a mixed-design, multi-lensed analysis. That is, I used a quantitatively-oriented descriptive analysis to map out the scope of academic earmarking among various types of institutions in the U.S. and the types of projects that are being supported by earmarks at these institutions. I then used a qualitatively-oriented case study approach to explore the motivators that encourage institutions to engage in earmarking, along with the processes they have used to identify and secure earmarks, and the benefits (or impact) they claim to have experienced as a result of receiving them.

i. The descriptive study

My first goal for the study was to map the scope of earmarking activity occurring in the U.S., looking specifically at the level of participation in earmarking among different types of institutions. To carry this out, a quantitative analysis was conducted with data pulled from public and private data sources. First, a list of institutions receiving individual earmarks was taken from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*'s database of institutions receiving federal earmarks. Next, institutional identifiers, were drawn from the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.
Using the 2000 Carnegie Foundation’s classification of institutions as the organizing frame, I then grouped institutions into the following broad categories: doctoral/research universities (both extensive and intensive), master’s colleges and universities (both I and II), baccalaureate colleges and universities (liberal arts, general, and combined baccalaureate and associates), associates colleges, and specialized institutions. (For more information on the Carnegie classifications see http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/Classification/CIHE2000/.) The data taken from the above data sets were merged using SAS. For approximately one percent of the records from the Chronicle database, an individual earmark could not be matched to a particular institution. In such cases, the earmarks were given the designation of “other.” Based upon the project descriptions contained within the Chronicle database, each project was also evaluated for functional type: facility/infrastructure project versus research/training project. A cross-tabulation was then carried out to track the growth in earmarks over the past 13 years, to breakdown the distribution of earmarks by institution type (e.g., by broad Carnegie classification), and finally to break down the data by type of project funded: facility or infrastructure versus research/training project.

ii. The case studies

In addition to mapping the range of earmarking activity and type of projects being supported, my second goal for the study was to gain greater understanding of the motivations driving institutions to seek earmarks and the approaches used by them in such efforts. To achieve this, I undertook a qualitative analysis of institutions that had secured academic earmarks. The Chronicle database was used initially to identify
possible institutions for inclusion in the study. In order to gain the broadest possible perspective on the issue, I sought a range of possible participants. This range included institutions representing different Carnegie classifications; institutions with different levels of experience and/or success in winning earmarks (i.e., novices versus experienced practitioners); and institutions located in different states or regions of the country. Finally, because going into the study I anticipated that some institutions would be hesitant to openly share information on such a politically-sensitive topic, I also tried to identify and select institutions with which I had some contact or connection which might make them more willing to participate.

Based upon information in the *Chronicle* and the criteria listed above, I contacted representatives of eleven higher education institutions or systems of institutions either by phone, e-mail, or in person, and asked them to participate. Representatives from eight institutions, and one system of institutions, eventually agreed to participate in a series of one-on-one interviews. The individual campuses they represented included the following Carnegie classifications: Doctoral/Research-Extensive, Doctoral/Research-Intensive, Master’s I, Bachelor’s-Liberal Arts, Associates, and Specialized. Eight of the institutions were publicly-supported; one was private. The institutions were spread over three states, with three of the institutions located in rural areas, three in small to mid-size towns, and three in the suburbs of larger cities. Based upon their level of participation, the richness of the data gathered from the interviews, and the perceived utility of that data, I selected six institutions from those that agreed to participate for particular attention in the study.
However, I used the data gathered from all of the campus representatives interviewed to inform and enrich my final analysis and conclusions.

Information on the individuals interviewed for each campus is presented in the individual case study write ups in Chapter Four. Typically, I contacted by phone or e-mail either the institution's chief executive officer (president or chancellor) or chief academic officer (provost, vice chancellor for academic affairs, vice president for academic affairs, or dean) to explain the project and request an interview. In some instances, I asked individuals familiar with the project for assistance with gaining access to individuals at the institution. In addition, I also conducted supplemental interviews with various officials representing other institutions or systems who had general knowledge of earmarking or its impact. Finally, to try and gain a balanced perspective, the viewpoint of at least one representative of an institution that had publicly taken a stance against earmarking and does not participate in it was also solicited.

Participants from each institution varied and included, depending on the institution, the chief executive, chief academic officer, chief business or administrative officer (the vice president or vice chancellor for administration and finance), and/or academic deans. In addition to institutional leaders, I interviewed faculty and staff who were intimately involved with one or more earmarked projects at each institution as appropriate. The perspectives offered by these individuals, again, helped to balance and enrich the case studies.
To help illuminate the case study data and provide triangulation, I conducted document reviews for each participating institution. Examples of key documents reviewed included the mission statements of the institutions, institutional catalogs, institutional strategic plans and histories, presidential testimony and letters to alumni or the academic community, press releases or newsletters related to particular projects or programs supported through earmarks, published lists of faculty research or service activity, financial reports, and, where available, peer institution data.

Finally, to help provide a national context for the earmarking phenomenon and, where needed, clarify findings of the case study data, I also conducted interviews with individuals from outside the institutions who were particularly knowledgeable about federal research and/or institutional activity. These individuals included government relations professionals who represent institutions in Washington, DC, and state agency officials. Since many of the individuals interviewed, both those at institutions and not at institutions, had served in various capacities at different institutions and agencies over the span of their careers, they were also able to reach beyond the experience at their immediate institutions and contribute a useful and enlarged perspective based upon past experiences at other agencies and institutions.

iii. The interview process for the case studies

In all, I interviewed twenty-six individuals over twenty-eight sessions (some were interviewed over two sessions). Key interviews, but not all, were taped and subsequently transcribed. Notes were taken for all interviews. The notes and transcripts were coded
and analyzed. Where possible, I conducted interviews in person on the campus of the institution participating in the case study. Eighteen of the twenty-eight interviews were conducted at a campus or related site. Ten interviews were conducted over the phone. Follow up questions or requests for additional information were typically handled through phone calls, e-mail, or regular mail.

C. Analysis of the descriptive study data

Because a mixed-design approach was utilized for the study, different types of analysis were used depending on the particular research question or goal. Analysis of the summary data was carried out using SAS. Data from the Chronicle data base were merged with the Carnegie classification identifiers taken from IPEDS. These data were then combined into a single data set. As Payne (2003) found in her use of the Chronicle data, in some cases it was impossible to distinguish which institution within a system of institutions received the earmark (i.e., an earmark would be listed as going to the University of Alabama versus the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa or the University of Alabama at Birmingham). In such instances the data were assigned to the category “other” and excluded from any Carnegie classification analysis.

Using the combined data set, descriptive analyses were run summarizing and comparing the data by total dollars received through earmarks, by number of earmarks received, by Carnegie classification type, by percentage of the total number of earmarks going to different Carnegie classification types, by average number of earmarks going to Carnegie classification types over the 13-year period examined, by average number of years
receiving earmarks by Carnegie classification type, and change in the dollar amount of earmarks distributed through the various federal agencies.

Based upon the project information contained in the Chronicle data set, an analysis was also conducted on the types of projects supported through earmarks going to academic institutions. Specifically, this analysis utilized keywords contained in the project descriptors available through the Chronicle data. All projects whose descriptors contained such phrases as “building, construction, equipment, and center” were identified and categorized as “facilities” or “facilities-related” projects. Projects whose descriptors contained such phrases as “research project” or “training” were identified and categorized as “non-facilities” related. Those projects that could not be categorized based upon the keyword descriptors were individually reviewed and assigned to a category.

i. Limitations of the descriptive study

Although the summary data analysis provided a useful, overarching view of the scope of the earmarking phenomenon, a number of limitations to the data, their analysis, or their use must be acknowledged. These are set out below. First, the analysis only examined individual earmarks. Since earmarks that were identified by the Chronicle as “shared” by one or more institutions could not be accurately assigned to just one institution, those data were excluded. Therefore, the study errs on the side of being conservative and underreports the true extent of the phenomenon. Second, while the data are based upon information provided by federal agencies to the Chronicle, earmarking, as noted in Chapter One is a phenomenon that is frequently couched in obscure language and
anonymity. As a result, the true number of academic earmarks contained in appropriations bills (or their report language) may be difficult to assess. The Chronicle data represent one of three possible databases of earmarks that have been collected and used by past researchers (see Payne, 2002, 2003 and de Figueiredo and Silverman, 2002, 2004). The Chronicle data were selected for this study because they 1) provided a comprehensive and sustained period of coverage, 2) provided information on the type of project supported, and 3) were the only data set readily available for use by the public (thereby allowing findings from the data set to be more easily checked and verified by other researchers). Payne (2003) in her study noted the advantages of each of the different data sets available, but opined that the Chronicle data provided the best information source for some answering such questions as the type of project supported through the earmarks, which was one goal of this study. Payne (2003) also noted that a disparity in the dollar amounts between the data sets created by Savage and the Chronicle existed but she was unable to account for the disparity. She noted, however, that the Chronicle data set was more conservative in the total dollars cited as going to earmarks, meaning that, for purposes of this study, the results drawn from the data probably err on the side of being conservative. Finally, because this analysis of the Chronicle data excluded “unknowns,” those examples where I was unable to distinguish the particular campus in a system receiving the earmark dollars, this project may under represent the total amount of academic earmarking occurring within one or more of the institutional classifications.
D. Analysis of the case study data

Stake (1995) has noted that in qualitative research generally, and case study research in particular, "the search for meaning often is a search for patterns, for consistency within certain conditions, which we call 'correspondence'" (p. 78). Because of the multi-institution, multi-category nature of this study, analysis of the data derived from the case studies presented a unique set of challenges. The data analysis technique used in the case study component was constant comparative in that data from the first set of case studies were analyzed in an ongoing manner to aid in identifying additional topics or issues to be explored in subsequent interviews. To aid in analysis and establish an "audit trail," which has been defined as "a scheme for identifying...data chunks according to their speaker and context," data from the interviews were transcribed and saved as individual computer files (Hoepfl, 1997, "Analysis of Data" section, para 4). This process facilitated the subsequent cross comparison of data and allowed me to keep track of both the sources of the data and the context in which the data were presented. With initial data entry complete and a system for tracking the data source in place, analysis was begun using the raw data from the interviews as they became available.

The computerized files, containing data from the notes and transcripts, were compared and analyzed, per Stake's (1995) suggestion, looking for patterns or consistencies that emerged both within a particular interview, and over multiple interviews. Based on the patterns that were observed, data from the interviews were extracted, coded, and chunked within a series of overarching topics established for the study. The topics initially identified and used for organization and analysis were: motivation, process, and impact.
(see Miles and Huberman, 1994, and Lincoln and Guba, 1985, for a discussion of "chunking" and "coding"). Emergent themes within the overarching topic areas were identified and examined for both inter-category and cross-category correspondence. A hierarchy of themes—such as serendipity, need, opportunism, mission, etc.—was gradually developed based upon the strength of their correspondence within the case studies. As the overarching themes emerged and raw data from subsequent interviews became available, the data from each interview were re-reviewed and re-analyzed for concurrence and thematic fit. Based upon this analysis the themes were retained or modified. In addition, the overarching themes and their supporting data points were compared against the topics or themes predicted in the literature. Once more the themes were retained, modified, or rejected based upon this review. Finally, "thematic outliers," the themes or topics that emerged from the studies but which were unanticipated based on the literature review, were identified, compared, and retained or rejected.

After completion of the data analysis portion of the study and prior to the initial write up, a decision was required regarding the format to be used for presenting the data. To strengthen the reliability of the study and aid the reader, I decided to present as much contextual information as was possible in the body of each of the case study write ups. In essence, I decided to use a narrative process that provided for readers as much contextual information on the case studies and the participants involved in them as was permissible within the confidentiality and anonymity requirements that had been agreed upon. This meant that for each case study, I identified for the reader in the body of the case study the positions held by the people I spoke with at the institution (though not their name or other
personally identifiable information), how and where they were interviewed, and their level of access to or knowledge about the specific earmarks examined at the institution. These thick, upfront descriptions, I believe, make it easier for readers to draw their own conclusions as to the accuracy of and meanings behind the case study data (Stake, 1995). Importantly, in order to make sure study participants were comfortable with the anonymity granted them in the write ups, participants cited in the study and whose institutions were profiled were asked to review the case studies prior to the final draft to identify any issues of concern or clarify misinterpretations. All changes subsequently suggested by the participants were reviewed and made. Finally, as additional ‘audit trail’ aid for the reader, a list of the interviewees who provided data that were subsequently used in the case study analyses was developed. See Appendix A for this list.

i. Document analysis for the case studies

Where they were available, documents were collected and analyzed for additional information on the institutions, projects, and individuals identified in each case study. Documents collected through this process typically included institutional histories, strategic plans, lists of peers, financial statements, faculty activity reports, project summaries, and faculty vitae. The documents were reviewed for relevance to the case studies and, as the interview analysis preceded, the emerging themes. Corroborative or contradictory information was highlighted, assessed, and incorporated into the findings and summation as appropriate. Document data were particularly helpful for filling gaps in my knowledge of the institutions and their histories and supplementing the testimony of the participants with regard to the mission and goals of their institutions or their projects.
ii. Limitations of the case studies

The most significant limitation for the case study section of this project, in general, was its lack of generalizability. Case studies by their size and qualitative nature are not designed to yield results generalizable to a broad population. Instead, case study research seeks to promote insight into and understanding of a topic or phenomenon. Though as a "collective case study," this study was more concerned with "representation" than most intrinsic or instrumental case studies, it does not make claims toward the generalizability of its findings (Stake, 1995, p. 4). Instead, as with all case studies, the goal of this study was to promote the knowledge and understanding of a particular phenomenon. Nothing further.

In addition to the issue of generalizability, a significant concern with the case study section of this project, that is also a concern inherent in all qualitative studies, is the degree to which the findings are reliable. In order to enhance the reliability of data collected through the case studies, I incorporated into the study a number of methodological techniques suggested by Stake (1995) and others. These included the following:

1. The use of recorded interviews, extensive document review, and member checks. These were techniques designed to enhance the internal reliability of the data through verification and triangulation. Given the sensitivity of the issue, member checks were particularly important to ensuring both the accuracy of the testimony and the author's interpretation of events and meanings attached to them. Member
checks were solicited from key individuals at each institution profiled in the case study.

2. The use of a narrative structure that allowed participants to "tell their stories in their words"—this was a technique designed to increase external reliability by providing the reader with "adequate raw data prior to interpretation so that [he/she] can consider [his/her] own alternative interpretations" (Stake, 1995, p. 87).

3. And finally, the use of repeated data from multiple institutions and individuals—this was a technique designed to enhance external reliability through the use of multiple data source triangulation (Stake, 1995). Key to this technique was the issue of repeatedly going back to examine my data and interpretations to test whether what I observed in one case or incident appeared to "behave the same way or carry the same meaning under different circumstances" Gay (1996, p.113).

Finally, there were several issues particularly relevant to this topic, and the way it was investigated, that the reader should be made aware of in order to adjust his or her interpretation of the data appropriately. First, a general sensitivity among many members of the academy to the concept of academic earmarks, as well as to the participation by their institutions in the activity, meant that some institutional representatives contacted for the study were hesitant to share information and declined to participate. Recognizing and dealing with this reluctance, made me all the more grateful to those individuals and institutions that did agree to participate in this study. Their candor and accessibility were extremely important to the success of this project. I thank them openly.
In addition, the reluctance I encountered on the part of some individuals to participate forced me to place a high premium on the issue of access in selecting institutions and participants for the case study component of this project. Institutions were chosen for representativeness; they were not randomly selected (Stake 1995). Factors contributing to the selection of institutions included their success with earmarks, their geographic location, their Carnegie classification, and, most importantly, their willingness to participate. Likewise individuals at the institutions were selected on the basis of having information about the pertinent activities of their institution and a willingness to share that information with me. As a result of this selection process, the institutions selected for study, the earmarked projects that they engaged in, and the individuals who have participated in such projects should not be taken as typical of all institutions or individuals that engage in earmarking or the types of projects for which earmarks are awarded. If this study imparts one lesson, it should be that earmark-supported projects have their own unique histories, goals, and motivations, and may vary widely even within the same institution. Finally, I would like to note that the amount and quality of information participants were able to share was based on their level of access to and knowledge about particular projects and processes at their campuses (or, on occasion, other campuses). In each of the case studies, I have tried to impart to the reader not just the perspectives of participants but also contextual information that allows the reader to understand the participant’s place within the organization and the level of access he or she had to the project. However, the reader must always be aware that there are many sides to any story. The narratives and data that I present in the case studies represent just
one facet of a political phenomenon that involves many actors, each of whom has his or her own point of view.
Chapter Four: Study Findings

A. The descriptive study

To address the first goal for the project, mapping out the scope of earmarking activity among higher education institutions in all Carnegie classification categories. I used the database of earmarks compiled by the Chronicle of Higher Education. This database is the most comprehensive list of earmarks going to higher education institutions available, and has served as the basis for prior analyses, such as those published by Payne (2002, 2003). The database contains thirteen years of data extending from 1990 to 2002. It identifies the year in which the direct appropriation was made, the state in which the institution was located, the agency responsible for awarding the funds, the level of funding, whether the earmark was to an individual institution or was shared by institutions, and a brief description of the project for which the award was made.

According to Brainard, data in the database are collected from a number of different sources, including the federal agencies charged with disbursing the grants, the recipient institutions, and members of Congress. Where the specific institution receiving an earmark is not identifiable, the Chronicle staff may follow up with the federal agency identified in the report language to try and confirm the identity of the institution. In some cases, particularly those for Department of Defense grants, where the identity of the specific institution cannot be ascertained, the Chronicle simply lists the institution as
"unknown" (personal communication with Brainard, March 17, 2004; see also the *Chronicle* Website http://chronicle.com/stats/pork/).

As stated in Chapter Three, since the *Chronicle* database did not identify the Carnegie classification of the institutions receiving earmarks, the first step in the descriptive component of the study was to go through the *Chronicle* data and assign the appropriate federal unit identification code to each institution identified as receiving an earmark. Those institutions were then grouped, roughly, by institutional category, or type, using the 2000 Carnegie classification titles. The institutional categories used were as follows: Doctoral/Research Extensive (DRUE), Doctoral/Research Intensive (DRUI); Master’s, Baccalaureate, Associate’s, and Specialized/Tribal (for full definitions of each of these categories go to http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/Classification/CIHE2000/defNotes/Definitions.htm).

Where an earmark could not be matched with a particular institution (for instance the appropriate campus of a multi-campus system could not be determined) that institution was coded as “unknown.” Because there was no way to identify the division of funds per institution within a shared earmark, all analyses were done using “individual” earmarks only. Though the ratio of “individual” to “shared” earmarks varied over time, when the average over the 13 years (1990-2002) was examined, 64 percent of all academic earmarks went to individual projects and 36 percent went to shared projects. However, because shared earmarks tended to be larger in total dollars, the actual funding between
the two categories averaged out the same: 49.6 percent went to individual and 49.4 percent went to shared earmarks.

**Analysis 1: Total value of earmark dollars going to institutions by Carnegie Classification 1990-2002**

As the graph in Figure 1 shows, analysis of the combined Chronicle/IPEDS data indicated that the total dollars going to all categories of institutions in individual earmarks increased significantly between 1990-2002, with the Doctoral/Research Universities-Extensive (DRUEs) continuing to outpace easily all other categories of institutions. In 1990, the total value of all individual earmarks going to institutions of higher education was $210 million, by 2002, that total had increased to $1.54 billion. The
decline in funding that occurred between 1996 and 1998 reflected the period of time in
which the Republican-led Congress party waged an aggressive, but brief, campaign
against earmarks. Particularly noteworthy was the substantial increase in total dollars
going to all institutions which began around 1999 and continued through 2002, and which
reflects the current trend of the phenomenon, and within this overall trend line, the
substantial and historic increase going to non-research institutions that also began in 1999
and has continued through 2002.

Although Master’s, Baccalaureate, Associate’s, and Specialized/Tribal institutions
accounted for less than 16 percent of the total dollars going to institutions through
individual earmarks in 1990, by 2002 this group of institutions had increased its “market
share” of the total dollars being awarded through earmarks to 28 percent. In comparison,
the share of dollars going to DRUEs dropped from 58 percent in 1990 to 49 percent by
2002. For DRUIs (Doctoral/Research University-Intensive), the percentages remained the
same: 19 percent in 1990 and 19 percent in 2002. Unknowns accounted for two percent in
1990 and five percent in 2002. Figure 2 shows this change in “market” share of total
earmarked dollars going to the various categories of institutions.
FIGURE 2
MARKET SHARE OF INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTIONAL EARMARKS, BY
CARNEGIE CLASSIFICATION AND YEAR
Analysis 2: Number of institutions receiving individual earmarks by Carnegie classification 1990-2002

FIGURE 3

NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS RECEIVING INDIVIDUAL EARMARKS, BY CARNEGIE CLASSIFICATION AND YEAR

As the graph in Figure 3, above, shows, in 2002 for the first time since the Chronicle began comprehensively tracking earmarks, a category of non-research institutions (Master’s) surpassed the category of research extensive institutions (DRUEs) in the total number of individual earmarks awarded to institutions. The combined number of individual earmarks going to all non-research institutions (Master’s, Baccalaureate, Associate’s, and Specialized/Tribal) surpassed for the first time the number of individual earmarks going to all research institutions (DRUEs and DRUIs) in 2001.
As figure 4, above, shows, despite the increased number of individual earmarks going to non-research institutions, research institutions (DRUEs and DRUIs) continued to attract, on average, at least twice the number of earmarks per institution per year as the institutions in all other Carnegie categories combined. Of the institutions receiving earmarks in 1990, DRUE and DRUI institutions combined to receive 2.5 of these earmarks per institution per year in 1990 and 4.5 by 2002. In comparison, of the institutions receiving earmarks in 1990, all “other” categories of institutions, i.e. all non-research institutions, averaged just 1.0 earmarks per year per institution in 1990 and just 1.4 per year per institution in 2002.
Analysis 4. Average number of individual earmarks per institution and average number of years involved in the process.

FIGURE 5
AVERAGE NUMBER OF EARMARKS RECEIVED PER INSTITUTION FROM 1990 TO 2002, BY CARNEGIE CLASSIFICATION
Figure 5 and Figure 6 provide evidence of two key aspects of the phenomenon: 1) the historical dominance of research institutions in obtaining earmarks, and 2) the degree of continued, or sustained, participation in earmarking by institutions once they get an earmark. The graph in Figure 5 shows that of all institutions receiving earmarks between 1990-2002, DRUEs received on average 24.1 earmarks over that time period, DRUIs received 10.8, Master’s 3.1, Baccalaureate 2.4, Associate’s 1.5, and Specialized/Tribal 3.2. DRUEs received, on average, over seven times the number of earmarks that the largest category of non-research institutions received, on average, over that 13-year time span. In addition, as the graph in Figure 6 shows, DRUE institutions involved in earmarking, on average, received one or more earmarks (the average was greater than...
two) in seven out of the 13 years examined. By contrast, no category of non-research institutions averaged receiving earmarks for more than three out of the 13 years examined. (Though it is important to note that the data for non-research institutions may be skewed due to the comparatively recent history of participation by those institutions in any significant volume.) These data suggest that use of earmarks, once established within a community of institutions, may prove addictive.
Analysis 5. Degree of participation by Carnegie Category 1990-2002

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS RECEIVING AT LEAST ONE INDIVIDUAL EARMARK, OVER 13 YEARS AND IN 1990 AND 2002, BY CARNEGIE CLASSIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carnegie Category</th>
<th>Total number of Institutions in Category</th>
<th>1990 only Number of Institutions with earmarks</th>
<th>1990 only Number of Institutions with earmarks %</th>
<th>2002 only Number of Institutions with earmarks</th>
<th>2002 only Number of Institutions with earmarks %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DRUE</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRUI</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate</td>
<td>604</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates</td>
<td>1626</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialized/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All*</td>
<td>3866</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Totals do not include 55 earmarks that could not be assigned to a Carnegie category.

Table 1, above, shows the degree to which the earmarking phenomenon penetrated into the higher education community between 1990 and 2002. As the table indicates, over the
13-year period measured by the *Chronicle* database, 92 percent of the DRUE institutions received at least one individual earmark, as did 37 percent of the Master’s-level institutions, and 19 percent of the Baccalaureate-level institutions. Further, these numbers have increased markedly over the past decade as more institutions in each category received earmarks. In 1990, less than three out of ten DRUEs received an individual earmark in that particular year, but by 2002, the number had increased to eight out of ten. In 1990, less than two percent of all master’s institutions received an individual earmark in that fiscal year, but by 2002, twenty-four percent of all master’s received one.
Analysis 6. Percentage of total earmarks and earmark dollars going to facility-related versus non-facility-related projects 1990-2002

**TABLE 2**

NUMBER OF DOLLARS FOR INDIVIDUAL EARMARKS RELATED TO FACILITY AND NON-FACILITY PROJECTS FROM 1990 TO 2002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Non-Facility Earmarks</th>
<th>Facility-Related Earmarks</th>
<th>% of Non-Facility Earmarks</th>
<th>% of Facility-Related Earmarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td># of earmarks</td>
<td>Total $</td>
<td># of earmarks</td>
<td>Total $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>98,502,499</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>5,879,172,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>286,188,000</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>147,878,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>362,410,142</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>188,835,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>530,723,006</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>82,102,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>386,479,000</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>60,195,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>310,867,746</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>119,359,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>167,377,745</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>1997</td>
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<td>1998</td>
<td>247</td>
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<td>377</td>
<td>394,967,194</td>
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<td>549</td>
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<td>5018</td>
<td>5,879,172,000</td>
<td>778</td>
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</table>
Finally, Table 2, above, indicates how both the number of academic earmarks going to support facilities-related projects, and the number of dollars going to such projects changed between 1990 and 2002. In 1990, earmarks going to facilities-related projects made up 24 percent of the total number of earmarks awarded to higher education institutions; and over 53 percent of the earmarked dollars awarded. By 2002, facility-related earmarks awarded had fallen to just 13 percent of the total number of earmarks awarded, and just 22 percent of the total earmarked dollars.

\textit{i. Summary of descriptive findings}

So what do the descriptive analyses tell us? Briefly, the data showed that the practice of academic earmarking has penetrated into all levels of the community of academic institutions, with the most rapid increase coming over the past two to three years. In addition, the data showed that, for certain sectors of the community, the phenomenon has spread extensively, with almost nine out of ten DRUEs, and one out of two DRUIs, now benefiting (as of 2002) from at least one earmark. As the use of earmarks has saturated the research institution sector, it has also begun to spill over into other categories of institutions (Master's, Baccalaureate, and Associate's, etc.) that have, in the past, had little experience with the phenomenon. These institutions now represent much of the potential growth market for the number of earmark projects awarded (if not yet dollars awarded), with Master's-level institutions actually surpassing in 2002 all other categories of institutions in the number of earmarks obtained. Finally, the data suggest that, despite the long-standing justification that earmarks are used to provide needed funding for
facilities and research infrastructure, just a fifth of earmarked dollars now go (as of 2002) to support facility projects, and, more ominously, once their use is established at an institution, continued use may become habitual.

These particular findings, in turn, lead to a number of interesting questions, including the following: If some categories of non-research institutions are now more involved in earmarking than the research institutions (at least in terms of overall number of earmarks) are the motivations traditionally imputed to institutions for carrying out earmarks (concerns over facilities, peer review equity, institutional rankings, ambition, etc.) still appropriate or valid? What other motivational drivers might account for the level of activity evidenced by these data? Are there significant commonalities across institutional types in terms of those motivators or experiences? How do institutions motivated to seek earmarks go about the process? Are there observable differences between the processes used by one group of institutions research over another? To try and answer such questions, I examined specific cases at various types of institutions. The findings from these case studies are presented below.
B. The case studies

Case Study 1: St. Sebastian’s College

St. Sebastian’s is an independent, four-year liberal arts college. It resides in an area of the country noted for its profusion of well-funded, ultra-competitive liberal arts colleges, all located within an hour or two drive of each other. As its Carnegie classification implies, the educational focus of St. Sebastian’s is entirely at the undergraduate level. The college offers both the bachelor’s of arts and the bachelor’s of science and enrolls approximately 1,400 undergraduates—90 percent of whom are white—in approximately 25 majors. Enrollment has been steadily rising at the institution, increasing by approximately 20 percent over the past decade.

History and mission

Recognized, according to one periodical, as one of those small, liberal arts colleges that “change lives,” St. Sebastian’s mission is “to enable students to become independent, responsible, and thoughtful individuals through a program of liberal education” (St. Sebastian website). St. Sebastian’s prides itself on the intimate size of its classes (the average ratio of students to faculty is 12:1) and the opportunities that this allows for close interaction between faculty and fellow students. Under the current president, St. Sebastian’s has made a priority of increasing the opportunities available to students to engage in research and “outside the classroom learning.” The result has been that each summer dozens of St. Sebastian’s students are awarded “summer research” stipends to help them carry out their own original research both on campus and off. In addition, the college has become a member of the prestigious Watson Foundation Fellowship list,
allowing St. Sebastian's seniors to compete with students from the nation's other top liberal arts colleges for fellowships to carry out independent study and foreign travel after graduation.

Beyond the classroom, St. Sebastian's is noted for the beauty of its suburban campus, which features a nationally-acclaimed art museum and sculpture garden that draws thousands of visitors to the campus and town each year. Recognizing the fine and performing arts as an area in which it can differentiate itself from its peers, the college has raised $15 million in gifts to build a performing arts center. Spelling out his vision for the arts at St. Sebastian's to the college's alumni, the president wrote in a recent alumni newsletter: "We are now moving forward to reinforce our programs in studio art, art history, theatre, music, and dance....Our vision is that [St. Sebastian's] at its best has to be a tremendous learning community, and that the arts play a central role in strengthening and nurturing that community....More powerfully than other aspects of the curriculum, the arts engage us all, and they engage us in a kind of learning that involves the heart as well as the mind."

Peer competition:

As a private institution, St. Sebastian's does not have a state-sanctioned peer group. It does have, however, a recognized "overlap group": those institutions it typically competes against, primarily for students and, sometimes, for faculty. Most of these overlap institutions are similar in size, wealth, reputation, and curricular focus as St. Sebastian's but they also include a couple of institutions with significant graduate and
professional programs in medicine, the sciences, and engineering. Like most of its selective peers, St. Sebastian's annually places among the top national liberal arts colleges in *U.S. News and World Reports*' annual rankings.

**Endowment and other forms of support**

Though it does not have the smallest endowment among its overlap group, St. Sebastian's is far from having the largest. At the end of June 2003, the market value of the college's endowment was less than half that of many of the institutions it identified as competitors for students. Worse news for the institution is that its endowment had fallen four percent from the previous year and 24 percent from its historic high of June 2000. The good news for the institution is that the comparable decline for its closest overlap institutions was 29 percent. (Source = *Chronicle*, June 2003). Although its steady rise in enrollment over the past decade provides the college with financial stability, the erosion in endowment clearly could be worrisome for an institution that discounts tuition as heavily as St. Sebastian's does. The price for attending St. Sebastian's, like that of the other institutions in the region is high: closing in on $30,000 in tuition and fees in the 2003-2004 academic year. Approximately 95 percent of St. Sebastian's students receive some form of aid, including institutional grants (i.e. grants awarded to the student by the institution. Approximately 95 percent of St. Sebastian's students receive institutionally-supported aid). Other forms of aid going to St. Sebastian's students include state/local grants (almost a third of St. Sebastian's students receive some form of state or local aid), and federal grants (just over 20 percent of St. Sebastian's students receive federal grants) (Source = IPEDS).
St. Sebastian's history of earmarking

Although the number of baccalaureate-liberal arts colleges receiving federal earmarks may be increasing nationally, the overall number that has received earmarks is still small and those with more than one federal earmark are even more rare. St. Sebastian’s is one of those rare exceptions. Over the past decade, the college received an earmarked grant of less than half a million dollars for renovations to its art museum, and it also has received a substantially larger grant to expand its arts education and community outreach program. The initial grant was eventually returned. Funding from the second grant has been used to expand the education and outreach program of the college’s fine arts museum. This has included funding a full-time museum educator. In conversations regarding the grant, the college’s president noted, “This grant took us a little more down the road of integrating that museum into the academic program. And [that is largely] because [name of the educator hired] has been so talented about getting students and faculty in there. And that wasn’t part of the vision; it was just a wonderful happenstance” (R5). Though the college has not received any additional federal earmarks, it has begun to work, however, with state-level leaders to secure a multi-million dollar loan for a related project.

The interview with St. Sebastian’s president

In August of 2003, I met with the president of St. Sebastian’s to discuss the federal earmarks the college had received. The initial contact was made through e-mail, following an introduction by a third party familiar with the project and the institution. I followed up the initial e-mail by a phone interview with the president to learn more about
the institution and explore its candidacy for the case study. Subsequently, I asked for and was granted a one hour, on-campus interview with the president to discuss the college’s experience with earmarks, including why it decided to seek the earmarks for the projects and the impact the projects had had on campus. At the president’s suggestion, I also arranged to speak with a staff member at the college who works with the college’s museum on education and outreach programs funded partly as a result of the earmark. Since the staff member was unavailable during my visit to the campus, a one-hour phone interview was set up to discuss the project. The following material provides key information obtained in those interviews. To allow for succinctness and greater ease of interpretation, it is formatted in topical order and may not necessarily reflect the actual path of the conversation.

