Culture Clash: A case study of the issues that non-traditional college presidents face in adjusting to academic culture

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Culture Clash: A Case Study of the Issues that Non-Traditional College Presidents Face in Adjusting to Academic Culture

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Sean Michael Heuvel
November 2014
Culture Clash: A Case Study of the Issues that Non-Traditional College Presidents Face in Adjusting to Academic Culture

by

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Abstract

This study examined the issues that non-traditional college presidents face in adjusting to academic culture. Defined here as presidents who come from non-academic backgrounds, such as government, business, or the military, this paper used a case study design and pragmatist approach to analyze the experiences of three such individuals, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower at Columbia University (1948-1953), former North Carolina Gov. Terry Sanford at Duke University (1969-1985), and former U.S. Sen. Paul S. Trible at Christopher Newport University (1996-present). A combination of historical research and interview formats were utilized to learn about the experiences that Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible had in adjusting to academic culture at their respective universities. This study found that Eisenhower had a very difficult adjustment experience while Sanford and Trible were more successful in adapting to academic culture. This study concluded that for non-traditional presidents, vision, adaptability, commitment to institution, and prior academic exposure were key issues in facilitating a successful adjustment experience to academic culture.

Keywords: academic culture, college president, non-traditional

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EDUCATION, POLICY, PLANNING, AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

As American higher education advances into the 21st century, the college presidency is undergoing a rapid and significant evolution. Once the reserve of career academics, dwindling government funding and increased competition for private support are prompting hiring boards at college and universities to seek out individuals who are adept at fundraising as well as friend-raising (Howard, 2007; Tromble, 1998). To find such leaders, higher education institutions are appointing their presidents increasingly from professional sectors outside of the academy, including the business, military, and government realms (The American College President, 2012; Basinger, 2002; Fischer, 2005, Greenberg, 1998; Trachtenberg, Kauvar, & Bogue, 2013; Will, 2003).

Often referred to as non-traditional presidents, these new types of leaders were defined for the purposes of this study as college presidents with little to no prior professional experience in higher education. Over the past 28 years, these non-traditional college presidents have become more common across all institutions, increasing in representation in higher education from 10.1% in 1986 to 20.3% in 2011 (The American College President, 2012). The number of presidents with experience outside of academe across various four-year institutions, which are the focus of this study, is also compelling. For instance, in 2011 non-traditional presidents comprised 15% of all doctorate-granting institution presidents, 15.5% of master’s institution presidents, as well as 25.7% of baccalaureate institution presidents (The American College President, 2012). However, despite their growing presence, little scholarly research has been done to analyze their efficacy as educational leaders. To date, the majority of writing on non-traditional presidents has been solely in the form of editorial commentary (Cotnam, 2006). Further,
little is known about how these non-traditional presidents perceive, respond to, and adapt to academic culture.

**Statement of the Problem**

Based on existing scholarly literature, there are distinct differences between academic and non-academic cultures. Scholars portray non-academic cultures (particularly business culture) as profit driven and being focused on the bottom line (Hofstede, Van Deusen, Mueller, & Charles, 2002). Conversely, academic culture prioritizes notions of academic freedom, collegiality, and collective decision-making (Rosovsky, 1990). Further, while scholars have generally portrayed non-academic cultures as highly organized and goal-oriented, others have described academic culture as an organized anarchy with highly ambiguous goals (Cohen & March, 1974; Lane, 1985; Pfeffer, 1997). While there has been a recent neo-liberal push for higher education to adopt more business-like practices, the traditional foundations of academic culture have remained sound (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004).

These differences in cultures are significant and carry important implications for non-traditional college presidents, since most will be unfamiliar with academic culture upon assuming their posts. Recent higher education history is full of highly publicized examples of non-traditional college presidents (Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower at Columbia University, former U.S. Sen. Robert “Bob” Kerrey at New York’s New School, etc.) who had serious difficulties making the adjustment to academic life. Their problems ranged from disputes with faculty leaders to trouble adjusting to the collective decision-making process found in many areas of higher education. However, there are other examples of non-traditional presidents who made the cultural transition with little or no trouble.
Nevertheless, as noted earlier, the potential for this clash of cultures is increasing as the number of non-traditional presidents in American higher education is rising gradually. For instance, the September 2014 appointment of veteran Florida state legislator John E. Thrasher as president of Florida State University was met with considerable protest from students and faculty, who had favored more traditional academic candidates (Schmidt, 2014). Dismissing the selection process as being tainted with political favoritism, the faculty senate had even passed a resolution for Thrasher not to be appointed, claiming that “he lacked the stated qualifications required for the position” (Schmidt, 2014, p. 2). However, several board of trustee members countered that with Thrasher’s immense political network, he was uniquely positioned to raise funds for the university and increase its national reputation (Schmidt, 2014). Ultimately, this episode at Florida State University may foreshadow a clash between academic and non-academic cultures that could become even more acute in the future.

According to the American Council on Education’s (ACE) 1986 Report on the College Presidency, about 10.1% of all (four-year and two-year) college presidents came from outside of higher education. Redden (2008) noted that after reaching 14.7% in 2001, the numbers slipped back to 13.1% by 2006. However, by 2011 the number had grown significantly to over 20% of the overall presidential population for four-year college presidents— the object of this study— and roughly 17% for two-year college presidents (The American College President, 2012). More specifically, private colleges have traditionally hired a larger number of their presidents from outside academe (Song & Hartley, 2012; The American College President, 2012). According to ACE’s The American College President (2007), the percentage of non-traditional presidents serving
at private institutions (18.9%) in 2006 was over double the number of non-traditional presidents serving at public institutions (7.3%). By 2011, the percentage of non-traditional presidents serving at private institutions had grown to 27.6%, while the percentage of non-traditional presidents at public institutions was 13.9% (*The American College President*, 2012). Interestingly, the hiring gap between private and public institutions increased incrementally between 2006 (11.6%) and 2011 (13.7%).

**Purpose of Study**

As the ranks of non-traditional presidents are growing steadily in American higher education, it is imperative that greater scholarly attention is placed upon them. More specifically, focused research is needed to determine what issues they face in adjusting to academic life. As the rising number of non-traditional presidents is beginning to generate significant potential for a culture clash between the worlds of academic and non-academic culture, this issue needs to be studied in order to provide current and future non-traditional presidents the information they need to succeed in office. The alternative would be to just stand by and watch several of these presidents possibly fail, such as when former U.S. Sen. Robert “Bob” Kerrey and former U.S. Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers suffered faculty no-confidence votes during their presidential tenures at the New School and at Harvard, respectively (Santora & Foderaro, 2008). However, such a strategy would be counterproductive to the nation’s educational interests. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the issues that non-traditional college presidents face in adjusting to academic culture and derive what lessons could be learned to inform future practice.
Methods Summary

Employing a qualitative research methodology and case study format, data were obtained by studying three non-traditional presidents and the experiences they had in adjusting to academic culture. These presidents included Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, who served as president of Columbia University from 1948 to 1953, former North Carolina Governor Terry Sanford, who served as president of Duke University from 1969 to 1985, and former U.S. Sen. Paul S. Trible, who has served as president of Christopher Newport University (CNU) since 1996. Collectively, these individuals are among the highest profile non-traditional academic leaders who have served as college presidents in the United States. Moreover, they each experienced unique adjustment processes to academic life in different historical, cultural, and organizational contexts that merit closer study. Data were collected by a combination of qualitative approaches, including archival research, content analysis, and interviews.

Research Paradigm

The research paradigm that served as a foundation for this research was pragmatism (Biesta & Burbules, 2004; Creswell, 2012). Individuals holding this worldview “focus on the outcomes of the research – the actions, situations, and consequences of inquiry – rather than antecedent conditions” (Creswell, 2012, p. 22). Further, there is a focus on the practical implications of research as well as a concern for applications and solutions to problems (Creswell, 2012). Thus, instead of focusing on methods, pragmatists examine the problem being studied as well as the questions asked about the problem (Creswell, 2012). Considered by many to be the only uniquely American philosophy, pragmatism, according to Schwandt (2001), had its roots in the
work of William James (1842-1910), John Dewey (1859-1952), and Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914).

Though there are many versions of pragmatism, the philosophy generally "views knowledge as an instrument or tool for organizing experience, and it is deeply concerned with the union of theory and practice" (Schwandt, 2001, p. 204). This study fit within the realm of pragmatism because it endeavored to draw practical lessons about the issues that non-traditional presidents face in adjusting to academic culture from the experiences of three modern non-traditional presidents. Ultimately, this research is intended for use as a resource for new non-traditional presidents as they begin the process of learning about and/or adapting to academic culture. It would also be a vital resource for those involved in the selection of non-traditional presidents, including board of trustee members and other academic leaders. By examining this study, they would have a more complete understanding of the academic culture as well as the possible issues (both positive and negative) that non-traditional presidents face in acclimating to it. In following the pragmatist philosophical tradition, this study focused primarily on outcomes – namely how it could help new non-traditional presidents adapt to academic culture.

Research Questions Investigated

The research questions that were addressed in this study included:

1. What perceptions do non-traditional presidents have of academic culture?
   A) How do those perceptions help them in adjusting to academic culture?
   B) How do those perceptions hinder them in adjusting to academic culture?

2. How do non-traditional presidents adjust to academic culture?
   A) What are (if any) the key issues that non-traditional presidents face in
adjusting to academic culture?

B) How have some non-traditional presidents been able to adjust to academic culture successfully while others could not?

Significance of the Study

Understanding more about the issues that non-traditional college presidents face in adjusting to academic life is significant for several reasons. On a personal level, this study serves as important exploratory research to provide a strong foundation for my future research in this area. On a broader level, this study is also significant because it addresses a key leadership challenge that many new non-traditional college presidents face – what are the issues involved in adjusting to academic culture and how can that adjustment best be achieved? Further, to what extent are these adjustment experiences influenced by institutional type? As rising numbers of leaders with non-academic backgrounds are appointed to college presidencies, research in these areas will be an important resource for those who need to make that transition successfully.

Moreover, whatever academics think of these non-traditional college leaders, they are becoming a more common presence at higher education institutions across the United States. As the higher education community looks increasingly to this type of leader for leadership, it is imperative that non-traditional presidents are studied more closely in order to help prevent possible adjustment problems and to help facilitate success. Thus, the findings from this study could help inform practice for new non-traditional presidents in the future. For instance, exposing such presidents to this information in leadership development programs could possibly enable them to avoid some of the mistakes made by their predecessors. These findings would also be useful for hiring boards, giving them
Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical perspective for this study was rooted in two distinct strains of leadership theory. In recent years, several scholars have studied the leadership process within academic settings (Boyett, 1996; Gregory, 1996; Neumann & Neumann, 1999; Pounder, 2001; Ramsden, 1998; Randall & Coakley, 2007; Rowley & Sherman, 2003). Within the broad realm of leadership theories, two specific theoretical approaches—adaptive leadership and change leadership—are most applicable to how non-traditional presidents may lead while adjusting to academic culture. Heifetz (1994) pioneered the research on adaptive leadership, basing it on the premise that leadership is more of a process rather than individual personal capabilities (Heifetz, Kania, & Kramer, 2004; Randall & Coakley, 2007). According to Randall and Coakley (2007), “this process requires people to focus on the specific problems at hand and to modify the way they have worked in the past” (p. 327). In his model of adaptive leadership, Heifetz (1994) focused it on the process and not the person, and the model employed the knowledge of all who have a vested interest in moving the organization to the next level (Randall & Coakley, 2007).

Along with Ronald Heifetz, other scholars have studied how leaders lead most effectively in a culture of change, often referring to the concept as change leadership (Beckhard & Pritchard, 1992; Beer, Eisenstat, & Spector, 1990; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Fullan, 2001; Goleman, 2000; Hamel, 2000; Koteen, 1991; Kotter, 1996). Heifetz (1994) argued that people must re-conceptualize their philosophy of leadership, framing it as the
mobilization of people to solve tough problems instead of merely looking for a heroic figure to save them. Thus, this study utilized both adaptive leadership and change leadership as a theoretical lens to explore the extent to which Presidents Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible were able to adjust to academic culture.

**Definition of Key Terms**

The following key terms were used in this study:

- **Academic Culture**: an institution in which values such as objectivity, academic freedom, and respect for students and human subjects guide academic behavior, and are therefore reflected in the language, symbols, and ceremonies of academic life (Clark, 1983; Dill, 2012).

- **College President**: a generic term for the chief executive officer of a college or university. Other titles may include university president or chancellor (Cotnam, 2006).

- **Non-Traditional College President**: A college or university president who meets one or more of the following conditions (Cotnam, 2006):
  1) Lacking an academic doctoral degree (Ph.D. or Ed.D)
  2) Holding an immediate prior position outside of higher education
  3) Having no faculty experience (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001)

**Summary**

Due to the increasing demands and complexities inherent in the modern college presidency, more and more hiring boards are looking to executives from outside the realm of higher education to provide leadership. This has been driven in part by the rise of neoliberalism in higher education since the mid-twentieth century (Slaughter &
Rhoades, 2004). Based on a philosophy of generating wealth and building a free market, neoliberalism within the higher education context involves transitioning colleges and universities toward privatization and commercialization (Brentnall, 2013). This vision has also been used as a rationale for the withdrawal of state funding from public universities, prompting them to adopt neoliberal practices only used previously by their private institutional peers (Fish, 2009). However, critics of neoliberalism contend that such short-term, profit-driven approaches rob the academy of its fundamental mission and consequently short-change its students (Giroux, 2014).

Within this neoliberal paradigm, recent history has shown that non-traditional college presidents can often provide the fundraising and friend-raising prowess that many revenue-starved institutions are currently seeking (Bomstein, 2011). However, little empirical research has been done to analyze this new type of president to which colleges and universities are looking increasingly for leadership. Chapter 1 outlined the statement of the problem and the means by which this study will explore the issues that non-traditional college presidents face in adjusting to academic culture. To provide the necessary context for this study, the next chapter will provide a thorough literature review that explores the applicable scholarship in the evolution of the college presidency, the demands on modern presidents, the dynamics of academic culture, as well as the processes of adaptive and change leadership. This section will provide the appropriate contextual background to examine the methodology for this study, which will be outlined in Chapter 3. Each presidency will then be reviewed in individual chapters, followed by a findings chapter that also examines implications for future research.
Chapter 2 – Literature Review

As discussed in Chapter 1, the college presidency is undergoing a significant change in response to increased organizational complexity and increased demands for fundraising as well as friend-raising prowess (Howard, 2007; Tromble, 1998). Thus, higher education institutions are appointing more regularly their presidents from professional sectors outside of the academy, including the business, military, and government realms (Basinger, 2002; Fischer, 2005, Greenberg, 1998; Will, 2003). Often referred to as non-traditional presidents, they were defined for the purposes of this study as college presidents with little to no prior professional experience in higher education.

While these non-traditional college presidents are becoming more common across the higher education landscape, little scholarly research has been done on them to analyze their impact on higher education. To date, the majority of writing on non-traditional presidents has been solely in the form of editorial commentary (Applebome, 1995; Basinger, 2002; Cotnam, 2006; Fischer, 2005; Greenberg, 1998; Mead-Fox, 2009; Redden, 2008). Further, little is known about how these non-traditional presidents perceive, respond to, and adapt to academic culture. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the issues that non-traditional college presidents face in adjusting to academic culture and derive what lessons could be learned to inform future practice.

This literature review explores existing scholarly and anecdotal literature on non-traditional presidents and the issues they face in adjusting to academic culture. Further, it examines existing research attempting to define academic culture and how it compares and contrasts with other forms of organizational culture. Further, this literature review
explores research on the leadership approaches that presidents often use to engage with their academic community - namely adaptive and change leadership.

**Overview of Literature Review**

The following literature review examines the existing scholarship that pertains to non-traditional presidents. It includes some of the aforementioned media coverage and statistical reports, along with scholarly research on the college presidency that focus at least in part on non-traditional presidents. There is also a section on academic culture, which has received far more attention in the scholarly literature than non-traditional presidents. This literature review includes references to research that attempt to define academic culture as well as studies on how it compares and contrasts with other types of organizational culture. Further, there is a section on adaptive and change leadership, which provides a framework for what approaches non-traditional presidents may use in adjusting to academic life. However, it is useful to begin this study with applicable research on the evolution of the college presidency and how non-traditional presidents have figured into that process, specifically in modern times.

**The Evolution of the College Presidency**

Several scholars have explored the evolution of the college presidency over the last two to three centuries (Bornstein, 2003; Kauffman, 1980; Nelson, 2009; Rudolph, 1990). From the colonial era through the mid-20th century, the college presidency was largely the reserve of academics (Kauffman, 1980). In the 18th and 19th centuries, presidents would often serve as professors and continue teaching while performing their administrative duties (Bornstein, 2003; Rudolph, 1990). As higher education evolved in the 20th century, a career track began to take a more focused shape. According to Cohen
and March (1974), those aspiring to the presidency would begin their careers as faculty members, and earn successive promotions to department chair, dean, and finally provost or academic vice president. However, further research suggested that this career ladder was a bit too simplistic; arguing that most presidents did not advance through the ranks in that particular order, and had even skipped certain steps on occasion (Moore, Salimbene, Marlier, & Bragg, 1983). Nevertheless, the predominant path to the presidency during this period remained an academic one – requiring aspirants to hold a series of faculty and or administrative positions before making the jump to a presidency (Bimbaum & Umbach, 2001; Wessel & Keim, 1994). This pattern has continued to the present day, with roughly 80% of all college presidents coming from traditional academic backgrounds (The American College President, 2012).

Consequently, college presidents with academic backgrounds remained the norm throughout the so-called “Golden Age” of higher education (spanning from roughly 1945 to 1970). However, as the twentieth century progressed the recruiting and hiring pattern began to gradually shift, as the demands on the college president began to change (Cook, 1997). As Whetten and Cameron (1985) argued:

For at least two decades after World War II, higher education administrators had a relatively easy job. By traditional standards, administrative effectiveness was almost universal. Enrollments were increasing, revenues were growing... and almost unprecedented prestige was associated with college professors and administrators in the eyes of the public... All of that changed in the 1970s and was magnified in the 1980s: the availability of funds was severely curtailed; the legitimacy and
usefulness of college degrees called into question... the public prestige associated with faculty and administrator status plummeted along with their relative earnings. (p. 35)

According to Keller (1983), for these and other reasons, the postwar higher education boom had begun to fizzle by the mid-1970s. Further, beginning in the mid-1960s, larger numbers of students, driven by population growth and a growing middle class, began attending college (Bornstein, 2003). This growth prompted an expansion in educational infrastructure as well as in the numbers of faculty, but also in the administrative staff necessary to manage the more complex organization. Thus, institutional administrative structures gradually became more elaborate, and the presidency became more bureaucratic and managerial in nature. All of this was also happening in a time when financial resources were increasingly scarce. A 1996 commission established by the Association of Governing Boards described the modern academic president as “juggler-in-chief, expected to meet an endless stream of individual needs and special demands within and outside the institution” (Renewing the Academic Presidency, 1996, pp. 9-10). Along the same lines, Asghar (2013) argued that the modern college presidency is probably the most demanding leadership job possible.

Along with growing institutional complexity, the job requirements for academic presidents began to change in the 1970s. Gone were the days when a broad array of academics could assume college presidencies. Instead, the job was beginning to require individuals with specialized skills. For example, state funding for many public institutions began to decline in the 1990s, prompting these colleges to look toward private sources for financial support (Bornstein, 2003; St. John & Parsons, 2005). This
development caused many governing boards to look favorably upon presidential candidates with experience in fundraising and networking, skills that many career academicians do not possess. As Bornstein (2003) noted, the Council for the Advancement and Support Education (CASE) documented an increase in the number of college presidents with backgrounds in advancement from 25 to 167 between their 1982 and 1997 surveys. As Applebome (1995) explained:

It's not that corporate tycoons and professional managers are displacing classicists and zoologists en masse as university presidents. But increasingly, as the demands on university presidents center on raising money, restructuring and political savvy rather than traditional academic pursuits, universities are considering less traditional candidates for the pressure cooker job of university president. (p. 1)

Consequently, the college presidency is no longer exclusively the reserve of career academics, and non-traditional presidents are slowly but surely becoming more common. As Nelson (2009) noted, “of course, college presidents are educators. But the reality is that presidents do not as actively play and are not as forced by nature of their office to serve the role of educator as was once the case” (p. 70). This trend can also be explained by examining the evolving responsibilities of modern college presidents, which are increasingly calling for skills in fundraising and friend-raising that career academics do not always possess.

Evolving responsibilities of the college president. In addition to researching the evolution of the college presidency in general, higher education scholars have begun studying the evolution of responsibilities for presidents. This area of research is
important as it shapes what qualities hiring boards will look for in presidential applicants. For instance, hiring boards have a modern tendency to hire people who are like them, typically possessing non-academic professional backgrounds such as business and government (Glazer-Raymo, 2001). Thus, with the increasing complexities of the modern college presidency, it only reinforces the notion among hiring boards to hire people who have the necessary and expanded skill set to handle the job. Increasingly, job requirements tap skills in fund development, entrepreneurial development, and partnership creation.

As Birnbaum (1988) wrote, “the days of amateur administration when faculty temporarily assumed administrative positions and then returned to the classrooms are long since over at most institutions” (pp. 6-7). Based on this assumption that business-oriented hiring boards want leaders who can focus on the bottom line, Birnbaum (1988) further noted that as colleges and universities become more complex, specialized knowledge in such areas as federal regulations, higher education law, organizational management, and student development theory are required of administrators to pursue their work effectively. In a similar vein, Esterberg and Wooding (2012) noted that modern presidents have the “fundamental responsibility of setting the direction for the campus, seeking sources of funds, and making the budget work” (p. 27). Consequently, presidents across all four-year institutional types reported in 2011 that fundraising and budgetary/financial management, and not academics, consumed most of their time (The American College President, 2012).

Several scholars have supported this view, stressing that the academic presidency has become more complex than ever before (Bornstein, 2003; Kerr, 1991; Neumann,
Neumann (1989) found that presidential strategy has become more complex over the years and that it now focuses more on shaping organizational members' perceptions and attitudes. Further, she concluded that changes in presidential strategy may result from changes in the environment or in the presidents themselves as they learn the job (Neumann, 1989). However, the study was limited by a small sample size and did not highlight non-traditional college presidents.

Bornstein (2003) argued that the presidency is made more difficult because of increasing public and media scrutiny. In a similar vein, Kovala (2014) asserted that college presidents must now engage in the “everlasting interview” (p. 1), where they are constantly held accountable to their institutions’ students, faculty members, administration, and community. Kerr (1991) concluded that modern college presidents are more like political leaders, “depending on persuasion and coalition building rather than the authority of office to get things done” (pp. 218-220). This point was echoed by Asghar (2013), who argued that since college presidents work closely with tenured faculty who cannot be easily fired, they must lead through collaboration and cajoling, not control. However, what remains unknown is how non-traditional presidents approach faculty interaction.

Pusser (2000) stated that many observers now believe the academic presidency is “an untenable position... mutating beyond the ability of anyone to do the job” (p. 3). This long list of challenges is leaving a noticeable impact on the cadre of professionals who are qualified enough and willing to take on a college presidency. Higher education observers are now noticing a “shrinking pool” of qualified candidates for presidential positions (Mead-Fox, 2009, p. 1). As Mead-Fox (2009) argued, the changing nature of
the college presidency along with shifting cultural norms regarding family obligations are now causing many aspiring academic leaders to rethink their presidential aspirations. Consequently, it is increasingly difficult for hiring committees to find superior candidates (Mead-Fox, 2009). With a multitude of on-the-job challenges, it is clear that the role of college president is in the midst of a dynamic paradigm shift.

Career paths leading to the college presidency. Even though research on non-traditional presidents is sparse, scholars have completed valuable work in related areas that can provide useful insights. Moore and associates (1983) conducted pioneering research concerning variations in career paths among presidents of four-year institutions, but the study was limited by a small sample size of 156 presidents. However, the study found that a single hierarchical trajectory does not reflect accurately the career experience of the majority of deans or presidents (Moore, et al., 1983). Almost two decades later, Birnbaum and Umbach (2001) conducted a more thorough study that addressed such issues as gender, age, and highest degree earned. They concluded that although extensive research has developed demographic profiles of four-year college presidents, relatively little is known about the career paths that lead to the presidency (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001). In their own research, they posited four career paths among college presidents – the “scholar,” “steward,” “spanner,” and “stranger” (p. 206). “Scholars” represented the traditional faculty path to the presidency, while “stewards” were career higher education administrators. The non-traditional paths are represented in the “spanner,” who spends a career rotating in and out of higher education, and the “stranger,” who has never held a position in the academy (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001, p. 206).
Birnbaum and Umbach (2001) concluded that the traditional scholar path remains the “royal road” to the presidency and is followed by the “steward” path (p. 210). They further stated, “for ‘strangers,’ the presidency may be less likely to represent a commitment to education than a target of opportunity created by some unusual confluence of events” (pp. 204-205). They also indicate that the numbers of non-traditional presidents varied depending upon institutional type. Cotnam (2006) compared the “activities, concerns, and goals” of non-traditional versus traditional presidents and concluded that traditional presidents showed more interest in “academic matters, faculty related activities, and governmental support and regulation” (p. 1). In noting the advantages that non-traditional presidents bring to academe, McCulloch-Lovell (2012) argued that they were likely to have previous experience with budgeting, fundraising, and adapting to a wide variety of workplaces. Further, McCulloch-Lovell (2012) noted that non-traditional presidents bring with them a healthy impatience to the academy, asserting that their usual reply to “we don’t do it this way” is “why not?” (p. 2). However, what remains unknown is how non-traditional presidents actually engage with academic culture, and whether exposure to academic culture influences their priorities in office.

Bornstein (2003) in her research on the academic presidency defined one of the key factors for efficacy, individual legitimacy, as the “president’s background, career, and identity characteristics, and how they mesh with the institution’s needs” (p. 25). Further, Bornstein (2003) noted that the key threats to achieving legitimacy were lack of cultural fit, management incompetence, misconduct, erosion of social capital, inattentiveness, and grandiosity. Moreover, Bornstein (2003) asserted that the lack of cultural fit was the most dire legitimacy threat for non-traditional presidents. Conversely,
Bornstein (2003) noted that those coming to the presidency from the traditional "royal road" (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001, p. 210) with service at prestigious institutions enjoyed the highest degrees of individual legitimacy. However, Bornstein (2003) also noted that such individuals usually had little experience in areas within external relations, such as fundraising, politicking, and networking. Perhaps in response to this reality, Basinger (2003) and Redden (2008) noted an increased interest among hiring committees in so-called “hybrid models” (pp. 2-3), that is, aspiring college presidents with academic credentials as well as experience outside the academy. In many ways, they are similar to the “spanners” listed in the Birnbaum and Umbach (2001) model (p. 206). Such individuals normally served as faculty members before entering non-academic arenas, and could effectively bridge the gap between aspiring traditional-track and non-traditional presidents in the future. Given the spanning of college and business careers, more research is required to understand better their efficacy as college presidents.

While existing scholarly research on non-traditional presidents is sparse, more work has been done in the area of studying academic culture. A question that has interested scholars in recent years is how academic culture compares with the cultures found in other organizations, such as those found in the business and government sectors. However, making such comparisons has proven challenging at times since scholars have not yet reached a consensus as to what academic culture really entails.

**Defining Academic Culture**

For several decades, higher education scholars have also endeavored to define academic culture and explore what distinguishes it from other types of organizational culture. According to Kezar and Eckel (2002), the research in this area has progressed
through three distinct phases. First, researchers in the 1960s (Clark, 1970; Lunsford, 1963; Riesman, Gusfield, & Gamson, 1970) used culture to illustrate how academic culture was unique compared with other institutions (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). Later higher education studies in the 1980s (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988; Peterson, Cameron, Jones, Mets, & Ettington, 1986) linked institutional culture with organizational success (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). To explore this connection with institutional culture and organizational success more deeply, several studies have also demonstrated the way that different cultures shaped various institutional functions, including governance (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988), leadership (Birnbaum, 1988), and planning (Hearn, Clugston, & Heydinger, 1993; Leslie & Fretwell, 1996).

According to Kezar and Eckel (2002), two links between culture and change have been made in higher education literature as a result of previous research. The first link suggests that institutions need to have a culture that encourages change (Curry, 1992; Kezar & Eckel, 2002). Thus, the goal of this line of research has been to determine the aspects of culture that need to be fostered to promote institutional change (Schein, 1985; Kezar & Eckel, 2002). Meanwhile, the second link suggests that culture or key institutional elements that shape culture, such as a vision or mission, are modified as a result of the change process (Chaffee & Tierney, 1988; Eckel, Hill, & Green, 1998; Guskin, 1996). In their line of research, Kezar and Eckel (2002) presented a proposed third link, in addition to the first two, “investigating the ways in which culture shapes an institution’s change processes and strategies” (p. 438). They characterize culture as the modifying element rather than the subject of modification (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). Thus, there are a variety of opinions among scholars about the role that culture plays in an
organizational setting – with some believing that culture shapes the organization, and others believing that the organization shapes the culture.

Schein (1992) proposed a model of culture that contains three elements: artifacts, espoused values, and assumptions. Artifacts represent the visible elements in a culture, including such things as dress codes, furniture, art, work climate, organizational structures, etc. (Schein, 1992). Espoused values are the values normally espoused by leading figures of a culture, which should in turn be in line with the general assumptions of the culture (Schein, 1992). Assumptions reflect the shared values within the specific culture and are typically not visible to its members (Schein, 1992).

Along with presenting this cultural model, Schein (2010) also noted that subcultures may exist within organizations. Specifically, Schein (2010) identified three distinct groups that constitute subcultures within organizations; operators, engineers, and executives. Operators are characterized by a high level of human interaction, strong communication, trust, and teamwork (Schein, 2010). Conversely, engineers are focused on pursuing abstract solutions to problems and developing functional systems (Schein, 2010). Finally, executives are described as lone heroes who maintain a sense of rightness and omniscience (Schein, 2010). For organizations to function correctly, Schein (2010) noted that proper alignment of these subcultural groups was critical. Schein (2010) argued that many problems typically attributed to bureaucracy, environmental factors, or personality conflicts among managers are in fact the result of a lack of alignment between these subcultures. However, what remains unknown is how non-traditional college presidents engage with the subcultures found within the academy, and how these subcultures influence their adjustment process to academic culture. What also remains
unknown is the extent to which these subcultures align with the organizational cultures with which non-traditional presidents are most familiar.

Despite these research advances in recent years, the process of actually defining academic culture has been challenging. According to Tierney (1988), "a usable definition of organizational culture appropriate to higher education has remained elusive" (p. 6). To further complicate matters, scholars have had difficulty determining whether the academy even constitutes a profession (Williams, 2008). For instance, as Piper (1994) and Taylor (1999) asked, are academics professional as discipline experts or as educators? As Taylor (1999) further noted, "traditional...understandings of academics’ sense of professionalism are neither fixed, nor closed... [but are]... social constructions – partial, patchy, and incomplete" (p. 116). Thus, it is clear that the academy as both a profession and as a distinct culture invites a large number of definitions and interpretations. To that end, increased scholarly interest in organizational culture has generated increasingly broad and divergent concepts of culture (Tierney, 1988). Defining academic culture is further complicated by the popular image of the *Ivory Tower*, where professors can engage carelessly in enlightened discourse without having to worry about the challenges of the outside world (Aguirre, 2000).

Nevertheless, some scholars have been able to produce a general definition of academic culture that is useful when considering how non-traditional presidents may perceive this unique environment. Supporting the research of Schein (2010) on subcultures, Adams (1988) and Becher (1989) wrote that academic communities are notably fractured places with distinct tribes and territories. Further, if colleges and universities “are like a conglomeration of tribal communities organized into villages and
hamlets, then the disciplines serve as the tribes into which individual scholars are organized" (Esterberg & Wooding, 2012, p. 81). According to Esterberg and Wooding (2012), it is this tribe – the discipline – with which most faculty members are identified. Fundamentally, the discipline represents the faculty members’ overarching professional identity (Esterberg & Wooding, 2012). Therefore, campuses contain competing and contradictory loyalties, as faculty members are often split between commitments to their institution versus commitments to their discipline (Esterberg & Wooding, 2012). Consequently, this dynamic makes it difficult for presidents who seek transforming institutional change, as they must struggle to get faculty members to look beyond their own departments and disciplines and appreciate the needs of the larger campus community (Esterberg & Wooding, 2012).

Aguirre (2000) and Stewart (1995) defined academic culture as a lifestyle that socializes faculty to perform and value activities that are vital to membership in the academic community, such as attending conferences, presenting papers, and conducting research. Clark (1983) and Dill (2012) argued that universities are “culturally loaded” institutions, in which values such as objectivity, academic freedom, and respect for students and human subjects guide academic behavior, and are therefore reflected in the language, symbols, and ceremonies of academic life (Dill, 2012, p. 11). Further, another key characteristic of academic culture is its resistance to rapid change. Traditionally, academic culture has been fairly static and conservative, changing only minimally in response to external pressures (Crawford & Crawford, 1997; Hesketh et al., 1996). This resistance to change is interesting considering that higher education has undergone major periods of transformation over the past century.
In Clark's (1981) study, he concluded that academic culture was also highly complex, with systems of belief permeating academic institutions on at least three levels: the culture of the enterprise, the culture of the academic profession at large, and the culture of the academic discipline (as cited in Dill, 1982). The culture of the enterprise refers to the traditions and symbols of academic life, such as titles, degrees, a specified curriculum, and examinations (Dill, 1982). The culture of the academic profession at large refers to the established tradition of scholars organizing themselves into guilds or other professional organizations, such as the American Association of University Professors (Dill, 1982). Lastly, the culture of the academic discipline refers to the distinct ideologies found within the academy's various disciplines (Dill, 1982). These levels help to produce an academic culture that is multi-faceted and complex when compared with many other organizational cultures. Despite this complexity, higher education as an organizational form has never been more powerful than it is today, as universities through their research, academic programs, and disciplines increasingly define the legitimacy of knowledge in modern society (Bastedo, 2012; Clark, 1983; Frank & Meyer, 2007).