The president’s vision for St. Sebastian’s and the challenges facing the college

Intrigued by the president’s 2001 letter to alumni regarding his vision for the arts at St. Sebastian’s, I asked the president whether this vision was his way of creating a competitive niche for the college, of separating it from its peers. He acknowledged that that was the intent but went on to note that, in addition to its peer institutions, the college also must consider the challenge it faces from other sectors of higher education as well. “Part of our thinking about the niche,” the president explained, “is that the competition from the publics is going to be fiercer and fiercer…I think [our state] is just miles behind [other states] in terms of conceptualizing public liberal arts colleges, but sooner or later someone is going to say…we could make [College X] the great public liberal arts college of [our state]. So part of our thinking about survival and flourishing is to become a
great,...obviously national, liberal arts college. And on that score the lopsidedness of the college in favor of science was a detriment” (R5).

When I pressed the president to explain further his vision for the art museum and its relationship to this larger vision for the college, he continued:

The notion that a liberal arts college is providing a kind of education that is not prepractical but much larger than the practical...educating the soul...means that in this agnostic age the arts can perform some of the function that mandatory chapel might have performed before I was born. By the time I came along mandatory chapel on most campuses had become a kind of...joke....But the arts have the potential for testing matters of conscience, and for a whole community,...in a way that individual courses can[not] ....So the arts are to us intrinsic to that higher ambition of being a liberal arts college....[because they] deal with the fundamental questions of what it means to be human (R5).

Leadership and faculty activity at St. Sebastian’s

From my preparatory reading on the college I knew that the president had been in office for almost a decade, and that he had come to the college after a distinguished academic and faculty career at similar liberal arts institutions, including a stint as provost. In addition, he told me, he also had had experience in Washington, DC, working at one of the federal agencies. Upon arriving at the college, he noted, his priorities had been “faculty salaries, undergraduate research, and study abroad,” all areas he had subsequently improved by spending “lots of money on.” But importantly, he stressed,
they also were areas that the faculty had eventually adopted as "shared priorities" for the whole institution (R5).

When I asked the president to assess the entrepreneurship of the faculty, and their engagement in the decision-making processes at the college, the president noted that faculty at St. Sebastian’s did not have the “culture of grants” that he had found at some of the other institutions at which he had served. St. Sebastian’s was, he explained, “amazingly hierarchical,” when he arrived. But gradually the culture of the college had begun to change as “slowly but surely” the faculty had begun to “buy in” to the president’s vision of the institution. Though, the president speculated, the faculty might say that they still generally “don’t have much voice in things,” he believed that “the overwhelming majority of faculty are thrilled with the sense of purpose and motion that they see here….and sense that the administration is eager to support faculty and mission” (R5).

Moving on to the role of the St. Sebastian’s Board of Trustees, I quizzed the president about the involvement of the board in helping to set the agenda for the college and monitoring such activities as the earmarked appropriations St. Sebastian’s received. The president noted that while not a wealthy board, in his opinion it “conform[ed] to the conventional definition of good private liberal arts college boards. Which [was] to say it ha[d] bought into the institutional vision, which they personalize[d] as my vision, and support that vision.” The board members, he went on to explain, “view themselves as having primary responsibility for fiduciary concerns. So they spend a lot of time talking
about endowment investment policies and fundraising. But it not a board that has made major policy decisions except at the point at which it costs significant money. So the board decides 'yes' to approve a performing arts center....[and] there was not a lot of debate. [But,] that was [after] two years of getting the board ready to see that as absolutely essential to our well being” (R5).

In his own words: The “story” of St. Sebastian’s earmark from the viewpoint of the president

To completely understand both how the earmarks came about and the college’s motivation for seeking them out, it was necessary to first understand both the background story of the college’s museum and the process St. Sebastian’s president engaged in to secure the awards. As with each of the case studies, I attempted to capture through narrative the “story” of the college’s experience with earmarks and the events that led to that experience using the president’s own words.

[It is] a well-known legend,...which I never bothered to verify, but [name of a married couple] were important art collectors from the 1950’s on. He was also president of the board of the [name of city] Museum of Art, but he knew he had a lot of art that would not be of interest to the Museum on the one hand, and on the other he had a keen ambition, a strong desire to have a museum with his name on it....So [he] approached several institutions saying, ‘I'll give you the art if you give me the building.’ ....I don’t know how many institutions he approached; rumor has it he approached at least [two others],...But when he approached St. Sebastian’s, two things [clicked], [he] had gone here for at least a semester back
in the 1930s so there was a little bit of a connection, and two, St. Sebastian's had a vacant building....So the college agreed to the...museum deal....[He] created a $750,000 endowment, and contributed an unspecified number of works of art,...And the college spent about $2 million renovating that building.

So the museum was started. ...But as part of the deal,...the college more or less agreed to put on a 6,000 square foot gallery in addition to the existing building. And that gallery would be the necessary precondition for gifts, significant gifts of additional art [and endowment funds]. So...we [were] still at the talking stage and it all revolve[d] around whether we [were] going to do the addition [when I arrived].

So the earmark actually began when...a St. Sebastian’s alumnus and board member left [an influential] position [at a federal agency] and was casting about looking for something else to do. And [the alumnus] said maybe I can help the college get some federal money for that addition. [The alumnus]... had great, longstanding contact with all the leading senior Republicans in [our state]....So [the alumnus] and I began by looking for capital project money for that addition....[The alum’s] strongest tie was with [a congressman] who had been in Congress for 30-something years. [The alumnus] had known him ever since he had been in Congress, and at that point he was chair of [a] House... subcommittee. So we met with [the congressman] and his chief aid, who was also very well respected,...and the first thing that [the Congressman] said to us
was...‘There ain’t no money for capital projects, but if you are interested in an alternative, I’ll work with you.’ Essentially, [though] not nearly in such crass terms. So we talked a little bit, and at that point outreach for the arts, the second part of [our] agenda for the museum, ...seemed [achievable]....[So we said,] ‘Gee,...let’s just tackle that as a short run opportunity.’

And [the alumnus] was a very good friend of [name of the state’s senior senator], who was then chairing the Senate counterpart subcommittee....And we met with [him]...and [we] were off and running. [The congressman had said] that we should probably meet with as many of the Republican members of his committee as possible. So over the course of a summer and a fall we did do that. We had [name of the state’s senior senator’s] assurances of support and help. And I met with [names four representatives from various states].

[Finally, we were] going to see [name of the congressional representative from the college’s district]. I wouldn’t say we were friends, but I found him extraordinarily admirable....I was just tremendously impressed with his candor, his integrity. He explained everything he does in terms of both constituent interest and his ideology. [He] said, ‘I’m going to make this one of my major priorities’....And so that was sort of the background [to the project]. We said: ‘Gee we’re going to go for programming.’ [Our local representative] is going to help in the House. [The state’s highest ranking House member and chair of a
House appropriations subcommittee] is really carrying the water. And [our state’s senior senator] is going to oversee the process.’

And that was the year…that the congressional elections were held but there was still no budget….A lame duck December session [was held] and it was during that session that one of [the local representative’s] aids called me and said, ‘Well, I couldn’t get you the million but I got you $250,000.’ … And in the meanwhile [the state’s senior senator] got us the million a couple of weeks later, [which later] in the House and Senate negotiations…was reduced…, and the $250,000 was [also] reduced.

[In retrospect], it was hardly a plan. [The alumnus] was not a paid lobbyist and I was chasing around talking with whomever I could…But that whole process to me was just fun. I have always liked politicians, partly because like reporters and traffic cops that have great stories. [But], I didn’t think it would go anywhere. I thought as long as we—I mean my one constant thought was that we needed to protect ourselves against any matching requirement—[but] as long as, in a since, it was free money to expand an agenda that was already intrinsic to the college’s purpose, [then] all right (R5).

The motivation for the earmark:

Since much of the interview had focused on the process by which the earmark had occurred, as well as indirect motivations for the college’s actions, I returned to the topic
of the president’s motivation for seeking the earmarks toward the close of the interview. Upon being pressed for further details, the president explained the unique confluence of events and factors that had influenced his actions:

I guess in this case because the opportunity presented itself. If [name of alumnus] hadn’t approached me I never would have dreamed of doing this. And at the same time if I hadn’t had this Damocles sword hanging over my head: the need to expand that museum to get some additional art, but on my part a reluctance to approach too many donors for that museum who also would be donors for other things that would have a much higher impact on students. I was looking for a path that could take me to funding that would not be available to us otherwise. And when that capital project part of it got derailed, I thought, ‘oh well.’ At that point I was on a [national] commission, I was going to Washington regularly anyway, and also I was on another group meeting in Washington,…so it was fairly easy for me to justify a couple of hours here and there (R5).

The impact of the earmark:

In our initial discussion of the earmark, the president had outlined some impacts that the earmark had had on the institution. The college was able to do some “budget relief” with the money, he explained, which included creating a “visual studies” position inside the college that was later incorporated into the college’s faculty budget. In addition, the grant had allowed the college to support summer student research stipends, a major program priority of the college (R5).
To further assess the impact of the earmarks on the college, I spoke, at the suggestion of the president, with the museum's director of education and outreach, a position funded by the earmark (R6). Noting that she came into the project a year after the earmark was received, she reported that she felt unable to do everything within the short amount of time remaining under the grant and had focused therefore on a few key activities. As with the president's testimony, what she had attempted to accomplish with the grants funds is presented in her own words:

Instead of trying to do everything, which I knew would never happen, I tried to think of ways to essentially plant seeds in each of the areas that the grant addressed and that I felt were important. So that at the very least when we came out of the grant cycle we would have the beginnings of programs in each area that we thought to be important. And the areas seemed to conveniently divide themselves into outreach within the [St. Sebastian's] community and outreach outside of the [St. Sebastian's] community.... The relationship within the [St. Sebastian's] community has been more problematic because...to build bridges to the curriculum is so labor intensive....[However,] the grant,...again under the overarching rubric of promoting visual culture on campus, and specifically promoting visual literacy through the museum, has supplemented the funds that the college has provided for arts and lectures programming. It also has supported a whole series of public programming that we did at the museum, including a music in the museum series where at least last year I tried very hard to find some way to use the performances by various musicians to help as a kind of...as an interpretive tool for the exhibitions in the gallery....Obviously that kind of series
reaches our own internal audience, but it is more pointedly geared to an outside audience.

We [also] instituted a series of monthly gallery talks. There had been no such formal series previously. We did a fairly, [perhaps] overly ambitious project around the date of September 11th. A whole sort of month long, and in some cases year long, project with a number of various components having to do with trying to get people to focus on that event and what it evoked for them in terms of images, rather than text.

[Finally,]...one of the programs that we started that I think [the president] is very enthusiastic about, as am I, is a partnership with a secondary school, actually, elementary school, in [a neighboring city]....It is a school of seriously at risk students in a highly impoverished area....I [had] happened to meet their art teacher at a workshop that I attended just after I started here, and she and I decided to create a partnership. She was avid about taking her students to various local museums and had been sort of regularly disappointed in the way in which her students had been treated. That is to say treated as though they had no intelligence and no ability to independently comprehend what they were looking at. So therefore she felt the end result was not very rewarding for her students and certainly not for her. And she and I felt that perhaps with a small museum where she and I could tailor a partnership the results might be different. And what we did was to create a sort of, something that we called an ‘adopt a work program’
where students actually came into the museum’s storage vaults, selected prints, drawings, paintings that they wanted to spend a semester working on.

And that...they personally engaged with....They made the connection. It wasn’t something we forced on them. They made the connection....And then they used those pieces [as inspiration] to make their own responsive pieces in various media that she was able then to teach them about. And a small group of them actually gave a presentation at the end of the semester, at the museum, with an assembled audience of some of our students who had actually worked alongside me as mentors for the....school kids during the process of the collaboration. There were some St. Sebastian’s alumni who came. The school’s teachers and principal came. And I have to say,...I could not possibly have foreseen the perfection with which they addressed what this project had done for them. In their own little ways...they gave these tremendously moving ten minute, fifteen minute speeches. And it was really...quite an experience. And again, the grant enabled us to pay for their transportation, to pay for the slides that we had produced for them of the works that they were working on. We were able to bring them out to the museum for multiple visits. And it was the seed for a project that we will be doing this year with them for which we have now gotten additional grant funding from another source (R6).

Asked to summarize the impact of the museum, and the president’s vision for the fine and performing arts on the college, the director went on to note that:
I would say that it is very central to the museum, but that the museum is becoming more central to faculty and to the administration because the administration in particular is heading itself and the institution in the direction of visual literacy, the integration of visual culture, the integration of the arts (R6).

Seeking to clarify that comment later, she rephrased her remarks by saying, "in a sense the arts are a foreign language still to quite a lot of people on campus. That is not to say though that they don’t want to learn that foreign language...[but] I think there is also a more pervasive sensibility on campus [with regard to the acceptability of the arts]. I mean maybe it hasn’t quite reached all of the chemists and mathematicians yet,” but it is getting there. Summing up, the education and outreach director spoke frankly about the changes she had witnessed in the college and the outlook for the future. “To put it bluntly,” she concluded, “I think the arts are still a second class citizen on campus, but I think that they are upwardly mobile” (R6). The earmark-supported program had been just one step in that upward movement, but it was an important one.

Summary of the St. Sebastian’s case study

St. Sebastian’s is a selective, four-year baccalaureate-level institution that competes for students with a set of high-quality peer institutions, many with greater endowments, and most of similar size, mission, and curricular focus. A distinguishing characteristic of the college is its nationally- acclaimed art museum, which features a major collection of American art bequeathed to it by a former alumnus and collector. Under the terms of the
gift agreement, and in return for additional works of art and endowment funds, the donor's family expected the college to enlarge the museum.

Over the past five years, the president of St. Sebastian's, with the support of its board, has begun a conspicuous initiative to expand and establish programs in the fine and performing arts at the college. The admitted purposes of this initiative were to engage the college's students in an educational dialogue about what it means to be human, create initiatives that distinguish the college from its peer institution and inoculate it against possible competition from the state's public four year institutions, and, at the same time, expand the college's visibility in neighboring communities. When a politically well-connected member of the college's board approached the college about attempting to secure an earmark to help attract funds for the museum addition, the college's president recognized a possible opportunity to secure federal funds for the institution that would allow its to fulfill its obligations to the museum donor, secure additional gifts from the donor, and not tap financial resources available to the college that could be used for other purposes. When initial contact with the state's representatives in Congress indicated that the college could not get federal money for the bricks and mortar addition, but could secure funding for programmatic initiatives, the college moved to secure that funding and used it to strengthen its initiatives in the fine arts, including education and outreach programs to the extended community.
Case Study 2: Delacroix University

Delacroix University is a public, four-year, Doctoral/Research University-Intensive (DRUI). By definition, DRUIs offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs and are committed to the graduate education through the doctorate, although in less breadth than a DRUE. With a total undergraduate and graduate student population of under 10,000, Delacroix is small for a research institution, but it is considered extremely competitive. A number of Delacroix’s programs have been ranked among the best in the nation by the National Research Council and highly touted in other publications, such as U.S. News and World Report and Financial Times. The university does not have an engineering program, but a graduate-level program (master’s through the doctorate) in applied physics has been added over the last two decades. That program, which is multidisciplinary in its focus, draws faculty from a variety of science and engineering backgrounds.

History and mission of the university:

The institution takes great pride in its reputation as a public university that tries to balance quality teaching with quality research. Despite its status as a DRUI, Delacroix sees itself, in the words of its provost, as a “niche” institution. Its ambition is not to serve as an example of Clark Kerr’s infamous “multiversities” but as a “special type of university—one whose small size permits a truly collegial environment, and one in which the undergraduate excellence is a fundamental concern.” According to the university’s most recent strategic plan, it is the avowed goal of the institution to combine the best aspects of an undergraduate institution with those of a research university by continuing
Delacroix’s historic strength in undergraduate education while also developing and maintaining a select, but high quality, number of graduate and professional programs.

Delacroix University is uniquely located in an area that has both tremendous cultural resources and a high tech research capability that is boosted by the presence of numerous military and academic research institutions. An independently-operated history museum is located close to the university, and a world-class, federally-supported national physics laboratory in within an hour’s drive. To help it, and other institutions in the region, take full advantage of this laboratory, the institution participates in a consortium of higher education institutions that is designed to promote transfer of the laboratory’s research into industrial applications.

Peer institutions:
As a public institution, Delacroix University’s peer institutions are selected with the agreement of its state higher education coordinating agency. Reflecting its unique size, mission, selectivity, and aspirations, the university’s peers are a blend of private and public institutions, and range from very wealthy Ivy League institutions, such as Brown or Dartmouth, to comparatively less wealthy, but highly-regarded public universities, such as the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

Endowment and state support:
Despite its academic reputation, Delacroix, like many public institutions, has a relatively modest endowment, particularly given the endowments of some of its peers. According to
The Chronicle of Higher Education, the June 2003 market value of the Delacroix University was less than $350 million. Although that represented a decrease from its high of approximately $400 million in June 2000, it still represented a 20 percent gain over the past five years.

Considerably more troubling for the university, however, has been the extended decline in state funding it, and the other public higher education institutions in its state, have experienced over much of the last decade. After enduring nearly a decade of reduced state funding, Delacroix depended upon state funds to cover less than 20 percent of the university’s operating costs in 2003.

Research activity:
Despite its research institution status, Delacroix’s predominant focus has remains on its undergraduate, liberal arts programs, and its sponsored research activity has reflected this focus. The Delacroix provost noted that “Delacroix just began to take itself as a research institution seriously within the last 10-15 years” (R19). However, as the institution has built stronger graduate programs, and invested in faculty and facilities, its sponsored research activity has increased. Over the past decade, sponsored research expenditures more than doubled over the past nine years, rising to well over $30 million by FY 2003. Leading these increases were the institution’s sciences programs, particularly its marine sciences program, which accounted for approximately 44 percent of the university’s total research and development (R&D) expenditures in FY 2003. The second largest R&D unit at the university was its college of arts and sciences, which contains the department of
applied physics, had approximately 36 percent of the total R&D in FY 2003 (Delacroix's 2002-2003 Annual Report of Sponsored Programs).

**History of earmarking at Delacroix University:**

Although it is a DRUI, Delacroix University's experience with earmarking is comparatively recent and, relative to many other research institutions, still rather limited. The institution received its first earmark less than five years ago for a project funded through the U.S. Department of Education. The project, which focuses on cultural studies at both the pre-collegiate and collegiate levels, also has received additional earmarks to bring its total funding to over $1 million. Since receiving that initial earmark, the university has had subsequent success in obtaining additional earmarks through other federal agencies, such as the Department of Defense, the Homeland Security Agency, and the Commerce Department, for a variety of projects, most related to defense or environmental research. All totaled, the university has secured, according to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, over $4 million in direct appropriations over the past three to five years. The university continues to actively solicit earmarks and, through its foundation, has engaged a lobbying firm to help advance these efforts.

**The interviews:**

In February of 2004, I met with the provost of Delacroix University to discuss a series of earmarks the university had received from various federal agencies. My initial contact with the provost had been through a series of e-mails providing information about the goals of the project, outlining the reasons for my interest in Delacroix as a possible study
site, and proposing a time and format for interviews. The meeting with the provost that came out of those initial exchanges lasted approximately one hour and was conducted in the provost's office on the Delacroix campus. Following the interview, I also asked for and received permission to follow up on the information by contacting faculty and staff associated with the projects discussed. One-hour phone interviews with two faculty members who served as project directors for two of the Delacroix projects funded through earmarks were subsequently arranged. The following material provides key information obtained in these interviews. Although the number and varied focus of these earmarks make it impossible to describe each in great detail, the following presents a brief description of how Delacroix's involvement with earmarking has progressed and the motivations behind it. To allow for greater ease of interpretation and succinctness, I have presented the information in topical order. Because the focus of the case study is actually bi-level—the university as a whole as one focus and the specific projects as another—I have split the responses into both an administrative view (for the university as a whole) and the faculty view (for the specific projects).

In his own words: The "story" of Delacroix's earmarks from the perspective of the university's provost

After reviewing Delacroix's history of earmarking, I was particularly intrigued by the question of why a university that had not previously solicited earmarks would suddenly reverse its policy and seek them out. When I asked the Delacroix provost this question in the interview, he explained that the recent success of the university in securing earmarks
had been a confluence of a number of factors. The “story” he shared on Delacroix’s activities is presented in his words below:

What really happened is that about four or five years ago, the acting president of [a local museum] and [Delacroix University’s president] got together to talk [about] things [the museum] and [university] could do together. And this idea of this [cultural studies program] kind of came up, and I don’t know whose idea it was, but the thought was that well maybe that was something we could get an earmark on. Frankly, I think it probably came from [the local museum]. They were in pretty desperate straits. They were already seeing the financial handwriting on the wall and were looking every where they could. And I think initially they wanted to house this program in a facility that they owned. Their thinking was that [they] could bring students here during the school year, which is sort of their off season, and during the height of their season [in the summer] the students wouldn’t be here so they could rent the space out, sort of multi-use. And they thought they could get the federal government to help them renovate this facility.

So…they brought everybody together and certain people were tasked to see what they could do. And I was part of it because I was dean of arts and sciences. And what happened is well the first thing is that it was clear that they [the federal agencies] weren’t going to help renovate commercial space….And so [the local museum] kind of got lukewarm on the whole thing. But in the meantime we had been having conversations at that time with our congressman,…and he actually
got very interested. He was...interested in history, was from this area, and thought more could be done [to exploit the region’s history]. So we...continued to pursue that, but [the congressman] died....So this was really done as a kind of memorial to [him]. It was kind of interesting how that happened. I mean, ...his family wanted to do this because it was something he cared a lot about, and I think [the representative who replaced him] felt the same, and [the state’s senior senator]. So we kind of fell into that one in a way. We got about $2 million to get that thing started, and now this summer will be the last summer for which it will have federal dollars and will become a self-sustaining program. So that sort of showed us: ‘Oh, we can do this.’ And...at that stage...[our president] brought together his government relations people and said, ‘What more should we be doing?’ (R19).

As the provost’s remarks indicated, this initial foray by Delacroix into federal earmarks was created by a serendipitous combination of financial need, inter-institutional partnering, and the personal interests of the institution’s congressional representatives. Following that initial effort, however, Delacroix began to apply a more focused strategy toward the use of federal earmarks. The provost’s narrative of Delacroix’s “story” continued with the following:

What happened [with the subsequent earmarks] is that both the physics and the computer science programs were really very opportunistic and built around the locational advantage of the fact that [two major federal research facilities were located in the vicinity]....Because those programs tend to be pretty close to federal agencies, there never was any particular need for the institution to think
about earmarking. Because our faculty was heavily in [involved with] DOE and NASA type work, they had their own, in a sense, earmarks, but they weren’t things the institution was seeking.

Probably about 1990 or a few years before that,...[the previous president of Delacroix] got very interested in applied physics and started building up the applied physics program. By the time my predecessor provost came here, we [had begun] to make significant investments in that [program]. And I think what happened in a sense is we were poised with that program—because they do very applied types of things—to begin looking at that [earmarks]. But even so, we hadn’t done it yet....So then...what we did was, we kind of looked across the campus at where were there potential areas of existing strength that we felt could align with federal initiatives....And the first place we looked was at our applied physics program. It turned out that I had hired about two years before a young guy [subsequently the principle investigator for the project] who had been a congressional fellow...and had worked [on Capitol Hill]....He had very good connections on the Hill, and so we immediately focused on him. And we began really using those contacts. And because he does work in defense-related areas, in defense applications, [the state’s senior senator’s] office was very interested. And so we kind of leaped on that. And that was the next one and is now in its second year of funding...and we are asking for a third year....And so with those two successes behind us, we realized that we were in the thick of this. And the state was beginning to get very interested [since], as...the budget downturn came and
the governor’s office said, ‘Well what are the things we can do at the state level to enhance all of our institutions?’….So at [that] point we were getting pretty well organized.

On a parallel track, [our marine sciences program] had for years been a major grant getting agency from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Office of Naval Research (ONR), NASA, and the National Science Foundation (NSF)….At the very same time, and actually probably somewhat independently,…[the marine sciences program] was beginning to look at some [earmarking] opportunities, primarily linking through [a university research group]…. [That group] years ago got involved in providing internet activity for universities who are part of [it]….And they sold [their interests in that activity] to the Internet 2 folks, the Abilene people. And so [the research group was sitting] on this pot of money and they were looking for ways to invest it. And one of the ways they decided to invest it was in coastal monitoring programs. That led very early to [our marine sciences program] because that is what [they] do. Then [the research group] got very involved because [it] is a major DOD contractor and [our marine sciences program] has been a DOD contractor. That very quickly began to move and so [the group] just got a [multi] million dollar earmark in the last session, of which [some] goes to [our marine sciences program]….So that was kind of all of a sudden where we were. So [our marine sciences program] had been doing these things and we [the university’s traditional arts and sciences
programs] had been doing these things—and we realized that we had to get together. So really within the last year we’ve pulled it together (R19).

Motivation for the earmarks:

Although the provost’s explanation of the forces that had come together to create opportunities for Delacroix’s successful pursuit of earmarks, was instructive in laying out how the process had worked at the university, I still was unclear as to the underlying motivation for Delacroix to engage in such projects, particularly since it had not previously done so. After being pressed to discuss the motivating factors or drivers for seeking earmarks, the provost described several drivers, including competition. “I think, you know, if you don’t, [seek earmarks] then you lose out,” he said. “The problem is that it is one of those situations where the rules of the game have changed, and you will deny your faculty legitimate research opportunities if you take the high road and say I would not ever do that” (R19). The provost then went on to admit that other factors played into the decision as well including the role that the university plays, particularly under its current president, in the economy of the region. “Another piece of this for [Delacroix],” he explained, “which is directly attributable to [the president’s] institutional aspirations,” is the university’s role in developing the economy of the region. “I think [he] is the first president to really think about whether [Delacroix] has a role to play in regional economic development. And his answer is ‘yes.’ He feels that the [university] has a moral obligation to the initiatives in this area in development. And as soon as you begin to do that, and to engage in things like the [name of a regional economic partnership initiative] and begin to engage in sort of economic development issues, you really quickly enter into
the political sphere. And it is hard to do economic development without some sort of state and federal help” (R19).

Finally, the provost offered a third motivation for Delacroix’s decision to seek out earmarks, and that motivator is the complexity of projects that the university is seeking to engage in. Using, as an example, a proposed university project that would bring together on a single campus, programs from the university’s school of education, a local community college, and a local school system all focused around the theme of educational technology, the provost noted, “When you get into that kind of complexity, when you have all of those different agencies involved, it very quickly becomes a [situation where] you’re going to do this only through political means” (R19).

The future of earmarking at Delacroix

When I questioned the Delacroix provost about the university’s future use of earmarks to carry out its research or service agenda, he admitted that the university had learned much from its initial experiences with earmarks and, as a result, was moving to be “strategic” about where it expended its energy and resources on such projects. He was excited about future opportunities, he indicated, but, at the same time, was concerned over the impact that such projects could have on the institution. He explained:

What we are trying to do is identify a very select subset [of possible projects for federal support]. We are trying very hard—and really this is kind of my initiative—to keep us from being led into places we don’t want to go by what the opportunities are. And so what I’ve been doing is putting in front of our
government relations people places where I feel that there is some potential in programs where we are already strong to link with priorities in federal agencies....The only thing we are doing in Home Land Security, for instance, is coastal monitoring, because we don’t do homeland security here....So we are trying to find places where we know we already have opportunities. [However] I’m trying very hard not to let these agency priorities turn us into something that we’re not....Delacroix is such a niche institution. It is different from a lot of places. A place like [he names a large land grant university] can be much more nimble in terms of ‘oh, there’s a need. Well, we’ll put something together.’ We don’t do that very well here. It is not how we operate. So my task in all of this is to be the policeman, I think. To keep us from being pulled in directions we don’t want to go by the demand factors that are coming out of the beltway (R19).

In their own words: Delacroix’s earmarks from the perspective of the faculty

In order to gain additional information and perspective on Delacroix’s experience with earmarks, including the perceived impact that they have had on the university, I interviewed the principal investigators (PIs) on two earmark-supported projects at the university. Their individual impressions of the goals for the earmarked projects, the institutional or programmatic motivations for going after the earmarks, and the impact of the earmarks are presented below.
Earmark 1: The cultural studies project

As reported by the provost, the first project for which Delacroix received an earmark was a joint project focused on the cultural studies. The project, as the PI explained it, was a partnership of the university's highly-regarded History and American Studies programs and the private foundation that operated a local museum near the university. The goal of the program, according to the PI, who had come on board the project after the initial earmark had been received, was to harness the separate strengths of the two organizations to create a unique learning opportunity for students, both pre-collegiate and collegiate. "I ha[d] been on a soapbox for exactly this sort of program that we have created" for the last twenty-five years, the PI explained, "because I knew that we were in a situation where there was no place else in the country where these resources existed. [At the same time,] neither the [museum] nor the university, was really able to do that [financially]. I mean everybody seemed to like the idea but nobody had the money" (R21).

The impact of the earmark and the program, the PI went on to note, could be seen at both the departmental and the university-wide levels. Through the earmarked resources, the PI explained, the project had been “able to pay for courses that are taught by real experts at [the museum] in fields that we [the department] either don’t cover at all or would like to cover better” (R21). In essence, he noted, the resources brought in by the earmark have allowed his department to “broaden the curriculum and supplement both existing fields and bring in new fields in museum studies and material culture that aren’t covered or aren’t covered in the depth [the department] would like” (R21).
At a larger level, however, the PI also claimed that the earmark had had an impact on the university, as a whole, as well as the students who participated in the program. A particularly important impact credited to the project by both the provost and the project PI was the ability of the program to attract students from various regions of the country, as well as students of diverse educational and economic backgrounds. The PI noted that, “We reach out with the summer program to the coal fields of West Virginia, to the Latino students among the Rio Grande in Texas, to inner city kids in [the East]. We’ve had some of all of those....We make it possible for them to come to this university, not only to make those students possible candidates for the freshman class at [Delacroix] but also to provide something to them just in terms of that summer experience, whether or not they are going to come [here]. These are things that are personally important to [me and the staff working on this project]” (R21). In addition, however, the PI also noted that the program has a dual benefit. Just as the students participating in the program may benefit by coming to the university and learning from the activities, so too the university benefits from the exposure the project gives it. Just as “the outreach is very much a part of [the success of the project],” the PI noted, “the possibility of recruiting really top flight students is also a part of that....It is, as you know, difficult for [Delacroix] to sometimes recruit students from disadvantaged areas. We can provide a bit of a pipeline there, I think. But whether or not that happens, the experience of the individual student in the precollegiate program is a key factor for us” (R21).
Earmark 2: The electromagnetic imaging project

The second earmark received by Delacroix went to a Department of Defense-funded project focused on the use of electromagnetic waves to improve the power of communication and imaging technologies. The project was developed by a faculty member in the university’s department of applied physics in cooperation with researchers from two other institutions. As the Delacroix provost had noted, this project, to a large extent, developed from the personal research interests and contacts of a particularly active Delacroix faculty member (R19). The Delacroix faculty member who served as the principal investigator for the project described the impetus for the earmark this way:

It was actually a collaboration of three institutions....I had known the two other researchers for several years. We had been talking about a variety of issues, technical issues. And this is just something that kind of came out of the conversation in terms of a need that we saw in DOD that was not being addressed by current funding. There had been a DARPA [Defense Advanced Research Projects Administration] program for our type of activity and it had been somewhat successful but did not achieve DARPA’s goals. And we thought that we had a solid case—a scientific idea—for a research program that could achieve the goals that DARPA wanted. So we decided to pursue that further so we went to talk to some of our program managers that we knew in ONR [Office of Naval Research] and other branches of DOD [the Department of Defense]. They saw this as a need as well but they didn’t have a funding source for it so...we approached our congressional delegation about giving some support to get the money (R20).
As with the first earmark described earlier, the impact of the federal funds for this project was felt at multiple levels of the organization. The first impact, the PI noted, was the enhanced reputation to the university and the perceived ability of the university to carry out such advanced work. "An advantage [of such a federally-funded project]," he explained, "is that it does give smaller institutions a chance to weigh in on large-scale projects. In my opinion having gone through on both sides of the review process with both NSF and DOD, Delacroix would have no shot at leading a larger project like this [under traditional peer-reviewed programs],... because we don’t have a lot of the infrastructure that would be needed for this type of project and that would come as a severe hit [to us] as the lead institution. We could participate as a co-PI, but we would never get to lead a project of this technical sort" (R21).

In addition to building the university’s external research reputation, the earmark also helped to provide needed resources that the university used to not only increase its research capacity but also improve its educational programs, including its undergraduate programs. "All of these moneys go for research," the PI noted, "it goes to buy equipment. It pays for graduate students. It pays for post docs. And in this case it has attracted a world-renown senior scientist who came here to work on this project and it pays part of his salary" (R21). And all of this equipment, and much of the expertise is going to stay after the conclusion of the project, he explained, and contribute to the educational excellence of the university, including contributing to the larger goal of linking the applied physics department’s primarily graduate level program to the undergraduate...
"The lab equipment that was purchased is going to be here when the project ends," the PI stated, "and that senior scientist who was attracted to work on the project is going to stay and bring in additional funding, and work on additional projects, and will serve as an intellectual resource on campus. So it is an indirect benefit but there is clearly a benefit because you have to go through that process...in order to get the whole infrastructure, the whole research system up and running in such a way that you can then take time and resources and direct them toward integrating into the undergraduate curriculum" (R21).

Summary of Delacroix case study

Delacroix is a publicly-supported DRUI with a highly regarded undergraduate program and a growing but selective emphasis on graduate programs. Like all of the public institutions in its state, the university has faced an operating environment in which state funding has declined at the same time that the university has sought to enhance its educational and research programs, both at the undergraduate and graduate level, and, in conjunction with other entities in the region, expand its efforts to improve the region’s economic development. In these efforts, Delacroix is blessed with some unique advantages, including a privately-operated museum and a national physics lab, all located close to the university’s campus.

Although the university has historically not sought out direct appropriations through earmarks, its position on this began to change recently when the university sought to obtain an earmark, at initially in cooperation with a privately-operated museum, to obtain
an earmark that would provide funding to support a cultural studies project. Although this initial success owed much to a serendipitous turn of events, it had the effect of encouraging the university to look at other opportunities for earmarks, building on the connections that existed between its faculty and research centers and federal agencies. Success in these efforts have, in turn, led to the decision by the university to become more strategic in the way it seeks out earmarks. As a result, the university’s leadership has begun to put in place a process that seeks to identify areas of strength and match those, where appropriate, with federal opportunities. The goal in this, the provost, has explained is to try and balance the needs and capabilities of the institution, with the priorities and needs of Congress and the federal agencies in a way that benefits both.

Not surprisingly at such a complex organization, the perceived motives for engaging in earmarking depend upon the individual’s position within the institution. For the provost at Delacroix, major motivators included obtaining resources, working to promote the economic development in the region, and maintaining the institution’s ability to competitively support its faculty. For the PIs, the motivators to engage in the earmark appeared to be split between outreach, perceived national needs that were not being addressed (particularly in the defense area), and a desire to expand resources at both the departmental and university level.

Case Study 3: Mondawmin State University

Mondawmin State University (MSU) is a public, Doctoral/Research Extensive university (DRUE). MSU has a total student population of over 30,000, close to 10,000 of whom
with are graduate students. These students are spread out over 100 different undergraduate majors and almost as many graduate programs. Mondawmin is the designated “flagship” university in its state. According to the U.S. Department of Education’s IPEDS database, Mondawmin awarded over 5,000 thousand undergraduate degrees in the 2002-2003 academic year and offers a full range of graduate programs, including highly regarded programs in business, engineering, public policy, education, agriculture, and the social sciences.

As the state’s original land grant institution, MSU is a member of the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC), but thanks to its research and development (R&D) strength, it is also a member of the more prestigious, highly-selective Association of American Universities (AAU). It is the sixty-two AAU member institutions that the president and provost of the institution consider to be its natural peer group. The institution’s official peers, as established by the state’s higher education oversight agency, includes such highly-regarded institutions as the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, and the University of California at Los Angeles. Within this group, MSU ranks toward the bottom but not at the bottom, and, in some factors (such as non-medical school related R&D, incoming freshman SAT scores, and national rankings such as *U.S. News*) it has vaulted over several peers in recent years.

Traditionally, MSU’s strongest programs have been in science and engineering. A joke common around the university was that a former president of the institution once
described it as a world class physics department with a university attached. Officials at MSU are now proud of the fact that over the past decade high quality programs, formerly found only in pockets of the science and engineering colleges, have spread throughout the institution. According to the university's most recent accountability report, in 2003 Mondawmin counted over 60 graduate-level programs, schools, or specialty areas ranked among the top 25 in the nation in such publications as *U.S. News and World Report*, *Financial Times*, *Business Week*, and the National Research Council's rankings of graduate schools. This number was double the number the university had recorded just four years earlier. Included in these totals were a number of top ranked programs in areas of the Social Sciences and Education, areas where the university previously had not been particularly competitive.

**Sponsored research activity**

In terms of sponsored research, MSU ranks among the top 50 research institutions in the nation in federal research expenditures, with total research and development (R&D) expenditures of over $330 million in FY 2003. That level of activity represents an increase in R&D of over 40 percent since FY 1997. Helping to fuel this boom in R&D activity have been significant increases in state funding for the university, particularly between 1999 and 2001. However, as with most institutions, the university has faced budget cuts over the past two years and expects to continue to see either flat or declining state support for at least the near future. Discussions with university officials indicate that the university expects to depend increasingly upon the revenue generated by its R&D activities—along with increased tuition and fees-- to make up for the loss of state dollars.
Also helping to boost the university’s R&D success is its advantageous location. Centered in an area that has experienced explosive growth in the information sciences and biotechnology, the university is within a three hour commute of over 300 public and private laboratories and research centers.

**Mondawmin’s history and mission**

MSU is the designated land-grant institution for a state that, over the past century, has seen its economy evolve from an agriculture economy, to a smoke stack economy, to its present economic position as one of the leaders in the technology-oriented “new economy.” As the state’s economy has evolved, so too has the mission and focus of MSU. From its early beginnings as a utilitarian “farmer’s college,” MSU has created programs and services that extend to all sectors of the state. Whether it is training the state’s teachers, advising local governments, creating new startups through its business incubator programs, assisting struggling small businesses through its small business development center, or providing extension services to the state’s farmer through its agricultural programs, MSU’s broad mission is to serve the needs of the state and its citizens.

**Leadership at Mondawmin**

Mondawmin has a strong president that came to the institution five years ago with a vision for building on the university’s research strengths and its connections to federal and private laboratories in order to transform the university into an economic engine that

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rivaled any in the nation. The president’s aspirations for the university were laid out in the strategic plan that it adopted soon after he arrived. The ambitious goals of that plan call for, among other things, the university to “partner with private companies, government agencies, and other research universities in the state and the region in order to become a major force in the economic development and well-being of the citizens of [its state].” To help achieve this goal, the MSU president has encouraged the university to become active in all areas, including the creation of a stronger federal relations program.

**Mondawmin’s history with earmarks:**

Like many DRUE institutions, MSU has had a long history of academic earmarks. According to the Chronicle’s database, MSU received over 25 earmarks, either individually or as part of a group of institutions, between 1993 and 2002. Total earmarked funding over that time period approached $9 million in individual grants to MSU (the university also shared in earmarked projects totaling over $100 million, according to the Chronicle; however, it was not possible to determine how much of the shared earmarks went to MSU). The earmarks came through a variety of agency appropriations bills including those of HUD, NASA, Commerce, Agriculture, and Defense.

Despite the number of earmarks it had received, university officials were quick to point out that 1) compared to many other research extensive universities, Mondawmin has been relatively modest in the extent to which it has sought earmarks, and 2) that earmarks at the university have played a fairly small, though useful, role in boosting the university’s...
overall R&D portfolio (R3). The university’s provost noted that, whereas at some institutions federal funds received through earmarks might reach as high as 50 percent of the institution’s total R&D expenditures, at Mondawmin the annual percentage of federal funds coming from earmarks is more in the line of one to two percent (out of a total of over $300 million in federally-funded research expenditures). So, “while [earmarking] can serve as an important role in building up capabilities,” the provost noted, “it should never be a significant factor in what the [university] does in the R&D end [of its activities].” If the university were to ever approach the range of 10 percent or 20 percent of total R&D dollars, he stated, then the leadership of the university would know it was “getting in the deep woods” (R3).

The interviews at Mondawmin:

Because of its size, complex administrative structure, expansive mission, and long history of receiving earmarks, Mondawmin represented the most complex case in this study. In an attempt to accurately capture the range and flavor of the university’s earmarking activity, I conducted six interviews with different administrators and faculty over an 18-month period. Initial contact for each interview was made by e-mail. Unlike the other interviews, the first set of interviews at MSU took place not at the presidential or provost level but at the college-level. Working at that level, I identified a specific earmark of interest and carried out one-hour, in-person interviews with the faculty member who was the principal investigator (PI) on the project, an associate dean in the college in which the project was located, and the dean of the college in which the project was housed at the time the earmark was received. All of the interviews were held on campus except the one
with the dean, which was held off campus. The focus of my questions during the
interviews was on the goals of the specific earmark-supported project, how the process
for developing the project and identifying political support for it worked, and the impact
of the project on the department or college. Follow up questions were handled by e-mail.
Finally, in order to review key elements of the project a second one-hour interview was
scheduled with the PI. That interview was also held on campus.

Following the college-level interviews, and using information gleaned from them, I
requested and was granted an interview with Mondawmin’s provost. As with the college-
level interviews, initial contact was made by e-mail. The subsequent interview lasted for
just over an hour and was held at an off campus location. Key questions that I sought
information on from the provost included his perception of the motivations behind the
university’s use of earmarks, how the process worked from the central administration
perspective, and the impact of earmarked projects on the campus.

Finally, in order to gain yet another perspective on earmark-related activities at
Mondawmin, I interviewed the dean of the university’s college of education. In my
discussions with the provost he had mentioned in passing that the dean had been
successful in obtaining an earmark for a particularly interesting project. As with the other
interviews, I contacted the dean by e-mail and asked to set up an interview to discuss the
project. The interview, which took place in the dean’s office on campus, lasted just under
an hour. As with the initial interviews at Mondawmin, this interview was focused on the
project and sought to ascertain the goals for it, how the earmark process had worked, and the impact of the project.

The following material provides key information obtained in these interviews. Although the number and varied foci of these earmarks make it impossible to describe each in great detail, the following presents a brief description of the university's involvement with earmarking and the motivations behind it. To allow for greater ease of interpretation and succinctness, I have presented the information in topical order. Because the focus of the case study is again, bi-level, I have split the responses into the central administration-level view (for the university as a whole) and the college or faculty-level view (for the specific projects).

In his own words: the perspectives of Mondawmin provost on motivations for earmarking

In March of 2004, I met with the Mondawmin provost to discuss the university's involvement with federal earmarks and its motivation for seeking them. The national data indicated that Mondawmin, though it had long had some success at earmarking, had started slowly and then gradually increased the number of earmarks it sought as the decade of the 1990s went along. In starting the interview, I asked the provost to give me his view of what had occurred over the past decade to encourage the university to become more engaged in earmarking. His response, highlighted below, shows the impact of changing external and internal norms and expectations placed on the university. The provost noted:
I think that actually for a good number of years it was regarded as being beneath the university's dignity. In fact there were sort of instructions—unofficial instructions—going out to the department chairs and deans that we [did] not do this kind of thing. I think that reflected the position of many of the largest research universities that these research dollars ought to be competitive. But as that base of institutions...not doing it eroded, and even some major organizations like Michigan...started to get earmarks, I think that position sort of eroded along with it....But I think there was actually another thing that contributed to it. And that was that...the states...and the [congressional] representatives of the states had always tried to get separate allocations to support economic activity in their states. That was nothing new. [But] as research universities especially were seen as being more and more important drivers [of the economy], I think that the attitude somewhat changed....[So] the increasing role that research universities are playing in economic development now makes them a player whenever people think about ways in which their own congressional delegation can bring home the bacon. Instead of just money for a bridge somewhere, now people are much more ambitious and want to talk about helping their states become competitive for jobs. And universities are now seen as being a big part of that (R3).

In addition to the changing norms and expectations of the Mondawmin community, the provost also cited an additional factor that he considered important in encouraging increased earmarking, not just for Mondawmin but for all major research institutions: high start up costs associated with new faculty and labs. “I think another thing that you
certainly need to look at from the historical context,” he added, “is establishing the capability to do cutting edge research from the college’s side has become very expensive. I remember that when I started as a university faculty member 30 years ago, I got no start up money at all. And most of my colleagues got no start up money. But now, you know, these packages of over half a million dollars are very common. And for senior faculty they are now $1 million-$2 million. So I think there has been a change to some extent in the kind of funds necessary to work at the cutting edge. And the funding agencies really haven’t been able to respond until very recently and even then inadequately to the changing needs. For instance, NSF has a research instrumentation program that requires 50 percent matching from the host institution. If you want to buy a million dollar piece of equipment, the institution has to find $500,000 even if they are successful at that [getting the instrumentation grant]....And I think it is this frustration over the inability to be competitive without going after earmarks that drives greater and greater involvement of the AAU type institutions in this whole process” (R3).

Since much of the information the provost had shared with me had focused on what he believed was driving the expansion of earmarks among research institutions at the national level, I sought to narrow the focus of the discussion by asking him what he saw as the motivators specific to Mondawmin’s earmarking activities. The provost, who was also a former faculty member at the university, responded: “I think it is in many ways to be competitive with our peer institutions. Many of these earmarks are being used by the various research universities to build up special capabilities that allow them to [compete] successfully for competitively-awarded grants. And many of these facilities are very
expensive. As an example, one of the earmarks that I was involved in early on was an earmark related to [advanced manufacturing technology]. With $7.5 million [from an earmark] we were able to establish a capability here at [the university] that no one else had and, therefore, we were able to go after, subsequently, competitively-awarded grants for that program. And so I think the desire to maintain the most modern kinds of capabilities, especially on the technology side was very important” (R3). But, the provost added, at the same time anyone seeking the answer to what is driving the earmarking at research universities should not overlook the impact of the economic expectations now being placed on research universities. Bringing the topic back to the national level, he noted that “Almost every AAU university is now seeing its future as being one defined by its ability to be an economic engine,” he said. “It costs nearly twice as much per student for the [state] to fund MSU as to fund [the provost names a public comprehensive university in the same state], so the question becomes, what is the added value that you get from that? And this [economic development] has clearly got to be one of them” (R3).

The process for identifying and developing candidate projects at Mondawmin

Given the serendipitous processes I had observed for seeking earmarks at other institutions, I was curious to learn how Mondawmin, as an institution experienced in soliciting and receiving earmarks, had structured its process for identifying likely projects and working with its congressional delegation. I asked the provost to outline the process by which projects were identified at Mondawmin. His response indicated that, much like with Delacroix, the process for seeking earmarks at MSU had evolved over the past few years, going from a largely bottom-up process that was driven as much by faculty
contacts and research interests as any concept of the university’s strategic interests, toward a more centrally-controlled, top-down process that seeks to identify institutional priorities and match those with the interests of the university’s congressional delegation. Describing the evolution of the process at MSU, the provost related: “It has only been organized in any sense at all since we brought in a federal relations person [three years earlier]. It used to be that individual faculty would lobby Congress. It was disorganized and somewhat embarrassing. But now we actually have a process in which every year we solicit the deans’ ideas for possible direct funding for the state through our delegation. We assemble a list of those and we then go over that, and at the top of the campus [i.e., the president and the cabinet], to prioritize them both in terms of the special importance to the campus and the potential interest of the congressional sponsor. And whether or not the congressional sponsor has a committee position on the relevant committee. Then we put together even more of a priority list, basically we take some things just off the list [entirely], and publish a...booklet which...[is] distributed to our delegation. It lists our priority interests” (R3).

Pressed for the types of projects that would make list, and how they would square with the institutional priorities established by the president, the provost noted that: “we have quite a broad mission, which helps us, but there is no question that the president does review these submissions. And he does look to see that these requests support the basic strategic goals of the institution. And if they don’t, they get deleted from the list pretty quickly....For example, building the biosciences is one that would automatically move a request in that area up high on the list. And might move some others that are less relevant
to that priority lower” (R3). The provost went on to note that the MSU president typically met each year with at least one of the state’s senators to go over institutional priorities. “[The senator] will typically show interest in some,” he noted, “and no interest in others, but [the senator] has become more active in recent years in terms of trying to help and we have gotten several things as a result of [the senator’s] activities.” Going on to credit the president for making Mondawmin more aggressive and more strategic in seeking out earmarks over the past few years, the provost replied, there is no question that the president “wants to be a player in all areas,” and he looked at this and said, ‘Gee, we’re not much of a player here, let’s get ourselves organized’” (R3). The result was the hiring of the federal relations director.

Asked if the university had ever used a lobbyist, the provost noted that the current president had resisted the idea of obtaining outside assistance for the university as a whole, but that some exceptions had been made in the past for individual projects or colleges. For instance, under the previous provost one of the colleges at the university was allowed to hire a lobbyist with its own funds. The outcome was so successful, at least in terms of gaining funding, that the provost wondered if the university as a whole might not be better off hiring an organization to represent it in Washington.

Finally, discussing the relative advantages and disadvantages of the earmark process to other R&D or capacity building activities, the Mondawmin provost noted that while there are obvious advantages to earmarking, there are also aspects of the process that make it difficult to manage. “Well, first of all,” he explained, “there are no rules in earmarking
and that makes it very tough. For example, [name of one of the state's senators] has no interest whatsoever in construction. But that seems to me to be a decision that [the senator] made. Other people might have a different view of it. So the rules, literally, for what you can propose tend to vary by the individual member of Congress that you are approaching. And that can be a real challenge. I think also, multi-year funding is very hard to get through this route. But I think it is much easier to get a block of money to build up some kind of facility—equipment in a facility, I don’t mean construct bricks and mortar. But I do mean to acquire equipment because that is the sort of money that can be spent very easily within one year. But we have had cases of earmarks being provided for several years for research grants but that certainly is a trickier business. You worry a lot about the expiration of the money and all that sort of thing” (R3).

Other perspectives on earmarking at Mondawmin:

In an effort to triangulate the responses provided by the provost with the perspectives of other leaders on the campus, I also interviewed one of the senior deans at the MSU campus who, though retired from that position, had worked with the president and provost to build the research capability of his college and the campus as a whole. The dean agreed with much of what the provost had said, crediting the decision to aggressively seek earmarks in a prioritized way to the current president of Mondawmin. “[The president] always said that [Mondawmin] has an unfair competitive advantage by being so well connected to federal agencies and laboratories,” the dean noted, “and you have to take advantage of it. So [we] hired [a director for federal relations] because [the president] is so entrepreneurial. He didn’t believe that [MSU] was getting its fair share of
federal funds” (R17). Whereas in the past the process was very faculty driven, the dean
notes, “the model...is now that [the federal relations director] asks the deans what they
want support for. Each dean then has to decide which projects he or she wants to put
forward. It is not exactly a competition, but [the MSU president] and [the MSU vice
president for research] have to decide [which to go forward with]” (R17). In deciding
about which projects to put forward from his own college, the dean concluded “I always
asked, where is the quality work being done and how will this add to it? My rule of
thumb, however, was that the quality had to be there [first] and then this [earmark] had to
enhance that quality” (R17). Finally, in words very similar to those used by the provost at
Delacroix, the dean concluded by acknowledging that there were possible downsides to
receiving earmarked funds, but “that’s always been just part of doing business,” he said.
“If you don’t enter into the fray, you lose opportunities for your faculty” (R17).

In their own words: Faculty perspectives on Mondawmin’s earmarks.

To try and learn more about some specific earmarks at MSU, I interviewed a number of
faculty and administrators who were tied to specific projects at the university. Two
projects were chosen from different colleges of the campus. Each project had a different
focus. Each is described in some detail below with the comments of their instigating
faculty or administrators.

Earmark 1: The minority education project

The largest MSU earmark on which I focused was received by the university’s college of
education. The goal of the earmark was to improve the achievement of minority students,
particularly those attending schools in economically-challenged school districts. The project, as it had been described to me by the provost, was the brainchild of the dean of the college of education. To learn more about the motives that lay behind the earmark, the process by which it was secured, and the impact it had had, I spoke at length with the dean.

**Purpose of the earmark:**

The dean of the college described the purpose for the earmark this way:

> Essentially the identified issue here is that nationally there is a [significant] problem with minority achievement. Locally, this college of education happens to sit in one of the most research rich areas to study minority achievement because of the demographics of its county of residence and the surrounding counties.... So it was clear that it would meet both state and, well actually, regional, plus national priorities if we could catalyze something. But here is what the issue is: Most of the existing funding isn’t for catalyst type things that will enable you to put in place a beginning infrastructure to grow something. *This is clearly a need that the earmark solved that couldn’t have been solved any other way.* And that is why we went after the earmark. We very specifically saw the need to catalyze this particular project (R4).

Since the provost had indicted that the dean had been directly involved in developing and soliciting the earmark for this project, I asked the dean to describe how the process for
seeking the earmark had played out in the college. His response indicated that, in this case, the project had originated with him and not the faculty. According to the dean:

Basically this was my idea... I mean if you look at my [the college of education’s] strategic plan carefully, one of our specific goals was to advance in areas of strategic opportunity.... Well this was clearly some thing of a strategic opportunity. When you sat and did the analysis this was very clear. So a long time ago, that’s about the best I can say, a long time ago, I came up with this idea, pulled together some of my lead people, and said, ‘we are going to make this happen.’ ....Because you know we have a great college of education. It is the only... institution in the area [to] have programs [nationally] ranked. [So] you’ve got this great research faculty, and you’ve got this huge problem: minority achievement. Clearly, thinking of this strategically, the best thing you can do is harness this talent to that issue. Every ounce of talent in this college is applicable to that issue. So it was an analysis of what my resources were—a whole college full of really phenomenally good researchers—highly nationally respected and all of this other stuff.... And then there was this big issue that was just a keen national issue. It was a no brainer. The logical thing to do was to come up with a way to harness that talent to this problem. It’s a win-win for the college and for the area (R3).

The process for gaining the earmark:

From my discussion with the Mondawmin provost I knew that the dean had asked for and received permission to use a lobbying firm to move this project forward. This
represented, I believed, a particularly entrepreneurial action that no other dean at the institution had taken. Interested in why the dean had decided to go outside the university for assistance, I asked him to discuss his motivation and how the process had worked. His reply was as follows:

I was clueless about these things, very clueless. However, when we started exploring [the possibility of going after an earmark],...I went down to talk with [name of a congressional representative] about this. He’s a [Mondawmin] graduate. He got his bachelor’s here...[and] he had a relationship with people here. In fact, this college had given him an award years ago before I arrived. So folks here knew him and I trotted down to talk to him and he sort of tried to explain things to me....Well, things evolved after that and I spent some time with him, and I said that I needed to know Pork 101. He explained to me what to do. And he went through the whole thing and he really did help me to understand that there are processes you have to go through and it is a good idea to work with a lobbyist who understands these things. And you know at this point, [the university] didn’t even have [a federal relations officer]. So I talked with [the provost] and got an agreement to use some of our undesignated foundation money. I asked around and I did an RFP [request for proposals] and sought bids, if you will, to three lobbying firms that had been recommended to us (R4).

Interested in finding out what benefit the lobbying firm had brought to the project, I pressed the dean about the services they provided. “They made the process really doable,” he said. “I must admit we were really clueless. We did not know how to speak
Congress-ese….You know, the way I speak as a dean doesn’t jive with what Congress is looking for. So they basically helped us to understand [how to deal with Congress]. We gave them our ideas and they worked back and forth with us to help massage it into a workable proposal….It was a real back and forth and they treated us with great respect through the process. So that worked very very well. We worked with them. They helped us develop the proposal. They did a lot of work with the members and they also arranged for me to visit members….I was never walking in cold. It was always well prepared and an excellent use of my time” (R4).

The impact of the project on MSU and the surrounding community

The project at Mondawmin had not begun until the 2002-2003 academic year and was just developing its first major activities. This meant that, like so many of the earmark-supported projects I examined in the study, the full impact of the MSU earmark could not yet be assessed. When I asked the dean to describe what had been achieved so far, he noted that the funds had gone to support “infrastructure development,” by which he primarily meant putting people and programs in place to attack the problem. The dean described the impact this way:

What the funds have done is they’ve funded, and are still very much in the process of [funding],…infrastructure development….I buy faculty to work on specific projects and I also buy staff to work on specific projects. [In essence,] I buy time. [And] what is happening…is that the whole thing is starting to snowball. All I needed was the catalyst. It is now starting to bring in the grant money, which will keep it going, which was the intent. When we went for this
money...knowing that once I could start the ball rolling I could keep the ball rolling. And that is exactly what’s happened....For example, the [name of a local school] project that we did with [a local county] was a corporate-funded project that couldn’t have happened without this infrastructure pushing it forward. We have a...symposium...coming up that wouldn’t have happened without this focus on minorities in education.... So this project has become a catalyst. And then the other thing that [has] happen[ed] is that the project in turn catalyzes other things. We have a ton of stuff going on now that is in both research and outreach. For example, the project has hooked on and catalyzed the work of school psych in the district [a strong point of the college as well]. So it became the nucleus onto which things that were starting to develop around the college, were able to hook on and be strengthened (R4).

Interestingly, in addition to the externally-focused impacts that the project was beginning to have on the community, the dean also intimated that there was a second goal for the project, one that was more internally-focused. As a relatively new dean at the university, he had been struggling to try and reshape the college’s focus and elevate its profile on campus. A new strategic plan for the college had been one step in this effort, and the institute proved to be another. He explained:

The other thing that happened with this project, and why I wanted it so desperately, was that...as it developed within the college, it, in the process, helped to transform the college. And that’s been really exciting. For example, in the project’s plans there is a concentration area in urban and minority education...
developed in curriculum and instruction, which includes faculty from sociology. So the project provided a way that brought people together to help transform us as a college. So it not only meets the external [need] of bringing [together] the talent of the faculty of the college and also of other colleges on campus and at other institutions across the state, but it harnesses those up to the minority achievement issue and at the same time it transforms who we are (R4).

Given the dean’s desire to use the grant to transform the college, I asked him if a motivation for the earmark was also to improve the college’s position in terms of its rankings. He replied that it was not a primary motivation, though he admitted that it might be a secondary benefit. “I can’t say that I don’t believe that in the long term, harnessing the college to [this issue] won’t help rankings,” the dean said, “but the college is already in the elite. So sure it will help us a little further [along]” (R4). The more important motivation, the dean insisted was the concept of national need and how that national need fit into the mission of the college. “The real issue is that there is a need and...it is a sufficiently broad need,” he said. “Minority achievement, and particularly [building] the linkages between higher education and [school] districts,...was sufficiently broad that it doesn’t fit into any one funding niche. Now that I have the infrastructure, I’m able to manage different funding niches around the infrastructure. [And finally] this was consistent with the mission [of the college]. It wasn’t mission creep. It was something that was consistent with the mission and fit a specific need” (R4).
Earmark 2: The geospatial information system (GIS) project

The second earmark that I examined at MSU was a technology-transfer project managed by the MSU’s college of social sciences. This project, in essence, sought to promote the use of land surface data acquired through advanced geospatial information system (GIS) technologies, i.e., observation of land surface features through satellites and other remote sensing devices, among local users. These users, which included state and local governments, environmental agencies, commercial firms, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), were able to use the satellite data to generate plans, policies, and procedures related to a host of issues, including land use planning, forest and water management, agricultural practices, and pollution monitoring and control. The earmark was awarded to the university a little more than four years earlier. Its goal was to allow the university to continue the work of an earlier project funded through a NASA-sponsored, one-time, peer-reviewed competition.

The interviews:

Because this project proved to be particularly complicated, I conducted two sets of on-campus interviews with the faculty member who was the principal investigator (PI) for the project. In addition, I sought to triangulate my findings from these two interviews through additional interviews with an assistant dean (R1) and the dean of the college (R17) in which the project was housed. Finally, I also had asked the provost in my interview with him to provide his perspective on this particular project. The following presents my conversation with the principal investigator for the project.
In my initial conversations with the PI about the earmark, he had indicated that a key motivation for going after the earmark had been his recognition that though there was an obvious need for regional data no federal agencies had programs that could or would support such applied, interregional projects. In such cases, he admitted, “the earmark process can be very useful” (R2). Following up on these initial comments, I later asked the PI to describe the history of the project and his motivations for his seeking the earmark. His “story” of the motivation for the project and how the process worked are presented below:

Well we started the [original project] in 1999, I think....The funding was moderate....It was about $1.8 million over [a three-year period], so it was about $600,000 a year before overheads. And our concept for [the project] at the beginning, and really as it worked, was to set up a means whereby we could take recent advances in science and move them into applied science. Pure to applied science....Actually scientists don’t make that division very often, but some things are clearly more theoretical, at least they have less obvious implications. So we were interested in finding those sorts of things [with applied science potential] and then working with defined users in the region [to develop them].... So we started to assess what were the real needs of people in the region and I have to confess we were neophytes to this really as to how best to do it....how you would get scientists and quote “users” to work together with ourselves. [But] after a lot of thinking about it we decided, well, nobody is going to listen to us until we do something. And so we made a guess as to what would be the most profitable thing
to do. And as it worked out we were right. It has acted as a door opener and a means to work with other people.

...The motivation then to go and ask for an earmark was that this [original grant came from an agency that] is well known for never renewing grants, ever. They have this attitude that they are not an operational agency. And so if somebody says to them look this is such a wonderful project you should fund it again, then they say ‘well if it is so wonderful, who ever thinks it’s wonderful should pay.’ Which is totally unrealistic...So...there was no means whereby...we could put pressure on [the agency] to continue this....[But] the feeling that we had was that we had opened a Pandora’s box of state and local government, NGOs, even the public, who were really overawed, enamored, delighted to get their hands on the types of data which generally scientists only get access to, and in many cases in a form that they could work with....[But] state and local governments, even in 1999 were not well [funded] and now of course there is no hope of them being able to find funds to support this. And yet the federal government steps back from supporting these sorts of things within states.... So we felt that we had got our fingers on the pulse, and it was in [the federal agency’s] interest to, as it were, open this door and they would have an enormous number of people wanting to buy in to this and voting for them in Congress and supporting them and so on. So we felt that was justified to do that.
Now [another federal agency] was clearly the primary beneficiary of all this and in [the view of the original granting agency] they should be the ones paying for this... So it seemed to me that to keep [the project] going and as a source of funds,...[getting an earmark through the agency that would benefit the most] was a peculiarly appropriate way to do it. *It was almost showing to the federal government that you should be funding this and we are going to try and help you to do it.* In other words, it fell between the research agencies....So that really is the nub of it. [None of the other federal agencies or even private foundations were able to support such a project at this level] and as I say [the original granting agency] is not prepared to support anything long term...So an earmark seemed to me to be the only way that you can do something of this sort. That is a rather long answer to your question...[but in essence] I was trying to assist an enormous organism in a direction which I thought it ought to go but it had not even thought about. So there was a step of faith there, which I guess is true for all of these earmarks (R2).

**The process by which the earmark was received**

Unlike the prior earmark at Mondawmin, which had been primarily a “top down” process driven by the dean, the process by which this project was developed, and the earmark for it sought, I had been told, was largely a faculty-driven process, with limited assistance or direction from the institution’s central administration. Asked to discuss how the process worked, the PI noted that the idea for the earmark had come from him (R2). He had developed the original proposal and then approached the dean and the college’s business
officer. They, in turn, had taken the proposal for the earmark to the provost at the university, who, because the university did not have a federal relations officer at that time, asked an assistant vice president (AVP) for research to work on it. Though the AVP assisted the project by contacting the university’s local congressional representative, the project director noted that, from his perspective, there was little follow through or further support from the central administration of the university (R2). Nor, once the proposal was submitted to the congressional delegation, did there appear to be significant contact between the faculty member and Capitol Hill. “I operated in a bit of a vacuum really,” the project director noted. “I wrote a letter to [the university’s congressional representative] and [the name of the state’s senior senator], and I did speak with [name of a member of the representative’s staff], but no real business occurred between us. Once the campus decided to do this, I don’t think [the congressman] was exercising any selectivity. He was depending on the campus [to ensure the integrity of the project]” (R2).

Finally, when I queried the PI about whether a lobbyist had been used for the project, he noted that both he and the AVP from Mondawmin had met and talked with a lobbyist from a nearby research university that the Mondawmin faculty member had cooperated with in the past. However, the PI stressed that the meeting was just informational and Mondawmin had not used the lobbyist to help secure the earmark (R2).