Along with attempting to produce a usable definition of academic culture, scholars have also endeavored to define what specific cultural components comprise academic life. Some of this work has evolved from Bolman and Deal's (1984) Four Frames Model, which views organizations as a mental model operationalized in four frames; the structural frame, the human resource frame, the political frame, and the symbolic frame. While the structural frame focuses on the architecture of the organization, such as goals and role coordination, the human resource frame emphasizes
understanding people and their relationships (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Conversely, the political frame emphasizes power, competition, and winning scarce resources, while the symbolic frame captures organizational life as drama and focuses on ceremony and ritual (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Using the Four Frames Model, a study by Bensimon (1989) concluded that most college presidents view their institutions through multiple frames. Out of 32 presidents interviewed, 13 espoused a single frame, 11 espoused two frames, seven espoused three frames, and one espoused four frames (Bensimon, 1989). However, the study’s sample size was small and it did address non-traditional college presidents specifically. Further, the non-traditional presidents who possessed more of a multi-frame perspective were located at community colleges instead of four-year institutions. Thus, what remains unknown is whether all non-traditional college presidents view the academy through a particular frame, or whether it varies by each individual.

Tierney (1991) developed a model of unique university culture, proposing that academic culture consisted of six categories: environment, mission, socialization, information, strategy, and leadership. By examining each of these six categories, Tierney (1991) argued that researchers could obtain a clearer picture of a university’s culture. Meanwhile, Bergquist (1992) established that the academy is made up of four distinct cultures. First, the collegial culture finds meaning primarily in the disciplines represented by faculty at the institution (Bergquist, 1992). Those aligned with this culture value faculty research and scholarship and consider their institution’s primary enterprise as the generation, interpretation, and dissemination of knowledge (Bergquist, 1992). Second, the managerial culture is comprised by those who find meaning in the organization, implementation, and evaluation of work that is directed toward specified goals and
purposes (Bergquist, 1992). Further, they hold assumptions about the capacity of the institution to define and measure its goals and objectives clearly (Bergquist, 1992).

Third, the developmental culture is comprised by those in the academy who find meaning in the creation of programs and activities that promote the personal and professional growth of all members of the academic community (Bergquist, 1992). Those aligned with this culture value openness and service to others and encourage the potential for cognitive, affective, and behavioral growth among students, faculty, administrators, and staff (Bergquist, 1992). Fourth, the culture of advocacy centers on the establishment of equitable and egalitarian policies and procedures for the distribution of resources and benefits at the institution (Bergquist, 1992). Those who find meaning in this culture value confrontation and fair bargaining among constituency groups and conceive of the institution’s enterprise as either the undesirable promulgation of existing and repressive social attitudes or the establishment of new and more liberating ones (Bergquist, 1992). Because of its focus on confrontation and bargaining, the culture of advocacy is somewhat similar to Bolman and Deal’s (1984) political frame.

In later research, Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) identified two additional cultures found in the academy. The virtual culture centers on finding meaning by responding to the knowledge generation and dissemination capacity of the postmodern world and promoting an open and global perspective (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). Those aligned with this culture believe the purpose of their institution is to link its educational resources to global and technological resources, thus broadening the global learning network (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). Meanwhile, the sixth category, the tangible culture, finds meaning in its roots, the community, and its spiritual grounding (Bergquist & Pawlak,
Those aligned with this culture value the predictability of a value-based, face-to-face education in a stable physical location and conceive of the institution’s enterprise as the honoring and reintegration of learning from a local perspective (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008).

Despite the advances in research concerning the components of academic culture, scholars argue that more focused study is urgently needed (Kezar & Eckel, 2002; Tierney, 1988). According to Tierney (1988), “our lack of understanding about the role of organizational culture in improving management and institutional performance inhibits our ability to address the challenges that face higher education” (p. 4). To that end, a key challenge in the exploration of academic culture has been the lack of research on subcultures found in the academy (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). While most scholars have studied academic culture as a broad, all-encompassing concept, some scholars have argued that it also consists of multiple levels, including the enterprise, the institution, the subgroup (i.e. faculty, administrators), and the individual level (Martin, 1992). Moreover, diversity scholars could also argue that academic culture may differ based on race, class, and gender (Bastedo, 2012; Bensimon & Neumann, 1994). Thus, more research is needed to determine how these different levels and subgroups compare and differ within the academy.

Further, much of the research on academic culture has dealt with how educational leaders must operate within its framework. According to Kezar and Eckel (2002), more research is needed to determine when it is best for leaders to operate within an existing cultural framework or to challenge it. That also raises the question as to whether academic culture is universal or whether it varies to some degree by institution (Kezar &
Eckel, 2002). Thus, more research on how much context impacts academic culture is also needed. Moreover, no known studies have attempted to explore the adjustment process of non-traditional presidents to academic culture using the aforementioned definitions, models and approaches.

**Academic culture under threat.** To best understand how non-traditional presidents engage with academic culture, it is useful to explore this culture’s role and level of vitality in modern society. Along with attempting to define academic culture, scholars have studied the challenges it faces along with its prospects for future survival in a society that wants to increasingly see tangible, measurable results. While academic culture has a long and distinguished tradition in Western civilization, many scholars have argued that its long-term survival is under threat (Beck & Young, 2005; Dill, 1982; Rice, 1999; Rowland, 2002; Williams, 2008). Beck and Young (2005) identified the modern primary threats as the increased calls for greater professionalism, productivity, and managerial oversight coming from non-academic authorities. Williams (2008) attributed academic culture’s vulnerability to the challenges created by evolving socio-economic conditions. Such an argument sounds plausible in an era of ever-growing virtual universities and on-line degree programs. In a similar vein, Rice (1999) attributed the plight of faculty and academic culture to a decline of extrinsic rewards, such as salaries and professional opportunities. Dill (1982) maintained that academic culture was in decline because of the steady erosion of an enterprise culture originally based on sectarian religious beliefs. Specifically:

In the United States the loss of meaning of enterprise culture has been relatively rapid. In only a hundred years we have moved from colleges
and universities with the symbols and traditions of required chapel, a liberal education heavily based upon religious and moral precepts, and baccalaureate services at graduation, to secular institutions which retain many of these symbols and rituals but have discarded the underlying religious faith which gave these symbols meaning. In its place, we have adopted a faith in disciplinary ideology. But at the enterprise level we have failed to develop a corresponding culture rich enough in symbol and ritual to provide a unifying sense of belief. (Dill, 1982, p. 311)

Further, Dill (1982) argued that the rapid growth of systems of higher education, along with a growing orientation toward the individual, discipline-based career was eroding traditional academic culture significantly. A primary cause of these phenomena was the rapid proliferation of fields, disciplines, and PhD recipients in the years following World War II, resulting in an elimination of shared traditions, identification with a common calling, and the sense of a single academic profession (Dill, 1982). Further, instead of identifying with academic culture in general, faculty have come to identify with the culture of their discipline (Nisbet, 1971), or even more specifically, with just their own professional careers (Blankenship, 1977; Dill, 1982; Rice, 1999). Consequently, “faculty members who a generation ago would define themselves in terms of their institution – ‘I am a member of the Harvard faculty’ – now identify themselves in terms of their field – ‘I am a sociologist, currently at Harvard’” (Dill, 1982, p. 311). However, what remains unknown is how these faculty attitudes influence the adjustment processes of non-traditional college presidents to academic culture.
**Comparing academic culture with other cultures.** Along with attempting to define academic culture and its prospects for long-term viability, scholars have explored how it compares and contrasts with other types of organizational culture. This research is significant when studying how non-traditional presidents engage with academic culture. Coming from the worlds of the military, government, business, etc., non-traditional presidents are likely much more familiar with other forms of organizational culture upon assuming their posts. Thus, understanding how academic culture compares and contrasts with other forms of organizational culture provides a framework for the possible issues that a new non-traditional president may face in adjusting to academic life.

According to Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker, and Riley (1999), a major difference between academic and non-academic organizational cultures has to do with goal ambiguity. In general, most organizations are goal-oriented, such as businesses trying to make profit or hospitals trying to help sick people. However, colleges and universities have vague, ambiguous goals that force them to have to make decisions with a high degree of uncertainty. Thus, goal ambiguity is one of the chief characteristics of academic organizations (Baldridge et al., 1999). This could present a key challenge for new non-traditional college presidents who are used to leading goal-oriented institutions.

Along with goal ambiguity, scholars have determined that other distinct differences exist between academic and non-academic cultures. For instance, some scholars have done extensive research on the specific intricacies of academic culture, explaining how it is a unique entity when compared to other organizational cultures (Dill, 2012; Lane, 1985; Williams, 2008). Lane (1985) found that while differentiation (i.e. division of the organizational culture into smaller sub-units) exists in every organization,
higher education is characterized by extreme differentiation. Specifically, academic work is first divided according to subject matter or academic department and then in relation to the orientation of each scholar (Lane, 1985; Smith, 1990). Thus, each academic department is typically a world unto itself. Lane (1985) also concluded that academia is often characterized by an interplay between the academic organization and the academic man/woman. Whereas an academic organization is typically passive, with slow and collective decision-making, the academic man/woman is active, busily pursuing their individual research agendas (Lane, 1985).

Birnbaum (1988) also studied this phenomenon of parallel organizational structures in higher education, referring to it as a “dualism of controls” (p. 9). However, instead of focusing specifically on the interplay between academic organization and scholar, he examined this interplay on a variety of fronts, including faculty vs. board interaction and faculty vs. administrator interaction. Birnbaum (1988) characterized these interactions as a problem of governance, as this organizational structure is often difficult to lead and perceived as disorganized by outside cultures. Moreover, he concluded that there is a clear problem in higher education organization that has an impact on its culture. In organizations, “administrative authority is predicated on the control and coordination of activities by superiors; professional authority is predicated on autonomy and individual knowledge” (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 10).

Noting that these types of authority are in fundamental disagreement, Birnbaum (1988) found that such an arrangement can make it quite difficult to lead an academic organization because both types of authority are equally present within that culture. Thus, this arrangement of competing orientations will increase the need for collegiality
and collective decision-making in order to satisfy all of the stakeholders involved (i.e. faculty, administrators, board members). This approach to authority is quite different than business, military, or government organizations, in which only administrative authority is typically present and singular decision-making is more common. This background of reasoning is quite helpful in understanding why it can be difficult for non-traditional presidents to adjust to academic culture. They come from organizational cultures where only administrative authority is present, and are typically not used to the professional authority possessed by faculty members as well as some administrators.

In his typology of organizational cultures, Mintzberg (1980) labeled the one best suited for academic organizations as “professional bureaucracy” (p. 333). In this decentralized culture, organizations hire highly trained specialists, known as professionals, in its hiring core (Mintzberg, 1980). Given considerable autonomy, these professionals work freely not only of the administrative hierarchy but also of their own colleagues (Mintzberg, 1980). Moreover, managers in this culture must have the support of professional operators and be professionals themselves in order to maintain credibility and power (Mintzberg, 1980). Mintzberg’s (1980) model for professional bureaucracy may help to explain why non-traditional college presidents may have difficulty in adjusting to academic culture. If they are not considered to be professional by their faculty peers, it may lead to legitimacy problems.

Further, non-traditional presidents may be more accustomed to Mintzberg’s (1980) model for “machine bureaucracy” (p. 332), particularly if they come from business, government, or military backgrounds. In this more centralized culture, there are formalized procedures in the operating core, as well as centralized power for decision-
making (Mintzberg, 1980). Moreover, there is an elaborate administrative structure along with a clear distinction between staff and managers (Mintzberg, 1980). Overall, this culture stands in marked contrast to the professional bureaucracy model (Mintzberg, 1980). Thus, additional research is needed to explore the extent to which the differences between Mintzberg’s (1980) models for professional and machine bureaucracy impact non-traditional college presidents.

Rosovsky (1990) also wrote extensively about academic culture, noting that academics are typically happier and more satisfied professionally than their peers in business, government, or the military because they have more freedom of movement, minimal direct supervision, and they have the opportunity to work in the pleasant, attractive, and tranquil surroundings found on most college campuses. To support his claim, he referenced a study (Ladd & Lipset, 1976) that surveyed faculty job satisfaction for American academics. It found that 88% of the sample maintained that if they were to begin their careers anew, they would still want to be college professors (Ladd & Lipset, 1976). However, such arguments raise a possible limitation of research on academic culture by such scholars as Rosovsky (1990), Birnbaum (1988), and Lane (1985). When they described and analyzed academic culture, they only referred to faculty members, and not to other key constituency groups within an academic setting. Further, according to Gappa, Austin, and Trice (2007), modern professionals, including academics, are not as tied to their employers and careers as they were in previous decades. According to Berrett (2012), faculty members are also more stressed and strapped for teaching time, suggesting that the faculty sentiments expressed in Ladd and Lipset (1976) may be different today among modern academics. Overall, it would be useful to examine more
research on how academic administrators perceive and engage with academic culture, and determine if there are any differences with the perceptions held by faculty members.

As with academic culture, there has also been extensive research on non-academic culture, particularly within the realm of business. While non-academic culture is portrayed as having distinct differences from its academic counterpart, there also appear to be some areas of similarity. For instance, Gordon (1991) argued that corporate culture is strongly influenced by the characteristics of the industry in which the company operates. Thus, the organizational culture of a local insurance agent’s office would be influenced by the corporate culture of the larger company of which it is a part (Gordon, 1991). This line of reasoning could also fit within academic culture, as overarching cultural themes such as academic freedom, intellectual growth, and advancement of knowledge would be present within the culture on many college campuses.

In recent years, scholars have also pointed to other areas of similarity between academic and corporate culture, asserting that they are slowly becoming more alike. For instance, Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) studied the rise of what they called academic capitalism, or the tendency of colleges and universities to engage in market-like behaviors. Prompted by a sluggish economy and declining state support for public institutions, colleges and universities have increasingly sought to generate revenue from their core educational, research, and service functions (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Recent examples of this strategy have included encouraging faculty to pursue research that leads to patents and to develop curricular materials that can be copyrighted and marketed (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004).
While Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) argued that academic culture is becoming more like corporate culture, Bastedo (2012) argued the opposite, maintaining that many corporations are beginning to take on aspects of academic culture. For instance, Bastedo (2012) pointed out that several corporations are giving employees greater autonomy, implanting sabbaticals in certain cases, and encouraging greater research and development. Overall, due to economic realities and shifting societal norms, it appears that the lines between academic and corporate culture are blurring to a certain extent. Further research would be useful in determining if a similar pattern is taking place between academic culture and other forms of non-academic culture, such as those found in the military and the government.

However, while there are possible similarities between academic and non-academic cultures, the research indicates that there are also key differences. Gordon (1991) asserted that corporate culture would likely possess a greater sense of shared assumptions and values than its academic counterpart, which is often influenced by its extreme differentiation. Further, Rotemberg (1993) argued that autocratic leadership and management styles are more likely to be found in non-academic organizational cultures, where administrative authority is more prevalent. As mentioned in Birnbaum (1988), an autocratic governance style would not likely last long within academic culture because of the strong presence of professional authority held by faculty members in particular. Hofstede et al. (2002) came upon another possible difference when they concluded that profit and growth of the organization were the top priorities of executives in non-academic cultures. Within academic culture the importance of those profit-oriented goals would depend upon the constituency group in question. While presidents, boards of
trustees, and financial administrators would be interested in profit and growth, those goals may not be of as much importance to faculty members, who may be more interested in academic freedom, student success, and intellectual growth.

Overall, based on existing research, academic culture appears to be a unique enterprise immersed in special traditions, symbols, and ceremonies, which also values objectivity and academic freedom (Clark, 1983; Dill, 2012). Moreover, modern research makes a compelling argument that academic culture is quite different than other types of organizational culture. As opposed to other organizational cultures, academic culture is characterized by extreme differentiation and is highly decentralized, especially within the faculty ranks (Lane, 1985). Further, the advanced education and expertise of faculty members and many administrators often necessitates a collective decision-making approach not often found in other organizational cultures (Birnbaum, 1988). Specifically, the belief is promoted among faculty that they are a community of scholars who collectively governs academia (Aguirre, 2000; Chaffee & Tierney, 1988; Clark, 1970; Mortimer & McConnell, 1978). To that end, autocratic leadership is not an approach that works well within academic settings (Birnbaum, 1988). This reality about autocratic leadership is a compelling and sobering point, considering that many non-traditional presidents come from organizational cultures (such as business, the government, or the military) where that form of leadership is more common (Rotemberg, 1993).

Adaptive and Change Leadership

Considering that there are key similarities and differences between academic culture and other forms of organizational culture, it raises the question as to what are the best leadership strategies for presidents to employ within a higher education setting,
particularly if they are unfamiliar with academic culture. Moreover, what resources can presidents utilize in order to lead colleges and universities effectively? Along with literature on organizational culture, research on leadership theory comprises another important dimension in exploring how non-traditional college presidents can adjust to academic culture and lead within it effectively.