**The impact of the earmark on Mondawmin**

Like so many of the projects in this study, the direct impact of the earmark was difficult to discern. When asked to assess the impact of the earmark, the PI noted that, overall, the
larger project that the earmark had helped to support had had a “tremendous impact,” both on his work and that of the students he works with. “I have a constant stream of students now wanting to come and work on these sorts of things,” the PI explained, “There is just an enormous interest in one’s back yard. It has opened completely new areas of research, some of which are reasonably new in science as whole, using new approaches….One of the things, for instance that is a big deal in this area, is the issue of where will people live in the future and how many of them will there be. And we were able to do some modeling of that sort which [lets] you run the model under different scenarios of land management. And that has just had a very big effect in the area” (R2). However, the PI went on to admit that making a direct assessment of the specific activities funded by the earmark was problematic given the size of the department and the numerous sponsored research activities it has constantly ongoing. “I’m not sure whether I can distinguish what has happened from what would have happened anyway if one were just doing a research project,” he commented. But, he continued, it “is definitely true [that] I would not be doing this had we not got that original grant and had we not been able to continue it in this way [through the earmark]” (R2). Finally, the PI acknowledged that attempts to secure additional federal monies for the project had not succeeded, and it did not appear as if the university would be able to pick up the costs associated with expanding the project, which was one of the project’s original goals.

**Summary of the Mondawmin Case Study**

Mondawmin is a publicly-supported DRUE that ranks among the top 50 universities in the nation in R&D support. As the flagship research university in its state, Mondawmin
has an extensive mission that encompasses everything from building world-class undergraduate education programs to engaging in a range of partnerships with private companies, government agencies and laboratories in order to make the university a major player in the economic development of its state. Like Delacroix, Mondawmin is blessed in its efforts to carry out this mission with some unique locational advantages including being within commuting distance of one of the country’s largest concentrations of research laboratories.

Unlike Delacroix, Mondawmin has a long history of seeking out direct appropriations through earmarks. Between 1993 and 2002, the university received over 25 earmarks, either individually or as part of a group of institutions. Total earmarked funding over that time period came to almost $9 million in individual earmarks awarded to Mondawmin. Surprisingly, for an institution with such a long and successful track record of winning directed awards, the university has only recently begun to try and strategically use earmarks as a source of funding. As at Delacroix, this movement to become more strategic has taken the form of the university’s leadership putting into place a process that identifies promising projects and seeks to match them with the appropriate opportunity to win federal support.

As the other case studies have demonstrated, the motivation to engage in earmarking appears to depend upon the individual’s position within the institution. According to the Mondawmin provost, there are a number of motivators that encourage institutions to seek out earmarks. These include: changing norms or standards of behavior within the
academic community that at one time served to inhibit the practice of seeking earmarks; growing perceptions among political leaders that universities are economic engines that through their R&D efforts can multiply the impact of earmarked dollars; the desire of institutions to build their capabilities in particular research areas in order to be able to compete more successfully for additional awards; and, finally, the increasingly high start-up costs associated with establishing faculty in some fields. For individuals at Mondawmin who are below the level of the central administration, but are directly involved in developing project that utilize earmarks, other motivators exist as well. These include addressing regional or national needs (such as minority educational achievement), renewing or redirecting the research focus of organizations, and attempting to shape federal agency priorities.

Case study 4: Haberville State University

Haberville State University is a public, four-year Master's I. By definition, this institution offers a wide range of baccalaureate programs and is committed to graduate education through the master's degree, awarding 40 or more master's degrees annually across at least three disciplines (IPEDS). Enrollment at Haberville is over 5,000 students, with about ten percent of those being graduate students enrolled in one of its 10 master's programs. Appropriate to its history as a teacher training institution, the university's largest baccalaureate-level program remains its education program. In the 2000-2003 academic year the university awarded over 200 baccalaureate degrees in education, the largest of any division, followed by business (IPEDS). Haberville is a member of a large system of public universities in its state, ranking in the middle of the pack in terms of
size. It is growing rapidly, however, and has increased its student population by 13 percent over the past three years and expects to grow an additional 20 percent over the next decade. Despite this influx of new students, which is placing strains on the university's physical and educational infrastructure, the university is very proud of the fact that, despite this increase in student population, its four-year and six-year graduation and retention rates now lead all other public universities in the system.

**Haberville’s history and mission:**

The university sits in a region of the state that is physically isolated from the economic, financial, and political power center of its state. In many ways, Haberville is the prototypical “AASCU” institution. It began as a teacher’s college with the primary mission of training educators for the schools in its region. From this limited role, the university has grown to include professional programs in business, applied health, social work, and nursing, as well as education. As the focus and mission of the university have grown, so has its importance to and impact on the region. Now, Haberville serves not just as a significant producer of teachers (both for the region and the state) but also as the intellectual and cultural hub of the region. Through the university’s small business development center, which is run in cooperation with the state’s land grant university, small businesses and business start ups throughout that portion of the state receive management training and technical assistance. In addition, the university hosts concerts and national sporting events. It sponsors an art museum that proudly showcases art from the region, and, as part of its library system, it operates the Knox Institute, which is dedicated to the study of the region’s history.
Challenges facing Haberville

The major challenges the university faces, as they were presented by the university’s leadership and staff in the interviews, all relate to the need for new resources. They include the need for more laboratory and classroom space, the need to upgrade and expand its library, and the need for more student housing. However, despite its growing importance to the region and the state, the university’s funding level, historically, has not kept up with that of many of the other public institutions in the state. This lack of additional funding has created a perception among many of the university’s faculty and staff that the university has not been treated equitably, at least in terms of financial support, either by the state or its university system. That perception is bolstered by data showing that Haberville receives the second smallest state appropriation per student of any institution in the state’s university system, and the smallest appropriation among the traditional four-year institutions. Noting this fact, and the demoralizing impact it has had on faculty and staff, one senior administrator at the institution said: “Historically, Haberville has been at the bottom [of funding among the state’s public institutions]. This university seems to have historically proud of ‘making do,’...but we are feeling more and more discriminated against because we are on the outskirts of activity in the central [area of the state]. So somewhat geographically orphaned comes up a lot [when staff speak about issues facing the university]. And not being able to compete against the Research I’s and professional schools in the attention and care given by the [state university system’s office] and perhaps the legislature” (R23). This lack of attention is particularly troubling the administrator went on, “when the [state legislature and the central
administration of the university system] are expecting the comprehensives to assume a larger percentage of the burden of educating the [high school] graduates that are coming in” (R23).

Haberville’s peers

As a public institution, Haberville has a set of peer institutions that is established according to a statewide formula. Beyond this official set of peers, however, the university also has to compete with an historically black institution (HBI), which is located in the same general region. Although Haberville and the HBI share resources when possible, the Haberville staff believe that the close location of the HBI makes it difficult for Haberville to attract African American students. As a result, one staff member explained, Haberville has begun to look at other ways it can meet its institutional goal of expanding access to higher education for a diverse range of students (R24). Because the region in which the university is located has one of the state’s most rapidly-growing populations of non-native born residents, the university is beginning to explore strategies by which it can tap into this underserved population for students and support (R23). These strategies include seeking out direct federal appropriations in order to serve the educational and business needs of this population.

Leadership and faculty activity at Haberville

Although he is relatively new to the university (having been in the position just over three years), Haberville’s president, was credited by faculty and staff at the university with having energized the university, particularly in its relations with the surrounding
community. Explained one administrator at the university, "the university itself has changed and in a very positive manner," since the president came on board. "It's a little more streamlined....less bureaucratic, more open. And some of it has to do with [the president] holding what he calls 'koffee klatch' meetings with the community" (R24).

From such actions by the president and the provost, the administrator later admitted, it was pretty clear that a "strategic" attempt was being made to reshape the "culture" of the institution (R24).

Haberville’s level of engagement with sponsored research has historically been small, at least in comparison to that of research institutions, but it is growing. The leadership and staff at Haberville credit this change to two related trends that are affecting institutions across the country. The first is that older faculty are beginning to retire. Most of these faculty were hired at Haberville a time when the requirements for gaining tenure were focused on excellence in teaching, not sponsored research and scholarship. The second trend is that the younger faculty who are replacing the retiring faculty are arriving with the knowledge that, in order to gain tenure at Haberville, they now have to show evidence of an active research or scholarship portfolio. The result of these trends, naturally enough, has been the adoption of a more aggressive, or entrepreneurial, attitude on the part of the faculty, and the university, toward the development of alternative sources of revenue. A senior administrator at Haberville summed up the situation this way: "Yes [the faculty] are looking for resources to do this research and there is this other emphasis on entrepreneurialism, of bringing in money through grants but also through patents and through business and fees. [For instance, our business outreach program] does its work
for fees, and some of the money goes to the business school and some to the university for the overhead. So yes, [the faculty are] more entrepreneurial in the sense of really bringing in money and entrepreneurial in the sense of getting grants” (R23).

Importantly, however, the same administrator also noted that at Haberville, this search for alternative resources has not yet turned toward a strategic, university-wide consideration of federal earmarks, either at the faculty level or the institutional level. “When we sit and think, and we do, about our new strategic plan and presidential initiatives,” the staff member explained to me, “we never think of turning to the federal government. [For instance] the president just launched a community outreach initiative two weeks ago. That includes the town council and efforts to bring students and neighbor intervention teams to the different neighborhoods. That will cost some money-sponsorship money for students monitoring the community and money to support the time of the town council—but not once did we think, did anyone on this campus think,...we could turn to [the U.S. Department of Education] or anyone to get a grant to sponsor this project of expanding and improving our neighborhood relations. We haven’t thought about that. Our faculty are very good about getting grants, but we don’t seem, and certainly I don’t know why we haven’t gotten money, [but] we haven’t turned to these types of campus projects...strategically” (R23).

Haberville’s history of earmarks

Haberville’s first and, so far, only successful foray into earmarks came in 2001 when it was awarded a grant to support the university’s Knox Institute. More information on that
award, how it was conceived, its purpose, and impact it has had on the institution, is described below. Since receiving that award, the university also has put together additional project proposals for which it is currently seeking, or has sought, unsuccessfully, earmarks through its congressional delegation. These include such projects as a multi-million dollar initiative designed to help the university produce more language teachers trained to work with the region’s growing population of non-native students, and a proposed economic development initiative, run through Haberville’s school of business, that will help provide needed strategic and financial planning services, including language acquisition and cultural competency skills training, to non-profit organizations serving non-native residents.

These projects are clearly in line with the mission and special interest areas of the institution. However, an administrator knowledgeable about the proposals and the reasons for their submission expressed the opinion that there was little optimism on campus that the one or more of the projects would be selected for funding. “We would be shocked,” the administrator noted, “if suddenly we got a check in the mail or someone called us and said we got it” (R23). The problem, the administrator noted, was that in developing such proposals the campus simply did not have enough information to work with about what might, or might not, be of interest to the state’s congressional delegation.

Haberville’s earmark for the American Histories project

The project for which Haberville received its only earmark was called “American Histories.” Summarized briefly, it seeks to take isolated historical data available in the
university's Knox Institute archives, such as wills, land patents, death inventories, and link them together an on-line database that can be accessed by individuals, whether students, professional historians, or amateur genealogists, wishing to carry out research on the region. The data tie together the history of the geography of the region with the history of the people who lived, worked, and died there over the past two centuries. The impetus for the project, according to the director of the Knox Institute, actually came about as a result of a speech she gave to an outside audience. "I had given a talk before the genealogical society," the director started her story, "and the way I was doing it, I was using things like tax lists...to make this map, and I was cutting and pasting like a 5th grader. [Eventually] I said there has to be a better way for me to show this change in time....So I had been thinking, okay so how would I do this, if I could do it technologically. But I had not been thinking in terms of a grant or anything huge. I was just thinking on a small scale" (R24). The idea for the American Histories project then lay fallow in the director's mind until an opportunity presented itself.

The interviews at Haberville:

In March of 2004, I contacted the president of Haberville by e-mail and asked to set up an interview to discuss an earmark that the university had received approximately three years earlier to support a project at the Knox Institute. Because the president could not meet with me due to an unanticipated event, he asked his senior assistant, who is responsible for overseeing state and federal relations at the university, to meet with me on his behalf. I subsequently set up a one-hour, on-campus interview with the senior administrator to discuss the university's experience with the earmark, including why it
decided to seek the earmarks for the projects, the impact the project had had on the Haberville campus, and the university’s plans, if any, for seeking earmark funds in the future. At the suggestion of the administrator, I also arranged to speak with the director of the Knox Institute. The director, the senior administrator assured me, had been directly responsible for obtaining the earmark and could provide greater details on how it came about. Initial contact with the director was made through e-mail. A one-hour phone interview was set up to discuss the project. Subsequent follow up questions were handled by both e-mail and phone calls. To help prepare for all of the contacts—email, in-person, and by phone—information on the university’s history, mission, budget, legislative testimony, and outreach activities was pulled from available sources on the Web. The following material provides key information obtained in those interviews. To allow for greater ease of interpretation, I have formatted the material in topical order, which may not necessarily reflect the actual paths of the conversations. Because the director was able to provide richer detail about the Institute, its activities, and how the earmark was obtained, her conversation provided much of the core information that is related below.

The purpose of the Knox Institute and its relationship to the university

In order to gain a better understanding of how the Knox Institute connects to the university, I asked the director of the center to give me an overview of it history and its operations. She explained the origins of the institute and its importance to the surrounding region:

The institute was originally set up to be a learning laboratory for Haberville University students, history students primarily. Whether by design or
happenstance, another part of our mission has since come to serving the community at large....Because most of the documents that history students use are also used [by community researchers]. Nine years ago when I first came here, there was a very tenuous relationship with the university. It seemed as if we weren’t really part of the university—sort of—but not really. Now, it is different. The institute is a department under the library and I report to the dean of the libraries (R24).

When I inquired specifically how the center fit into Haberville’s larger mission, the director colorfully explained that while both are dedicated to producing high caliber students, she thinks of the center as the “icing on the cake.” At the institute, she explained, “you get something beyond a classroom experience: you get a hands-on experience in research and using unique materials. You have to learn to think critically or you can’t do anything with the materials that you find here. So you have to be able to write about it in a coherent, cohesive manner.” Laughing, she then added, “and since it’s not a library, it’s not quiet over here. We believe in the exchange of ideas” (R24).

Pressed to explain how the institute advances the larger mission of the university, the director noted that it has proven to be one of the more successful venues the university has for demonstrating its value and commitment to the community. “The university is very interested in showing that it is a tremendous asset to the community,” she explained, and the Knox Institute fits into that community outreach drive because “it is the guardian of the region’s heritage” (R24). “Plus,” she added, “we put on local exhibits, and while I
hear a lot of people in the community saying ‘well we don’t care about the Eastern European [exhibits, for example] that the university might put on,’ you know we usually get good attendance at things that are about local things” (R24).

In her own words: The history of Haberville’s earmark for the American Histories project

To better understand how the earmark to the American Histories project at the Knox Institute occurred, I asked the institute’s director to tell me the “story” of the earmark. The following narrative describes, in her own words, how the university secured federal support:

[First] I’ll give you a little background that is sort of essential. We had had this undergraduate student that worked for us. And he was smart! This child graduated from college at like, I don’t know, seventeen or something. He started here when he was fifteen. Brilliant! Brilliant! And mature too. So we loved him and he loved us. I had a board member who works in Washington, DC at the Department of the Interior. He [the student] wanted an internship. So I said ‘okay, fine, I’ll recommend you.’ They gave him the internship. He goes up there and decides he likes politics, he likes Capitol Hill, etc. etc. Then when he graduates, he goes and gets a job in [Haberville’s representative’s] office. Okay, so we had someone in the office.

This same young man, okay, this same young man then calls me at midnight on a Friday night at home. Because he couldn’t reach me during the day because I was taking my children to camp and wasn’t working that day. So he told me that there
is a fabulous opportunity. Apparently it was [his boss’s] turn on some committee and he had money to give away. And he could get us some money. And so I said, ‘well what do I have to do for this money?’ And he said, ‘well before Monday at 8:00 a.m., you have to come up with some kind of an idea for a project and write it up.’ And I’m like, ‘your kidding!’ And he said, ‘It will be worth your while.’ And I said, ‘but I’m on vacation.’ And he said, ‘oh, you can’t turn this down.’ He said, ‘I will send you 10 questions, come up with a project and I will write it up and process it.’ And I said, ‘okay, I’ll give up my weekend for that.’ So the next morning I called the chairman of the history department who also is on the board of advisors for the Knox Institute and I told him that [the former student] had called and I said ‘you’re never going to believe this but I can’t do this without you and you’ve got to come help me.’ And so...we had a volunteer that was in, and the three of us were just madly typing and I was trying to explain what this concept was. I mean this was so out of [the blue]....And I never thought we were going to get it.

[So] we put a proposal together, but it wasn’t what I call a formal proposal, [we were working off of the questions he sent to us]....From September to February, was a very ‘iffy’ time. We thought we were going to get it. Didn’t know who was going to administer it. Didn’t know when, how, or anything....So then we got notice from [the federal agency charged with overseeing the grant] and from that point on, except for the fact that we already quote ‘had it,’ we still filled out all the grant paper work, we still did the budget, then we got a little more
formal….Because once you actually get assigned to a federal agency you are in it just like it was a competitive thing. You’ve got to follow all of these rules. Not that that is bad, but you have already committed. Once you’ve said what your project is and [a federal agency]…has gotten hold of it, you can’t be saying: ‘no, instead of that, I think I’ll do this’ (R24).

To make sure that I understood what the director had meant when she said: “it was [the Haberville’s representative’s] turn,” I asked her if she could clarify the process by which the money was awarded. She patiently explained, “We are in his [name of a representative’s] district, and he was looking to give something to somewhere [in our region]. This was an election year, you understand. So this was just serendipitous….It could have been anybody. I think he was looking to distribute some goodies in his district, and was asking his staff for ideas, and it was serendipitous in that there was someone [on his staff] who was familiar with us and thought that we were a good cause and mentioned us” (R24).

Haberville’s motivation for seeking the earmark

When I asked the interview participants at Haberville to tell me, in their own words, what Haberville’s motivation for accepting the earmark had been (including those that the university was currently seeking), the common answer was the same: resources. The director of the Knox Institute, said simply: “See we needed money. Who in the university system does not need money?” (R24). The response from Haberville’s presidential suite was a little more diplomatic but the meaning was the same: “Resources,” the president’s
assistant explained, "and economic development. It is clear that as the percentage of the budget coming from the state support decreases, we have to look at alternatives. I think just as comprehensives were slow to develop alumni and private donation sources—and now we have and we do a very good job here—that another step of alternative resources is grants...Earmarks look to us like this lump sum money coming out of the blue and wherever money is going to come...we are going to be willing to accept it" (R23).

The impact of Haberville’s earmark

To the degree that it can be assessed, the impact of the earmark on Haberville University has been limited. On the positive side, the Knox Institute director noted, the earmark had helped the institute and the university to leverage an additional smaller grant from the state agency charged with historic preservation. More importantly, the director added, the earmark and the subsequent grant had improved the center’s visibility on campus. "It sort of made some people stand up and pay attention” to the Knox Institute and the value of its collections, she proudly pointed out (R24). However, when pressed for additional examples of the project’s impact, the director admitted that technical difficulties in developing the database had left the information frequently inaccessible for many of the clients it was designed to serve and made it impossible, so far, to assess the full impact of the project. Further, the director noted, it was unlikely that once the grant ends that the university would be able to sustain its funding. “If I want to continue [the project],” she explained, “I’m going to have to find another grant to continue it. But I am confident that once we work out all the bugs, we’ll be able to do that” (R24).
Summary of the Haberville case study:

Haberville is a comprehensive institution that has traditionally served as the educational and cultural focal point of its region. Approximately three years ago, the university received an earmark to help develop an archival database that was designed to serve scholars studying the history and culture of the region. This project, though obviously connected to the educational and outreach mission of the institution, appears, at this point, to have had little sustained impact on the institution or the community. This lack of impact appears may be due, at least partly, to technological problems that have caused the implementation of the project to be delayed. However, the largely opportunistic and serendipitous process by which the project was developed and funded may have also contributed to its minor impact. Though approved by the provost and dean, the project was put together on extremely short notice by staff at the suggestion of a congressional staff member who was an alumnus of the university. It therefore lacked the extensive development and review process that might have helped broaden its impact and allowed it to be linked with other institutional priorities. In essence, the process used at Haberville in creating the project was largely a bottom up process, with the impetus for the project flowing primarily between the Haberville staff and the congressional staff, and little input or coordination coming from the university’s central administration. Although the university is continuing to develop proposals for additional earmarks that address issues directly related to the university’s mission or population interests, staff acquainted with the process by which those proposals were developed are skeptical that the university will have much success at attracting awards for them.
Case Study 5: Corinth University

Corinth University is a public, four-year Master’s I. By definition, this institution offers a wide range of baccalaureate programs and is committed to graduate education through the master’s degree, awarding 40 or more master’s degrees annually across at least three disciplines. Enrollment at Corinth is approximately 5,500 students with about twenty percent of those being graduate students. In the 2002-2003 academic year, the university awarded approximately 800 baccalaureate degrees, with the largest numbers concentrated in the areas of Business Administration, followed by the Social Sciences, Education, and Psychology (IPEDS).

Corinth’s history and mission

Perhaps more than any other institution in this study, Corinth’s mission, as well as its sense of identity and purpose, is inseparably tied to its location. The university is situated in a rural region of the mountains that is culturally, as well as geographically, separate from the lowland regions of the state. Once a thriving center of mining and timber commerce, the area surrounding Corinth has experienced a dramatic loss of industry and jobs over the past three decades and now lags behind other regions of the state in most measures of economic and social welfare. Corinth, which began its existence as a state normal school designed to prepare teachers for employment in the region’s schools, continues to maintain a strong tradition of service to the community. One of the largest employers in the region, the institution also serves as the cultural hub for the region, attracting national touring companies and performing groups. Its faculty provide outreach and training to local school districts and state agencies located in the area, and its students
providing tutoring and mentoring services to both children and adults in the region. In response to the economic needs of its service area, Corinth, working in conjunction with county, state, and federal agencies, has recently sought to develop a technology park that sits at the edge of its campus. The goal of the park is to attract technology-oriented companies, particularly those working in the biosciences and related areas, to the region, thereby helping to rebuild the local economy with companies that will symbiotically support and draw on the strengths of the campus and the surrounding region (R8, R9).

Corinth’s institutional peers

Although as a public institution, Corinth has a set of peer institutions established by law, in reality, its president claims, “we have very little competition because of our geography. We are the only four-year [public] institution west of [names the state’s two largest metropolitan areas]. So it is a privileged position to be in” (R7). The flip side to that privilege, of course, is the responsibility that it places on the institution to serve that vast service area. “We are in an area that needs this institution badly,” the president noted (R7).

The challenges facing Corinth

Like many institutions, the dominant challenge facing Corinth is the need to find additional operating resources. Between FY 2002 and FY 2004, state support of the public four-year institutions in Corinth’s state declined by 13 percent, while tuition and fees increased by 22 percent. Since 1991, Corinth officials estimate that state spending per student at the university had actually fallen by $1,000, and the university faced an
estimated operating budget shortfall of approximately $2 million for its FY 2005 budget (out of a total state-supported budget of approximately $24 million) (R8).

These budget difficulties not only affect the staffing levels and programmatic expenditures of the university, but, because of the university’s regional economic role, also have had a significant effect on the local economy. Noting the impact past state budget cuts have had both on the university and the area, the president of Corinth challenged state legislators, in her most recent testimony before the state assembly, to help the institution and, by extension, the region. “I would like to stress the fact that [this] institution has a powerful impact on the economy of this region,” the president testified. “In an area that is rural,…that impact can be profound. Reductions in [Corinth’s] budget mean that fewer dollars go to our community and to the surrounding area….We are the fourth largest employer in [our] county,” she continued, “[and] it is no exaggeration to claim that, without this university, [the town in which we are located] would be a ghost town, and the surrounding areas would be in steep decline. So our plea to preserve our budget…and to move as quickly as feasible to preserve and enhance our budget is a plea not only to sustain and improve the quality of the educational programs offered to students [at this institution], but also a plea to support the economic health of this region.”

Leadership and faculty activity at Corinth

Corinth has a long-serving president who is well respected in the state and a recognized advocate for higher education both regionally and statewide. The president has served as
chair of the council of state university presidents and serves on numerous regional boards focused on community service and economic development. The connections she has developed through these efforts have built good will for the institution both among its sister institutions in the state and the state’s congressional delegation.

Like many comprehensive institutions, however, Corinth faces something of a split in its faculty between long-serving faculty veterans, who came when the expectations for promotion and tenure at Corinth were entirely linked to teaching excellence, and younger faculty who are more aggressive in seeking out external research and outreach opportunities. The university has made some strong hires in recent years that are, as a result, helping to increase its overall research productivity. This is especially true for its programs in the life sciences, business, computer science, and high-tech related disciplines, such as geography. Helping to drive this growth has been Corinth’s success in improving the quality of its research facilities. The university recently received a large grant from the National Science Foundation that was used to strengthen and develop its environmental science research programs by renovating a building to house the geography department and two major NSF-funded labs. In addition, the university persuaded the state to invest in a state-of-the-art science building for the campus, which the university president sees as “essential both to the aspirations of the county but also to Corinth’s growing emphasis on the sciences” (R7). This building, which cost over $30 million and came on line in FY 2002, is a centerpiece of the university’s plans for strengthening its research activities and sponsored programs.
Another factor that has contributed to the increase in sponsored research growth has been the connection Corinth has to the region, and the expectation that the university’s faculty will actively work to address the needs of that region. The president of Corinth put that expectation and its impact in this context: “We cannot in any way be a walled-in tower of learning. The health of this institution is so dependent upon who [and where] we are. And as a result, there are opportunities here for faculty members to be engaged in activities that have application and are not strictly theoretical. A lot of our faculty do research on how much damage black bears versus deer do to crops. They do research...on the headwaters of [a regional estuary], which are here. So if you are talking about [fighting] pollution in the [estuary], you can’t ignore this area. So both in terms of the national environment and in terms of the interest of the community at large in their research and the applications of that research they are ‘tied in’ [to the community], particularly in the sciences” (R7).

**Corinth’s history with earmarking:**

If, on a continuum, Haberville University represents a comprehensive institution that serendipitously stumbled into an earmark and is now struggling to develop a clear strategy as to how to use the earmark process to benefit the institution or its community, Corinth represents another portion of the spectrum. It is a comprehensive with little history of success in earmarking, but a clear vision for how such funds could be used strategically to help build the research portfolio of the institution and, in turn, expand the university’s impact on the economy of the region. Ironically, Corinth, at least so far, has been the least successful of all the institutions in the study in terms of seeking earmarks.
Although the university is listed in the Chronicle database as having received one earmark, Corinth officials indicated, and state agency officials confirmed, that that earmark actually went to a state environmental agency that has offices next to the Corinth campus and works closely with the university's faculty (R8). The funds from the earmark were sub-contracted to Corinth to carry out environmental studies related to the abating the impact of mining in Corinth’s service area (R8). The lack of a past history with earmarks has not stopped Corinth from strategically working to win such awards, however. Currently, the university has developed a proposal for an earmark to help fund an institute for environmental pharmacology studies. This institute will specialize in the identification, study, and commercial development of local plants that demonstrate the potential for into new and more effective drugs or health-related treatments. The university has submitted the proposal for the institute to its congressional delegation and asked for a direct appropriation to support it.

The interviews:

In December 2003, I interviewed Corinth’s president (R7), vice president for administration and finance (R8), and facilities management director (R9) about the campus about the university’s efforts to secure federal funding for an economic development park adjacent to its campus. Among the topics discussed at those meetings, was the university’s intention to form an environmental pharmacology (enviro-pharmaco) institute and the possibility of trying to secure a federal earmark to support the project. In March of 2004, I learned that the campus had submitted a proposal to its congressional delegation asking for a direct appropriation for the project. In April 2004, I contacted the
Corinth president by e-mail and requested a follow-up interview to learn more about the project, the university's goals and expectations for it, and how the proposal was developed. The second interview with the president was held at an off-campus site. The following material provides key information obtained in those interviews. To allow for succinctness and greater ease of interpretation, it is formatted in topical order and may not necessarily reflect the actual path of the conversation.

The environmental pharmacological institute

The project for which Corinth is currently seeking an earmark is designed, according to the Corinth president, to build on the university's research strength in the environmental sciences. Specifically, the project is designed to explore the potential medicinal uses of plants that grow naturally in the region. In addition, the project will try to strengthen the investigation and documentation of native customs and usages that are associated with those plants.

To carry out this research, the university has formed a partnership with two other institutions in the region, including a nationally-respected biological research center and a major research university located in an adjoining state. Though the goal of this partnership is, first and foremost, to leverage the combined capabilities of the institutions to advance the research and allow them to exploit any useful discoveries that occur, the president, in her discussions with me, was also quite candid in acknowledging, that there is also a clear political element to the decision to form a multi-institutional partnership project (R7). That political calculation, of course, is that having more than one statewide
delegation working to support the project in Congress would help to increase the project’s chances of obtaining federal funding.

**Goals of the project**

Discussions with Corinth’s leadership showed that there are two goals to the project. The first is to advance, preserve, and exploit knowledge, i.e., try to discover and produce useful environmentally-based products while, at the same time, studying and documenting the cultural heritage of the region. Almost as important, however, and definitely a driving factor in the university’s decision to carry out the project, is a second goal: the desire to promote alternative sources of economic development in the region.

The Corinth president described the possible impact on economy of the region, as follows: “It ties to economic development in that there are cottage industries throughout [the mountain region] where families will go out and, let’s take ginseng as an example, they will harvest the ginseng. They will take it and sell it to a local rod and gun club, or a local little country store. New York buyers will come and buy that stuff from those stores at anywhere from $100 to a $1000 dollars more than their getting from these little shops. So, if you could ever get to the point where there was an infrastructure so that you could literally deal with this as a commodity, then it would obviously help the region.... That is an economic development thrust that we are engaged in” (R7).
In her own words: The impetus for Corinth’s environmental pharmacology project and the process used in seeking the earmark

Interested in how the idea for the project developed at Corinth, I asked the university’s president to provide information on the process used. The following, related in the president’s own words, shows how the project began as a collaborative idea that evolved with the help of faculty:

The first contact actually was from the president of [the biological research center] to me. But it was ‘we’re interested in doing more with your biology people’; it wasn’t initially [about] pharmacology. It was what can we do because of your interest in biotech, maybe the development of the [research] park?, etc. So what we did was to unleash our people. That is, her faculty met with some of our faculty in biology and our provost’s office was involved and our dean was involved in the arts and sciences area. And it was not long before it came to looking at an environmental pharmacology project. Actually, [the president of the research center] had done quite a bit with that in her undergraduate work at [name of the research university in the neighboring state]. So then the idea came, well if we are going to do this in [this] region, wouldn’t it be a good idea to engage [name of the research university in the neighboring state], along with [name of the research center], along with [Corinth]. And the whole concept is that [this region] is different from that of any other area in our state. And the folklore around certain kinds of plants, like Ginseng, and so forth is very deeply rooted in the culture of [our region]. So that is where you get into the ‘ethno’ side of [the project]. [Now], we also had a faculty member on our campus who was doing
research on old forest growth. We have in our area,...the oldest old forest growth north of the [X mountains]. His research had predated the discussion about ethnobotany, but what happened then, politically, was that environmental groups wanted to preserve 4000 acres in [the area forest] where there could be no research, no education, no access to what was growing in there. So we had to go to [our regional state delegation to ask for an exemption].

...So then we began to go for some grant money at the federal level. The [name of a federal agency] only gives grants to states or parts of states that involve [this region]. So we went there and we got a feasibility study, [examining] is this the kind of research that would make some kind of sense? And the feasibility study was done last summer. In the meantime, we hired an ethnobotanist. We had a vacancy in the biology department and we moved in this direction. The feasibility was very promising. Some of the growth in this old forest area has a different biochemistry—and again, my field was literature so I'm talking out of my area—from those that are cultivated in these farms for example....So we are at this point going to [the state’s senior senator] who has a particular interest in alternative medicine to see if we can get some additional federal grant money based upon the fact that the preliminary feasibility study was very positive....It is an ongoing process at this point,... [we will] continue to do research in that 1000 acres and see what that yields. We have formed an institute for environmental pharmacological research with [the neighboring state’s research university] and [the biological research center]. [The other state university] concurrently is
beginning to approach [their senior state senator] because of his interest...in [this region]...It is a kind of a two-pronged political approach with the U.S. Senate (R7).

Since, in our previous discussions, the Corinth president had indicated that the earmarking process could also be "a two way street," i.e., that sometimes, instead of the institutions being the aggressor in seeking out the earmarks, the initial impetus came from congressional officials who sent signals to institutions that they were interested in funding certain types of projects, I asked whether that had been the case with the current project for which Corinth was seeking funding. The president indicated that while there had not been any specific request from the state’s congressional delegation, the knowledge that at least one of the state’s U.S. senators was willing to help the university had been relayed to them and did play some background role in creating the project. The president explained: "The signal that [the senator] had sent to us earlier...was that ‘I know I haven’t been able to do anything for [Corinth], and I think I ought to do something for [Corinth].’ So...it was a question of finding a match in terms of [the senator’s] interests and, frankly, what [the senator] has or doesn’t have access to in terms of funding on...the federal level....We are hoping that this will emerge as one that [is of particular interest to the senator]" (R7).

Finally, I asked the president about the process that Corinth used to identify potential projects for earmarks and to move them forward. Her response was that the complexity and natural maturation cycle of a proposal drives the process. The initial impetus for a
project can come from “either direction,” she noted, either from the faculty or the administration. However, once a project rises to a certain level, such as “collaboration with another institution or pushing ahead for priority funding,” then that obviously pushes the project to “the next level,” where it has to go through significant review and discussion by the president and her cabinet (R7).

The anticipated impact of the project

Since the earmark for the environmental pharmacological project is still in the developmental stage, its potential impact is hard to assess. The university has already invested significant resources into the project, adding an ethnobotanist to the faculty, a specialty that had not existed at the university in the past, and providing support for graduate students to work with the faculty member. Queried about expectations for the project and the likelihood of continued funding for it, the Corinth president noted that her hopes for the project center around the quality of the research and the boon the project could be to the region. “I would like to see the research validate that there is something going on in our area...that is unparalleled elsewhere or very seldom paralleled elsewhere,” the president said “and that it will in turn then become the source of economic development, ...moving beyond these little family industries to one that could really be a major boon to economic development in [our region of the state]” (R7). She also noted that the university would be going back to the [federal agency] for an additional grant but that, without significant external funding, such as that possible only through an earmark, she did not think the project could be sustained. “Hopefully,” she
added, having the coalition of the three institutions working on the project would “make something happen” (R7).

Summary of the Corinth case study

Corinth University is a public comprehensive institution (Carnegie classification Master’s I) that, like Haberville State University, serves as the educational, cultural, and economic focal point of an isolated region. Like many regional comprehensive institutions, Corinth has always played a strong service and outreach role in its local community. This role, which is a central part of the university’s mission, has included everything from working with local schools to advising businesses and state agencies working in the region. Because the region in which Corinth is located has experienced severe economic distress over the past three decades, the university’s role as an engine for promoting economic development has intensified. This has led Corinth to undertake initiatives focused on attracting and promoting high-technology business interests, especially in the biosciences, to the region.

The need to promote economic development in its region also has helped, at least partly, to encourage the Corinth faculty and leadership to enter into a project that is designed to create an institute for the study of environmental pharmacology. The university is now seeking an earmark to help fund this institute, which would seek to identify and develop the medicinal uses of plants indigenous to the university’s region. Although the university has had little success in seeking out federal earmarks in the past, in creating this project it has demonstrated, I believe, a sophisticated understanding of how the
earmarking process can be best used. That is, the project matches the university’s research interests and strengths with the needs and resources of the region. It has created an infrastructure that has nurtured and supported the project, including the addition of faculty and graduate students. And it has secured a small federal grant to conduct a feasibility study, with plans to follow up on this with additional small grants in the coming year. Finally, the university has sought to leverage its educational and political resources through participation in a “coalition” of institutions that pulls in political support from at least two states in the region.

Case Study 6: Tri-County Community College

Tri-County Community College (TCCC) is a public community college (Associate’s under the Carnegie classification). By definition, these institutions offer the associate’s degree and certificate programs but, with few exceptions, award no baccalaureate degrees. Tri-County has approximately 7,000 students spread out over four campuses in three counties. Like most of the community colleges in its state, Tri-County serves as the primary entry point for students seeking a higher education in its region. According to information available on the college’s Website, over sixty percent of the residents who attend higher education institutions in its service area are educated at TCCC.

Tri-County’s history and mission

Tri-County is a relatively young institution that has grown significantly in both its size and activity level in recent decades. Founded in the 1950s to serve a single rural county, the college has since expanded to become a “regional” institution covering a three county
area that is increasingly suburban. Driving much of the growth in its service area is a large military base that houses a number of advanced research projects and serves as a steady employer for the region. TCCC, like so many community colleges, has a broad mission that has changed as the needs of the population and businesses in its service area have changed. The result is that the mission for the college is now focused globally as well as locally, emphasizing the need to prepare students to work in a global economy while also maintaining a commitment to local and community service. Importantly, Tri-County is an “open access” institution, so the college must be prepared to serve a diverse range of students, from low-income, first-generation college students to affluent, well-educated professionals drawn to the region by the military base and its related high tech companies. As a result the educational programs offered by the TCCC cover a wide range of education and work force related needs, including approximately fifty associate’s programs, forty certificate programs, and dozens of continuing education programs. Further, through its corporate training and executive leadership institute program, the college serves hundreds of businesses and local organizations each year by providing access to a broad range of business-related management, mentoring, and networking services. This includes a local business incubator program.

Leadership at Tri-County

In my discussions with academic leaders in the state, Tri-County was described by several of these individuals as among the state’s most entrepreneurial two-year institutions. Over the past decade, the college has revamped and expanded its course offerings (with more than 120 programs now offered), developed a Web-based online
learning program, and negotiated articulation agreements with five highly-respected, four-year institutions in its state. These agreements allow Tri-County students to complete their baccalaureate degrees at a Tri-County campus through courses offered by one of the partnering institutions.

Interviews and discussion with various individuals, both within Tri County and within the state, indicated that credit for this level of activity should largely go to the institution’s president, its senior leadership, and its board. Like Corinth, Tri County has a long-serving president who has aggressively sought to expand the college’s mission. It also has an active board of trustees made up of local community leaders who were described as “hands on” in their engagement and monitoring of the college and its programs. These elements have come together to create an entrepreneurial environment at the institution that is supported and reinforced by the board “at every meeting” (R26). One administrator summed up her view of the impact that the college’s leadership has had this way: “I see [the changes] at the college [as] stemming from the president and the president’s council. They have modified the mission throughout the years, based…on the population they are serving… [as well as] how competitive the world is…because our programs [and] our services must reflect what is actually desired or required of them in today’s global economy. [So] our degree programs or certificate programs have changed…[and] I think it [has been driven by] a combination of the president, her board of trustees, as well as obviously the dean and other key administrators of the college. It is a very active board,…a hands on group of people…. [And the college is] still small
enough so that if there is some discomfort or students have some disgruntlement they [the board] would know” (R26).

**Tri-County’s institutional peers**

As a public community college with a legislatively-designated service area, Tri-County does not have an official set of peer institutions. However, community college officials in the state note that the public community colleges in the state closely monitor the development and progress of their sister institutions. Ongoing comparison among the state’s community colleges is greatly facilitated by the state higher education coordinating agency, which annually tracks and reports on the effectiveness of the institutions as a whole, and, more recently, the development of a statewide association or council of community colleges. The creation of this latter group was cited by administrators at Tri-County as being particularly important in raising the public profile of the state’s community colleges and abetting their efforts to attract additional funding, including state and federal monies (R25).

**The challenges facing Tri-County**

As was the case with every public institution included in the aforementioned case studies, the level of state funding available to support Tri-County has dropped precipitately over the past two years. State dollars going to community colleges in TCCC’s state were cut by approximately four percent in 2003, followed by an additional six percent cut in 2004. As a result, TCCC, like all of the community colleges in its state has struggled to make up for the decrease in state support without overly taxing its students through tuition and
fee increases. The importance of this struggle came through in the interviews when I asked administrators and staff for the challenges facing the college. The responses were almost uniformly the same: the lack of money and the impact that has on the ability of the institution to carry out its primary mission. "How to deal with growth at a time when resources continue to decline, while we try to maintain a mission that says access is at the top of the list," was the way a TCCC dean addressed the question of challenges (R25). While another administrator admitted that "the challenges are centered around economics….Everyone knows what is going on in [this state]. There are fiscal concerns…[and] the lack of student aid money has adversely affected the enrollment of low income students" (R26). The result of the lack of money, along with a difficult job market for graduates, has meant that the county, and the college, has struggled to adequately fund programs designed to provide low income individuals with opportunities for them to get training, earn more money, and put more money back into the county and the state. And when you have an educated society, the TCCC administrator noted, it helps the entire community, the entire county (R26).

Tri-County's history of earmarks

Tri-County has had an impressive track record for securing earmarks, particularly for a community college. Since 1995, the institution has received at least four federal earmarks totaling over $4 million. This is a rare feat. According to the Chronicle database, fewer than seven percent of all community colleges listed as receiving individual earmarks between 1990 and 2002 received four or more during the same time frame. The earmarks have come from a variety of federal agencies and have funded projects ranging from the
construction of new classroom facilities to a program designed to help populations under-represented in high technology careers improve their computer literacy skills. In addition to its individual earmarked projects, the college also has participated, along with the other community colleges in its state, in a two-year, multi-million dollar earmark-supported project to train workers in information technology careers.

The interviews at Tri-County:

Because of its long-term, serial success in securing earmarks, I was particularly interested in having Tri-County participate in the study. In April 2004, after my initial requests to the president for an interview went unanswered, I was able to arrange, by e-mail, an interview with the dean of the college’s career and technical education division (R25). Due to a conflict with schedules the interview could not be held on site so a one-hour phone interview was set up. Follow-up questions were handled by e-mail. At the dean’s suggestion, I subsequently interviewed the project manager for one of the Tri-County’s earmark-supported projects (R26) as well. As with the interview with the dean, this discussion took place by phone. Follow-up exchanges were conducted by mail and e-mail.

The following material provides key information obtained in these interviews. As with the past case studies, the number and varied foci of the earmarks that the college has received made it impossible to describe each of them in detail. As a result two projects were selected for special attention. The following presents a brief description of the college’s involvement under these earmark-supported projects and the motivations
behind them. To allow for greater ease of interpretation and succinctness, I have presented the information in topical order.

Earmark 1: The shared project in information technology (IT) training

I spoke first with the dean of the college’s career and technical education division. As the chief academic officer for that division, she was both a member of the president’s cabinet and had participated in the development of the college’s most recent project to receive earmarked funding. That project, she explained, was somewhat atypical of other earmarked projects at TCCC in that the funding actually went to the state’s association of community colleges. That entity in turn dispensed the money to the member institutions through a series of internal competitions that were targeted, according to the dean, toward addressing “urgent workforce needs,” such as IT training, including the integration of IT skills training into health care training programs. When I asked the dean specifically about the motivators driving the decision of the combined community colleges in the state to go for the earmarks, she replied that it was a combination of factors, including limitations on the ability of the institutions to raise funds through tuition, a continued environment of need, and the creation of the community college association. “It [was] all of this combined,” the dean said “we finally had an organization that was looking at the needs of the community colleges, [combined] with a continued environment of inadequate state funding, and the need to not raise tuition, to not get it from our students,...that’s the environment in which there was discussion with [our senator]....” Key to this earmark, she noted, was the ability of the institutions to coalesce around the association: “Very much in [this state] the community colleges are autonomous. But what
we found was a way that [through the association] there is at least some synchronized communication among...[all the] institutions so we can at least go in the same direction...Have a single voice for community colleges [and play an advocacy role]. So trying to go after some of this federal money was a logical step" (R25).

In her own words: The process used to obtain the earmark

As with each of the prior case studies, I was particularly interested in understanding the process by which the college had become involved in the earmark. Although the dean had not been directly involved in the exchanges that occurred between the presidents of the community colleges, the community college association’s leadership, and the state’s congressional delegation, I believed that her knowledge and insight into what had occurred was significant and would be of value to the study. Therefore, I pressed her to continue. Reviewing the series of events, as she understood it to have occurred, the dean explained:

The association went to [our state’s senior senator],...[who] is a big fan of the community colleges, [and] I don’t know [exactly] how the interaction began, but I suspect the presidents said to [the senator]...‘you know, our funding is at a level that doesn’t allow us to have the enhancement that we need. And with our mission being open access and low tuition, we are not going to...be getting the money from our students, fully, and its become real clear that we are not getting it from the state, and if we are going to do the kind of enhancements we wanted,...it has to come from elsewhere.’ So...[the senator] responded actively and a proposal was put together (R25).
Noting that while the senator has been more than willing to help the institutions, the dean also said that the senator had made it quite clear that if earmarked funds were to be obtained they must be for projects that ‘are pretty meaty and...really show need’ (R25).

Given the unusual procedure that the association had settled on for distributing funds under this earmark (the community college group used an “internal” competition to redistribute the money to the various community colleges in the state based on proposals prepared by them), I was particularly interested in getting the dean’s view of the usefulness such a system had for awarding earmarks, and whether it appeared to add a measure of quality control. Asked to give her assessment of the process, the dean noted that when they had heard that the money was coming, they had just wanted the money divided equally among all of the institutions, if for no other reason than to save the effort involved in having to develop proposals. “However,” the dean concluded, “after living with it through the first round, from a user perspective, I think there is a lot more integrity to the process than there would be to just shipping us a check” (R25).

**The impact of the IT training project**

Though the final impact of the IT project was still to be determined since the project was only starting to become fully operational, the dean expressed confidence that the college would soon have information to share. “We will this fall open up our own wireless curriculum at our [name of a regional] campus, with the money that came through that grant....We will begin offering construction and IT courses this summer. And we have already begun using the... money to conduct focus groups with local businesses and...are
looking at developing the training that they have asked for. So in each of those three we have outcomes, or at least products, we can turn to: curricula, training courses. We don't yet have the outcome of the employee saying 'I can do this when I didn't used to be able to do that,' but I expect that will come" (R25).

**Earmark 2: The under-represented populations in high tech careers project**

The second earmark that I examined at Tri-County also was linked to workforce development. The published description of the project had stated simply that it was designed to improve computer skills among groups under represented in the high technology workforce, such as women and minorities, and help train them for high-tech careers. The dean, in our initial discussion, had indicated that the project also had come to TCCC in a somewhat unusual process. It was not a project, she stressed, that the leadership at TCCC had proactively sought, though they had been glad to get it once the earmark came through (R25). Instead, the dean explained to me, the project had been developed and promoted almost entirely by an administrator at the institution working on her own initiative in conjunction with a colleague at another institution. The dean encouraged me to speak with the project director about the project.

**The goal for the project**

Following up on the dean’s suggestion, I contacted the project director. She explained to me that the goal of the program was broader than it appeared in the published description. In essence, the project sought to develop collaborative programs between Tri County and a technical institute located in a heavily urban area of another state. “We wanted to
encourage and assist women and minorities to enter careers in technology and also seek information on technical careers,” she stated, “so it primarily was a technical career approach...Here at this institution,...there were very few minorities seeking entry into engineering and into technology programs. And certainly the percentage was even lower when you considered women. So our goal was to close that digital divide that exists at both institutions” (R26).

In her own words: The process used to obtain the earmark

Based upon my initial discussion with the Tri-County dean, I knew that the perception among the senior leadership at the college was that this project had been a serendipitous one that, in the words of the dean, “just kind of landed in our lap” (R25). In order to better understand the process by which the project had been conceived and secured, I asked the project director to recount her side of the events. The following narrative presents her “story” of the events leading to the creation of the project and the subsequent earmark for it. It started, as she related, with a chance meeting between colleagues:

I'm trying to think. I may have met Mark* at a reception. I go on the Hill a lot....
Or at least once a week....I have a friend who is chief of staff for [a New York congressman] and so he'll invite me to receptions and we'll work on projects for [a congressional special interest group]. I've been doing that for about fifteen years. [Anyway] it must have been at a function I'm sure where I met Mark and he was interested in having an audience with a congressman on some project he was working on. And he couldn't get past the chief of staff. And so I said to him 'oh I can get you in. I'll talk to the congressman.' And he said, 'Oh, I'm indebted
to you for life.' So we just struck up a conversation and I realized that he was with [name of the technical institute]. They were interested in what we were doing and I shared with him that we were concerned about [the lack of participation of women and minorities in technology]... So when I heard that Mark was at [the technical institute] and they even had a program for women in technology, I thought that that was simply fantastic. So we had mutual interests.... He had done some lobbying on the Hill and, in fact,...we both had connections in Washington, so you know we just sort of talked about what some possibilities were, if in fact we could do a collaborative program,...an exchange program primarily between women, low income women, and minorities who were here at the Tri-County coupled with students at his institution in [New York]. And so we drew up...this plan....I suggested to Mark well why don’t we do it collaboratively. [And] since [Tri-county’s congressional representative] was [a high ranking] Democrat why don’t we have him sponsor it and then have the sign off from the [institute’s state] delegation. Well [our congressman] was very interested and since [the project] was going to also be in the [other state], we got the signatures, or he got the signatures, of [that] delegation to support this request for funding....From that point I don’t know what happened. I do know that we got the [cites a particular dollar amount] funded. [Although on paper it was awarded just to us; it was shared]. It was split halfway down the middle....We received [half] and they received [half] (R26).

[*a pseudonym is used]
Motivation and goal for the project

It appeared clear to me from her description of the process that both serendipity and opportunism—i.e., meeting a third party at a reception on the Hill, finding out they worked for institutions with similar needs and interests, deciding to create a collaborative project, etc.—had played important roles in the initial success of this project. However, I was still unclear as to the underlying motivation for creating the project in the first place. I therefore pressed the project director to provide greater details on her own motivation for developing the project, and, in her view, the reason the college chose to participate in it. Her response highlighted the connection between the mission of the college and this project. “The college has an open admissions policy,” she noted. “It is designed with the idea of being responsive to the community. [And] I believe that the institution is aware of the disparities that exist in terms of minorities and women in technical fields as well as being admitted into the institution. So by accepting this grant it was a viable way to close that gap and show that they are mindful of or certainly aware of these disparities. And the funds would be utilized to close the gap that exists....[So, it] came from the mission of the institution....I could [have said] to [the president] I have [this federal grant]...for the college, what do you want me to do with it? And she could have said ‘no we don’t want to do anything for women,’ but I knew that this was an issue she was certainly concerned about” (R26).

The impact of the high tech careers project:

Asked to address the impact of the project, and by extension the earmark, the project director noted that the project had allowed both her college and the partner institute to
undertake a number of outreach efforts designed to assist the populations targeted by the project. However, she also noted that the final impact of the project would not be known until the assessment data were in. Still, she was very upbeat in her assessment of the project, offering the opinion that the college had been very successful in attaining the primary goals for the project. "I think we were very successful," she said, "in co-sponsoring events for the communities and for organizations. We offered services for young people, middle schools data repair workshops, all the way up to adults....We developed a guidebook, a very comprehensive guidebook in terms of how to look for grants, etc....We did power book presentations to grassroots organizations, to faith-based groups, for example....African American heritage societies, Baptist churches, Catholic churches, etc., on technology and women and how to seek funding to create avenues for bringing technology or seeking technology for their churches, etc....I think it was wonderful. It was wonderful that rural students had a chance to go to [the partnering institution] and to visit the school, look at the labs, meet with students, etc. And I just saw the growth after going on the trip and coming back, the change in attitude. Because we had students of varying ages to participate, and varying levels of development to participate" (R26).

Summary of Tri-County case study

Tri-County is a public two-year associate's-level institution that has a strong president and active board, an entrepreneurial faculty, and a commitment to meeting its community service and open access mission. Tri-County, in several ways, presented a unique case study. It was one of the most experienced practitioners of earmarking examined in this
study, yet, as a community college, it belonged to a class of institutions that, historically, has participated little in the earmarking phenomenon. In addition, the earmarked projects that the college had participated in through earmarks displayed, in one case, elements of strategic planning and control (found most typically in this study, if found at all, at the more earmark-proficient institutions such as Delacroix or Mondawmin), and, in another case, a complete lack of central control and a total reliance on individual opportunism (found most typically in this study at earmark novices, such as Haberville). The common denominator linking the college's earmark-related activities appeared to be the professed desire to carry out the educational mission of the college, in a time of financial stress, by using whatever tools or resources were available to do so. Contributing to the successful campaigns for both earmarks examined at Tri-County was the aid and influence of third parties: the state association of community colleges in one case, which allowed the state's community colleges to "speak with one voice," and the partnering college in the other case, which used the influence it had with its congressional delegation to help advance the project.
Chapter 5: Integrative Analysis of the Study Findings

This was an exploratory study of the phenomenon of academic earmarks. Five research questions, laid out in chapter three, guided the study. These questions fell, roughly, into four categories: scope, motivation, process, and impact. The specific questions were as follows:

1. Who is seeking academic earmarks? Specifically, what types of institutions (as defined by Carnegie classification) are seeking earmarks, and how has this changed over the last decade?

2. What kinds of projects are being supported through earmarks? Specifically, are institutions using earmarks to support facilities or research projects, and has that ratio changed over the past decade?

3. Why do institutions seek earmarks? What are the self-professed motivators driving them to seek earmarks, and, based on the evidence available, do these motivators vary by institutional type?

4. How are these institutions going about securing earmarks? Based upon the cases examined, how does the process work at institutions, and do any instructive commonalities appear to exist across different categories of institutions?

5. And finally, to the extent it can be assessed, what impact have these earmarks had on their recipient institutions? What benefits appear to have accrued to institutions, or their communities and states, based upon the earmark-funded projects?
An analysis of each of these questions is presented below.

A. Analysis of the findings related to the scope of the phenomenon

Research Question 1: Who is seeking earmarks? Specifically, what types of institutions (as defined by Carnegie classification) are seeking earmarks, and how has this changed over the last decade?

"The earmarking process is one that is now pervasive."

de Figueiredo and Silverman (2004, p. 14)

"You know, it is kind of like the [first earmark-funded project] was the entry level drug and kind of persuaded us."

Campus administrator commenting on how his institution had become involved in seeking earmarks

(Interview with author, March 2004)

Historically, the scope of academic earmarking has been examined in a number of different ways. These have included the total amount of dollars spent on academic earmarks, the number of institutions that have received academic earmarks, the total amount of dollars spent on academic earmarks by state, the number of institutions receiving earmarks by state, etc. Because the amount of money going to academic earmarks has increased substantially over the past two and a half decades, most authors
have focused on that aspect of the phenomenon. For instance, de Figueiredo and Silverman (2002), in their study of the returns to institutions that employ lobbyists, looked at the federal dollars going to institutions through earmarks and noted that “the amount of money allocated through academic earmarks rose from less than $17 million in 1980 (or $32 million measured in constant 2001 dollars) to nearly $1.7 billion in 2001, a 100-fold increase in nominal terms (and a 52-fold increase in real terms)” (http://papers.ssm.com/abstract=310901, May, Section 1, para 2). In her work examining the process by which higher education lobbies the federal government, Cook (1998) cited information from the Washington Post showing the increase in dollars going to academic earmarks grew from $11 million in 1982 to $700 million by 1992 (p. 39). Cook interpreted this dramatic increase in the dollars, and by implication the increased willingness of higher education institutions to seek handouts on the Hill, to be a contributing factor to the declining reputation higher education is seen as having on Capitol Hill.

In 1999, Savage, using his own in-depth examination of congressional appropriations bills, broadened the discussion of scope by looking beyond the dollars involved to compare the types of institutions that had received them and the impact the earmarks had had. In a study that encompassed a sixteen year time span (1980-1996), Savage identified 387 institutions of higher education that had received over $5.1 billion in earmarked federal funds and compared them against the institutions that appeared on the National Science Foundation’s list of the top 100 recipients of federal research and development (R&D) funds. Savage found that “of the 73 schools identified as having received $20
million or more in earmarks,” over half of them (40) were already among the top 100 recipients of federal academic R&D funding, and 21 of the them were in the top 50 (1999, p. 145). The conclusion drawn by Savage was that, although in a few select cases earmarks had been able to improve an institution’s research capacity, generally earmarks did not significantly affect a university’s R&D rank. Savage’s research did not break down the institutions by Carnegie classification, however, and his analysis stopped with the 1996 federal fiscal year.

In one of the most recent analyses of the earmarking issue, Payne (2003) looked at Carnegie classification as part of a larger theme. Focusing on the impact of earmarking on key research activities, she examined the distribution of earmarks among American Research I, Research II, Doctoral I, and Doctoral II institutions. Using the databases compiled by both the Chronicle and by Savage, Payne examined 218 institutions included in these four Carnegie categories and found that three-quarters of the universities within each class except Doctoral I received “at least 1 year of earmarked funding” in the years examined (only 44 percent of Doctoral I’s received at least 1 year of earmarked funding) (2003, p. 20). In addition, Payne found that at least 50 percent of all Research I and Research II institutions received more than five years of earmarked funding (2003). Payne’s findings suggested both a high and sustained pattern of earmarking by research institutions. However, her study, which focused on the impact of earmarking on such research-related activity as publishing, did not extend beyond the Carnegie classification of research and doctoral institutions (missing growth among other
classifications), and did not extend beyond the 1998 fiscal year (missing the recent explosive growth in earmarking among all sectors).

Much of Payne’s (2003) work was based on data put together by the Chronicle of Higher Education, which has provided the most sustained reporting on the scope of academic earmarks through its annual analysis of earmarking among academic institutions. Over the past decade the Chronicle has not only reported extensively on earmarks that emerged from the most recent legislative sessions, but it also has compiled a database that provides information on the institutions involved, the states receiving the most earmarked moneys, the agency through which the money passed, and basic information on the nature of the project for which it is granted. The Chronicle data go from 1990 through 2002 and provide not only the most recent but the most comprehensive source of data; however, the Chronicle data do not break down the data by type of institution.

This study builds upon the studies of Savage (1999), Payne (2003), Cook (1998) and others to explore how pervasively the phenomenon of academic earmarking has penetrated the higher education community at all classification levels. Using data pulled from the Chronicle of Higher Education’s database of academic earmarks and the U.S. Department of Education’s IPEDS, the study examined thirteen years of earmarked funding, covering institutions in every Carnegie classification (using the 2000 Carnegie Classification of institutions; see http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/Classification/CIHE2000/defNotes/Definitions.htm). The study found the following:
1) Earmarks going to higher education institutions have continued to proliferate over the past 13 years, with significantly more institutions now getting individual earmarks than did over a decade ago. In 1990, according to the analysis of the data collected by the *Chronicle*, the number of institutions of any classification identified as receiving an individual earmark in that fiscal year was less than 80. By 2002, this number had reached over 500, an increase of almost 600 percent in the number of individual earmarks going to academic institutions (see Table 1).

2) The use of earmarks has saturated, or come very close to saturating, an entire category of institutions (research institutions), and is now spreading into other categories, such as master’s, bachelor’s, and associates. The data from the *Chronicle* and IPEDS showed that over the 13-year period examined, 92 percent of the doctoral/research extensive institutions and 70 percent of the doctoral/research intensive institutions had benefited from at least one individual earmark. Combined, 83 percent of the nation’s total research institutions, over 8 out of 10, received at least one earmark during that period (see Table 1). These findings corroborate the significant saturation among research and doctoral institutions first reported by Payne (2003), and suggest that the practice of earmarking may have penetrated even deeper into the community than she found. Further, this study showed that over the same period the number of non-research institutions—master’s, baccalaureates, associates, and specialized/tribal institutions—that received at least one earmark increased by over 1600 percent, going from just 20 total in 1990 to 355 in 2002.
(see Table 1). This was the first time that the level of participation level among these classifications of institutions had been examined.

3) In line with the above finding, this study showed that the combined number of non-research institutions (master's, bachelor's, associates, and specialized/tribal) receiving at least one individual earmark in a fiscal year surpassed the combined number of research institutions (DRUEs and DRUIs) receiving at least one individual earmark in a fiscal year for the first time in 2001, and the category of master's surpassed the category of research extensive institutions (DRUEs) in the number of institutions receiving at least one individual earmark in a fiscal year for the first time in 2003 (see Figure 3). Although the total amount of dollars, as well as the average number of individual earmarks, going to research institutions through individual earmarks continues to be much larger than the total going to non-research institutions (see Figure 1 and Figure 4), these overall findings suggest that as the academic earmarking phenomenon continues to grow, it is spreading beyond the initial, and now largely-saturated group of research institutions, into other types of higher education institutions. Since these other types of institutions traditionally have their own unique missions, which may not include basic research, this finding has significant import for the way we must begin to look at the issue of earmarking.

4) Finally, the study indicated that, like certain drugs, the use of earmarks may be addictive. Once institutions began using earmarks they tended to continue using them. This study showed that over half of the institutions listed in the DRUE classification, the group of institutions that historically has been most involved in earmarking, received at
least one earmark in seven of the 13 years examined (see Figure 6). Almost a third of the
DRUEs (30.2 percent) received two or more earmarks in at least seven of the 13 years
examined. This corroborated a similar finding by Payne (2003), and although this degree
of sustained, repetitive use of earmarks was not found in any other group of institutions—
no category of non-research institutions averaged receiving earmarks for more than three
out of the 13 years examined—that may be due only to the comparatively recent use of
earmarks on a significant scale by those group of institutions. Whether those types of
institutions will also find earmarks as addictive is an issue that bears watching in future
research.

B. Analysis of the findings related to the type of projects being supported under the
phenomenon

Research Question 2: What kinds of projects are being supported through academic
earmarks?

Given the history of the debate about academic earmarks and the justifications offered for
their use, the issue of the kind of project institutions are seeking and receiving earmarked
funding for is an important one. A traditional justification for seeking direct
appropriations has been that they provide facilities-related funding that the federal
government is no longer willing or able to support (See Langenberg, 1987; Carnegie
Commission, 1994). However, the data examined in Chapter Three of this study
indicated that facilities related earmarks comprised less than 20 percent of the earmarks
awarded in 2002 (see Table 2). This finding that a disproportionate percentage of earmarks now appear to go to support projects that are not facilities-related or equipment-related corroborates analyses conducted by other studies. For instance, the Carnegie Commission found in 1994 that less than a third of the funds earmarked for academic institutions in the FY 1993 budget went for research facilities (1994, p. 73). In 2003, the Chronicle's Brainard and Borrego found that 13 percent of the earmarked funding identified by the Chronicle as going to academic institutions in FY 2003 went for research buildings or equipment (September 26, 2003).

Discussion of the findings related to scope and type

Earmarks, as de Figueiredo and Silverman (2004) stated, have now become pervasive in American higher education, and their use has penetrated into each of the higher education segments, saturating the most-research oriented category of institutions. Given that saturation, it is not surprising to see the greatest growth in earmarks now being in the ranks of master’s, liberal arts, and community colleges— institutions that have their own unique missions, goals, student populations, and reasons for seeking earmarks. These institutions, until now, have been largely overlooked in studies examining the use of earmarks. The data also strongly suggest that once earmarks become embedded in an institution, or a community of institutions, their continued use is not likely to cease. Since earmarks appear to be no longer used primarily for facilities support but have become used overwhelmingly for other types of projects, whether research, community development, or some other, the motivations that lie behind such projects, and the
decision to use earmarks in order to support them, become particularly appropriate targets for this study.

C. Analysis of the findings related to motivations driving the phenomenon at the institutional-level

Research Question 3: Why do these institutions seek earmarks? What are the self-professed motivators driving higher education institutions to seek earmarks, and, based on the evidence available, do these motivators vary by institutional type?

“The motivation is primarily need, sometimes desperate need.”

Kenneth Schlossberg, lobbyist, (Testimony in U.S. House Hearings, 1993, p. 37)

“Earmarking takes place because universities are in the best sense of the word, ambitious”

James Savage (1999, p. 20)
"The last question you raised is the question related to the proliferation of direct appropriations. Service in terms of the three major roles of the university has taken on a new connotation and that is clearly economic development....No adequate policy exists to account for economic development."

William Ihlanfeldt (Testimony in U.S. House Hearings 1994, pp. 80, 94)

"Why do they go after earmarks? One word: 'Greed.'"

Former university president and federal agency official

(Interview with author, December 2001)

In her 2002 public policy paper focused on the impact of earmarks on research university output, Payne noted that a key topic for future exploration was “the motivations of universities in seeking earmarked funding” (p. 326). Although a number of past studies have examined in depth the motivators that encourage earmarking from the perspective of Congress, few studies have examined the factors that motivate academic institutions to seek out earmarks. Given the historical antipathy toward earmarking that has existed, and still exists, among some individuals in higher education this issue is particularly relevant especially if we are to understand the phenomenon in all of its facets. Much of the case study portion of this project was devoted to exploring this aspect of the phenomenon.
Past research on institutional motivation to seek earmarks:

As noted earlier in this study, the national debate that has raged over the past quarter century regarding the appropriateness of academic earmarking has traditionally focused on two primary causes: 1) lack of sufficient federal support for research facilities, and 2) inequitable research funding stemming from the systemic problems associated with peer review (i.e., the dominance of certain institutions and certain states in peer-reviewed competitions has created a system in which the top research institutions garner the lion’s share of all peer-reviewed research funds resulting a “haves versus have nots” situation that can only be resolved through direct awards of federal funds) (Brown 1993; Feller, 2004; Savage 1999). Although a number of researchers have noted the dubiousness of these justifications—Schlossberg referred to them in the 1993 House Hearings as “strawmen being marched out onto the field of battle by both sides” (p. 39)—they have continued to be seen as the primary casus belli, dutifully repeated in numerous policy-related articles, ranging from Langenberg (1987) to most recently de Figueiredo and Silverman in 2004.