Scholars have conducted extensive research on the types of personal influence that leaders possess. Within a higher education setting, this research would inform how college presidents establish and maintain the credibility to lead their institutions, as well as to advance their formal agendas. Some of the seminal work in this area was conducted by Bourdieu (1985) through his model for four forms of capital - economic, social, cultural, and symbolic. Bourdieu (1985) developed these terms in the early 1970s as a means for revealing the dynamics of power relations in social life and for studying the role that these forms of capital play in the leadership process. According to Bourdieu (1985), economic capital refers to command over economic resources; social capital refers to resources based on group membership, relationships, and networks of influence; and cultural capital refers to forms of knowledge, skills, education, and advantages a person has, which gives them a higher status in society. Cultural capital is further comprised of three subtypes. The embodied state refers to the inherited (non-genetic) and acquired traits and skills embedded in the individual (Bourdieu, 1985). The objectified state refers to things that are owned (such as artwork), while the institutionalized state refers to institutional recognition of one’s cultural capital, normally understood as academic credentials (Bourdieu, 1985). Bourdieu (1985) also developed the concept of
symbolic capital, which refers to the resources available to an individual on the basis of honor, prestige, or recognition.

In recent decades, scholars have also researched the types of power that organizational leaders possess. Power sources can be classified in two general forms – position power and personal power (Bass, 1960; Etzioni, 1961; Rahim, 1988; Yukl & Falbe, 1991). According to Yukl (2006), types of position power, based upon opportunities inherent in a person’s position, include legitimate power (power stemming from formal authority over work activities), reward power (the power to distribute gifts or incentives), and coercive power (the power to distribute punishment). Information power (control over the flow of information) and ecological power (control over the physical environment, technology, and organization of the work) are also categorized under position power (Cartwright, 1965; Raven, 1965; Yukl, 2006).

Conversely, personal power stems from the attributes of the leader himself or herself (Yukl, 2006). According to Yukl (2006), it includes referent power (power based on affection, admiration, and loyalty), and expert power (task-relevant knowledge and skill). While the research on power and capital is abundant, what remains unknown is how it applies to non-traditional college presidents. Do non-traditional presidents all possess the same types of power and capital, or does it depend upon the person and situation? Moreover, would any expert power possessed by non-traditional presidents be diminished in an academic setting, where they are surrounded by highly-educated scholars? More research is needed to address these questions.

Several scholars have also studied the leadership process within academic settings (Boyett, 1996; Gregory, 1996; Neumann & Neumann, 1999; Pounder, 2001; Ramsden,
Within the broad realm of leadership theories, two specific theoretical approaches—adaptive leadership and change leadership—are most applicable to how non-traditional presidents, as well as traditional presidents, may lead while adjusting to academic culture. Heifetz (1994) pioneered the research on adaptive leadership, basing it on the premise that leadership is more of a process rather than individual personal capabilities (Heifetz, Kania, & Kramer, 2004; Randall & Coakley, 2007). According to Randall and Coakley (2007), “this process requires people to focus on the specific problems at hand and to modify the way they have worked in the past” (p. 327). In his model of adaptive leadership, Heifetz (1994) focused it on the process and not the person, and the model employed the knowledge of all who have a vested interest in moving the organization to the next level (Randall & Coakley, 2007). However, it is important to note that most of the examples that Heifetz (1994) used in his research are non-academic, prompting the question of how his adaptive leadership model would work in an academic cultural setting. Nevertheless, the Heifetz (1994) model still provides a useful framework to examine how adaptive leadership could possibly work in such a setting.

As part of his model, Heifetz proposed that leaders are confronted by two types of problems—technical and adaptive (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Technical problems are well defined with known solutions, and anyone with the right expertise and resources can solve them (Heifetz, 1994; Randall & Coakley, 2007). Conversely, adaptive problems are not well defined and consequently present no known solutions in advance (Heifetz, 1994; Randall & Coakley, 2007). Instead, it requires learning to formulate workable
solutions (Heifetz, 1994). Senge (1997) supported this rationale, asserting that learning is the “currency of survival” in an era of constant change (p. 46).

Recognizing the important role that learning plays in the modern world, several scholars have studied the dynamics of adult learning. For instance, Knowles (1980) introduced the European concept of andragogy to American scholarly audiences, defining it as “the art and science of helping adults learn” (p. 43). Centered on the concepts of independence and self-directed learning, Knowles (1980) maintained that there were five assumptions underlying andragogy. They describe the adult learner as someone who (1) has an independent self-concept and who can direct his or her own learning, (2) has accumulated a reservoir of life experiences that is a rich resource for learning, (3) has learning needs closely related to changing social roles, (4) is problem-centered and interested in immediate application of knowledge, and (5) is motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors (Knowles, 1980; Merriam, 2001). Based on these assumptions, Knowles (1980) developed a program-planning model for designing, implementing, and evaluating educational experiences for adults (Merriam, 2001).

In a similar vein, Mezirow (1996) developed a transformational learning model that helped explain how adults changed the way that they interpreted their world (Taylor, 2008). This model is based on the premise that “learning is understood as the process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience in order to guide future action (Mezirow, 1996, p. 162). This transformative process is formed and circumscribed by frames of reference, defined as “structures of assumptions and expectations that frame an individual’s tacit points of view and influence their thinking, beliefs, and actions” (Taylor, 2008, p. 5). According to
Taylor (2008), it is the revision of a frame of reference in concert with reflection on experience that culminates in a paradigmatic shift. This dynamic is specifically what is addressed by the theory of perspective transformation (Taylor, 2008).

Applying many of these concepts about learning to leadership, Amey (2005) concluded that instead of viewing leadership as a series of career stages through which particular skills are learned, it is more effective to conceptualize leadership as a broader, ongoing process of learning. Beckhard and Pritchard (1992) echoed this point about learning, finding that leading any successful change or adaptation requires a conscious decision to move to a learning mode, where learning and doing are both valued. Further, when adaptive problems exist, there are generally many different stakeholders involved with their own interpretations of the issues at hand (Randall & Coakley, 2007). Consequently, solutions stem from the stakeholders themselves, and not from one single entity, because the problem is based in their own attitudes, priorities, and behavior (Heifetz et al., 2004; Randall & Coakley, 2007). Thus, if a leader does not recognize that their organization is confronted with adaptive problems and employs a more technical approach; successful change will fail to occur (Randall & Coakley, 2007). However, what remains unknown is how these principles apply to non-traditional presidents. For instance, will they be more inclined to follow one approach or another given their leadership in other contexts? Moreover, would non-traditional presidents be more likely to see the adaptive changes needed considering their ability to cross over and adapt to a new organizational culture and profession? More research is needed to answer these questions.
According to Randall and Coakley (2007), “the adaptive leadership model includes six stages when executing change in a complex, organizational setting where non-routine decisions are required” (p. 328). These include identifying the type of problem, focusing attention, framing the issues, securing ownership, managing stakeholder conflict and stress, and creating a safe haven (Heifetz & Laurie, 1997). Yukl (2006) maintained that this approach to leadership is “consistent with the idea that flexible, adaptive leadership is essential to deal successfully with the difficult challenges posed by trade-offs, competing objectives, and changing situations” (p. 373).

Along with Ronald Heifetz, other scholars have studied how leaders lead most effectively in a culture of change, often referring to the concept as change leadership (Beckhard & Pritchard, 1992; Beer, Eisenstat, & Spector, 1990; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Fullan, 2001; Goleman, 2000; Hamel, 2000; Koteen, 1991; Kotter, 1996). Heifetz (1994) argued that people must re-conceptualize their philosophy of leadership, framing it as the mobilization of people to solve tough problems instead of merely looking for a heroic figure to save them. Fullan (2001) followed this view in his framework for change leadership. He believed that five components of leadership “represent independent but mutual reinforcing forces for positive change” (Fullan, 2001, p. 3). They include moral purpose, or the intention of making a positive difference in the lives of others, as well as understanding the change process. The components also include relationship building along with knowledge creation and sharing. Finally, one of the most crucial components is coherence making (or sense making), since effective change leaders must help followers make sense of chaotic conditions and help them see the larger picture (Fullan, 2001; Weick, 1995). Along with those components, Fullan (2001) believed that effective
change leaders possess certain personal characteristics that help them engage with followers. They include energy, enthusiasm, and hopefulness, and Fullan (2001) argued that all effective change leaders possess them.

In a similar vein, Kotter (1996) proposed an eight-step process for initiating transformation in organizations. The steps were to establish a grand strategy, create a guiding coalition, develop a vision and strategy, communicate the change vision, empower broad-based action, generate short-term wins, consolidate gains and produce more change, and anchor new approaches in the culture (Kotter, 1996). Kotter and Cohen (2002) revised these steps, listing them as follows: increase urgency, build the guiding team, get the vision right, communicate for buy-in, empower action, create short-term wins, do not let up, and make the changes stick. Hamel (2000) presented a similar eight-step process for leading change. His steps included building a point of view, writing a manifesto, creating a coalition, picking your targets and your moments, co-opting and neutralizing, finding a translator, pursuing small victories, and finally integrating the new approach (Hamel, 2000). Further, Beer, Eisenstat, and Spector (1990) created a model for drawing out bottom-up ideas and energies from within the organization. The model called for mobilizing joint commitment to change and developing a shared vision for how to best move forward (Beer, et al., 1990).

In order to understand leading in times of change, it is important to have a better framework in place regarding the change process. Kezar (2014) asserted that there are six fundamental theories of change, upon which many change implementation models are built. The theories are also instrumental for leaders in understanding how change works, and include scientific management, evolutionary, social cognition, cultural, political, and
institutional (Kezar, 2014). The scientific management approach assumes that organizations are purposeful and adaptive, while evolutionary theories maintain that change is the result of, and dependent on, circumstances, situational variables, and the environment faced by each organization (Cameron & Smart, 1998; Carnall, 1995; Morgan, 1986; Peterson, 1995; Van de Ven & Poole, 1995). Social cognition theory maintains that change can be best understood and enacted through individuals and their thought processes, while cultural theory is based on the premise that change occurs naturally as a response to constant alterations in the human environment (Morgan, 1986; Peterson, 1997; Scott, 1995; Weick, 1995).

Lastly, political theories identify change as being a natural part of human interaction, occurring as different agendas and interests are negotiated, while institutional theory examines how higher education as a social institution might change in different ways from other types of organizations (Kezar, 2014). Although these theories provide a useful framework for understanding change, what remains unknown is how non-traditional presidents interact with them and how the theories may be employed differently depending upon context. Moreover, do non-traditional presidents tend to favor some of these theoretical perspectives over others, or does it depend upon the individual thoughts and interests? More research is needed to shed light on these questions.

While many change leadership models have been developed, some scholars have questioned their usefulness and efficacy. Fullan (2001) considered many of these models to be contradictory and difficult to follow. He also argued that the change models were often much too general and unclear as to how to best proceed (Fullan, 2001). Along
those lines, Argyris (2000) considered many of these change leadership models to be “non-actionable advice” (p. 3). Fullan (2001) argued that there is no single, universal strategy to lead change effectively in all situations. Further, he proposed that “change can be understood and perhaps led, but it cannot be controlled” (Fullan, 2001, p. 33). However, despite the preponderance of research on change leadership, few studies have connected it specifically to non-traditional college presidents and their process of engaging with and adjusting to academic culture. More research in that area is urgently needed, as non-traditional presidents are typically appointed to oversee periods of significant change at their institutions. According to Trachtenberg, Kauvar, and Bogue (2013), difficulty adapting to change is among the major reasons why some college presidents fail, so it is imperative that we achieve a better understanding of how non-traditional as well as traditional college presidents cope with change. Research is also needed to determine if adaptive or change leadership strategies can be used equally well in academic versus non-academic organizational cultures.

Conceptual Model

After examining the relevant literature pertaining to the college presidency, academic culture, and leadership, a conceptual model emerged (See Figure 1) in my mind that links these three areas together. In this model, seven factors contribute in approximately equal degrees to the non-traditional president’s adaptive experience to academic culture. The factors are split into three main categories – institution-driven factors, leadership-oriented factors, and external factors. In this model, the green circles represent institution-driven factors, including the institution’s culture and subcultures, duties and responsibilities of the presidency at that institution, and how the non-
traditional president's professional background intersects with the institutional culture. Meanwhile, the teal circles represent leadership-oriented factors specific to the non-traditional president, including adaptive leadership ability and responsiveness to change. Finally, the purple circles represent external factors, including the evolution of the college presidency and the broader societal context. Collectively, these factors provide a framework for understanding the various issues that non-traditional college presidents face in adjusting to academic culture.

Figure 1 - Conceptual Model

Summary

Extensive research has been undertaken to explore the unique dynamics of academic culture and how it compares with other organizational cultures. Further,
additional research has focused on how academic leaders most effectively lead in a higher education environment. However, there have been no scholarly studies that explore how non-traditional college presidents specifically engage with, adapt to, and lead within academic culture. While scholars have studied the evolution of the college presidency as well as the skills needed for the office, there has been little research on the unique dynamics of non-traditional presidents. One study (Cotnam, 2006) analyzed the leadership style of traditional versus non-traditional presidents, and found that traditional presidents showed more interest in academic activities while non-traditional presidents showed more interest in financial and management-related activities. However, beyond that singular study there has been little to no scholarly research on the issues non-traditional presidents face adjusting to academic culture. The studies that are available on non-traditional presidents are typically limited in their generalizability by small sample sizes. Scholars have mentioned the issue of small sample size frequently as a fundamental challenge in this area of research because the ranks of non-traditional presidents are still fairly small (Cotnam, 2006). Thus, this limitation makes it a challenging group to study.

There are other little-researched areas that would merit more investigation to better inform our understanding of non-traditional presidents. For one, more scholarly research within the context of non-traditional presidents is needed in the realm of institutional fit, or how new presidents acclimate to their college or university’s community. According to Will (2010), once a candidate meets all the objective criteria (earned terminal degree, appropriate experience, etc.) for appointment, the final selection of a new president will depend almost entirely on an assessment – by the candidate and
by the institution’s constituents – of the level of cultural comfort they have with one another. An interesting question for future study is whether non-traditional presidents have a more challenging time achieving institutional fit because of their lack of exposure to academic culture?

Moreover, more research is needed concerning the priorities that boards of trustees possess in selecting new presidents. Supporting the notion of institutional fit, Johnston and Ferrare (2013) argued that boards must define their institution’s leadership needs in order to find a president who can meet those requirements. However, according to the Association of Governing Board’s (AGB) 2010 Statement on Board Responsibility for Institutional Governance, current social, political, economic, and technological issues present multiple challenges for governing boards. Such issues can in turn make determining the necessary qualifications for a new president difficult. For instance, modern colleges and universities are increasingly limited by insufficient resources, greater calls for scrutiny and accountability, and a highly competitive marketplace (Statement on Board Responsibility for Institutional Governance, 2010). Thus, such limitations can influence the qualifications that boards want in a new president. What can be most challenging in this context is the rapid pace of change, driven by things like technology and increased competition (Statement on Board Responsibility for Institutional Governance, 2010). Such rapid change can make determining institutional needs difficult, which can in turn complicate the search process for a new president.

At present, literature that informs our understanding of how governing boards respond to these challenges while conducting presidential searches is limited. More research in this area could help explain why the numbers of non-traditional presidents are
steadily rising in American colleges and universities. Are non-traditional presidents seen as a possible answer to these growing institutional challenges? Governing boards may assume that prospective presidents from non-academic backgrounds may be uniquely equipped to handle the complex issues inherent in modern college and universities. Conversely, some scholars argue that mixing non-traditional presidents with governing boards can sometimes result in contentious relations (Trachtenberg, Kauvar, & Bogue, 2013). However, there is still a considerable gap in the literature when it comes to understanding how governing boards engage with non-traditional presidents. While scholars have studied academic culture extensively along with adaptive and change leadership, and to a lesser extent institutional fit for presidents and priorities for boards, no study thus far has combined all of these research strands to better inform our understanding of non-traditional presidents.

This presents a key problem since the higher education community knows relatively little about a group to whom they are looking increasingly for leadership. Although the ranks of non-traditional presidents are still small when compared with presidents from traditional academic backgrounds, their numbers are growing (The American College President, 2012). Further, if the current rates of growth continue, non-traditional presidents could constitute a significant proportion of all college presidents in the not too distant future. Thus, research in this area would help fill a critical gap in the literature and would be of great use to hiring boards and other higher education scholars eager to learn more about this new breed of college president. In addition, research on how non-traditional presidents adapt to and even influence academic culture would be of use to potential non-traditional presidents themselves, providing them with a useful
resource to pursue a job successfully that is becoming increasingly complex. In the end, all constituencies within the higher education community would benefit immensely by gaining a better understanding of this phenomenon.
Chapter 3 – Methodology

As noted in previous chapters, the purpose of this study was to explore the issues that non-traditional college presidents face in adjusting to academic culture and derive what lessons could be learned to inform future practice. To obtain the necessary data, this project entailed a combination of qualitative methodological approaches to explore the issues that three non-traditional college presidents – Dwight D. Eisenhower at Columbia University (1948 to 1953), Terry Sanford at Duke University (1969 to 1985), and Paul Trible at Christopher Newport University (1996 to present) - faced as higher education leaders needing to adapt to academic culture. Using a case study format, I combined historical research and content analysis techniques with interviews to study these three non-traditional presidents from three distinct time periods. By studying past non-traditional presidents as well as a long-serving current one, I anticipated achieving a better understanding of their institutional impacts than if I were studying only current non-traditional presidents exclusively. Studying past non-traditional presidents allowed me to obtain a better sense of their institutional impact and legacy. Further, I anticipated having access to a wider cross-section of data sources than with newer non-traditional presidents, who likely have not been in office long enough to generate the necessary sources for data collection needed in this study.