At the same time, some scholars have looked beyond these arguments to offer more specific incentives for institutional actions. For instance, over a decade ago academic leaders such as Ihlanfeldt and Rosenzweig focused on economic development as a major contributor to the motivation for research universities to seek earmarks in their testimony before the House Committee in 1993 and 1994 (see Ihlanfeldt, W. testimony before the House, 1994; see Rosenzweig, R. testimony before the House, 1993). In 1994, a report by the Carnegie Commission on Science, Technology, and Government also cited economic
development, noting that "one strong incentive for earmarking is the hope of Members of Congress that research projects will lead to regional economic development....[And that] many institutions believe that new research facilities will strengthen their capacity to contribute to local development and create jobs" (p. 67). The Carnegie Commission noted in its conclusion, however, that a "variety of motivations and needs underlie the problem of earmarking," and "no single approach" to addressing it "will be adequate" (1994, p. 76).

Acknowledging, like the Carnegie report that "the incentives for a university to earmark are more varied and complex than simply the desire to rectify the flaws in the federal research grants allocation system," Savage (1999) provided the most extended discussion to date of the motives, or incentives he called them, for universities to engage in earmarking activity. He postulated that "earmarking takes place because universities are in the best sense of the word, ambitious and they seek rewards that come from greater prestige and status" (1999, p. 20). For Savage, the basic drivers of this ambition, included the presidents of the institutions, followed by the faculty, the alumni, boards of trustees, and other members of the university community, who "not only...view their school with pride and seek to enhance its reputation, [but also] they take umbrage when outsiders consider their alma mater with less than proper respect" (1999, p. 23). Helping to give shape to these ambitions for Savage was the rise of national college rankings, such as those published by U.S. News and World Report, and the National Science Foundation's annual list of the top 100 recipients of federal research and development support (1999, p. 24). "To be ranked in the top 100" of the NSF survey, Savage wrote, "is considered very
good among academics, but what truly counts is a ranking among the top 50 and, best yet, among the top 10. The goal of becoming a top 10 research university is indeed the pinnacle of ambition in the academic research community” (1999, p. 25).

If the arguments put forward by Rosenzweig, Ihlanfeldt, the Carnegie Commission, Savage, and others were taken together, along with the more traditional motivators that have been proposed, then a list of the incentives that scholars have put forward as contributing to institutions seeking earmarks might look, roughly, like this:

1. Lack of resources or other resource constraints
2. Need to redress inequities caused by peer review
3. Federal failure to fund facilities
4. Expectations for economic development
5. Institutional ambition
6. Other motivators

Findings from the case studies

So how well did the findings from the case studies regarding motivations match up with the motivations put forward by past researchers? The following analysis is based on the major findings from the cases. The first three findings encompass what I refer to as “case constants,” issues that were common to all cases examined and were particularly helpful in understanding the motivations behind the phenomenon. These might be considered as pre-conditions whose presence strongly enhanced an institution’s likelihood of identifying a funding opportunity and successfully soliciting an earmark for it. The
remaining findings were more case specific, meaning that they generally appeared in at least a couple of cases but not all. How these findings compared with the existing theories or speculations on motivation, and how they differed by Carnegie classification was also examined.

Finding 1: Concerns over resource constraints were constants in each case.
Not surprisingly given the nature of the topic, a lack of financial resources, or put another way, the desire for additional financial resources, was a motivating factor in each case examined. Although this motivator was more overt in some cases than others—or, at least, more overtly stated—a theme of the need for, or desire for, additional resources was present from the testimony of individuals at the community college and the liberal arts institution through those at the research institutions, and from the public institutions to the private institution. At private St. Sebastian’s, for instance, where the endowment was significantly smaller than at many of its competitors, the need for additional resources was expressed as a desire to secure funding for an addition to a museum. That addition, the president hoped, would allow the college to fulfill a past commitment to a benefactor and secure additional gifts in the future. Such gifts, in turn, could be used to strengthen the college’s programs and reputation in the liberal arts, giving it a new, competitive “niche.” However, the president also wished to do this without tapping supporters who might give to projects more directly applicable to the core operational needs of the college and its students. This need to find funding to honor a financial commitment that could, in turn, help to strengthen the competitive stance of the college,
but without drawing upon the college’s more traditional sources of support contributed to the president’s decision to try and tap a new source for funds: federal earmarks.

At Haberville, one of the comprehensive master’s level institutions in the study, the connection between the university’s acceptance of the earmark and its need for additional resources was more directly stated. “We needed money, who in the university system does not need money,” the project director succinctly responded when asked to explain the university’s motivation for going after the earmark (R24). This position was supported by an assistant to Haberville’s president who, responding to the same question, said: “It is clear as that as the percentage of the budget coming from the state support decreases, we have to look at alternatives....Earmarks look to us like this lump sum money coming out of the blue and wherever money is going to come from....we are willing to accept it” (R23).

At other institutions discussions of financial need or resource constraints were less overt, less directly tied to decisions surrounding their earmark efforts, but still present. At research extensive Mondawmin, the issue arose in the provost’s discussion of the cost of equipping laboratories and competing with other institutions (R3), and at Delacroix, a DRUI, the issue appeared in a faculty member’s discussion of his department’s past inability to easily transport students on class trips or offer honoraria to visiting speakers (things that were done through the earmark-supported project) (R21). Finally, at Corinth, also a comprehensive master’s, the issue appeared in the president’s discussion of the local economy and its financial dependence upon the university and, due to that
dependence, the university's desire to find new mechanisms to enhance economic growth in the region (R7).

In essence, financial constraints, or other forms of resource constraints, were a given in each of these case studies. It was part of the "background noise," the environmental parameters within which these institutions operated. This was true regardless of the Carnegie classification of the institution or the source of institutional control (public versus private). However, while important, the lack of resources in and of itself was not the only, or even the primary, motivating factor. As one observer of the process commented, "you don't notice a lack of money until you have a specific reason for wanting money" (R11). From the perspective of this study, and from a public policy perspective, the key question relating to motivation was what the institutions planned to do with the resources they sought. What other factors, combined with a need for resources, motivated the institutions to seek out earmarks?
Finding 2: Opportunism, the ability of individuals at the various institutions to recognize and exploit unanticipated opportunities for earmarks, was a key constant in each case.

“There is a kind of opportunism about these things, and if somebody sends out a signal...you know, we’d like you to come talk to me about X or Y. Then you are not going to say ‘no.’”

College president commenting on her experience working with Congress on earmarks (Interview with author, December 2004)

If the effect of resource constraints, particularly financial resources, on institutional decisions to seek earmarks was an anticipated finding of the study, the importance of individual opportunism in each of the cases was not. Opportunism was defined for this study as the ability of an individual, or individuals, at the institution to recognize an opportunity (whether it was a direct offer of support, an unmet educational or scientific need, or a relationship that existed with well-connected individuals) and exploit that opportunity to obtain resources for the institution. Perhaps the most striking example of this was seen in the Haberville case study, where an unsolicited offer of support encouraged the project director to develop a successful proposal in a very short period of time (R24). By exploiting this completely unanticipated opportunity, Haberville staff successfully obtained for the institution the only earmark it has received. More tellingly, they achieved this in spite of no prior experience in soliciting an earmark or, at the time, any plan for seeking a federal earmark (R23).
Though less dramatic, other examples of opportunism were also spread throughout the case studies. At the private liberal arts college, St. Sebastian's, the offer by a politically well-connected alumnus of the college to intercede with Washington legislators was cited by the president as an impetus for his decision to successfully seek an earmark (R5). At Tri-County, the community college's program director took advantage of a serendipitous meeting with a politically-connected colleague from a different institution to create a joint project that received earmarked funds (R25). At Mondawmin, another institution's offer to share financial support in exchange for the department's research expertise and the university's political support was credited by staff there with helping to encourage that institution's own subsequent and successful attempt to win an earmark (R1, R2). Finally, at Delacroix the initial approach by an outside entity regarding the possibility of seeking funds for joint projects, combined eventually with the desire of the family and friends to honor a former congressman, was credited with providing the impetus for that institution's initial earmark (R19).

Like need, opportunism can assume many guises, and thereby make it difficult to isolate from other factors, possibly interrelated, that contribute to the earmarking phenomenon. However, in almost every story of the motivations and stratagems that led institutions to obtain earmarks, there appeared a serendipitous opportunity or contact that was recognized and exploited by one or more individuals at the institutions studied here. This was true for all categories of institutions included in the study, regardless of their complexity or history with earmarks. While the randomness of this finding makes
analysis of this phenomenon more difficult—how do you predict the likelihood or impact of serendipitous opportunity?—it is important for three reasons. First, it tells us something about how the impetus for such projects occurs on campuses, and the importance of contacts between campus representatives, at whatever level of responsibility, and the outside world (i.e., ideas that attract earmark funding may emerge at any level of the institution, not just at the top leadership levels, and they frequently emerge from the interplay of ideas and experiences between campus officials and individuals from other campuses or organizations). Second, based on the “flow” of these contacts and ideas inside and outside the borders of the campuses, the finding provides guidance on the difficulty campus leaders may face in trying to institutionalize, or routinize, the earmark process in order to make it a more stable or strategic source of funding. Finally, it indicates that opportunism acts, in some ways, as a “leveling agent,” allowing institutions regardless of size or organizational sophistication, some justified hope that they will be able to obtain resources through the earmark process.
Finding 3: Entrepreneurship among institutional faculty and staff was a key element in securing earmark funding at all institutions.

"Because the faculty in a place like this are so dependent upon research funding... there is quite a strong reason for hunting, for turning over every stone as it were"

A faculty member at a research institution talking about why he and other faculty members seek earmarked funds

(Interview with author, May 2004)

Closely aligned with need and opportunism in this study was a high degree of entrepreneurship displayed by the major actors in each case study. This entrepreneurialism was exemplified most frequently in the willingness of the actors to go outside the boundaries of their official duties or offices in order to seek out funds for projects they were interested in—sometimes violating the established chain of command.

For instance, at Mondawmin, the dean identified what she perceived as a national need, asked for a special dispensation to hire a lobbyist from her college’s development funds, and then worked with the lobbying firm to win an earmark from Capitol Hill (R4). At Haberville, the project director came up with an idea for better integrating cultural and historical information about that university’s region and, when an opportunity for an earmark became available, was willing to work through a weekend to prepare a proposal on short notice (R24). Smart and Hamm have referred to such activities by faculty and staff at higher education institutions as “prospective-type strategies,” or “boundary
spanning activities” and have noted that these are typical of academic cultures that “emphasize entrepreneurship, growth, and adaptability” (1992, pp. 3,7).

One of the best examples of such entrepreneurial activity at a campus was the following narrative related by a project director who turned a serendipitous contact with a colleague into an opportunity to obtain an earmark for an outreach program: “So when I heard that [a colleague was at a similar institution] and they even had a program....in technology, I thought that that was simply fantastic. So we had mutual interests....and then he shared with me the idea of...a project, and I suggested well why don’t we do it together collaboratively. Since Congressman [name of the college’s congressman] is [a key] Democrat why don’t we have him sponsor it and then have the sign off from [the partnering institution’s] delegation....And I’m telling you they gave me hell about this grant. Because I did not, quote, ‘go through the chain.’ You know, you didn’t go through the chain [of command]...didn’t let the president’s council see it. And I just thought that [they] would be happy that I [was] bringing this grant here. It match[ed] the goals [of the college] etc. The president was happy but some of the others weren’t....But they got over it I think” (R26). From these comments we can see how this administrator seized upon an opportunity and went outside her prescribed role to obtain support for a project that she thought met the institution’s goals, even though her actions violated the standard operating procedures at her institution.

The degree to which faculty members at the case study institutions were willing to expand boundaries and go beyond traditional funding sources in their disciplines in order
to garner support for their projects was also exemplified by a faculty member at Mondawmin. Reflecting on his actions, he noted that even for a faculty member at a research institution his actions were out of the mainstream. He explained: “Well, there is no doubt that there are many, many people on this campus who just routinely get grant after grant after grant out of agencies and that is kind of the accepted way that things work. I guess what I did, which was a little bit unusual, was stepping out of that into an area which has traditionally been regarded as small companies’ work [emphasis mine]. I mean there are plenty of companies around here like [name of a corporation] that are well known for doing this sort of work, but they are production. They don’t do any research....So I think actually in the commercial sense it has been quite good for the campus. But you know I think it may be a bit unusual in that respect, but you’re the better judge of that” (R2).

Slaughter and Leslie (1997) have argued that faculty in research institutions that are resource poor “will turn to academic capitalism to maintain research (and other) resources and to maintain prestige.” Academic capitalism is defined by them as “institutional and professorial market or market like efforts to secure external moneys” (1997, p. 8). I argue that the efforts of faculty, staff, and administrators in the case studies to seek out external funds that would allow them to achieve their goals are strong examples of the capitalistic, entrepreneurial spirit predicted by Slaughter and Leslie. As a final interesting comment to Slaughter and Leslie’s work, however, it is also worth noting that the market like activities described above occurred in every category of institution
participating in this study, not just among research institutions and not just among research faculty.

**Finding 4: Ambition, as manifested in the desire of the institution’s leadership and faculty to remain competitive with the institution’s peers, was a motivating factor in decisions by some institutions to seek out earmarks. However, this appeared true only for the most selective institutions. Ambition did not appear to be a major motivator for the non-selective institutions, even at the presidential level.**

**Ambition manifested through institutional leaders**

Savage posited that “earmarking takes place because universities are in the best sense of the word, ambitious and they seek rewards that come from greater prestige and status” (1999, p. 20). The basic drivers of this institutional ambition, he concluded were 1) the presidents “who bring to the job a particular vision and a set of goals for improving an institution’s performance,” 2) the faculty, “who are themselves recipients of advanced degrees from prestigious universities and...often aspire to be appointed at a similar institution or to transform their own school into such a place,” 3) alumni, boards of trustees, and other members of the university community, who “view their school with pride and seek to enhance its reputation...” (1999, pp. 23-24). Contributors to this ambition, Savage indicated, were the “rise of college rankings” such as the *U.S. News and World Report*’s annual guide to colleges, and, of particular importance to research universities, the National Science Foundation’s top 100 recipients of federal research support (1999, p. 24). “To be ranked in the top 100 of the NSF survey, is considered very
good among academics,” Savage stated, “but what truly counts is a ranking among the top 50 and, best yet, among the top 10. The goal of becoming a top 10 research university is indeed the pinnacle of ambition in the academic research community” (1999, p. 25).

Given the importance Savage placed on ambition as a motivator for earmarking, and the drivers he saw affecting that ambition, the obvious question is to what degree was ambition observed among the institutions studied here? At least some evidence, both direct and indirect, of the presidential-level ambition that Savage posited was exhibited in three of institutions examined. Not surprisingly, two of these were the research institutions. At Mondawmin, the provost noted that the university’s aggressive, organized approach to earmarking had not begun until the current president arrived. “He wants to be a player in all areas,” the provost noted of the Mondawmin president, “And he looked at this [the explosion of federal earmarks going to higher education institutions] and said, ‘Gee, we’re not much of a player here, let’s get ourselves organized.’ And suddenly we had a government affairs person” (R3). Even with the government affairs person in place, and a more standardized process for identifying potential proposals for earmark support, the Mondawmin president continues to review the proposals put forward by the deans, the provost noted, and discards any that do not meet the goals of the institution (R3, R17).

Although the president of Delacroix was not portrayed quite as hands on as the Mondawmin president, the provost there did note that the president of that institution was instrumental in starting the groundwork for the institution’s first earmark, working with
the executive director of a local center to develop the initial idea for the project (R19). More importantly, the Delacroix provost noted, it was the president who then brought his government relations people together after the initial success to ask “what more we should be doing?” (R19). In both Mondawmin and Delacroix, it was the presidents who established the conditions for the institutions to participate in earmarking.

While the importance of presidents’ ambitions or aspirations for their institutions as a motivating factor in earmarking was not a surprise finding among those institutions focused upon research, that it also showed up in an institution focused upon teaching was not anticipated, at least based upon the literature. At the liberal arts college, St. Sebastian’s, it was the belief of the president that the college must prepare itself for a more competitive environment, and a significant portion of that preparation would be repositioning the college as a leader in the arts, and in particular the visual arts, that led to the decision to go after earmarking. The president of the college put it as follows: “Part of our thinking about survival and flourishing is to become a great,...obviously, national liberal arts college. And on that score the lopsidedness of the college in favor of science was a detriment....The notion that a liberal arts college is providing a kind of education that is not prepractical but much larger than the practical...educating the soul...means that in this agnostic age the arts can perform some of the function that mandatory chapel might have performed before I was born....The arts have the potential for testing matters of conscience, and for a whole community,...in a way that individual courses cannot. ....So the arts are to us intrinsic to that higher ambition [emphasis mine] of being a liberal arts college....[because they] deal with the fundamental questions of what it
means to be human” (R5). This vision of what the arts could become and St. Sebastian’s need to reposition itself to take advantage of its opportunity in the arts contributed to the president’s decision to seek the earmark.

Finally, presidential ambitions or aspirations regarding national rankings or competitiveness versus peer institutions were not cited as a contributing factor to the decision to seek earmarks by interviewees at either comprehensive (master’s level) institution or the community college studied. Although the fact that this topic did not emerge in the interviews obviously does not exclude presidential ambition as a factor at these institutions, it does strongly suggest that the issue was not regarded as one of the more significant motivators driving the leaders of those types of institutions.

Discussion of presidential ambition

Although Savage’s (1999) focus on the impact of presidential ambition on institutional decisions to seek out earmarks was supported by these case studies, the studies also showed that this was not limited solely to research institutions. The decision of St. Sebastian’s, a selective liberal arts college but far from anything resembling a research university, to seek an earmark was significantly influenced by the president’s ambitions and vision for the institution. However, presidential ambition, at least in these case studies, did not appear to be a major motivator at the less selective institutions (institutions where the participants interviewed tended to see the value of the institution in its impact on the local community). A more relevant factor to Savage’s argument, it seems, may be competitiveness. The presidents of the most competitive colleges or
universities, whatever their Carnegie classification, are ambitious in that they must constantly seek ways to maintain their institution’s status vis a vis their peer competitors and that ambition extends to seeking advantage through earmarks.

Ambition manifested through peer competitiveness

Even more than with presidential ambition, institutional competitiveness, that is the desire of the institutions to maintain or enhance their ability to compete against their peer institutions, stood out as one of the key motivators for the most selective institutions in the study (Mondawmin, Delacroix, and St. Sebastian). Delacroix’s provost, when pressed to name the factor that had motivated the institution to begin aggressively seeking out earmarks noted, “...if you don’t, [seek earmarks] then you lose out.” “The problem,” he indicated, “is that it is one of those situations where the rules of the game have changed, and you will deny your faculty legitimate research opportunities if you take the high road and say I would not ever do that” (R19).

Mondawmin’s provost was even more direct in talking about the need to use earmarks to remain competitive: “I think it is in many ways to be competitive with our peer institutions,” he said. “Many of these earmarks are being used by the various research universities to build up special capabilities that allow them to [compete] successfully for competitively-awarded grants. And many of these facilities are very expensive. As an example, one of the earmarks that I was involved in early on was an earmark related to [manufacturing] technology. With $7.5 million [from an earmark] we were able to establish a capability here at [the university] that no one else had and, therefore, we were
able to go after, subsequently, competitively-awarded grants for that program. And so I think the desire to maintain the most modern kinds of capabilities, especially on the technology side was very important” (R3). The utility of earmarks in helping institutions catch up with the competition was also intimated by a faculty member at Delacroix, who noted that in the case of his own earmark a clear advantage of such a project was that “it does give smaller institutions a chance to weigh in on large-scale projects. In my opinion having gone through on both sides of the review process with both NSF and DOD, Delacroix would have no shot at leading a larger project like this [under traditional peer-reviewed programs],... because we don’t have a lot of the infrastructure that would be needed for this type of project and that would come as a severe hit [to us] as the lead institution. We could participate as a co-PI, but we would never get to lead a project of this technical sort” (R20).

If the research institutions cited the desire to compete with other research institutions and to support their faculty as a major factor in earmarking, the issue of competition for the private liberal arts institution came out in a different way. St. Sebastian’s president saw earmarking as a way to move toward a new niche, one that would allow the college to better compete against its peer institutions for students and resources. The president, explaining how his vision for an expanded arts program at the school fit into the institution’s competitive efforts, noted: “Given the existence of this museum and my desire to develop our theater program and our dance program, it really makes sense to see it as a coherent vision, and to see St. Sebastian’s as marking out an area of distinction that would really differentiate us even more from [our competitive peers]” (R5).
Discussion of institutional peer competitiveness

Clearly, institutional desire to remain competitive with other institutions was a major motivator cited by the most "selective" institutions participating in the study. However, this motivator appeared confined to just those institutions (the research institutions and the liberal arts college). No allusion to peer competition was offered as a motivator by anyone at either comprehensive institution or at the community college. This finding again suggests that while Savage's (1999) theory that institutional ambition helps to motivate institutions to seek earmarks appears to be true, it may not be as true for all categories of institutions. As with presidential ambition for the institution, the key appears to be the competitiveness of the institution not necessarily its focus (research versus liberal arts).

Finding 5: Economic development, specifically the role the institution is expected to play in the economic development of its state or region, was the most commonly cited motivator among the public institutions studied, both doctoral/research and master's institutions.

A 1994 report by the Carnegie Commission on Science, Technology, and Government stated that "one strong incentive for earmarking is the hope of Members of Congress that research projects will lead to regional economic development" (p. 67). The study then went on to say that "many institutions believe that new research facilities will strengthen their capacity to contribute to local development and create jobs" (1994, p. 67).
In this study, economic development was cited as a motivator by individuals at four of the institutions studied, including both research institutions and master's. All of these institutions were public. At Delacroix, the provost explained “Another piece of this for [us] is the university’s role in developing the economy of the region. I think [he] is the first president to really think about whether [Delacroix] has a role to play in regional economic development. And his answer is ‘yes.’ He feels that the [university] has a moral obligation to the initiatives in this area in development. And as soon as you begin to do that, and to engage in things like the [name of a regional economic partnership initiative] and begin to engage in sort of economic development issues, you really quickly enter into the political sphere. And it is hard to do economic development without some sort of state and federal help” (R19).

The connection between the perceived obligation of institutions to promote economic development and the utility of earmarks was explained even more explicitly by officials at Mondawmin. The provost there was candid about the pressure for economic development that all research institutions, or at least all AAU institutions, are facing. There is an “increasing role that research universities are playing in economic development now that makes them a player whenever people think about ways in which their own congressional delegation can bring home the bacon,” he explained. “Instead of just money for a bridge somewhere, now people are much more ambitious and want to talk about helping their states become competitive for jobs. And universities are now seen as being a big part of that....Almost every AAU university is now seeing its future as
being one defined by its ability to be an economic engine. It costs nearly twice as much per student [for the state] to fund [one of our students] as to fund [a student at a public comprehensive university in the same state], so the question becomes, what is the added value that you get from that? And this [economic development] has clearly got to be one of them” (R3).

At the public comprehensives, Haberville and Corinth, the issue of economic growth was viewed more parochially—that is, individuals at these institutions were concerned about the institution’s role in its specific region, versus the statewide role discussed by Mondawmin’s leadership—but economic development was still prominently mentioned as a key institutional motivator by officials at both schools. Leaders at both master’s level institutions stressed the importance of their universities to the cultural and economic development of their home regions. Corinth’s president, for instance, openly discussed her hope that the proposed project for which the university was seeking an earmark would spur development in its depressed region of the state. Discussing the university’s vision for the project, the president said, “I would like to see the research ...become the source of economic development, as I said, moving beyond these little family industries to one that could really be a major boon to economic development in [our region]” (R7).

_Finding 6: National rankings, concerns over inequities in funding created by the current peer review process, and inadequate government funding of facilities were not significant motivating factors for most institutions in the study._

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Interestingly, the traditional arguments that earmarks help to address inequities created by faults in the peer review process and/or compensate for a lack of government support of research facilities were offered by only a few individuals at institutions in the case studies. All of these individuals were at the research institutions and had been personally involved in earmarked projects that they believed had given their institutions a competitive advantage or opportunity that it would not otherwise have had (see for example, the statements of the Delaxcroix faculty member (R20) and Mondawmin provost (R2) cited earlier on pages 222 and 225, respectively). However, while they saw the ability of earmarks to “level the playing field” as an advantage of the process, none of the participants cited it as a central motivation to their actions or the actions of their institutions in terms of earmarking. And at the non-research institutions, where one could argue that the lack of federally-funded facilities and project support has been most acute, these issues were simply not raised at all.

Similarly, the case studies yielded little evidence that national rankings, particularly those supplied by *U.S. News* or the National Science Foundation, played a motivational role in seeking earmarks, as implied by Savage (1999). Of the dozens of interviews carried out, rankings were mentioned by only one individual at one institution. In that instance, the individual downplayed the impact of rankings on the decision to seek out an earmark, saying: “Now I can’t say that I don’t believe that in the long term, harnessing the college [to the project] won’t help rankings, but the college is already in the elite. Sure it will help us a little further, but the real issue is that there is a need and...it is a sufficiently broad need” (R4).
Additional findings related to other motivators

In addition to the motivators discussed above, which have been most frequently cited by researchers as justifications for earmarking, a number of additional motivators emerged from the case studies. While not as predominant or cross-cutting as some of those discussed above, they appeared frequently enough in the interviews to be worthy of mention and possible future investigation. They included the following: 1) the desire of administrators and faculty to address issues or commitments that were seen as core to the mission of the institution, or a unit within the institution, but which lacked a ready source of funding; 2) the desire of faculty, particularly faculty in the sciences, to address scientific or education-related needs/issues that have not been addressed by a federal agency due to a lack of funds or a lack of awareness of the issue; and 3) the desire of administrators or faculty to assist a federal agency in creating support for a program within the administration or Congress. Although a number of these motivators have been hinted at by other researchers—Feller (2004), for instance, collectively referred to such issues as "'orphan' problems...problems too local to otherwise command the attention of federal agencies or researchers attuned to national priorities"—their existence or impact has not been extensively recorded by other researchers. Taken with the other findings, they contribute to the range of motivators that are acknowledged as helping drive institutional decisions to seek earmarks. Examples of how these issues manifested themselves within the case studies, as well as the type of institutions in which they tended to be found, are presented below. They include:
1. Issues related to the desire of administrators and faculty to address issues or commitments that were seen as core to the mission of the institution, but for which traditional funding streams were lacking.

Institutional mission, or at some institutions departmental or college-level mission, was mentioned in connection to earmarked projects by administrators or faculty at three of the five public institutions (Tri-County, Corinth, and Mondawmin). Perhaps not surprisingly, the institution where the issue of mission seemed to have the biggest impact was the community college. When pressed to explain the reason that Tri-County had chosen to participate in an earmark supported project the dean explained the connection between the college’s lack of funding, its mission, and its decision to look elsewhere for funds. “You know our funding is at a level that doesn’t allow us to have the enhancement that we need,” she noted, “and with our mission being open access and low tuition, we are not going to be getting the money from the state. And if we are going to do the kind of enhancements we want,...it has to come from elsewhere” (R25). The dean later went on to speculate that, in her opinion, many earmarks sought by community colleges were tied to the traditional outreach mission of community colleges—“When I think of the community colleges’ mission,” she noted, “we’re likely to be asked to take something on that is workforce related or likely to help our local community, which is at the heart of all of our missions” (R25).

Echoing the words of the dean, the project director at Tri-County, who was directly responsible for bringing an earmark to the college, acknowledged a connection between her project and the college’s outreach mission. “I feel like a program such as ours,” the PI
noted, "although it is geared for exposing persons to technology, it has done more than that," she noted, "the fact that [the Tri County students who participated in the program] are now better able to be competitive with other folks in the region, by having access to technology, by having intellectual challenges, etc. And I think in that sense we have met, or are trying to meet, the college’s overall mission" (R26).

At the four-year institutions the issue of mission, though still relevant to the decision to seek earmarks, seemed less vital to the decision and more of an afterthought or post hoc justification. Typical of the comments related to mission at the four-year institutions were those made by a Mondawmin administrator, who noted "Yes, well this [project] is consistent with the mission....It is something that is consistent with the mission and fits a specific need....It also is something that is consistent with the university’s strategic plan, and the college’s plan, which talks about engaging with the community in harnessing the talents of the university to improve the community. So it is consistent with mission big time" (R4). Another faculty member at Mondawmin saw mission as more of a departmental issue rather than a university-wide one; however, he still regarded it as an important factor. "I think mission is much more important at the department level," he said "but there was a sense that, in a more altruistic sense, this helps the region and it fits the university’s mission as a whole” he explained, when asked about the role mission played in the decision of his department and university to seek an earmark, “And I don’t want to downplay that....The university has a role to fill in manpower,” he explained (R2).
2. *Issues related to the desire of faculty members to address scientific or education-related needs that have not been addressed by the agency due to a lack of awareness, lack of funds, or lack of an appropriate program mechanism.*

If mission was something of a secondary motivator for the faculty and administrators at the research institution, the idea that earmarks could be used to address areas of scientific or national need that have not been given priority by federal agencies, or for which there was no appropriate agency program or funding stream, was a primary motivator among faculty at both research institutions. This motivator often was raised in connection to large scale projects or multi-disciplinary projects that were just too large or too complex for a single federal agency to handle. Typical of the way this motivator emerged in the interviews include the following remarks by a faculty member at Delacroix:

And this [the idea of the earmarked project] is just something that kind of came out of the conversation in terms of a need that we saw in the DOD that was not being addressed by current funding. There had been a DARPA Program for our type of activity and it had been somewhat successful but did not achieve DARPA's goals. And we thought that we had a solid case—a scientific idea—for a research program that could achieve the goals that DARPA wanted. So we decided to pursue that further; so we went to talk to some of our program managers that we knew in...other branches of DOD. They saw this as a need as well but they didn’t have a funding source for it so that is when we approached our congressional delegation about giving some support to get the money (R20).
Similar remarks were also made by a faculty member at Mondawmin:

The motivation then to go and ask for an earmark was that [the project's original grant came from an agency that] is well known for never renewing grants, ever. They have this attitude that they are not an operational agency. And so if somebody says to them look this is such a wonderful project you should fund it again. Then they say well if it is so wonderful, who ever thinks it's wonderful should pay, which is totally unrealistic....So it seemed to me that to keep it [the project] going and as a source of funds, it seemed to me that this [the earmark] was a peculiarly appropriate way to do it. It was almost like showing to the federal government that you should be funding this and we are going to try and help you to do it (R2).

3. Issues related to the willingness of administrators or faculty to cooperate with federal agencies in seeking earmarks as a way to build support for a project within the White House or Congress.

The final motivator that appeared worthy of mentioning was also, arguably, the most controversial. It dealt, in short, with the willingness of some institutions to work cooperatively with federal agencies to seek earmarks. This was the only motivator that was not corroborated by individuals at more than one institution. However, it was raised by a sitting president with extensive experience in working with federal agencies. The comments of the president explained how the motivation worked:

Now on the practical side of things there are activities and initiatives that for one reason or another the agency is not yet prepared to do—either because it is a new
issue or because it has difficulties in getting the initiative included in its budget request up the chain.... So basically [the agency] comes to us in terms of discussion, saying 'can you help us move this forward because we will not be able to do this any other way, and we know that we need some political support in Congress to do it?’ Now...when the head of that agency goes before the Hill at the budget hearings, he has to say he doesn’t want that [the earmarked project]. And in fact that agency head might not, but at some level there is a wink and a nod so that we know that is something that [has to be said]. And in that particular program explicitly there is the suggestion that well, if we can get another year of funding we can finally wear down the opposition to the program and get it into the administration’s budget request. So that’s very different from something that comes to an agency, which basically depletes its resources and capabilities to do what it was planning to do (R18).

Although no other institutions specifically cited as a motivator the desire to assist a federal agency in increasing its program budget through an earmark, the ability of both federal agencies and interest groups to manipulate the congressional appropriations process to obtain resources that support their activities or interests has long been documented. Payne and Siow (1999), for instance, in an early working paper focused on the impact of federal research funding on university research outputs, noted that “agencies seeking bigger budgets may seek to allocate research funding in a manner which favors schools affiliated with members on the appropriations committees” (p. 10). That agencies may also work with the institutions to try and “plus up” federal budgets by
encouraging the inclusion of earmarks in those budgets fits well traditional political theories of the “iron triangles” that exist in Washington between Congress, federal agencies, and interest groups.

Discussion of motivational factors
The studies published by the Carnegie Commission (1994) and Savage (1999) correctly noted that numerous motivators contribute to institutional decisions to seek earmarks. To identify the various motivators that had incited the institutions is this study to seek earmarks, I asked each participant to discuss his or her motivations for seeking the earmark. The answers were enlightening both for what they did and did not suggest. They did not suggest that these earmarks were intentionally sought due to the inability of the federal government to fund facilities. They did not suggest any evidence of being influenced by, or trying to influence, national rankings either by mass publications or the NSF. And for the most part, they did not suggest that these earmarks were sought as a correction for an inequitable peer review process.