An emergent research design was utilized in order to adjust the inquiry plans and strategies in response to what was learned as the study unfolded (Schwandt, 2001). At the outset of this study, I had no formal hypothesis concerning the issues that non-traditional presidents face in adjusting to academic culture and planned to follow the data where it took me. Therefore, inferences were made from drawing conclusions from
particular premises (Schwandt, 2001). In qualitative research, three kinds of procedures for making inferences are deductive, inductive, and abductive (Schwandt, 2001). For this study, inductive analysis was utilized to reached a general set of conclusions about the participants following my analysis of their experiences adjusting to academic culture (Booth, Colomb, & Williams, 2008; Schwandt, 2001). This approach was effective for this study as I needed to collect data, in the forms of content analysis, historical research, and (in President Trible's case) interviews, on each non-traditional president before reaching any general conclusions.

To examine Presidents Eisenhower and Sanford, a combination of historical research and content analysis techniques were utilized. Along with those two approaches, an interview protocol was conducted with President Trible, as well as with other senior CNU faculty and administrative leaders who were present when he first came to the University. By using this multi-faceted approach, I anticipated discovering the primary issues that Presidents Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible faced in adjusting to academic culture. Moreover, I anticipated learning what strategies they utilized to make this adjustment during the early stages of their presidencies.

Research Questions Investigated

The research questions that were addressed in this study included:

1. What perceptions do non-traditional presidents have of academic culture?
   A) How do those perceptions help them in adjusting to academic culture?
   B) How do those perceptions hinder them in adjusting to academic culture?

2. How do non-traditional presidents adjust to academic culture?
   A) What are (if any) the key issues that non-traditional presidents face in
adjusting to academic culture?

B) How have some non-traditional presidents been able to adjust to academic culture successfully while others could not?

Participants

This study centered on the examination of three non-traditional college presidents from distinct historical eras – Dwight D. Eisenhower, Terry Sanford, and Paul Trible. Eisenhower was a career U.S. Army officer who achieved legendary status as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe during World War II (Smith, 2012). He later served as chief of staff of the U.S. Army before his 1948 appointment as president of Columbia University (Smith, 2012). Following his service there, Eisenhower served as president of the United States from 1953 to 1961. Terry Sanford was a World War II veteran and prominent attorney who served as governor of North Carolina from 1961 to 1965. He was also a close political ally of John F. Kennedy and was rumored to have been Kennedy’s choice as a running mate in the 1964 presidential election had Kennedy lived (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Following his tenure as Duke University’s president, he later represented North Carolina in the U.S. Senate from 1986 to 1993 (Covington & Ellis, 1999). In a similar vein, Paul Trible began his career as a noted Tidewater Virginia attorney and prosecutor before serving in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1977 to 1983 and the U.S. Senate from 1983 to 1989 (Barone & Ujifusa, 1987). Following his service in Congress, he served as part of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations and taught briefly at Harvard before assuming the presidency of Christopher Newport University in 1996 (Hamilton, 2011).
A combination of convenience and purposeful sampling was used to identify the participants for this study – Presidents Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible. In convenience sampling, the researcher selects participants because they are willing to be studied, while in purposeful sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals to learn or understand the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). Within the realm of convenience sampling, I chose to study Presidents Eisenhower and Sanford because their papers were either readily accessible in nearby archives or have already been published. This high level of access provided for an efficient and logistically feasible data collection process. President Trible also fit the criteria for convenience sampling because he was accessible for research purposes by virtue of my long association with him, he was relatively close in geographic proximity, and an interview with him could easily be scheduled and completed within the time frame required for this study. Because of this close association with Trible, I took steps to bracket my bias and assumptions and maintained a research reflexivity log during the study.

However, aspects of purposeful sampling also applied to all three participants. For this study, I utilized three guidelines in selecting the participants after surveying historical and current college presidents who possessed exclusively non-academic backgrounds. First, I wanted to study some of the most high-profile examples of non-academics who became college presidents. By examining their adjustment processes to academic culture, I believed that these pioneering leaders could provide useful lessons for aspiring non-traditional presidents and other key stakeholders. By serving during World War II as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe prior to serving as president of Columbia, I believed that President Eisenhower met this guideline quite well. Similarly,
as a former North Carolina governor and national Democratic Party leader, President Sanford also fit the criteria. Lastly, President Trible served as an example of a high-profile, non-traditional president in the modern era, owing to his service as both a U.S. congressman and U.S. senator.

Second, I wanted to study non-traditional presidents who had a range of experiences in adjusting to academic culture – specifically one highly negative (Eisenhower), one highly positive (Sanford), and one somewhere in-between (Trible). While history serves as a judge of the success of Eisenhower and Sanford, the modern day presidency of Trible is still occurring. Even though the final assessment of Trible’s leadership remains unknown, however, his having served 18 years as president of CNU affords a preliminary judgment of his success. Using this “pendulum” approach, President Eisenhower fit the bill as a non-traditional president who arguably failed to adjust to academic culture, while President Sanford fit as someone who enjoyed a much more positive experience. Lastly, President Trible fit the criteria for a non-traditional president who, to date, has landed somewhere in the middle as he has experienced both successes and challenges in this area during his presidency. Further, President Trible was a useful participant for this study since he is currently one of the longest-serving non-traditional college presidents in the nation. Over the course of his tenure, he has also worked closely with faculty to spearhead major curricular changes and building construction campaigns at CNU. Thus, the data derived from an examination of President Trible’s experiences was useful for the purposes of this study.

My third criteria for selecting participants centered on their placement in a larger, chronological framework. By choosing non-traditional presidents from three distinct
historical periods, this study could investigate how the contextual variables in each time frame influenced the perception that academic stakeholders had concerning non-traditional presidents. Thus, by selecting Presidents Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible, they each fit well into a broader chronological spectrum – with Eisenhower covering the late 1940s/early 1950s, Sanford covering the 1970s/early 1980s, and Trible covering the late 1990s/2000s.

Since President Trible is a currently serving non-traditional president, I was also able to draw on additional members of the CNU community to serve as participants in this study. Specifically, I utilized the same combination of purposeful and convenience sampling to identify five senior academic and faculty leaders who could speak to the issues that President Trible faced in adjusting to academic culture. These were all individuals who had been at CNU for either all or the vast majority of the Trible era. Since there were not that many individuals left at CNU who fit those criteria, I believed that interviewing five participants was sufficient. This total emerged because I wanted individuals who could reflect on the long trajectory and evolution of Trible’s leadership over time, instead of those who did not have as much exposure and were therefore not in a position to comment on the evolution.

Data Sources

The data for this study came from a variety of sources. In examining Presidents Eisenhower and Sanford, most of my data came from primary sources such as journals, letters, speeches, period newspaper articles, and memoirs. In historical research, a primary source is “a record that was generated by people who personally witnessed or participated in the historical events of interest” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007, p. 537). Thus,
diary entries, memoirs, speeches, and letters written by Presidents Eisenhower and Sanford were of paramount importance for this study. Specifically, personal documents were critical sources of data for this study. Personal documents generally refer to any first-person narrative that describes an individual’s actions, experiences, and beliefs (Plummer, 1983; Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). They typically consist of such writings as intimate diaries, personal letters, and autobiographies (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Many of these sources were contained in archives such as those at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Columbia University, and Duke University. However, others were published, particularly the papers of President Eisenhower, and were readily accessible through books and online databases.

Secondary sources, such as biographies and media coverage, were also useful as supplementary sources for the purposes of data triangulation. According to Gall and associates (2007), secondary sources are “documents in which individuals give an account of an event at which they were not present” (p. 537). Over the past few decades, there have been several major biographies of President Eisenhower written. Further, there has been at least one major biography of Terry Sanford as well as two books about CNU’s institutional history. These secondary sources provided useful data in the form of scholarly insight and interpretation on each of the three presidents. Such data were useful for data triangulation purposes in this study.

For President Trible, some of my data also came from a combination of primary and secondary sources, including university documents, newspaper articles, and published books pertaining to CNU’s history. However, as President Trible was the only living figure among the individuals profiled in the three case studies, the bulk of the data
came from an interview with him. Further, six additional interviews were conducted with five senior CNU faculty members and administrators (See Appendix A) who have served throughout the Trible presidency - or for the vast majority of it - and could speak to the issues he faced in adjusting to academic culture. One participant was interviewed twice – once for the original pilot study and a second time for this study. Three of the interviews were done for an earlier pilot study on this topic that was approved by The College of William and Mary’s institutional review board (IRB). The other three interviews were done for the purposes of this study. For both sets of interviews, the interview protocol was nearly identical (See Appendix C). Since these individuals have known President Trible for a number of years, their reflections on this topic also served as a valuable source for data triangulation in this study.

**Procedures for Data Collection**

The data collection process began with preparing and filing the necessary paperwork to The College of William and Mary’s IRB. This paperwork was then reviewed and ultimately approved. For all three presidents, data were then collected through the framework of a case study format. According to Gall and associates (2007), a case study is “the in-depth study of one or more instances of a phenomenon in its real-life context that reflects the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon” (p. 447). In a case study, a substantial amount of data are collected about the specific case selected to represent the phenomenon (Gall et al., 2007; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1989). Moreover, a case study design typically involves the study of a phenomenon in its real-life context (Gall et al., 2007; Kirk & Miller, 1986). Since three non-traditional presidents were examined for this study, a cross-case comparison, also
known as a cross-case analysis, was employed in order to compare and contrast each president (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Schwandt, 2001; Yin, 1989). According to Yin (1989), the choice of multiple case designs follows a replication rather than a sampling logic. Specifically, additional cases are chosen for study because they are expected to yield “similar information or findings or contrary but predictable findings” (Schwandt, 2001, p. 47).

According to Yin (1989), a case study strategy is preferred when the inquirer seeks answers to how or why questions, when the inquirer has little control over the events being studied, when the object of the study is a contemporary phenomenon in a real-life context, when boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not too clear, and when it is desirable to utilize multiple sources of evidence. This study followed all of the guidelines mentioned above as I carefully examined primary and secondary source documents pertaining to each presidency. It also followed a case study design by incorporating semi-structured interviews in certain cases with President Trible and other senior faculty and administrative leaders on the CNU campus. Because of its focus on the study of a phenomenon in its real-life context, I believed that a case study format was the best method to capture the unique experiences that Presidents Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible each faced in adjusting to academic culture.

Within this case study framework, a combination of approaches was utilized to collect data for all three presidents. First, a historical research technique was utilized to study Presidents Eisenhower and Sanford. Historical research entails the “process of systematically searching for data to answer questions about a phenomenon from the past to gain a better understanding of the foundation of present institutions, practices, trends,
beliefs, and issues in education” (Gall et al., p. 529). According to Edson (1986), historical investigation is similar to other qualitative research methodologies in four distinct ways: 1) the emphasis on the study of the context, 2) the study of behavior in natural rather than in contrived or hypothetical settings, 3) the appreciation of the wholeness of experiences, and 4) the centrality of interpretation in the research process. Along these lines, data for Eisenhower and Sanford were collected through reviewing primary source documents in archival settings as well as in published books.

To obtain these data, I designed and implemented a search plan (See Appendix B) before conducting thorough archival research. According to Gall and associates (2007), historians need to have some idea of what they are looking for before beginning a search for data. Thus, the first step in my search plan involved studying preliminary sources for Eisenhower and Sanford. Preliminary sources are indexes to primary and secondary sources, and may include bibliographies as well as indexes to archival holdings at libraries (Gall et al., 2007). For the purposes of this study, lists of archival holdings were useful as a means of identifying materials that shed light on the issues that Eisenhower and Sanford faced in adjusting to academic culture. Therefore, I reviewed the indexes to the Dwight D. Eisenhower papers at Columbia University and at his presidential library as well as the indexes for Terry Sanford’s papers at Duke University to identify key documents before proceeding with further historical research. This approach allowed me to save time and devote the bulk of my attention to documents that would provide useful data for this study.

To coincide with this historical research approach, content analysis was also utilized to obtain data for coding and the generation of key themes. According to
Fraenkel and Wallen (2006), content analysis is "a technique that enables researchers to study human behavior in an indirect way, through an analysis of their communications" (p. 483). For Presidents Eisenhower and Sanford, their writings were analyzed to look for key words and phrases that pertained to the issues they faced in adjusting to academic culture. These key words and phrases were then coded for further analysis (See Appendix E). According to Schwandt (2001), coding "is a procedure that disaggregates the data, breaks it down into manageable segments, and identifies or names those segments" (p. 26).

For this study, I believed that this combination of historical research and content analysis was the best approach to analyzing the issues that Eisenhower and Sanford faced in adjusting to academic culture. As noted by Fraenkel and Wallen (2006), a principal advantage of historical research is that it permits the investigation of topics and questions that cannot be studied any other way, such as things pertaining to the past. Since both presidents are now deceased, it was no longer possible to collect data from them personally through interviews. Moreover, the vast majority of faculty and administrative leaders from Columbia University and Duke University who would have been familiar with their adjustment processes were also likely deceased. Thus, by permitting the study of evidence from the past, historical research and content analysis provided the most effective methods to collect data for this study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

To a certain extent, historical research and content analysis approaches were also utilized to study President Trible. As with Presidents Eisenhower and Sanford, I studied primary and secondary source documents that provided insights to the issues he faced in adjusting to academic culture. However, since Trible was a living, currently serving
higher education executive, most data for his case study were collected through semi-structured interviews. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2006), semi-structured interviews are fairly formal and consist of a series of questions designed to elicit specific answers from respondents. They are most useful when time with the respondent is limited and it is desirable to obtain specific or focused information (Schwandt, 2001). For the purposes of this study, semi-structured interviews were most effective since they provided a framework for the discussion and allowed for targeted answers to specific questions in a short period of time.

One hour-long interview with President Trible was held in the conference room attached to his office suite on the CNU campus. An interview protocol (See Appendix C) with nine questions was utilized to explore aspects of Trible's experiences as a non-traditional president, his experiences interacting with academic culture, and the strategies he utilized to adapt to it. A modified version of the same protocol (See Appendix C) was used to interview five senior faculty and administrative leaders (See Appendix A) – with one participant being interviewed twice – and each interview was held in their respective offices. Further, a consent form (See Appendix D) was provided to each of the participants for their signature. They kept one signed copy while I kept the other. As outlined in the consent form (See Appendix D), their real names were not included (See Appendix A) in this study in order to protect their privacy and permit a full range of discussion. Instead, they were listed simply as “Participant 1,” “Participant 2,” etc. Following the in-person meetings with President Trible and the five administrative and faculty leaders, the interviews were transcribed and coded. The transcripts were then sent
to the participants for member checking and I made modifications and corrections based on their feedback.

**Procedures for Data Analysis**

For all three case studies (Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible), a thematic analysis was conducted following data collection to develop categories that summarized the data (Gall et al., 2007). This analysis also incorporated the time and contextual variables present during each presidency. For this study, a grounded, a posteriori, inductive, context-specific scheme was developed and utilized. According to Schwandt (2001), this schematic approach allows analysts to a) work with the actual language of respondents to generate the codes or categories, and b) work back and forth between the data segments and the codes or categories to refine the meaning of categories as they proceed through the data. For the purposes of this study, this approach was most effective since it offered a high degree of flexibility for developing codes and categories from raw data. Since the data largely came from studying historical documents that do not pertain to the specific focus of this study, that flexibility was crucial for effective data analysis. After this coding process, themes were then derived from these categories, followed by the determination of aggregate and then final themes for use in this study.

While analyzing the data for this study to determine findings and conclusions, following the accepted standards for trustworthiness criteria was critical. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), trustworthiness consists of a set of criteria that are used to judge the quality or goodness of qualitative inquiry. These criteria essentially mirror the criteria set forth for effective quantitative research. Further, trustworthiness is considered the quality of an investigation and its findings that make it noteworthy to audiences.
Lincoln and Guba (1985) determined that trustworthiness is comprised of four criteria—credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility runs parallel with internal validity as used in quantitative research and addresses the level of fit between respondents' views of their life ways and the inquirers' reconstruction and representation of the same (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schwandt, 2001). Transferability runs parallel with external validity as used in quantitative research and deals with the issue of generalizability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schwandt, 2001). Meanwhile, dependability is closely associated with reliability as used in quantitative research and focuses on the process of the inquiry, helping to ensure that the process is logical, traceable, and documented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schwandt, 2001). Finally, confirmability runs parallel with objectivity as used in quantitative research and helps ensure that the data and interpretations of an inquiry are not just merely the figments of the inquirer's imagination (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schwandt, 2001). It calls for linking assertions, findings, and interpretations to the data in clearly discernable ways (Schwandt, 2001).

To provide dependability for this study, I included detailed instructions outlining the specific research process in a manner allowing future researchers to replicate it if needed. Meanwhile, to provide credibility, confirmability, and to a certain extent transferability for this study, the procedure of triangulation was utilized to check the integrity of the inferences drawn from the study (Lincoln & Denzin, 2011; Schwandt, 2001). According to Creswell (2012), triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data, or methods of data collection. This helps ensure accuracy since the information draws on multiple sources of information,
individuals, or processes (Creswell, 2012). For this study, the primary data were derived from the writings of Presidents Eisenhower and Sanford, as well as from interview responses from President Trible. These data were triangulated by comparing them to two other types of data. First, they were compared with the writings or interview responses of senior faculty and administrative leaders at their respective universities. Second, they were compared with secondary sources such as newspaper articles, biographies, and other scholarly publications analyzing each president. The objective of utilizing triangulation was to ensure that these distinct forms of data corroborated with one another, thus helping to also provide confirmability. Since I was only studying three non-traditional presidents, the prospects for transferability were limited. However, the data triangulation in this study provided a good foundation of findings that would at least have bearing on the study of other non-traditional presidents.

To provide further confirmability and validity for the study, I utilized peer review, which is considered an integral verification procedure in qualitative research (Creswell, 1998; Glesne, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Glesne (2006), peer review and debriefing allow for external reflection and input on your work. For this study, a member of my dissertation committee (Dr. Eddie Cole) served as a peer reviewer. Dr. Cole has expertise in conducting historical research. Specifically, I shared with him samples of my data in the form of correspondence, interview transcripts, etc. along with the codes and themes I generated from those data. Ultimately, this provided me the opportunity to have an additional scholar concur with my findings and support my data triangulation.
Along with meeting the accepted criteria for trustworthiness, it was also crucial that this study met the standards set forth for analyzing historical documents. Thus, it was important to ensure the genuineness of the historical sources used for this study. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2006), "perhaps more so than in any other form of research, the historical researcher must adopt a critical attitude toward any and all sources he or she reviews" (p. 549). Along those lines, two key objectives for historical researchers are to determine whether the document under analysis was really written by the supposed author and to determine whether the information contained in the document is true (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

The first objective requires external criticism, which refers to the process of determining genuineness of any and all documents the researcher uses (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Gall et al., 2007). Since documents can sometimes be forged, falsified, or ghostwritten it is important that I took care to be diligent in this area. Meanwhile, the second objective refers to internal criticism, which "involves evaluating the accuracy and worth of the statements contained in a historical document" (Gall et al., 2007, p. 542). According to Gall and associates (2007), internal criticism is more complicated than external criticism because it includes the historian's judgment about the truth of the statements in a historical source as well as an evaluation of the person who wrote them. In addition, there is the added challenge for historians of trying to glean perception and intention from the historical data (Gall et al., 2007). For the purposes of this study, internal criticism and the interpretation of intention and perception were important factors for consideration, and I was careful to ensure that the contents of each document I
examined were accurate and appropriately interpreted by comparing them with other historical sources.

**Researcher Positionality**

I was originally drawn to this study because of my experience working with President Trible at CNU. I have been employed by the university since 2003, serving first as an administrator before becoming a full-time faculty member. With strong personal interests in American history and politics, I have also long been intrigued by the idea of a former elected official with little prior higher education experience presiding over a university. Thus, I was interested in how such an individual with a non-academic professional background engaged successfully with academic culture. While conducting background research for a pilot study leading up to this project, I was further interested in how historically, some non-traditional presidents adjusted quite successfully to academic culture while others did not. It led to me to wonder if the success or failure could be attributed to each individual non-traditional president, or to situational factors beyond their control.

In pursuing this study, I enjoyed certain benefits while having to overcome a few challenges. I anticipated few challenges studying Presidents Eisenhower and Sanford beyond the logistics of coordinating archival research and traveling to the necessary venues for data collection, which included the libraries at Columbia University and Duke University. However, one key challenge I faced involved the rigors of conducting historical research and content analysis. My study involved reviewing hundreds of pages of documents. Thus, I needed to ensure that I allowed enough time to do the thorough data collection and analysis that were required for this study.
As a longtime CNU employee with longstanding professional relationships with President Trible’s staff, scheduling and conducting an interview with him was not difficult. Several officials in his office, including Trible himself, were aware of my interest in this general topic and were more than happy to help in this endeavor.

However, one challenge I experienced could be attributed to my long association with President Trible. I have enjoyed a long and productive friendship with him for 15 years now and view him as a mentor. This relationship, coupled with my observation of his achievements in office during my tenure at CNU, has prompted me to develop a largely positive view concerning the efficacy and value of non-traditional presidents.

Therefore, I took care throughout this study to bracket my own sentiments as much as possible and endeavored to maintain a strict objectivity when interviewing President Trible and analyzing data. Further, I was careful to listen in the interview not just for complimentary language about Trible’s presidency, but also for constructive criticism given to him by others concerning his leadership style and possible challenges he faced in adjusting to academic culture. Overall, the need for reflexivity was very important over the course of this study. It allowed for critical self-reflection and provided an important means of inspecting the entire research process (Denzin, 1997; Schwandt, 2001). In order to facilitate this process of reflexivity, I maintained a field journal throughout this study where I could maintain a log of my personal notes as well as reflections (Schwandt, 2001). This journal played a valuable role in helping to produce a thoughtful and well-designed study.
Limitations and Delimitations

This study was delimited in the fact that it only examined three non-traditional college presidents at three distinct higher education institutions. Thus, it has little generalizability beyond that narrow area. This study also had several limitations. For one, while the intention for this study was to examine non-traditional presidents with no prior academic experience, the participants actually represented only one particular type – those who come from a public sector background, which includes such areas as government and military service. Non-traditional presidents from exclusively private sector backgrounds were not examined. Thus, the results from this study may not be applicable to other types of non-traditional presidents, including those from private sector backgrounds. Further research is needed to determine whether there are differences in the adjustment process to academic culture for different types of non-traditional presidents – namely between those from public sector backgrounds versus those from private sector backgrounds.

Another limitation was that the study focused on only three higher education institutions in distinct periods of time – Columbia University in the late 1940s/early 1950s, Duke University in the 1970s/early 1980s, and Christopher Newport University in the late 1990s and 2000s. While some of the findings in this study may be applicable to non-traditional presidents at other types of institutions, they will not apply in all cases due to differences in time, culture, and institutional contexts. Again, further research is needed to explore if there are differences in how non-traditional presidents adapt to academic culture depending upon institutional type and time context.
A further limitation of the study involved the challenges inherent in conducting historical research. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2006), historical research is among the most difficult types of research to conduct. This challenge is because of the severe limitations imposed by the nature of the sample of documents and the instrumentation process, which is typically content analysis (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). For instance, in historical research, researchers cannot ensure representatives of a sample or check the reliability and validity of the inferences made from the available data (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). Further, for the purposes of this study, there was the threat of taking statements made by Eisenhower and Sanford about academic culture out of context since they are now deceased and can no longer speak for themselves to provide elaboration or clarification.

**Ethical Considerations**

Since two of the cases in this study (Eisenhower and Sanford) are historical while the other one (Trible) is modern, I encountered different ethical considerations within each realm. For the historical case studies, following the accepted guidelines of proper archival research was an important consideration. Further, abiding by the usage and permissions guidelines of certain archival documents I examined was also an issue. However, since Presidents Eisenhower and Sanford are both deceased, this provided greater flexibility in areas such as IRB approval than if they were both still living.

For the modern case study, ensuring the confidentiality of informants beyond President Trible was important since I was using an interview protocol. This confidentiality was especially critical since the study required the informants to speak candidly about Trible, who is either their direct or indirect superior. Thus, data collected
from these interviews were kept in a secure location and I was the only researcher with
direct access to these data. Further, in order to ensure confidentiality, I was the only
researcher who knew the true identities of the informants in this study. I did not
encounter the same situation with the historical case studies since all parties involved in
those cases were likely deceased.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the issues that non-traditional college
presidents face in adjusting to academic culture and derive what lessons could be learned
to inform future practice. Using a qualitative, case study approach, this study examined
the experiences of three non-traditional presidents from distinct historical periods in
American higher education. Included were Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower at Columbia
University (1948-1953), former North Carolina Gov. Terry Sanford at Duke University
(1969-1985), and former U.S. Sen. Paul Trible at Christopher Newport University (1996-
present). This chapter has outlined the methodological approaches that were utilized in
order to gather and interpret the necessary data. The next chapters will provide a
contextual overview of the experiences of each president at their respective universities
and explore the findings from the study’s data collection and analysis process.
Chapter 4 – Dwight D. Eisenhower and Columbia University

As noted in previous chapters, non-traditional college presidents are gradually becoming a more common fixture across all levels of American higher education. However, despite their growing numbers, little is known about the issues that they face in adjusting to academic culture. Moreover, existing evidence suggests that the adjustment experiences of non-traditional college presidents may vary depending upon such factors as the president’s leadership approach, historical context, institutional context, and even unforeseen events (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001; Bornstein, 2003; Cotnam, 2006). This chapter explores the experiences of Dwight D. Eisenhower, who served as president of Columbia University from 1948 to 1953. The findings from this study indicated that Eisenhower personified a non-traditional college president who did not adjust well to academic culture. Instead, his tenure as president was a rocky one, leaving behind a legacy of bitterness within Columbia’s campus community that remained years after his tenure (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 1985).

Noted historian Stephen Ambrose (1990) once described Eisenhower as one of the greatest leaders from the Western world in the 20th century. This was a man who led armies of millions during World War II and helped to mastermind the greatest amphibious invasion ever attempted in world history (Smith, 2012). Moreover, Eisenhower managed to hold together against incredible odds the largest multinational alliance ever assembled, forging a path to victory over Adolf Hitler’s Third Reich (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Neal, 1978; Smith, 2012). However, when it came to leading a complex, urban university like Columbia, Eisenhower was unable to make it work (Clark, 2013; Smith, 2012). To make matters worse, he never adapted well to
academic culture and had an uncomfortable relationship at best with Columbia’s faculty (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001; Neal, 1978). Using data derived from Eisenhower’s personal and official correspondence, along with selected secondary sources, this study found that his failure to adjust to academic culture stemmed from a combination of factors. These included intense frustration over mounting political, military, and academic obligations; being overextended professionally; lacking the necessary academic experience for the position; and advocating a presidential vision that did not coincide with Columbia’s institutional needs. To put these factors into perspective, this study situated Eisenhower’s tenure at Columbia within a broader framework that included his personal history, a historical context of the post-World War II higher education landscape, and Columbia’s institutional context during that period. Those sections follow below.

**Personal History**

Dwight D. Eisenhower was born on October 14, 1890 in Denison, Texas. Following a childhood spent in Kansas, a strong interest in military history as well as financial necessity prompted him to attend West Point, from which he graduated in 1915. Coming from a large family with limited financial means, West Point proved to be the only viable option for Eisenhower to obtain a college education. Following graduation, he married Mamie Doud Eisenhower, with whom he eventually had two children. Eisenhower spent World War I serving stateside in various staff officer positions. His lack of combat experience on the warfront was a source of embarrassment for Eisenhower, and was used by rivals to denigrate him in later years. Nevertheless, his stellar reputation as a staff officer brought him into close contact with several prominent
military leaders, including Generals John J. Pershing, Douglas MacArthur, and George C. Marshall. Such influential connections combined with his natural talent for military administration allowed Eisenhower to rise steadily through the ranks, and he was promoted to brigadier general in October 1941 (Ambrose, 1990). During the World War II era, the promotion progression for U.S. Army officers would have been as follows: second lieutenant, first lieutenant, captain, major, lieutenant colonel, colonel, brigadier general (one-star), major general (two-star), lieutenant general (three-star), general (four-star), and General of the Army (five-star).

Advancement for Eisenhower continued as the United States entered World War II after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Following rapid promotions to major general and then lieutenant general, Eisenhower led the Allied invasion of North Africa in November 1942—code-named “Operation Torch.” After overseeing the invasion of Sicily and earning promotion to general in 1943, Eisenhower was appointed Supreme Allied Commander of Allied forces, charged with planning the proposed Operation Overlord. In that capacity, he worked closely with some of the top Allied leadership, including Winston Churchill, British Field Marshall Bernard Law Montgomery, and French Gen. Charles de Gaulle. In recognition of his success in the D-Day campaign, Eisenhower was promoted to General of the Army in December 1944 (Ambrose, 1990).

Following the German surrender, he served as military governor of the U.S. occupation zone in Germany and then replaced Gen. George C. Marshall as U.S. Army chief of staff in November 1945 (Ambrose, 1990). Not one to give compliments lightly, Marshall praised Eisenhower’s wartime leadership, telling him, “you have completed your mission with the greatest victory in the history of warfare… you have been selfless
in your actions, always sound and tolerant in your judgments and altogether admirable in
the courage and wisdom of your military decisions” (as cited in Jacobs, 2001, p. 4).
However, by early 1947, Eisenhower was pondering his next career move, as his term as
Army chief of staff was coming to an end. While at age 57 he was too young and vibrant
to retire, the immensely popular Eisenhower was also ready for a bit of a rest. Despite
lucrative financial offers from the corporate world, he wanted to remain in some form of
public service. A military historian at heart, Eisenhower had often dreamt of leading a
small liberal arts college in a sort of semi-retirement with his wife, Mamie (Ambrose,
1990; Clark, 2013; Neal, 1978). Thus, while uncertain of what the future would hold
Eisenhower was open to the prospect of a career in higher education (Jacobs, 2001).

**Historical Context**

By the late 1940s, the higher education landscape that Eisenhower contemplated
entering was full of challenges as well as opportunities. Following World War II,
American colleges and universities entered a “Golden Age” that was marked by
prosperity, prestige, and popularity (Clark, 2013, p. 16; Thelin, 2011, p. 260). Much of
this success was fueled by a strong federal government commitment to enhance college
access, along with the availability of millions of returning World War II veterans who
were eager to obtain college educations (Rudolph 1990; Thelin, 2011). In order to adjust
adequately to a peacetime economy and to avert civil strife among disgruntled veterans
who arrived home without jobs or prospects, the U.S. Congress passed the G.I. Bill in
1944 to provide educational support for college-bound veterans (Clark, 2013; Thelin,
2011). The bill guaranteed one year of education for 90 days of military service, plus one
month for each additional month of active duty up to 48 months (Thelin, 2011). Along
with paying tuition, it also provided funds for fees, books, and other supplies (Thelin, 2011).

Despite initial projections that the section of the G.I. Bill regarding educational benefits would not attract much interest, it was wildly popular, with college enrollments passing one million in 1946 (Thelin, 2011). Eventually, of the 11 million veterans who returned home following World War II, roughly one third utilized G.I. Bill benefits to attend colleges and universities (Rudolph, 1990). Aware of this financial boon, many higher education institutions put into place marketing initiatives to attract veterans to their campuses (Thelin, 2011). The net result of such efforts was a doubling in enrollments at American colleges and universities between 1943 and 1946 (Thelin, 2011).

Along with the G.I. Bill, other federal government initiatives during this period benefitted higher education institutions immensely. One such example was the Truman Commission, a 28-member body appointed by President Harry S. Truman in 1946. The commission’s task was to explore the functions of higher education in supporting democracy and to identify the means by which the subsequent plans could best be performed (Thelin, 2011). The resulting 1947 Truman Commission Report, entitled Higher Education for American Democracy, concluded that the United States devoted far too little of its gross national product to investment in postsecondary education (Thelin, 2011). Another report, developed in 1945 by the preeminent scientist Vannevar Bush and entitled Science, the Endless Frontier, argued for the utilization of American higher education institutions in federal government research (Clark, 2013; Thelin, 2011). The impact of this document for colleges and universities was monumental, as it positioned
the federal government as a research patron and contractor, working with scores of higher education institutions to advance scientific research (Clark, 2013; Thelin, 2011). Thus, the late 1940s was an exciting and lucrative period for American higher education, as it enjoyed spectacular success between unprecedented student enrollments and strong financial support from government and corporate sources (Clark, 2013).

However, this era was not without its challenges for colleges and universities across the nation. For one, higher education leaders debated the role that their institutions should play in the rapidly evolving societal landscape (Rudolph, 1990). Some questioned the long-range impact on American higher education of pursuing the enlargement of educational opportunity through the G.I. Bill (Rudolph, 1990). Further, they speculated openly whether it was in the best interest of colleges and universities, traditionally the domain of the elite, to open their gates to the masses (Rudolph, 1990). Thus, this question of whether American higher education was sacrificing quality for quantity concerned many educators throughout the nation (Rudolph, 1990).