They did suggest that differences in motivation may exist based on Carnegie classification and control (public versus private). They did suggest that, at least among the most “selective” institutions, the competitiveness of institutions with their peers was a major motivator. This included both the research institutions and the liberal arts college, but did not include, as one might suspect, the master’s institutions or the community college. They did suggest that the perception by the public four-year institutions that they must serve as economic engines for their states was a major motivator, whatever their
Carnegie type. They did suggest that among the research institutions and the community college issues of mission and need—whether a workforce or scientific need—were strong motivators. Interestingly, identification of such “need” did not always stem from institutions. It also came from the agencies themselves, which sought institutional help to increase their budgets. Finally, they did suggest that in all cases the conditions of resource constraints, opportunism, and entrepreneurialism played a major role in decisions to seek earmarks and the likelihood of success.

D. Analysis of findings related to the process:

Research Question 4: How are these institutions going about securing earmarks? Based upon the cases examined, how does the process work at different institutions, and do any instructive commonalities appear to exist across categories of institutions?

My concern with process in this study was to explore the procedures that institutions use to carry out such activities as the following: identifying projects for earmark support, developing a proposal, soliciting support for the project both on campus and in Congress, implementing the project, and monitoring the project for quality control. To gain insight into the various processes institutions used, I asked individuals participating in the case studies a series of questions related to these topics. Typical of the type of information gathered from these questions was the following, paraphrased sequence of events as related by a respondent at a master’s institution: They called me and asked if I wanted to participate. I called together the provost and the dean and made sure that it was okay then
spent the night writing the proposal. I didn’t hear from the agency until November. But once we received the grant we had to go through the usual procedures (R24).

Because most of the participants had also had experience with federal, peer-reviewed grant programs, comparisons were often made with those types of programs. Due to the idiosyncratic nature of the various projects studied, I found it difficult to draw significant parallels between the experiences of the institutions. Some commonalities, however, were observed. These were grouped into a series of process-related topic areas and are presented below.

Past research on the issue of “process”

Despite the wealth of articles debating the wisdom of academic earmarking, very little has been published on the actual processes or procedures institutions go through in developing and soliciting support for earmarked projects. The 1993-1994 U.S. House hearings provided the most in-depth detail of the processes institutions go through. In those hearings, the presidents of the University of Utah, and the University of Alabama, Birmingham, respectively, described their “approaches” to earmarks. At Utah, the president placed the process in the perspective of his institution’s total federally-sponsored research effort, saying:

Let me describe the University of Utah’s approach to federal funding. Our objective is simple: It is to overlay the areas of research excellence at the University with program or initiatives in which the federal government has announced an interest; or for which it has appropriated funds. This can range from
RFPs that agencies routinely insert in the Commerce Daily to initiatives announced by the President in the State of the Union Address. In short, our faculty create research proposals in response to federal initiatives. University committees and administrative officers review and prioritize the faculty initiatives to ensure quality, compatibility with University mission, availability of facilities, cost, and so forth. It is at this point that we may communicate with our elected federal representatives and ask for guidance on how to proceed [emphasis mine].

Our congressional delegation, for example, was able to suggest funding in the Strategic Stockpile for our research on the replacement of biopolymers of imported metals such as titanium and chromium in medical devices. We also work directly with federal agencies as we develop funding proposals. We understand that unless there are high-quality research results and a confluence of missions on the thrust of that research, our relationship with an agency will be less productive and less successful for all parties (U.S. House, 1993, pp 209-210).

The president of the University of Alabama, Birmingham, in his remarks, focused more specifically on the processes that led to a particular earmarked project at UAB, saying—

We have sought various ways of trying to fund our facilities, and ....[w]e have taken advantage of those opportunities that have been available to us....Where ever there is an agency that has funds available, we have...sought to obtain money from those agencies.... In the case of the biomedical research facility that I have discussed, there was no such [agency] that you could go to ask for support. It was on this basis that I approached directly the Alabama delegation....Our
A proposal was developed for the biomedical research facility by the faculty at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and then presented to the delegation. This request came directly from the university to the delegation. We do not use a firm to represent us in Washington, and lobbyists. These projects come out of the faculty and looking at our strategic plan in the university, and then we took this directly to our congressional delegation (emphasis mine)" (U.S. House, 1993, pp. 146-166).

The implication that emerges from each of these descriptions is that earmarking, at least at these institutions, is a controlled, strategically coordinated process that follows closely on the federally-sponsored research model that has been developed among American higher education institutions over the past six decades (see Graham and Diamond, 1997). In this model, university faculty develop proposals based on their areas of research interest, often responding to national priorities established by Congress and the federal research agencies, submit those proposals to their institution’s central administrative units for the necessary approvals and then ship them off to the agencies for review and, one hopes, funding. The impetus for developing projects under such a model resides with the faculty, the holders of expertise in their respective research areas. The flow of the project proposal process is, as one staff member interviewed put it, “bottom up,” flowing from the faculty to the central administration (for review and approval) to the federal agencies (R1). The key activity in this traditional model is the development of the research proposal, which is done by the appropriate faculty, approved by the institutional leadership, and then reviewed at the federal agencies by a committee of individuals.
selected for their expertise or familiarity with a subject. Earmarking, as it was described in the 1993 testimony by the presidents, is seen as a route of last resort. When it is determined by institutions that a traditional vehicle for funding does not exist, the project is placed on a list of possible projects for alternative sources of funding, and submitted to Congress. For many people, the processes by which university leaders identify, vet, and prioritize these projects, present them to Congress, and then advocate for them on the Hill appears to be something of a “black box”—an unknown process.

Recently, de Figueiredo and Silverman (2002) used data gathered from interviews with staffers on federal appropriations committees and university lobbyists to provide a glimpse into that black box by crafting a process portrait of academic lobbying at academic institutions. According to them, “the ‘life cycle’ of lobbying and obtaining an earmark is as follows. In January, a university’s administrators meet with its lobbyists to formulate their requests and lobbying strategy for the upcoming fiscal year earmarks. This entails prioritizing potential requests by the likelihood of success and identifying elected officials to lobby. In most cases, the lobbyist will approach the Representative and/or Senator from the university’s district. Beginning in March and April, the university begins lobbying the targeted representatives to have its request included in the appropriations legislation. After the August recess, there is a large push to have the request included in one of the thirteen appropriations bills. The cycle ends in November or early December, as the appropriations bills are sent to the President” (de Figueiredo and Silverman, 2002, see http://ssrn.com/abstract=521130).
This description by de Figueiredo and Silverman (2002), like the testimony of the university presidents in the House hearings, implies the existence of a uniform, routinized process at universities seeking earmarks—though the authors focus more on the government relations side of the process and less on the proposal development side. Payne (2003), though less descriptive than de Figueiredo and Silverman, also implies the existence of a systematic, coordinated process for earmarks. Her description was as follows: “In general, a university will identify a set of projects for which it would like funding. These projects can include such things as establishing a new academic program or school, building a research laboratory, renovating a dormitory, or funding a particular research project. Although individuals and researchers within the university may be interested in receiving an earmark, the top administrators at the university usually decide for which projects they will seek funding. Once the university has constructed its list of ideal earmarked projects it will then employ resources to lobby members of Congress for the earmarked funding” (Payne, 2003, p. 16).

Findings from the case studies

Process Finding 1: Based on the cases studied, the processes used by the institutions to identify, prepare, and submit projects for earmark support varied widely and frequently exhibited little of the routinization, centralized planning and coordination, or higher level prioritization or administrative oversight implied by Payne (2003), de Figueiredo and Silverman (2002), and cited by the institutional presidents at the 1993 House hearings. Surprisingly, the perception that there was little rationality to the process, and that past efforts of the institution to seek earmarks had been non-strategic and poorly supported,
was voiced by faculty and administrators at the institutions in the study that had enjoyed the greatest amount of earmarking success (such as Mondawmin) as well as at institutions that had enjoyed some of the smallest degree of success (such as Haberville).

The data from the case studies suggested that while formal, routinized systems for identifying and cultivating earmarks may exist at some institutions, such systems were not representative, at least not historically, of the processes found at the institutions in this study (with one of Delacroix’s earmarks being the apparent exception to this rule.) The processes by which the institutions participating in this study identified opportunities for securing earmarks, developed proposals to attract those funds, and worked with members of Congress or their staffs to secure the funds were characterized as much by serendipity and opportunism as strategy, rational planning, or centralized coordination and control.

For instance, at Haberville, the impetus for the project was the contact initiated by a congressional staff member to an administrator at the institution (and who had once employed the aide while he attended the institution). The inspiration for the project was the administrator’s experience in trying to relay cultural and archival information on the region to lay audiences (R23). The “flow” of the process was from Capitol Hill to the faculty at Haberville and then back to Capitol Hill. No list of institutional priorities guided or informed the project, as was discussed by the University of Utah’s president. No strategic plan was consulted or lobbying “game plan” drafted, as was predicted by de Figueiredo and Silverman’s depiction of the system (2002). Other than a quick “go
ahead" given by the provost, the central administration of the university provided remarkably little input or control (even that amount of central control was disputed, with individuals in the president's office stating that the PI had "put that together and got it before anyone on this campus knew, including the grants office) (R23, R24). Arguably, this lack of university-wide involvement in the process may have contributed to the project's later difficulty in achieving continued support within the campus. Whatever the eventual outcome, however, it would be hard to conceive a less strategically-planned or centrally-controlled process for securing funding than the Haberville case study.

Admittedly, Haberville appears to have been an outlier in terms of its serendipity and opportunism; however, findings of similar opportunistic processes that violated what we think of as the faculty-driven, traditional model of sponsored research appeared in each case study. For instance, at St. Sebastian's the decision to go after earmarks, as well as the goal of the project itself, was largely the result of the chief executive's vision for the institution (R5). Participation by faculty in the process at St. Sebastian's was at best secondary to the efforts of the president and a former board member, and appeared to be largely limited to the expansion of the proposal and its implementation after the earmarked funding was assured (R5, R6). Unlike the description of the processes at the University of Alabama, Birmingham or the University of Utah, St. Sebastian's was clearly not a case where the project came "out of the faculty." Further, the ease with which the project was adapted to fit the type of funding available—changing quickly from a focus on facilities to outreach based upon legislative feedback that "there ain't no money available for facilities"— does not square with traditional models of peer-
reviewed research, in which proposals are developed in response to a set of pre-determined priorities contained within a formal request for proposals (RFP) issued by the federal agencies (R5).

If Haberville was an extreme example of a bottom-up, faculty-driven process for developing earmark projects, and St. Sebastian’s was, in apogee, a model for a top-down, leadership-driven project, the examples provided by Mondawmin (and Delacroix) showed that both types could simultaneously exist at an institution. Depending on the project, and who was interested in it, the process at those two larger, and administratively more complex, research institutions was driven by either faculty, as was the case for one earmark studied at each institution, or administrators, as was the case for the other earmark studied at each institution. At Mondawmin, for example, the first project examined clearly came from the faculty. It was driven by a faculty member who recognized an unaddressed need for a service, developed a proposal, and then, largely on his own, worked through contacts at his institution and another institution in the region to obtain a direct appropriation for the project. Commenting on the level of involvement by the central administration, the principal investigator (PI) noted that, while the dean and provost supported the project and offered what help they could, there really was not anyone at the institution at that time who had the time or expertise to help the faculty member negotiate the process. As a result, the faculty member explained, “I operated in a bit of a vacuum really. I kept calling [the inhouse economic development specialist who was charged with trying to help advance the project] and saying what do you want [me to do]?” (R2). In all, the PI, though eventually successful, noted that the support given to the
project by the university administration had left him feeling “underwhelmed” with the way the campus had handled the process (R2). The provost at Mondawmin, when asked to comment on the project, agreed that the project had been “faculty driven,” and explained that it was from one of the institution’s “strong” departments so the central administration had trusted the faculty member to develop a quality project. It was a case, he explained, in which “[the PI] had contacts [and] the contacts proved productive” (R3). Relevant to the faculty member’s perceived lack of institutional support for the project, however, the provost admitted that the project went forward at a time when the campus “really had not organized the process very well” (R3).

In comparison, the initial earmark at Delacroix was directly attributable, according to both faculty and administrators at that institution, to the university’s president who had cooperatively worked with the president of a local museum to develop the initial concept for the earmark. Although the Delacroix provost felt that, given subsequent events, the university just “kind of fell into that [earmark],” he also credited the president with exploiting that initial success to stimulate similar activity on campus. That first earmark, the provost claimed, “sort of showed [the institution] ‘oh, we can do this,’ so at that stage [the president] brought together his government relations people and said “What more should we be doing?” (R19).

Finally, while the first earmark at Delacroix was clearly a top-down project, which was driven on campus by the president (a la St. Sebastian’s) at least initially, the process for the second project studied at Delacroix was almost the exact opposite. That project was a
bottom-up, a faculty-driven project that, of the nine different earmarks examined in the study, best illustrated the faculty-driven, strategically coordinated process envisioned by Payne (2003) and de Figueiredo and Silverman (2002). Discussing how the process worked for his project, the Delacroix faculty member noted: “I approached the university. The university did not approach me. We [he and colleagues at two other institutions] came up with this idea technically. We asked the program manger if they had any money to fund it. They said no, but if you guys found some money, we would be happy to take a look at it....[T]hen I approached my chair and I said ‘Look, I’ve got this idea, and these guys are talking about doing this congressional thing, do you know anything about it? And who do I talk to?’ So that is kind of what kind of set the wheels in motion. And only after I went through and convinced my chair, and I say convinced but it didn’t take much convincing because it clearly plays into one of the large activities that [the university] wanted to do” did the university agree to go along with the project (R20).

As with motivation, the case study findings strongly suggest that the process by which institutions identified, developed, and solicited earmarks, at least among the projects studied here, varied significantly. The impetus for the projects could, and did, come from chief executives of the institution (St. Sebastian’s and Delacroix), middle managers (Mondawmin), or faculty and staff (Haberville, Delacroix, Mondawmin, and Tri-County). The projects could enjoy the approval and support of the central administration (St. Sebastian’s and Delacroix) or they could be done largely on their own with little support from the university’s leadership (Haberville and Tri County). Although these findings do not reject the strategic, centrally-coordinated and controlled process
suggested by Payne (2003), de Figueiredo and Silverman (2002) and others, they do
strongly remind us that a variety of processes and motivations drive the decisions made
by institutions regarding earmarks. As tempting as it may be to try and fit the ways in
which such decisions are made and carried out on campuses into stereotypical processes
that are linear and strategically-coherent, such descriptions, at least according to the
evidence that emerged from these cases, may not be accurate.

Other findings related to process:
Although much of the above discussion pointed out the overall variability found within
the processes used by these institutions to seek out earmarks, at least historically, the case
studies also yielded a number of interesting commonalities. These may be useful in
adding to our understanding of the direction academic earmarking is taking today or will
take in the future. Some of the more relevant commonalities that emerged from the
discussions of process in the case studies are highlighted below.

1. Some institutions, especially the research institutions, have moved to become more
strategic in how they identify, develop, and cultivate support for projects amenable to
earmarks.

As a remedy to the serendipitous processes described above, several of the institutions in
the study noted that they had taken steps to implement procedures and controls that are
designed to routinize the internal processes by which projects that may be likely
candidates for earmarks are identified, prioritized, and presented to Congress. These steps
appear to be taking these institutions much closer to the centrally-coordinated and
controlled processes posited by Payne (2003) and de Figueiredo and Silverman (2002), and have occurred primarily at the two research institutions examined in the study, though there was also ample evidence that at least one of the public master’s institutions (Corinth) was also trying to be more strategic in the way it addressed possible earmark opportunities. The steps that the leadership of these institutions spoke of having taken include: 1) hiring internal staff whose specific role is to handle federal relations, with earmark opportunities being a large portion of the position’s portfolio (R3, R17); 2) hiring outside representation (i.e. lobbying firms) to help the institution identify opportunities and market projects on Capitol Hill (R19); 3) creating internal systems to ensure that candidate projects are sought from all areas of the campus, then vetted and prioritized by senior staff familiar with the institution’s strategic goals (R2, R3, 17); 4) working to build cooperative partnerships with other institutions, particularly those in key legislative regions, in order to improve both the “academic” attractiveness of the project as well as its “political” attractiveness (R4, R7, R19); and 5) working more closely with congressional and agency staff to try and match institutional projects or interests with the particular interests or priorities of their congressional delegation (R3, R19). The importance of this last step was stressed by one campus provost, who noted that though the flexibility of earmarks to support almost any kind of project was a useful feature but it was one that must be tempered by the realistic need to be able to catch the interest of a member of Congress (R3).
2. For some institutions, concerns over sustainability of earmark-supported projects, and the detrimental impacts that they might have on the institution’s central mission or activities have encouraged them to become more strategic about their use.

Helping to drive the movement by some institutions in the study to become more strategic about their use of earmarks was not the desire necessarily to become more adept at obtaining them but to make sure that earmarks did not have an unintended, deleterious effect of hindering the institution from carrying out its primary mission or draining the institution of resources needed in other areas. This concern was expressed by leaders at both research institutions included in the study, as well as the president of another research institution not chosen for inclusion in the study. In one case, for example, the president explained that while others were assigned the task of shepherding earmarked projects through the process, his own role as president was to serve as sort of policeman or “gatekeeper” making sure that the long-term interests of the institution were protected. “I try to maintain my position as the gatekeeper [emphasis mine] to determine what we are going to try and ask pork for and what we are not,” the president explained, but “even for an institution as small as mine, that is difficult to do” (R18). The president went on to state:

I’ve been asked by faculty, “well can’t we go and get an earmark for a…center?” And I say, ‘well you guys give me a plan first of all. Give me a concept that I can go and sell.’ And I get something that, from my standards anyway, is grossly insufficient….And I’m not saying this to brag, but I know some institutions…who would have acted on far less that what they’ve shown me. But…I’ve said, ‘well you’ve to tell me how is this going to be sustained?’
How are we going to sustain this thing over the long run, because I can’t see twenty years from now going and asking earmark money for this thing every year and year again. If it is a concept that says the breakout strategy that the agency would support, we could get it up and going, and then it wouldn’t need the earmark appropriation and it could sustain itself, then that is a different issue than if you are just telling me: ‘I want money’ (R18).

Similar to the above concerns about 1) the impact that earmarks can have on an institution, especially where sustainability might be an issue, and 2) the role the university’s leadership must play in making sure the use of earmarks is appropriate, were the comments made by the provost at Delacroix. In the remarks presented below, he referred to his own efforts to ensure that his university’s response, via earmarks, to federal priorities, was strategically sound:

I’m trying very hard not to let these agency priorities turn us into something that we’re not. I say that just because...Delacroix is such a niche institution. It is different from a lot of places. A place like [name of a large institution] can be much more nimble in terms of ‘Oh, there’s a need. Well, we’ll put something together.’ We don’t do that very well here. It is not how we operate. So my task in all of this is to be the policeman, [emphasis mine] I think. To keep us from being pulled in directions we don’t want to go by the demand factors that are coming out of the beltway. And of course, my main anxiety in all of this is sustainability [italics mine]. If you are going to do these things, how are you going to sustain
them? And so I’m always looking for… I mean I’m only agreeing to projects if someone can show me how we could wean ourselves from these dollars or move to programmatic dollars in such a way that you are not having to go to the senator’s or congressman’s office every year having to battle for the money (R19).

Such statements indicate a significant and growing concern among these institutional leaders of the impact a non-strategic use of earmarks can have on an institution, and a recognition by them of the critical role the institutional leadership must play in regulating the process. Such concerns, I believe, have contributed to the drive, at least among some institutions in the study, toward the more strategic, centrally-coordinated process of earmarking portrayed by de Figueiredo and Silverman (2002) and Payne (2003). The degree to which the institutions will be successful in reigning in what appears to be a serendipitous and opportunistic enterprise, however, remains to be seen. As a provost at one of the institutions intimated, there is a real challenge to trying to recast a largely-opportunistic activity into a more strategic system of operating without taking away the creativity and entrepreneurial drive that had been the key to success in the past (R3).

3. The use of outside lobbyists was not typical in the cases studied; however, most projects benefited from the advice or assistance of outside parties, whether they were officially connected to the institution or not.

Given the focus placed by Congress and national media on the issue of institutions employing lobbyists to secure earmarks (see Brainard, 2004, Field, 2004) an interesting
finding of the case studies was that so few institutions had employed registered lobbyists to secure the earmarks. Only one institution, Mondawmin, reported that it had used a lobbyist to help secure one of its earmarks, and that was considered a unique situation (R3). Because the official policy of the university was not to use outside lobbyists, the dean of the college had had to get permission from the university’s provost to hire a lobbyist using the college’s development funds. Despite this rather unusual process, the Mondawmin dean reported that his overall experience with the lobbying firm had been a very positive one for both him and the college:

They made the process really doable. I must admit we were really clueless. We did not know how to speak Congress-ese....So they basically helped us to understand. We gave them our ideas and they worked back and forth with us to help massage it into a workable proposal. And it was a real back and forth and they treated us with great respect through the process. So that worked very, very well....It was, you know, a very very positive process (R4).

In addition to Mondawmin’s experience, at least one other institution reported hiring a lobbying firm as part of a movement to strategically strengthen and coordinate its efforts related to federally-sponsored projects, including the use of earmarks (R19). This institution did not utilize the services of the outside firm, however, in obtaining any of the earmarks considered as part of this study.

Although Mondawmin was the only institution that had directly employed a lobbyist to help gain an earmark examined as part of this study, at least two more participants in the
study reported that their projects had benefited from the efforts of lobbyists engaged by other institutions that they were working with (R2, R18). However, they were quick to note that they themselves had maintained a careful distance from the activities of those lobbying groups. In addition, at least one comprehensive institution in the study indicated that it now recognizes the need to hire a lobbyist but the cost had prevented it from doing so.

Finally, as an endnote to the discussion of lobbyists, I think it is useful to point out a factor that consistently appeared in many of the case studies was the importance of, not lobbyists per se, but un-affiliated or unofficial third party contacts. Individuals at St. Sebastian’s, Mondawmin, Delacroix, Tri-County, and Haberville all noted that they had received voluntary assistance from individuals who helped them gain entrée to congressional offices, provided advice on effective ways to lobby Congress, and/or, provided advice on who to use if the institution was interested in hiring a lobbying firm. A key example of this was Mondawmin’s contact with a retired member of Congress. As a former senior member of the House appropriations committee, this individual provided both advice to Mondawmin’s dean, who was a self-described novice at trying to get a direct appropriation, and contact with professional lobbying firms (R4). Examples of important third party contacts mentioned by other institutions with earmarks included, the former alumnus with Washington contacts who agreed to work with St. Sebastian’s president (R5), the educational colleague with contacts among his state’s congressional delegation that helped Tri-County develop its proposal (R26), and a fellow faculty member at a regional institution who used his own institution’s contacts with Congress to
provide aid to Mondawmin's project (R1). The ability to identify and exploit such contacts, unofficial though they were, was a key example, I believe, of the opportunism and entrepreneurship that contributed to the success these institutions had in seeking earmarks.

4. The level of contact or frequency of contact between individuals at the institutions and congressional representatives or their staffs appeared to vary widely between the case studies.

Contrary to what I expected to find in a process so heavily dependent on personal connections and entrepreneurial activity, the level of time and personal attention individuals gave to lobbying congressional representatives or their staffs varied widely. At St. Sebastian's, the president had extensive interactions with congressional members and staff about that institution's projects, and noted that he had visited nearly every member of his state's delegation and key subcommittee members. The reverse was true at Haberville, however, where the principal investigator, after the initial interaction with a congressional staff member, indicated that she did not hear anything from the staff member or her representative after the proposal was submitted. Unlike faculty members at Mondawmin and Tri-County, she was never called to testify nor offer additional information (R24).

Further, such variation did not appear to depend upon the quality of the project, its size or sophistication, or the category of the institution. At Mondawmin, for instance, the provost noted that for one advanced manufacturing earmark he had been involved with, after his
initial contact with a member of Congress, he and his colleagues had heard nothing until the earmark for the project was published in the annual appropriations process. We had “talked to some of our congressional delegation at that time,” he explained and had “got[ten] them interested, and all of a sudden much to our great surprise and shock $7.5 million appeared in the federal budget earmarked for [Mondawmin University]. I had no idea...And the institution at the very top level [had no idea what the earmark was for]. So to the institution this was found money, and it started soliciting ideas about what to do to...spend this money. And I had to call them up and say. ‘this is mine’” (R2). Such a disconnected process in which there seemed to be very little rules about operating, the provost later remarked, could be tough to negotiate.

From the data provided, due diligence with regard to proposed projects—following through with contacts, letters of support, or additional information, did not seem to be a necessary requisite for success under the earmark process, though a number of institutional representatives were very diligent in their follow through. However, the idiosyncratic nature of the projects, and the unique situation of each campus with respect to the level of access it enjoyed to its congressional representatives, made the importance of such follow through difficult to judge. In addition, the data reported in the study also could be significantly influenced by the perspective of the individual interviewed (the perspective of the provost, for instance, versus that of the campus government relations director) and his or her knowledge of what other steps had been taken by individuals, such as federal relations directors, at the institution.
5. The level of detail involved in the preparation of proposals for earmarked projects varied significantly, with the simplicity of the process being seen by many participants as preferable to the requirements of traditional grant programs. However the post award processes for earmarked projects were seen as just as strict, and possibly more important, than those under traditional peer reviewed grant programs.

Unlike traditional peer review programs, where the development of a project proposal is the first step in applying for funding, and continued consideration of the project depends upon the quality of the proposal and the individuals who are proposing it, the proposal development processes described by the case study participants were much less traditional. The process for developing the proposals under at least some of the earmark projects, tended to be more flexible, less formal, less prescribed. Some institutions, made the initial approach to legislators with little more than two-page proposals outlining key goals for the project but giving little specific information. One case study participant, who asked to remain anonymous, indicated that even this level of detail could be considered unusual, noting the comments of one congressional staffer who, when presented with the institution’s plan for the project, said “Oh good, you’ve got a plan. Most just want money.” Another earmark recipient noted that the one- to two-page proposal he had submitted was “the easiest proposal he had ever had to write” and “got more bang for the buck than any of the traditional grant programs” he had been involved with (R22). In addition, the process for developing earmark-related projects appeared to be more amenable to allowing plans to be quickly altered to fit the vision of legislators or fiscal circumstances. For instance St. Sebastian’s changed its initial project’s focus,
which was on facilities, to incorporate an outreach and education focus, after receiving one powerful Congressman’s warning that “There ain’t no funding for facilities” (R5).

Regardless of the level of flexibility involved in the pre-award process, once the proposal was accepted for funding, even though it was through an earmark, the process was described by most participants as following the same structure and requirements as traditional sponsored research grants. That meant that the institutions worked closely with their agency officials, provided detailed reports as required, abided by the agency’s budget management regulations, and went through proper channels required for permission to alter their project plans. The process at Delacroix, for instance, was described as follows:

Once...the money [was] appropriated by Congress, I [went] through the normal peer review process at the Department of Defense. I wrote a proposal just like anybody else and it [got] reviewed just like any other proposal gets reviewed....It [was] treated just like any Department of Defense grant....The money [was] appropriated in this case to [name of an sub agency group], as soon as [the group] heard that they [had] the money, I contact[ed] the...program manager that we have worked with to identify the need. They ask[ed] for a proposal. Then, just like all my other DOD grants, we went through a process where we had to write a proposal and have it evaluated (R20).

Several case study respondents, after noting the freedom that they had experienced in drafting their proposals, saw this post-award process as being more locked in or in the
words of one participant, more “restricted.” As one project recipient noted, “You have to mind your P’s and Q’s. You have to do everything everybody else does” (R26). Several participants, however, expressed appreciation for the post-award regulations, noting that it gave them a sense of oversight and quality control (most indicated that the ability to abuse the system was diminished by the regulatory control imposed by the agency at this level). For at least one institutional representative, the agency post-award requirements provided a sense of validation regarding her project—e.g., she felt that since her project was being held to the same level of scrutiny as those funded through traditional peer review program it helped to prove its “value” (R24).

Again, due to differences in the case studies, the projects, and how the earmarks were funded, the agency that funded them, the way the congressional approval process was handled, etc., it is hard to draw any conclusions about the proposal process other than the most obvious one: that it varied significantly (and hence was a source of concern regarding its fairness). Although a number of case study participants suggested that the issue of variability may be due to differences in the way different agencies handle the processes (the difference say in the level of scrutiny the Department of Defense gives to projects versus the National Endowment for the Humanities) or the differences in facilities projects versus research projects, no evidence was available to support this. Institutions seeking facilities projects reported just as much variability in the process as institutions seeking research project funds. More importantly, the vagaries of the pre-award part of the process were interpreted as both a boon and a plague for those institutions seeking earmarks. Several participants expressed appreciation for a process
that allowed institutions to create their own projects, tailored to their own visions of what was needed. Others, however, noted that this lack of direction could backfire if the “powers that be” were not interested in that particular vision. As one administrator indicated, you don’t know what will catch the interests of Congress; it seems to be at the whim of your representative (R3).

Discussion of process
In its process and serendipity, the practice of earmarking at academic institutions appears to fall somewhere in between the highly-structured, tightly-regulated model of federally sponsored research that has evolved over the past half century in the U.S. (which emphasizes formal proposals, heavily focused on past scholarship in an area, addressing federally-set priorities that are often slow to change) and the more idiosyncratic grant-making processes that private foundations have developed (which frequently require shorter, less formal proposals or pre-proposals addressing issues that currently are of interest to the foundation or its benefactors--sometimes those interests are published and sometimes they are not). Many institutions, even those like Mondawmin with significant experience with the earmarking process, are just now developing processes to try and navigate this “new” system that has developed for research and project support. This development process includes trying to figure out ways to strategically manipulate the system by identifying opportunities, cultivating support, and leveraging resources. Most institutions at whatever Carnegie level, and whether public or private, have standardized this process at the sponsored research level and have become increasingly adept at soliciting private giving. The earmark funding process represents just one more way to
gain needed resources that institutions are trying to develop and exploit. Process wise, many institutions appear to be still trying to understand the rules of a game in which political capital and the ability to access this capital may be more important than scholarly reputation or track records related to past research, and developing contacts and gaining face time with the right people becomes more important than developing formal proposals. The issue becomes how to effectively tap into the political power and, to some degree, how much will Congress choose to democratize the process by distributing access to all institutions

E. Analysis of findings related to impact.

Research Question 5: To the extent it can be assessed, what impact have these earmarks had on their recipient institutions? What benefits appear to have accrued to institutions, or their communities and states based upon the earmarked projects that have received?

"Many arguments are advanced to defend academic earmarks...There is undoubtedly some element of truth in many of these claims, but all of them fail to communicate the disturbing nature of academic earmarks:...It is a process that destroys rational efforts to set priorities tied to national needs;...it is a process that fails to protect taxpayer's investment. There is neither accountability nor checks in the system the earmarkers have set up. This is not to say that every academic earmark is wasted money. However,
there is no way to gauge the quality of a project supported through
earmarks and no way to turn the spigot off.”

Rep. George W. Brown (D-CA) *(Interim Report on
Academic Earmarks in U.S. House Hearings, 1994, pp. 304-305)*

The impact academic earmarks have had on the institutions that have received them continues to be one of the most significant and unresolved issues surrounding the direct appropriations phenomena/debate. Do earmarks have the beneficial effects that supporters of the process, such as John Silber have claimed, or, as former Chairman Brown argued above, do they represent an insidious process that thwarts the will of those members of Congress charged with establishing national research priorities and ensuring that those priorities are met through high quality research?

**Past research on the topic of impact**

Despite the expressed intentions of the House committee members to investigate the “results of the earmarking process,” including “the benefits of the earmarks to the universities and their regions,” the 1993 House hearings were inconclusive in their treatment of this subject (p.101). After soliciting comments from 50 institutions that received earmarks in the 1993 appropriations bill, the chairman noted that “although many of the responses indicated that some high quality work is being performed with earmarked funds, it [was] still [his] belief congressional favoritism [was] no substitute for merit review of individual projects.” Brown then went on to note that less than 5 percent
of the institutions of higher education in the U.S. benefited from earmarking in 1992, that many of the top winners in sponsored research were among that five percent, and finally that the list of top earmark recipients changed remarkably little. Summing up, the chairman concluded that "all earmarks are not necessarily wasted, but it is neither a fair nor a wise way to distribute our scarce federal dollars in support of education and research. It is a process that undermines the existing system of peer and merit review. Just as importantly, earmarks are beginning to eat into the base programs of the federal agencies rely on to fund our scientific enterprise. Finally, earmarking gets some of our agencies far-a field from their institutional mandate" (1994, p. 309).