Higher education leaders also came to realize that the rapid increase in student enrollment on their campuses, driven by the G.I. Bill, came at a steep price. First, most colleges and universities had not prepared to handle such a high volume of students. According to Thelin (2011), "the swelling of postwar enrollments signaled the need for massive construction of laboratories, classroom buildings, and dormitories" (p. 265). Consequently, institutions scrambled to keep up with the extraordinary demand for new facilities. Also, higher education leaders found it difficult to accommodate the needs of G.I. Bill students (Thelin, 2011). These veterans were older than the traditional college student, were in some cases disabled, and were usually married with children (Thelin,
This group of adult learners required college faculty and administrators to reassess everything from how they designed curricular offerings to what campus activities they should offer. The G.I. Bill students also prompted traditional-aged college students to rethink their activities (Thelin, 2011). According to Thelin (2011), "how, for example could the hazing of a fraternity initiation intimidate a twenty-six-year-old army veteran who had been in mortal combat" (p. 266)? Consequently, the presence of millions of veterans on college campuses presented something of a double-edged sword for American higher education during this time. On the one hand, these veterans provided a large amount of revenue and prosperity for higher education institutions. On the other hand, they also created a number of logistical, infrastructural, and curricular problems.

Another major challenge stemmed from the growing threat of communism across the globe. Known as either the "Red Scare" or the "McCarthy" era, the period from 1947 to 1954 was characterized by intense ideological conflict and driven by the fear that a serious communist-based threat existed within the United States (Clark, 2013, p. 17; Foster, 1997, p. 1). Consequently, American society was propelled into "a period of fervent anti-communism, which produced one of the most severe episodes of political repercussion the United States has ever experienced" (Foster, 1997, p. 1). This repercussion was best characterized by Senator Joseph McCarthy's Un-American Activities Committee, a congressional task force that endeavored to seek out suspected communists from all walks of American society (Thelin, 2011).

This Red Scare era proved to be highly problematic for American higher education. During World War II, the nation's colleges and universities were seen as
centers of democracy, teaching citizens about civic engagement and providing research expertise that contributed to national defense (Thelin, 2011). However, after the war, concerns began to rise that these same institutions were havens for dissidence and disloyalty (Thelin, 2011). Such thinking was driven largely by vague accusations that leading scholars nationwide had ties to the Communist Party (Thelin, 2011). Consequently, faculty members at many institutions were subjected to political compliance tests in order to be considered for federal research funding or to even keep their jobs (Thelin, 2011). This demand for loyalty oaths prompted intense debate about the importance of academic freedom, and even prompted some faculty members at schools such as Berkeley to resign their positions in protest (Thelin, 2011). Hundreds of others with suspected communist ties were quietly dismissed by presidents and boards of trustees without due process (Thelin, 2011). It was a very troubling period in American higher education that tested the leadership prowess of many college presidents. Unfortunately, many campus presidents proved to be “more interested in defusing external scrutiny than in defending their professors’ traditional rights of academic freedom” (Thelin, 2011, p. 275). Therefore, despite the significant benefits for higher education brought about by the increased federal government support, they came at a steep price for many faculty members and administrators.

**Institutional Context**

The situation at Morningside Heights, the epicenter of the Columbia University campus, closely paralleled what was happening at colleges and universities elsewhere in the country. Following World War II, Columbia was inundated with military veterans, who comprised nearly 80% of the institution’s new students (Jacobs, 1985). By fall
1946, there were nearly 14,000 veterans enrolled on campus; a number that nearly matched Columbia’s entire 16,161 member student body in late 1941 (Jacobs, 2001; Kahn, 1941). By 1947, roughly half of Columbia’s students were enrolled under the G.I. Bill (McCaughey, 2003). Further, possessing a world-class faculty, Columbia was uniquely positioned to take advantage of the federal government’s emerging research partnerships with higher education institutions. However, several years of weak presidential leadership, along with an outdated administrative structure and mounting financial problems left the university woefully unprepared to meet the demands of this emerging era. By the late 1940s, Columbia was in dire straits and in search of a bold and compelling leader who could advance the university back to prosperity (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 1985; Jacobs, 2001).

Interestingly, the decades prior to World War II were highly productive for Columbia. For many years, the institution was ably led by Nicholas Murray Butler, who had served as president since 1902 (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 1985). A respected educator and Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Butler had overseen a massive building program during his tenure, adding over a dozen buildings and several academic programs to the campus by the early 1940s (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001). His success prompted many observers to refer to Columbia as the “Acropolis of America” (Jacobs, 2001, p. 14). Moreover, historian Allan Nevins considered Columbia during this period to be “the largest and richest seat of learning in the largest and richest city in the globe” (Jacobs, 1985, p. 556). Butler himself also helped give the institution an international reputation (Jacobs, 2001). As president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, he was highly respected in the diplomatic community and visits to his home by foreign government officials and
other dignitaries were common (Jacobs, 2001). While Butler did have some detractors, who referred to him as “Czar Nicholas” for his autocratic nature, his supporters were far more numerous (Jacobs, 2001, p. 15). According to scholar Lindsay Rogers, Butler was “a great university president – the greatest of the twentieth century” (Jacobs, 2001, p. 15).

However, as the 20th century progressed the acropolis that Butler had labored so hard to build began to crumble. First, the Great Depression depleted the fortunes of Columbia’s largest donors and left a noticeable impact on the institution’s fundraising (Jacobs, 2001). Moreover, as Butler’s tenure lingered on, many of his closest friends passed away, which drastically shrank the university’s donor pool (Jacobs, 2001). The largest problem, however, was Butler himself. Believing that only he could lead Columbia effectively, he remained at the helm well past the customary retirement age (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001). Consequently, Butler’s final years at the University were described as “tragic,” with increasing blindness and deafness impacting even his ability to give speeches (Jacobs, 1985, p. 556). By 1945, this decaying leadership left Columbia years behind in construction projects, building maintenance, fundraising, and administrative reorganization (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001). Moreover, there was an increasing realization that Columbia was nowhere near prepared to respond to the educational needs of post-World War II America. Ultimately, Butler had nearly destroyed the great university he himself had created (Jacobs, 2001). Later in 1945, the board of trustees finally asked the 83-year-old Butler to step down as president (Jacobs, 2001).

Unfortunately, getting Butler to retire did little to alleviate Columbia’s pressing problems. By 1945, “the lack of strong leadership and fundraising for over a decade
meant that Butler's successor would face a challenge far greater than Butler's formidable shadow" (Jacobs, 2001, p. 17). Specifically, Columbia faced the postwar era with an acting president, an administration in dire need of reorganization, a new presidential search, and pressing financial problems (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001). Further, even in retirement Butler continued to lurk in the shadows, attending board meetings and endeavoring to exert his influence (Jacobs, 2001). Consequently, many prominent educators refused to accept the Columbia presidency, prolonging the search and fueling faculty discontent on the Morningside Heights campus (Jacobs, 1985; Jacobs, 2001). Even after a two-year presidential search, there was still no clear successor to Butler. Thus, by 1947 Columbia University was in deep trouble on a variety of fronts. What follows (See Table 1) is a timeline that highlights key dates pertaining to Eisenhower's experience at Columbia. The dates are sorted by historical higher education context, Columbia's institutional context, and by Eisenhower's personal history. These three categories are placed side-by-side to allow the reader to obtain a thorough contextual overview of the key events and issues that occurred during the Eisenhower era at Columbia.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historical Context</th>
<th>Institutional Context</th>
<th>Personal History</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890: Eisenhower born.</td>
<td>1754: Columbia founded (as King's College).</td>
<td>1890: Eisenhower born.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915: Graduated from West Point.</td>
<td>1784: Institution renamed Columbia College.</td>
<td>1915: Graduated from West Point.</td>
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Selecting a New President

It was against this contextual backdrop that Dwight D. Eisenhower was first considered for Columbia’s presidency. The Eisenhower name had popped up regularly in board deliberations concerning a possible successor for Butler. A popular Columbia myth is that at one presidential search meeting, a trustee asked, “what about Eisenhower?” as a possible option, allegedly referring to General Eisenhower’s brother, Milton, who was an experienced university president (Jacobs, 2001, p. 33; Neal, 1978, pp. 237-238). However, as the legend goes, the other trustees assumed he meant General Eisenhower and subsequently initiated contact with the World War II hero (Jacobs, 2001; McCaughey, 2003; Neal, 1978). In reality, many of the trustees were legitimately interested in General Eisenhower, even though he possessed minimal qualifications at best for the position (Childs, 1958; McCaughey, 2003; Neal, 1978). Thirty years later, a veteran Columbia faculty member observed that the university would have been better off with Milton (Neal, 1978). However, he pointed out that ultimately, “the trustees wanted General Eisenhower” (Neal, 1978, p. 238).

Despite some initial reservations, the trustees wanted the general to be Columbia’s president for a variety of reasons. For one, Eisenhower was widely considered to be a future U.S. president, and many trustees yearned for Columbia to have a close association with such an important historical figure (Childs, 1958; McCaughey, 2003). Moreover, the university desperately needed money, and a celebrity president looked like a viable option to help alleviate the pressing financial problems (Clark, 2013; Parmet, 1972). Eisenhower’s close friendship with a wide array of wealthy businessmen and financiers proved very attractive to the board, and they believed that Eisenhower
could encourage many of those executives to support Columbia (Parmet, 1972). Lastly, in the midst of the Red Scare and the challenges it created for American higher education, Columbia needed the international stature and prestige that Eisenhower would bring to help protect it in that challenging political environment (Clark, 2013; Galambos, 1984a; Smith, 2012). Overall, it was “as a massive public figure that Eisenhower attracted the Columbia Trustees…. the Columbia tradition demanded such a public figure” (Neal, 1978, p. 239).

However, while Columbia was very interested in Dwight D. Eisenhower, he was not nearly as interested in Columbia (McCaughey, 2003). As early as spring 1946, Eisenhower had politely declined offers to assume the office of president (Ambrose, 1990; McCaughey, 2003). While the general was certainly interested in a college presidency, he had dreamt instead of presiding over a much smaller school in a country setting (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Galambos, 1984a; McCaughey, 2003; Neal, 1978; Smith, 2012). Conversely, the thought of leading a complex, urban university like Columbia intimidated him (Neal, 1978; Parmet, 1972). While military leaders had certainly served as college presidents in the past, none had ever led an institution as prestigious as Columbia (Neal, 1978). Nevertheless, certain Columbia trustees were so eager to recruit Eisenhower that they persisted in their lobbying efforts despite his initial reservations (McCaughey, 2003).

Further, the trustees made unrealistic promises to the general about the nature of his potential duties at Morningside Heights (McCaughey, 2003). In attempting to fit Columbia into Eisenhower’s vision for a desired semi-retirement, they insisted that his responsibilities would include no involvement in purely academic affairs and no
responsibility for fundraising (Ambrose, 1990; McCaughey, 2003). Instead, those functions were to be handled by the provost and various deans (Jacobs, 2001). The trustees also insisted that Eisenhower would not have to engage in excessive entertaining nor involve himself with burdensome administrative details (Ambrose, 1990; McCaughey, 2003). Alternately, Eisenhower could be the master of his own time and use Columbia as a national platform to advance his interests in civic engagement and democratic citizenship (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 1985).

Knowing the full extent of Columbia’s financial and administrative problems, it is striking that these trustees made such absurd promises to Eisenhower. However, they were desperate to recruit him and were prepared to say nearly anything to help seal the deal (McCaughey, 2003). Eisenhower eventually gave in and accepted the offer reluctantly in June 1947 (Ambrose, 1990; McCaughey, 2003). In assuming this new role, he believed that it would possibly afford him certain advantages and opportunities. For one, he could focus on his efforts to promote “basic concepts of education in a democracy with particular emphasis upon the American system of democracy” (Jacobs, 1985, p. 556). Columbia’s presidency also provided him a national platform to speak on significant issues, while avoiding either business ties or major political controversy (Parmet, 1972; Smith, 2012). Further, the position potentially provided Eisenhower a respite from mounting public pressure to run for president of the United States (Clark, 2013; Parmet, 1972). At the time, Eisenhower and the trustees came to believe that it would be a mutually beneficial arrangement (McCaughey, 2003; Smith, 2012).

However, in a troubling sign of things to come, then-West Point superintendent and Eisenhower confidante, Gen. Maxwell Taylor, felt that the general was perplexingly
naïve about the demands on the president of a large university (Jacobs, 1985). Believing that Eisenhower had allowed himself to be persuaded by false promises, Taylor remarked that his friend was “largely unaware of the nature of the primary duties of a university president with the emphasis on money raising and administration” (Jacobs, 1985, p. 556). As subsequent events proved, this observation was quite accurate and illustrated some of the key challenges that Eisenhower would face during his presidential tenure at Columbia. Moreover, Taylor’s sentiments foreshadowed Eisenhower’s difficult adjustment process to academic culture; one that he never really mastered.

**Summary of Emerging Themes**

As Taylor’s observations forewarned, Eisenhower’s tenure at Columbia was a troubled one. Although Eisenhower was well-intentioned, he did relatively little to alleviate the institution’s pressing problems, was frequently away from campus, and stirred up considerable resentment within the university community as a result (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001; Parmet, 1972). Eisenhower also represents a clear example of a non-traditional college president who did not adjust well to academic culture (Ambrose, 1990; Childs, 1958; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001; Neal, 1978). While he certainly held no ill will toward Columbia’s faculty, Eisenhower simply did not have the time, interest, or patience to learn the ways of the academy. And, indeed, he was told this area of oversight would not be included in his job.

Thus, this inability to adapt to academic culture, coupled with a lack of progress in addressing Columbia’s institutional needs, has prompted some modern historians to consider Eisenhower’s tenure at Morningside Heights a failed one (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001; McCaughey, 2003; Parmet, 1972). Conversely, other historians argue that
Eisenhower did achieve some degree of success. He gave Columbia enhanced international prestige, carefully defended the academic freedom of its faculty, and at least attempted to fix the institution's broken finances (Galambos, 1984a; Smith, 2012). However, regardless of his level of success as an educational leader, the purpose of this study was to determine the reasons why he failed – as concluded in this study - to adjust to academic culture.

To investigate this question, over 2,200 pieces of Eisenhower's personal correspondence spanning his years as Columbia's president (1948-1953) were examined. Interestingly, only about 220 of these documents were found to be relevant to Eisenhower's tenure at Columbia, and therefore only those were coded (See Appendix E). The rest pertained to military, political, and international diplomacy issues that were not germane to this study and therefore not coded. For the purposes of data triangulation, the coded data were then compared to analysis by historians as well as the relevant reflections of Eisenhower's Columbia colleagues to ensure that the findings were consistent.

The objective behind this research was to identify Eisenhower's perceptions about academic culture as reflected in his personal and official correspondence with others as well as in his diary entries. Another key objective was to identify the issues behind Eisenhower's failure to adjust to academic life. Open coding identified 12 applicable codes that showed up multiple times in his writings. Axial coding later narrowed these codes down into four central themes that helped explain his inability to adapt to academic culture. These themes included Eisenhower's frustration over the intricacies of academic culture as well as the demands of mounting political and military obligations. They also
included the challenges that Eisenhower faced by being too overextended professionally. While he was president of Columbia, he also had other important military and political commitments, which limited the time he could devote to Morningside Heights. The other two central themes were his lack of academic experience and the disconnect that existed between Eisenhower's presidential vision and Columbia's institutional needs. As the data ultimately demonstrated, all of these issues conspired to compromise his ability to adjust to academic culture.

**Frustration.** Frustration was a theme that showed up repeatedly in Eisenhower's writing, being expressed roughly 53 times in various letters and diary entries (Galambos, 1984a; Galambos, 1984b; Galambos, 1989a; Galambos, 1989b). This frustration was expressed in two distinct forms. First, as a career soldier Eisenhower was clearly annoyed by the unique dynamics of academic culture, which he referred to as a "bewildering world" (Galambos, 1984a, p. 107). He mentioned it in no less than 10 times in letters to friends and relatives, with an overall frequency of roughly one reference in every five letters. A particular area of contention for Eisenhower was what he considered the glacial pace of academic decision-making (Ambrose, 1990; Galambos, 1984a). This perspective made sense considering that as a general he was used to having his orders quickly executed. Conversely, in the academic world he was appalled at the amount of time and deliberation it took to get anything done. In one April 5, 1950 diary entry, he expressed these sentiments when reflecting on a search process for a new dean:

> There is probably no more complicated business in the world than that of picking a new dean within a university. Faculties, including the retiring dean, feel an almost religious fervor in insisting upon acceptance of their
views. These are as varied as there are individuals involved, and every man's opinion is voiced in terms of urgency. The result is complete confusion and I cannot see why universities have followed such a custom! But I'll be d--- glad when we have a new dean of engineering and the fuss, fury, and hysteria die down (Galambos, 1984b, p. 1067).

Academic governance holds faculty views as central and germane to operations. With a great deal of power vested in the professional roles of faculty, the decision-making process outlined by Eisenhower is typical.

Eisenhower expressed similar frustration over the amount of paperwork he noticed in the higher education environment. Following a long career in the U.S. Army, he thought that no other organization could produce so many documents (Ambrose, 1990). However, following a few months at Columbia, he wrote, “one of the major surprises... is the paperwork... I thought I was leaving those mountainous white piles forever” (Ambrose, 1990, p. 241). When Eisenhower tried to insist that every project should be presented on one typewritten page, the very idea “reduced the professors to helpless rage or laughter” (Ambrose, 1990, p. 241). The bureaucratic nature of academics is long documented and a common cultural artifact for those working in higher education (Mintzberg, 1980; Birnbaum, 1988).