The finding that earmarking had done little to reshuffle the deck among R&D winners was echoed later by Savage (1999). Noting that "perhaps the central issue in the debate over academic earmarking [was] that of equity," Savage went on to state that "rather than promoting a more equitable distribution of resources, earmarking encourages its own concentration of funding, sometimes benefiting geographic regions, states, and universities that are already major recipients of merit-reviewed funds" (1999, p. 142-43). His data showed that of 35 institutions that had received $40 million or more in earmarks over a 16-year time period (1980-96), just thirteen improved their NSF R&D ranking, while ten experienced declines in their ranking (the other twelve had never been ranked so Savage they could not compare them in his analysis). Attempting to explain this apparent variation in the ability of earmarks to positively impact the ability of recipients of large earmarks to improve their competitive status, Savage noted that a key may lie in the type of earmark received. He noted that "simply put, to be a top ten or top twenty
research university in the United States, an institution must be able to compete successfully for biomedical research funding, the largest source of federal academic R&D support, and for the research grants offered by NSF, the second largest source of federal R&D support. However, many earmarks simply do not contribute to institutions in this way. The universities that have demonstrated the most improvement in their R&D ranking,...[h]ave used their earmarks to achieve these goals and...are clearly great success stories of earmarking” p. 158. Savage concludes with the statement that “earmarking by itself appears to produce mixed results in strengthening an institution’s ability to compete for federal research funds”; however, if used strategically “earmarks may indeed enhance an institution’s ability to compete for much greater federal funding” (1999, p. 158).

More recently, Payne (2003) carried out the first published attempts to assess the impact of earmarked funding on research activity, as measured by academic articles and citations. Drawing on data sets from the Chronicle and Savage, Payne (2003) used regression analysis to measure the possible impact of earmarked funding on the number of academic articles published by faculty at recipient institutions and, as a measure of quality, the frequency with which those articles were cited. Her findings, which covered only earmarks going to research and doctoral institutions, suggested that while earmarked funding may increase the quantity of articles published by faculty at institutions benefiting from earmarks, the quality of those publications is lower. In addition, Payne found that for earmarks related strictly to agriculture, which she argued often go to smaller, more “discrete” projects, the results indicated that the effect generated by an
increase in earmarked funding was not statistically different from zero. This included both publications and citations per publication. Payne's summary judgment was that reliance on political decisions for distributing research funds may lead to poorer quality research. However, she also noted that the fact that earmarked funding is frequently more concerned with applied rather than basic research could lead to activities other than publications and would affect this outcome.

It is clear from the description of past research, above, that 1) few researchers have attempted to tackle the issue of the impact that academic earmarks have had on research activities, 2) that except for the 1993-1994 House hearings, the only research done on impact has focused on the research and doctoral institutions, and 3) that the measures used to assess the impact of research have been largely indirect measures, such as institutional R&D dollars and research publications. The goal of this section of this study was to try and examine the direct impact of earmarks at the institutional level or below; explore the ways in which the individuals at institutions that have received earmarks assessed the impact of those earmarked projects; and, if possible, identify commonalities in the assessment mechanisms used. Because perceptions of impact or benefit may differ depending upon a person's position within an institution or relationship with a project, individuals with varying levels of responsibility and connection to the earmark-supported projects were queried.

Findings regarding impact that emerged from the case studies

Not surprisingly, the overwhelming majority of the study participants questioned about
this issue claimed that the earmark-supported projects they were associated with had had a positive impact upon their institution. However, the benefits that they subsequently listed as accruing from those projects typically were local (e.g., confined to the department and, on occasion, the larger institution) and often specific to the expressed goals or outcomes of the project. For instance, one participant, when asked to discuss the impact of a specific earmark or the major results coming out of it, provided the following examples:

I would say basically it was the result of our accomplishments and all of the objectives, the seven, we had....I think we were very successful in co-sponsoring events for the communities and for organizations. We offered services for young people, [such as] middle schools data repair workshops, all the way up to adults....We offered several seminars targeted at women. ...And then, we did presentations to grassroots organizations...on technology and women and how to seek funding to create avenues for bringing technology or seek technology for their churches, etc. (R26).

Reactions of other participants to the question of impact varied from the concrete, project-specific outcomes cited as an example above, to more wide-ranging results, which traced the impact of the projects from the personal or program level to the wider institution level. Typical of these types of comments was the following exchange provided by a PI outlining the impact his earmarked-supported project had had on the students and staff who participated or worked in it, as well as the institution as a whole:

One of the things that is very important [to us] is outreach. For example, we reach
out with the summer program to the coal fields of West Virginia, to the Latino students among the Rio Grande in Texas, to inner city kids in [the East]....We make it possible for them to come to this university....not only to make these students possible candidates for the freshman class at [this institution] but also to provide something to them just in terms of that summer experience, whether or not they are going to come [here]. These are things that are personally important to [me and the staff working on this project]. [So] the outreach is very much a part of that, but the possibility of recruiting really top flight students in also a part of that.

In addition,...we...buy computers and things like vans. And that is a good example....[We] have for years struggled with transportation and... [then] the [project] acquired four vans, big fifteen person vans, at the time the [institution] was getting out of the van business, so now... I don’t have to worry about whether the...motor pool is going to have one that actually runs because I can see to that myself. So additional resources is what I’m getting and...it is just wonderful to be able to do that. Small amounts of money that can be directed to, not that a fifteen person van is a small amount of money, but other small amounts of money that can be directed to a course like mine just make a world of difference.... So that sort of resource is very important and the earmark here, the directed grant, makes it available to me and I make it available to other people at the [institution] (R21).
Although it is possible that the types of benefits reported by participants, such as those highlighted in the exchanges above, could result in increased activity that would show up in the outcomes examined by Savage (1999) and Payne (2003) (i.e., increases in faculty support or instrumentation could lead to increased ability to compete for R&D funds or publications), it seems unlikely, at least for the majority of cases examined in this study. And perhaps more importantly, for most of the projects examined in this study the measures used by Savage (1999) and Payne (2003) were not seen as either a desired outcome or relevant to their goals. When given the chance to describe the impact their earmark-supported projects had had, most participants in the study chose to adopt terms or measures that were intrinsic to the goals of their projects and, on occasion, the larger interests of their institution. And because the projects varied so much in their goals, the measures used to describe the impact they had had also varied widely.

Discussion of impact

In the final analysis, I believe that the issue of the specific impact these earmark-supported projects have had, as well as the issue of how to effectively measure the impact of earmarks in general, must remain largely undetermined. While the measures developed and used by Savage (1999) and Payne (2003) offer useful, though I also argue limited, ways to help us examine the impact of some kinds of earmarks, the information gleaned from this study reminds us that institutions seek earmarks for a wide variety of reasons, and those may have little or nothing to do with building research infrastructure or increasing the traditional R&D-related products that are derived from such infrastructure. To effectively assess the impact of earmarks upon these institutions, we must first move
beyond our limited, R&D-focused conceptions of what is driving earmarking and take into account the full range of goals and motivations that lie behind its use. This, no doubt, will prove to be a difficult task.

Implications for policy makers: Ensuring accountability and quality

Given the apparent permanence of the academic earmarks, and the difficulty that we face in trying to develop appropriate measures of their collective impact, a more achievable policy-related goal, and one which could have important implications for higher education’s future, may be creating a system that holds each institution accountable for an agreed-upon level of performance with regard to its individual earmark-supported projects. One of the most persistent and unresolved aspects of the academic earmarking phenomenon remains the issue of quality control. Specifically, a key question facing Congress, the federal agencies, and the higher education institutions involved in earmarking is this: How do you ensure some standards of quality exist in projects funded through earmarks when the process traditionally relied upon to ensure such standards—peer review—has been circumvented? Or, to paraphrase Representative Brown’s comments in the 1993 House hearings, how do you hold institutions accountable in a system where there is no agreed upon way to assess the quality of an earmarked projects or “turn the spigot off” if it is warranted? (p. 305)

This is an issue that several institutional leaders and faculty members in the study acknowledged struggling with as part of their decision to seek earmarks. According to the information they provided, there are a number of formal and informal controls that are seen as currently contributing to, or having the possibility of contributing to, some level
of accountability and quality control with regard to earmark projects (though, they also acknowledged, few of them alone was sufficient). These practices can be grouped into three categories. The first consists of controls imposed by external actors and includes such things as the level of scrutiny and oversight exercised by members of Congress and their staffs, particularly those members or staff with expertise in key areas such as defense procurement. This was referred to by one participant as the type of quality control mechanism available to any "buyer" of resources or products. The second category consists of controls imposed by the processes or procedures that institutions go through, or can be forced to go through, in acquiring the funds. For instance, depending upon how the language is structured in the appropriations bill or accompanying report, institutions may be forced to undergo some type of competitive proposal development or planning process before the funds are awarded or disbursed (such as a controlled competition that could be held by the federal agency or third party organization). This type of procedural control is in addition to the standard federal operational and financial reports all institutions receiving federal funds are required to file, including those awarded through direct appropriations. Mondawmin's provost, in particular, saw this procedural process as an effective tool that was available to Congress and for ensuring quality control. Finally, the third category consists of internal controls imposed by the institutions themselves. Depending upon how centralized or controlled the project development process is on a particular campus, these controls may include such things as requiring the review and approval of the institution's president and chief academic officer before going forward. It may also mean that projects must meet a series of institutionally-
imposed standards or tests, such as that of sustainability, before being allowed to be put forward for funding.

Of these three categories of quality control, the one regarded by many of the study participants as the most effective, and ultimately the most important, was the final one: institutional control. The factor that administrators and faculty interviewed in the case studies, and particularly those at the most competitive, research-oriented institutions, cited as ensuring the quality of and institutional accountability for these projects was the reputation and integrity of the institution and its faculty. Institutional leaders said that, in the final analysis, they trusted their faculty and the quality of the scholarship or research produced by them not to embarrass the institution or damage its reputation (of course, this trust was aided, as one provost acknowledged, by the fact that the faculty involved in such entrepreneurial projects typically were "big hitters" and not, in the provost’s words, "run of the mill faculty" (R3)). This trust, in turn, was bolstered by the faculty’s desire, as they expressed it, to not do anything that would embarrass their institution or, more importantly, anger their congressional sponsors in such a way that they would be unwilling to support similar projects in the future. As one anonymous participant noted rather colorfully:

You know, just risk of embarrassment with your congressional delegation [is a great motivator for accountability]....I mean, I don't know if it is like this in say West Virginia, but [our senior senator] is a very tough minded man. And he doesn’t put up with a lot of crap. If it isn’t producing he is going to raise hell and you’re going to pay for it.
Ironically, given the fact that some researchers and policy makers, such as Savage (1999) and Rosenzweig (1998), have viewed earmarking as resulting from a breakdown in professional norms among faculty and administrators, I believe that the answer to how institutions can ensure quality will depend most upon the internally-imposed controls discussed above, and the willingness of institutions to police themselves.

Historically, all efforts to impose any type of external controls on earmarks going to academic institutions, whether that effort was led by reform-minded members of Congress or leaders of higher education institutions/associations, have failed. The problem, I believe, has been that such efforts were focused on the all but impossible task of stopping or at least severely impeding earmarked spending. I propose that higher education and congressional policy makers concede the fact that earmarking is an entrenched, de facto system of funding and focus their efforts instead on developing a system to ensure accountability and quality in the products that emerge from it. In the end, it will be in the self interest of the higher education community to reach a consensus on a model for ensuring quality and accountability at the project-specific level.

Specifically, I propose that all institutions receiving earmarks be encouraged by their congressional sponsors to engage in a form of post hoc review of earmarked projects, which would assess the outcomes of those projects through a set of pre-agreed upon, pre-defined quantifiable measures. These limited measures would be negotiated with the project’s oversight agency before the project was initiated and would be based upon
outcomes identified by the institution and their faculty as appropriate to the project's goals. The institutions would be required to provide a report a summary of the project's outcomes using the agreed upon indicators at the conclusion of the report (or, in the case of multi-year projects an agreed upon time period). These reports, in turn, would be open to post award audits by the agency or other investigative units (such as the General Accounting Office). Because agency resources to conduct such audits are limited, it would be largely up to the institutions to self-monitor or self-police their projects. However, because the summary reports would be public information, they would provide a measure of public accountability not currently in place. Institutions that failed to follow the agreed upon reporting mandate could face, as the ultimate sanction, disbarment from receiving future direct appropriations, or, in the case egregious of malfeasance, all federal monies including student aid.

Obviously such an effort would take the cooperation of members of Congress, the federal agencies, as well as the institutions of higher education. However its adoption and implementation would also allow higher education and Congress to get away from what has been a rancorous and ultimately fruitless debate over earmarks, their motivations, and their impact. It would allow us to take our first steps towards a workable model of accountability (replacing the vacuum that currently exists) that includes all the different types of institutions now participating in the phenomenon, and uses accountability measures that are appropriate to their unique projects, institutional goals and institutional aspirations. Given the growing federal deficit, increased concern over available funding for discretionary federal programs, and renewed calls for controlling earmarks, it would
be in the best interests of all institutions, whether they participate in earmarking or not, to push for the adoption of such a process. It may be the only way that higher education institutions can once again present a unified front to Congress and the general public demonstrating that they are good stewards of the public resources entrusted into their care.

F. Conclusions from the study

Few issues within the higher education community have generated as intense and sustained debate as the phenomenon of academic earmarks. From the first earmarks to AAU member institutions in the early 1980s, through congressional and association efforts to limit growth in the early 1990s, to the rapid proliferation of earmarks among different types of institutions that is occurring today, this issue has been debated repeatedly and with great virulence by members of the higher education community, by Congress, and by the public. The reasons for concern are easy to comprehend. At $2 billion and growing, academic earmarks now equate to almost a tenth of the budget that Congress annually appropriates for basic research at all academic institutions. Such sums going to unauthorized projects, people worry, may sap the ability of the federal agencies to fund basic research in authorized priority areas. Further, by bypassing congressional authorization processes and eliminating peer review, the earmarking process undermines key tenets of the nation’s science policy.

Supporters of earmarks, not surprisingly, reject these arguments. They point out that academic earmarks represent but a small percentage of total federal spending on basic
research, and, in many instances, are budgetary "plus ups" that an agency would not otherwise have received. Further, they argue that peer review is not the guarantor of quality that it is professed to be by many and has never been the only instrument used to fund research facilities and projects. Finally, they argue that, as it is currently practiced, peer review has led to an imbalance in research wealth and facilities that stymies competition and innovation in favor of maintaining the status quo.

Given the stakes in this debate, and the tenacity with which it has been argued by both sides, it may come as a surprise that, when we look closely at the phenomenon of academic earmarks, we discover how little is known about key aspects of it. For instance, until now, we have known little about the prevalence of academic earmarks among institutions in categories other than the most research intensive institutions. We have had, until now, little direct evidence of the motivators that encourage institutions to seek out earmarks, and even less information on the processes they use to do so. And finally, despite three decades of academic earmarks going to institutions, we have only just recently begun to assess the impact that they have on institutions.

This lack of knowledge, I believe, is at least partly due to the fact that earmarking is a political process that thrives on anonymity, and as such is inherently difficult to investigate and map. But the lack of knowledge is also due to the tendency of past researchers to focus almost exclusively on the top research institutions, and use broad and indirect measures of impact. This somewhat myopic focus on a relatively small number of institutions is understandable given the prestigious place these institutions have in our
nation’s higher education system, their historic level of participation in earmarking, and the implications that their involvement has for basic research in this country. However, I argue that this myopia has caused us to overlook information that we must have if we are to better understand the totality of the phenomenon.

This study was designed to address the gaps that exist in what we know about academic earmarks. Using a mixed design research approach that utilized both summary data from national data sets and qualitative data from a series of institution-based case studies, this study was guided by five research questions. These questions can be summed up, in journalistic fashion, as simply who, why, what, and how. Who is participating (what is the scope of participation)? Why are they participating (what are the motivators driving participation)? What is the impact of their participation? And how are they going about participating (what are the processes they use)? A summary of the major findings that emerged from my investigation based upon these research questions is presented below.

**Findings related to the scope of participation by institutions of higher education in earmarking**

1. The use of earmarks now appears to be ubiquitous among the nation’s top research institutions. Earmarks within the Carnegie category of doctoral-research universities-extensive (DRUEs) and doctoral-research universities-intensive (DRUIs) have proliferated to the extent that nine out of ten DRUEs received at least one individual earmark between 1990 and 2002, and seven out of ten DRUIs received at least one individual earmark over the same time frame. Helping to
drive this proliferation has been an increase of approximately 600 percent in the number of individual earmarks going to academic institutions overall between 1990 and 2002.

2. The use of earmarks has begun to penetrate into other categories of institutions as well. Between 1990 and 2002, the “market share” of earmarks received by all non-research institutions increased from less than 16 percent to 28 percent (versus a decline in market share for the top research institutions—DRUEs—which went from 58 percent in 1990 to 49 percent in 2002). In addition, in 2002, for the first time since the Chronicle began recording earmarks a decade earlier, the number of master’s level institutions receiving at least one earmark surpassed the number of research institutions receiving at least one earmark. As these data suggest, the greatest growth in the number of earmarks is now occurring in the ranks of master’s, liberal arts, and community colleges—institutions that have their own unique missions, goals, student populations, and reasons for seeking earmarks, and institutions that, until now, have been historically overlooked in studies examining the use of earmarks.

3. The use of earmarking appears to be both serial and long-term. The data suggest that once the use of earmarks becomes deeply ingrained in an institution, or a community of institutions, their use is likely to be serial (over the thirteen year-period examined in this study, participating DRUEs averaged receiving 24.1 earmarks) and long-term (DRUEs involved in earmarking averaged receiving at
least two earmarks in seven out of the 13 years examined). If efforts to control earmarking are renewed, such findings portend serious difficulty for any externally-imposed attempt to wean institutions off earmark dollars.

4. Academic earmarks, whatever their original intent, now appear to go overwhelmingly toward project support rather than support for facilities or infrastructure. In addition to undermining one of the key arguments traditionally used by earmark supporters, this trend, if it continues, could have serious consequences for attempts by federal agencies and Congress to prioritize and control programmatic spending for basic research.

Findings related to the motivations driving institutions of higher education to participate in earmarking

5. The use of earmarks is driven by a variety of institutional motivations and circumstances. Although traditionally, public debate has focused overwhelmingly on concerns about fairness and facilities, decisions to seek out earmarks appear to be driven by a mixture of motivators, including some that have long been recognized in the literature (such as need, institutional ambition, and expectations of economic development) and others that have not been recognized or, at least, discussed in any depth (such as opportunism, entrepreneurialism, mission, a desire to advance knowledge or provide services, and a desire to cooperate with external agencies and organizations).
6. The motivators that helped to drive the use of earmarks at institutions in this study may be divided into two types: case constant motivators, elements of which were found at each institution in the study regardless of Carnegie type or focus; and case specific motivators, elements of which were found among some but not all institutions, and appeared to depend upon characteristics particular to the institution(s)—such as level of competitiveness with peers, mission, whether publicly or privately controlled, etc. Motivators in the former group include: need, opportunism, and entrepreneurialism. Motivators in the latter group may include such drivers as institutional ambition, institutional competitiveness, expectations of economic development, mission, etc. Both types of motivators may cut across Carnegie boundaries to influence institutions as diverse as research extensive universities and baccalaureate liberal arts colleges. The case constant motivators, however, appear to serve almost as a "conditioning function," meaning their presence may be of particular importance in establishing conditions that encourage and support the successful solicitation of earmarks.

Findings related to the processes institutions of higher education utilize or have developed for seeking out earmark support

7. The processes that institutions use to identify, mature, and cultivate support for earmark projects vary widely. However, a centralized, strategically-driven model that has been implicit in most descriptions of the process did not appear to apply, at least historically, to the cases studied. In those, opportunism, entrepreneurship, and serendipity dominated the process regardless of the size of the institution, its
research orientation, or its past history with earmarks. However, at several institutions, particularly the most research-oriented institutions, steps to try and institutionalize the process have been taken within the past three to four years. Although some of this is concerned with increasing the likelihood of success, at least some of it has been driven also by concerns that earmarking, if uncontrolled, could negatively impact the institution. Whether these steps will allow institutions to gain greater control over the process, maximizing their returns while minimizing negative effects, remains to be seen.

Findings related to the impact that earmark supported projects have had on institutions of higher education or their communities

8. Finally, the impact that earmarks have had on the institutions and their communities, at least in this series of case studies, tends to be viewed by project participants in very localized or project-specific terms (i.e., “we were able to gain access to travel support,” or “purchase software,” or “hold outreach workshops”), with larger, institutional-wide assessment of impacts only occasionally done (i.e., “we gained access to a more diverse population of students,” or “we were able to establish a capability here that no one else had and...were able to go after, subsequently, competitively awarded grants for the program”). However, this focus on project-specific or narrowly defined goals for what are in reality very wide-ranging projects means that there is an inherent disconnect between what project participants regard as the proper outcome measures for their earmarked
projects and the broad, indirect measures (such as total R&D funding or research publications) some researchers have used to measure and compare impact.

So what do these findings tell us about American higher education and the issue of earmarking? Although the debate over academic earmarks traditionally has been tied to the research enterprise, with supporters justifying earmarks as a tool to redress the imbalance of research wealth and facilities that come from the peer review process used in traditional research programs and opponents rejecting earmarks on the grounds that their use undermines the budget and priorities of research programs, the findings of this study strongly suggest that the scope of institutions participating, as well as their motives for participating, are much more varied and diverse than has been previously recognized.

American higher education institutions, whatever their educational or research focus (research, comprehensive, baccalaureate, or associate’s) more than ever before are expected to fulfill a wide variety of missions and roles. These include educating students, training workers, promoting discovery, spurring economic development, providing community service and outreach, and promoting and transmitting the cultural heritage of their regions, states, and even our nation. As institutions expand operations and services to meet these added expectations they are under relentless pressure, particularly given current economic conditions, to find new sources of support, new revenue streams, new operating models that will allow them to carry out these activities more efficiently and more effectively. These “demand” versus “resource constraints” are as true for community colleges and comprehensives as for research institutions. Academic
earmarking, I believe, is coming to be seen by institutions of all categories as a relatively new, and comparatively unconstrained, way to meet these resource needs and societal expectations. The result has been not only a tremendous increase in the number of earmarks sought and awarded but also a major shift in the types of institutions participating, the types of projects for which they are seeking awards, and finally the processes by which they identify candidate projects, develop these projects, and attract congressional support. With this context in mind, and given the shift that is occurring within the phenomenon, I argue that the traditional explanations of the factors driving the use of earmarks by higher education institutions no longer serve us well. A new model for understanding the actions and implications of the phenomenon is needed.

G. Policy Implications from the study: Moving toward a model of academic earmarking

The case study data show that the solicitation and use of academic earmarks is driven by a variety of motives at the institutional level, including but certainly not limited to such factors as economic development expectations, institutional ambition, institutional competitiveness, mission orientation, scientific and educational needs, and the desire to cooperate with or assist external agencies. In addition, the impact of these motivators or incentives on institutional actions is to a large degree determined by a set of pre-existing conditions (need, opportunity, and entrepreneurship) that, when present at an institution, appear to encourage success at seeking earmarks.
Developing a model for understanding earmarking

I believe these findings can be used to create a “model” of earmarking that can be used to explore and interpret the phenomenon. That model, expressed most simply, is as follows:

Motivation + Leadership + Opportunity = Earmark Funding

The motivators in the model can be a number of things: the need for additional financial resources, a desire to address some perceived national or regional need, a desire to respond to internal or external expectations for the institution, frequently economic or mission driven, etc. Motivators vary by institution and the level/responsibility of the person involved. The more complex the organization, the more complex the motivations may be (or the more diverse the motivations). However, even at the smallest, and arguably, most homogenous institution studied, there are a variety of forces pushing the earmarking phenomenon.

The leadership element is essentially having someone at the institution who is energized by one of the motivators discussed and has the willingness and ability to go after the funding. This can occur at the chief executive level or it can occur at the staff or faculty level. A contributing factor in this, I believe, is the entrepreneurial character of modern college/university leaders, faculty, and staff. Obviously, faculty and staff may respond to different motivators than do presidents and provosts, and vice versa.
And the final and key component is opportunity. Opportunity generally serves as the triggering mechanism for the phenomenon. This opportunity can be something as direct as being solicited by a congressman or potential lobbyist, or as indirect having a strong relationship with a particular program or program officer, or having another institution approach an organization with an offer to collaborate on a project or idea. Having strong elements in each of these categories is not necessary for success: an institution may be lacking in motivation or leadership and still enjoy initial success (due, say, to a strong opportunity). However, the likelihood that initial success in this situation would evolve into long-term success in earmarking appears doubtful. The most effective institutions studied, defined as those with the most sustained earmark support, had in place all of the elements in the model. Clearly, further research needs to be done to see if this model is valid and effectively contributes to our understanding of the issue.

The meaning of the model in terms of institutional and national policy

The model could mean different things to different organizations, depending on their perspectives, needs, and goals. For institutions that may be seeking to create earmarking success, they could look at this model, assuming its validity, as a guide to understanding and/or developing the general elements that help contribute to success. From a national policy perspective, the model could be looked at as a way to understand and control the various elements that contribute to the phenomenon and how they interact. For instance, based upon this model, policy makers attempting to create programs or policies to limit earmarking might ask: “what are the personal or institutional motivations—vision, mission, economic development, institutional ambition, etc.—that contribute to
earmarking and how do they interact with congressional appropriations procedures (the opportunities)?" Policy initiatives might then be created to further study or address the situation. Or, policy makers could focus on the phenomenon at the leadership level. Policies that encourage or discourage college leaders or faculty from directly soliciting support might be studied or created, with the understanding that the success of such efforts may be directly tied to the motivations they face or the opportunities they find. Finally, policy makers might choose to address the phenomenon at the opportunity level. Policies discouraging congressional offices or agencies from providing direct support to institutions (or projects at institutions) could be developed, for instance, with the understanding that such support is frequently brokered by third parties. Clearly a benefit of this model is demonstrating the interlinked nature of the characters, motivations, and opportunities that take place with regard to earmarking. And just as clearly addressing any one of these elements in isolation would be both difficult and futile. Therefore the model helps to show that, to be effective, any policy must take into account the process as a whole and a single focus on just one component, which has been much of the past conversation, will probably not be effective.

Final thoughts on the proposed model

This study was just one step among many that will be needed to formulate and assess such a model. However, it is an important step. The findings from this study show that, at the very least, we must realize that every institution involved in earmarking brings motivations that are unique to it, including its mission, its economic and cultural environment, and the aspirations of its leadership, faculty, and staff. To create a model
that addresses the phenomenon adequately, whether the goal of that policy is a quixotic attempt to eliminate earmarking or a more realistic effort to try and ensure in the process a greater degree of accountability and integrity, we must first recognize these differences and how they play out in institutions involved in the process.

**H. Suggestions for further study**

A number of areas for further study were identified through either the descriptive or case study components of this study. Perhaps as good a starting point as any for additional exploration would be the proposed model. Ultimately, to be useful to policy makers at either institutions or agencies more research needs to be done to see whether the model accurately explains or predicts the environmental, personal, and motivational factors that affect earmarking at institutions beyond the extremely small group of institutions that participated in this study. One fruitful area of future research may be the relationship among the different elements of the model and their individual level of importance. The key question, I believe, is simply this: is one or more of the elements stronger or more predictive than the others (i.e., should leadership be given more weight than opportunism) or does the strength of the elements depend upon the unique situation of the particular institution, college, or department?

In addition to research on the model proposed above, an obvious area for additional research remains the issue of impact and how to assess it. Both Payne (2002) and de Figueiredo and Silverman (2004) have noted that the impact that academic earmarks have on the research productivity of institutions, including the quality of research produced by
those institutions, is an area that requires further research. Yet, the extent efforts to do so (Savage 1999, Payne 2002) have all utilized broad, aggregated indicators of impact (such as overall institutional R&D) that may or may not have a direct connection to the project for which the earmark was awarded. The findings from this study remind us that earmarks go to support many different types of projects at different types of institutions, each with its own mission, goals, and expectations. In seeking a way to measure the impact of earmarking that allows us to address the policy question of "what has the investment of federal funds through earmarks gained for us as a nation," we must not fall into the trap of looking at all earmarks through the same research-based lens. A method of satisfactorily matching the project goals with the appropriate outcomes-based measures must be found.

A third area ripe for additional exploration concerns the motivations that drive institutions to seek earmarks. Payne (2002) did not explore motivations but identified this topic as an area for future study. Savage (1999) and Rosenzweig (1996) speculated on motivation but focused almost exclusively on the category of research institutions. This study looked at the motivators professed by faculty, staff, and academic leaders at nine academic institutions or systems of institutions representing six Carnegie classifications (though only six institutions representing five Carnegie classifications were chosen for highlighting in the case study section) and with different types of control (public versus private). The study found that some motivators did appear to cut across various classifications or control types for the institutions examined (for instance ambition appeared to be more related to selectivity or peer competitiveness than research focus or
Carnegie classification). This finding should be explored with a larger population of institutions.

Finally, as was extensively noted in Chapter Five, the area of process—the procedures that institutions go through in trying to identify, develop, cultivate projects for earmark support—is an area that has been significantly neglected in past studies. When it was addressed in past studies, researchers have tended to frame the process in the same way that traditional "sponsored research" projects are described. That is, project ideas are generated by faculty. The project ideas are matched with existing, authorized federal agency programs. Extensive proposals are developed by faculty using the specific format and guidelines developed by the agency, and submitted to central administration for vetting and approval. The proposals when cleared by the administration are submitted to the appropriate agency for review and funding. The agencies make funding decisions based upon the published set of guidelines using peer review to identify the "best projects." As this study has shown, the faculty-driven "bottom up" process, with proposals crafted by faculty in response to federal programs, and cleared by university administrators, has frequently not been the reality for earmark-supported projects, at least at most of the case study institutions. Instead, I have argued that these projects often would be more appropriately described using a private-giving model, i.e., a possible project idea is floated (sometimes with the knowledge of the university's leadership, sometimes not) past a philanthropist (in this case a member of Congress, and preferably a member of a Senate or House Appropriations Committee) who is able to pick and choose from an array of projects based on his/her own personal interest. There are few ground
rules to follow and the interest and priorities of the philanthropist may change without notice. Once the decision is made and funds awarded, then a full project proposal is developed, submitted to an agency, and financial monitoring procedures are implemented. It is a system, in the words of one participant in the study, in which Congress is willing to underwrite some of the start-up risk costs for untested projects (i.e. not peer-reviewed project) in return for a possibly high return on its investment (R4). Exploring this perspective on earmarking further, I believe, could expand our understanding of the phenomenon.
### Appendix A: Interview List for Data Analysis Section

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Institution Classification*</th>
<th>Type of Control</th>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Transcripted</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<td>R1</td>
<td>Associate Dean</td>
<td>DRUE Public</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>9/11/2002</td>
<td>Notes</td>
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<td>Public</td>
<td>9/12/2002; 5/9/2004</td>
<td>Tape/Notes</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Public</td>
<td>3/24/2004</td>
<td>Tape/Notes</td>
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<td>Off campus</td>
</tr>
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*See [http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/Classification/](http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/Classification/) for information on institutional classifications.

NA = Not applicable
NOTES

1 Opponents of earmarks would argue that the example of the NSF Facilities Program is a clear example of the degree to which earmarks hinder full funding. The program has never received anywhere close to its authorized appropriation level, yet billions of dollars have been earmarked for facilities (U.S. House, 1993). Proponents would point out that this is a false argument since those earmarked facilities dollars come from a wide array of spending bills. The chance that anywhere near that amount would be awarded for a single program is very, very small—thus supporting their claims for alternative sources of funds.

2 Silber and others have argued that it is even more unjust than it first appears since the resource rich institutions became that way through federal funds, including facility funds, that were awarded to them other than through peer review means. In essence, in Silber’s view, the “have” institutions built their facilities and programs with the use of federal funds that were not peer reviewed (since such programs did not exist at the time), then used though federally funded facilities to monopolize resources and shut out institutions that were not early beneficiaries of the federal largesse. Now, Silber claims, they want to make sure their “cartel” is not threatened by institutions that refuse to play by their established rules, i.e. by peer review (U.S. House, 1994).
Comparisons of information taken from the NIH website using averaged data for 1986, 1987, and 1988, the second, third, and fourth years for AREA, and 1998, 1999, and 2000, the most recent years for which data are available, show that the success rate under the program has dropped from an average of 45.1 percent to 28.3 percent (computed by number of applications versus number of awards) as the number of applicants has outpaced the number of awards made. The good news is that though the average number of awards made fell from 170 in 1986-88 to 165 in 1998-2000, the average amount per award increased from $10,984 to $18,025. See (http://grant.nih.gov/grants/funding/area_appr_awds.htm).
Works Cited


VITA

Sherrell Anthony Foster

Sherrell Anthony Foster was born in Oxford, Mississippi on October 31, 1958. He received his B.A. in English from the University of Mississippi in 1981. From 1984-1986, he attended Mississippi State University where he received his M.A. in English.

The author entered the College of William and Mary's Higher Education Program in 1995, and received an Ed.S. in Higher Education in 1999. His dissertation was defended in December 2004. He currently serves as assistant vice chancellor for accountability and planning at a public university system.