Eisenhower’s frustration with the dynamics of academic culture has also been well documented by both historians and his former Columbia associates (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001; McCaughey, 2003; Parmet, 1972; Smith, 2012). Smith (2012) argued that while universities are governed by consensus, Eisenhower was accustomed to a chain of command. Thus, Eisenhower viewed the various deans and department chairs
as his corps and division commanders, faculty members as officers and students as enlisted personnel (Smith, 2012). Much of Eisenhower’s frustration therefore stemmed from the decentralized nature of the academy (Mintzberg, 1980), and the reality that academic decision-making did not follow a strict hierarchy (Smith, 2012). Moreover, he came to find academic affairs increasingly trivial over the course of his presidential tenure, which further fueled his discomfort and frustration (Ambrose, 1990; Smith, 2012). For Eisenhower, faculty meetings were his “special hell” (Ambrose, 1990, p. 241). According to John Krout, dean of the graduate faculty in 1949, Eisenhower constantly complained that instead of actually accomplishing anything, all faculty members did was talk (Ambrose, 1990). Consequently, total boredom combined with discussion over what Eisenhower considered trivial topics soon drove him away (Ambrose, 1990).

On this issue of frustration, the data from Eisenhower’s correspondence were supported by other Columbia officials as well. According to several faculty sources, much of his frustration stemmed from regret over accepting the Columbia presidency in the first place (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; McCaughey, 2003; Parmet, 1972; Smith, 2012). According to McCaughey (2003), Eisenhower believed that he had been tricked into taking the job. In later years, Dean Harry Carman recounted a conversation with Eisenhower that touched on this difficult subject (Jacobs, 2001; Smith, 2012). With a tinge of regret, Carman remembered Eisenhower reflecting, “in a moment of weakness I listened to the blandishments of a couple of your trustees and here I find myself with a gigantic organization on my hands, and I don’t know a goddamn thing about it” (as cited in Jacobs, 2001, p. 87). In a similar vein, a close Eisenhower associate once remarked, “I
don’t think that he had any idea what a complicated thing Columbia University was or is. No idea of it whatever.” (as cited in Jacobs, 2001, p. 87). By both personal accounts and those with whom Eisenhower was in contact, academics represented a foreign territory for this non-traditional college president, and ultimately Eisenhower never embraced the academic culture.

Eisenhower’s deep frustration also stemmed from the mounting expectations for him to engage in national military and government service, even while serving as Columbia’s president. He discussed this aspect of his frustration in 43 different letters and diary entries (Galambos, 1984a, Galambos, 1984b, Galambos, 1989a, Galambos, 1989b). Originally, Eisenhower envisioned his post-World War II life to be a semi-retirement of sorts, in which he could be the master of his own schedule (Ambrose, 1990). However, pressing national security issues prompted a military leader of his stature to be utilized extensively as a trouble shooter and informal advisor at the Pentagon throughout the late 1940s (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Smith, 2012).

Eisenhower’s services were needed in particular to work out Department of Defense budget problems and to smooth over disputes between the armed services (Ambrose, 1990; Smith, 2012). He therefore spent at least a couple of days a week in Washington D.C. during the early stages of his Columbia tenure (Jacobs, 2001). The problem grew only worse when President Harry S. Truman asked Eisenhower to head the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in October 1950 (Childs, 1958). To be sure, Truman was within his rights as commander and chief to make this and other requests, since a five-star general, under the law creating the rank, never fully retires from active service (Childs, 1958). However, Eisenhower was still indignant over this assignment,
which required him to take an unpopular leave of absence from Columbia (Ambrose, 1990; Jacobs, 2001). Throughout this period, he also had to fend off increasing calls to run for president of the United States, which further fueled his stress and annoyance (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001; Smith, 2012). Clearly, this did not put Eisenhower in the ideal frame of mind to learn the ways of academic life, as it was doubtful he would have a long tenure in a university setting.

Eisenhower’s frustration over these military, government, and political obligations was highly evident in his correspondence. In explaining his feelings to a close friend, Eisenhower wrote in a February 24, 1950 letter:

I have read some of the same comments that you have concerning my alleged dissatisfaction with my present position! They are merely examples of distortion and inaccuracy. It is true that in attempting, at times, to explain to my friends the difficulties of my present life, I have dwelt upon the conflicts that arise between the details of university administration, unusually persistent adhesions from a past life, and, finally, the demands that arise out of my earnest effort to be of some help to people who are struggling manfully to support the essentials of the American way of life (Galambos, 1984b, p. 989).

This letter was written relatively early in Eisenhower’s Columbia presidency when he was still trying to acclimate as Columbia’s president. Eisenhower’s arc of frustration peaked shortly thereafter, when he began to realize that he would not be an effective higher education leader. In other letters and diary entries, Eisenhower expressed similar sentiments about having too much to do, discussing at length about how “the pressures on
me are of several kinds” (Galambos, 1989a, p. 367). Along with his military duties, he was very frustrated with mounting political expectations, which continued to grow as his tenure at Columbia progressed. To Eisenhower’s chagrin, pressure for him to run for president of the United States mounted no matter how much he denied interest in the position (Galambos, 1984b; 1989a). He referred to the endless calls for him to enter the presidential ring as “burdensome” and “monotonous” (Galambos, 1989a, p. 667).

Ultimately, no matter what he did or said, Eisenhower could not escape the consensus from leaders in both political parties that the United States “demanded” him in politics (Galambos, 1989a, p. 698).

The data from Eisenhower’s writings reflecting these frustrations are supported by multiple historians and contemporaries (Ambrose, 1990; Childs, 1958; Clark, 2013; Neal, 1978; Parmet, 1972). According to Ambrose (1990), any hopes for Eisenhower of a future free from politics were shattered on election night in 1948, when Democrat Harry S. Truman was re-elected president unexpectedly. Following their bitter defeat, Republicans began lobbying Eisenhower for a 1952 presidential run relentlessly (Ambrose, 1990). Anti-Truman Democrats were also eager for Eisenhower to run as their nominee in the 1948 and 1952 elections (Childs, 1958; Parmet, 1972). According to Childs (1958) Eisenhower was not even fully settled in his Columbia office before a seemingly endless stream of governors and congressmen descended upon Morningside Heights to demand a presidential run. This pressure only increased during Eisenhower’s tenure as Columbia’s president (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001; Smith, 2012). A few years later, Eisenhower was furious when U.S. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge entered his name on the Republican ballot for the New Hampshire primary in January.
1952 (Ambrose, 1990). However, Eisenhower later gave in to this pressure and entered the presidential campaign reluctantly a few weeks later (Ambrose, 1990; Smith, 2012).

Overall, the frustration resulting from these constant demands, as well as possible regrets about coming to Columbia in the first place, did not put Eisenhower in the best mental frame to undertake the rigors of learning academic culture. Moreover, Eisenhower had experienced a culture-shock of sorts engaging with academic culture and was forced to try and do a job that was much different than the one he was promised. Consequently, these factors also contributed to his frustration and severely limited his ability to acclimate to academe.

**Overextended.** Along with the frustration resulting from these non-academic professional demands, a related theme in Eisenhower’s writing was how overextended he was trying to take on all of these tasks. In a June 26, 1951 letter to a friend, he commented, “here I am working as hard as I ever have in my life” (Galambos, 1989a, p. 387). Despite his interest in seeking semi-retirement, Eisenhower’s workload had increased. To complicate matters, beyond his academic, military, and political duties, Eisenhower was also in high demand as a keynote speaker or patron for various organizations (Galambos, 1984a; 1984b; 1989a; 1989b). He was forced to decline the vast majority of these invitations and consequently worried whether this “problem of saying no and sticking to it” would cause resentment toward Columbia (Galambos, 1984a, p. 328). Eisenhower discussed this problem of overextension in 30 different letters and diary entries during his tenure as Columbia’s president (Galambos, 1984a; Galambos, 1984b; Galambos, 1989a; Galambos, 1989b). An underlying theme in these writings was Eisenhower’s regret that he could not devote enough time to his duties at
Columbia, even though he had reservations about serving as its president. In a September 23, 1948 letter, he wrote:

I have never had more difficulty than I have now in attempting to fulfill even a tiny percentage of the requests that are made upon me for various kinds of activities ranging from participation in “peace societies” to taking part in conventions for conservation of natural resources. The work here at the University would in itself occupy a man if he could give to it his entire attention. I am so driven that I sometimes feel guilty in the lack of time that I can devote to the affairs of this great institution (as cited in Galambos, 1984a, p. 221).

This problem only grew worse when Eisenhower took the extended leave of absence from Columbia to serve as head of NATO, lasting from January 1951 to May 1952 (Ambrose, 1990). He offered to resign upon hearing of this important assignment, but the trustees insisted that he remain in office on indefinite leave, asserting that an acting president could run the university while Eisenhower was in Europe (Galambos, 1989a; Jacobs, 2001). The enthusiasm of the board to retain Eisenhower as president likely stemmed from their fear of undergoing another grueling presidential search (Jacobs, 2001). Moreover, several of the trustees clearly relished having a close association with the World War II hero (Jacobs, 1985). However, despite the trustees’ best intentions, this arrangement was highly unpopular with the Columbia faculty, who already considered Eisenhower aloof and uncommitted as president (Galambos, 1984b, p. 1097). Faculty members also began to think that Eisenhower was only using Columbia as a perch to advance his political career (Smith, 2012). Further, his prolonged absence
due to this military commitment also meant that Columbia suffered from weak leadership and diminished fundraising during the absence (Jacobs, 1985).

No one was more aware of this problem than Eisenhower, himself. By his 27th month as president, he realized that he had actually been on campus for less than 10 months’ time (Smith, 2012). During this period, Eisenhower began to label himself an “absentee president,” indicating a deep sense of guilt that he was not fulfilling his presidential responsibilities (as cited in Smith, 2012, p. 496). In 10 letters throughout the summer and fall of 1951, he discussed how this arrangement was unsustainable and openly considered resignation (Galambos, 1989a). In a May 16, 1951 letter, Eisenhower discussed how his “retention as the nominal president is working against Columbia” (as cited in Galambos, 1989a, p. 292). Further, in a September 15, 1951 letter, he discussed his fear that “the trustees out of their friendship for me would permit a situation to develop that would be inimical to the best interests of the university” (as cited in Galambos, 1989a, p. 543). Attempting to find a suitable solution, Eisenhower proposed his reassignment as Columbia’s honorary chancellor, arguing that there must be a real president based at Morningside Heights (Galambos, 1989a). However, the board was determined to retain Eisenhower as president, and did not end up accepting his resignation until shortly before the U.S. presidential inauguration in January 1953 (Jacobs, 2001). In the months prior to that event, Eisenhower was even more distracted from his Columbia duties by the rigors of his presidential campaign (Jacobs, 2001). Ultimately, he was spread too thin professionally to provide solid and consistent leadership at Columbia, despite his best intentions. Further, since Columbia was not
Eisenhower's top professional priority during this period, this eliminated any meaningful chance for him to adjust effectively to academic culture.

These data illustrating Eisenhower's over extendedness are supported by several historians as well as by information from his Columbia colleagues. A central theme in many of Eisenhower's biographical treatments is that he was spread in far too many professional directions during this period (Ambrose, 1990; Childs, 1958; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001; Neal, 1978; Parmet, 1972; Smith, 2012). However, instead of Eisenhower creating this situation, historians maintain that many of these external pressures were thrust upon him against his will or better judgment (Ambrose, 1990; Jacobs, 2001; Neal, 1978; Smith, 2012). Consequently, Eisenhower pursued those military and political commitments out of a sense of duty, regretting the impact it had on Columbia (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001; Neal, 1978; Smith, 2012). To his credit, Eisenhower attempted to remedy the situation by resigning as Columbia's president. However, he was thwarted repeatedly by Columbia's board members, who were eager to keep him at the helm and avoid another long and costly presidential search (Jacobs, 2001).

Eisenhower's Columbia colleagues expressed similar sentiments concerning this problem of overextension. Regarding Eisenhower's NATO assignment, Economics Prof. Eli Ginzberg reflected that President Truman "was really putting a burden on him that he didn't want" (as cited in Jacobs, 2001, p. 252). Further, Ginzberg asserted that President Truman leaned heavily on Eisenhower for support in national security matters, and that Eisenhower "was not happy about it... that is fact" (Jacobs, 2001, p. 252). Former Columbia president Grayson Kirk also reflected on the impact that these external pressures had on Eisenhower, explaining his prediction that following his departure for
the NATO assignment, Eisenhower would not return to Columbia (Jacobs, 2001). Kirk explained that:

I had felt that he had not been particularly comfortable in his position, and also he had been under a great deal of pressure from outside interests to get into national politics. A combination of some discomfort at Morningside on his part and the various external pressures made it unlikely in my judgment that he would return and settle down (Jacobs, 2001, pp. 252-253).

Kirk’s prediction eventually turned out to be an accurate one. While Eisenhower continued as Columbia’s nominal president following his retirement from the Army, he never really reconnected with the institution following his NATO service, even though he continued to profess a fondness for Columbia in several letters (Ambrose, 1990; Galambos, 1989a). Several historians assert that his interest in being an academic leader had subsided following his return from Europe (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 1985; Jacobs, 2001; Smith, 2012). Smith (2012) concluded that by this point, Columbia had become a “secondary interest” to Eisenhower (p. 488). He occupied himself primarily with his U.S. presidential campaign until his final departure from Columbia in January 1953, when he was designated as president emeritus (Ambrose, 1990; Galambos, 1989b). According to Jacobs (1985) and Smith (2012), Eisenhower could have potentially been a great leader for Columbia had he possessed the time to do it. However, constant external pressures conspired to keep him away from Morningside Heights for much of his presidency, eliminating any meaningful chance of engaging with the academy and learning its culture.
Lack of academic experience. Another central theme that appeared consistently in Eisenhower’s writings was his general lack of academic experience. Although he was a West Point graduate and military historian with an extensive organizational leadership background, Eisenhower had little to no connection with the scholarly world. In a letter to a friend, he once wrote, “I know nothing about the workings of a great university and am certainly far from being an ‘educator’…” (as cited in Neal, 1978, p. 240). This inexperience was highly apparent during his Columbia tenure, which limited his ability and willingness to learn the ways of academic culture. Eisenhower mentioned this lack of knowledge in 14 different letters over the course of his Columbia presidency (Galambos, 1984a). In one such June 2, 1949 letter, he wrote to another friend that he was “under no illusion as to any qualifications involving scholarship” (as cited in Galambos, 1984a, p. 601). Accustomed to abject followership in the military, Eisenhower often felt inferior to Columbia’s faculty members and worried that they questioned his authority as their president.

In other letters, Eisenhower sounded almost apologetic, referring at times to his “woeful ignorance” of certain academic fields (as cited in Galambos, 1984a, p. 688). Moreover, in his first appearance at Columbia’s Low Memorial Library, Eisenhower commented to a gathering of university deans and administrators that, “nobody is more keenly aware of my academic shortcomings than I am” (as cited in Neal, 1978, p. 239). Such sentiments did not instill much confidence in those campus academic leaders, who gave Eisenhower a chilly reception (Neal, 1978). Even after nearly two years in office, he commented to a friend in a February 10, 1950 letter that, “I have never yet understood some of the methods that we use for the performance of some of our most important
work" (as cited in Galambos, 1984b, p. 963). Specifically, Eisenhower was at a loss to understand many organizational processes unique to academia, ranging from faculty hiring to the tenure review system.

In many cases, this lack of academic experience prompted Eisenhower to take a hands-off approach to many issues of university governance. This aloof behavior was reflected in 13 different letters during his Columbia tenure (Galambos, 1984a; 1984b; 1989a). When Columbia constituents would ask him to help with certain administrative matters, ranging from admissions to athletics, Eisenhower would often respond that the request was not within his purview, or he did not know enough about the matter to offer constructive assistance (Galambos, 1984a; 1984b; 1989a). For instance, in a November 4, 1949 letter, Eisenhower wrote that he “should not be identified too closely with those individuals who interest themselves directly in the admission into the college of students with known football records” (Galambos, 1984a, p. 816). Despite Eisenhower’s fondness for football, he did not want to involve himself in recruiting. Further, in an October 9, 1950 letter to a prospective student, Eisenhower wrote that the “president of a great confederated university, such as Columbia, does not interfere in the slightest degree in the selection of students” (as cited in Galambos, 1984b, p. 1363). In many cases, Eisenhower was certainly justified in not over-involving himself in such matters. However, the persistence of this sentiment in Eisenhower’s correspondence, coupled with his lack of knowledge about academic affairs, suggests the possibility that intimidation over getting involved in matters unfamiliar to him sometimes prompted Eisenhower to avoid such situations entirely.
These data concerning Eisenhower’s challenges with academic culture are echoed in historical analysis as well as the reflection of contemporaries. Dean of Columbia College Harry J. Carman often told a story about his first encounter with a “solemn and uncomfortable” Eisenhower, who had just been installed as president (Neal, 1978, p. 244). Summoning Carman to his office, Eisenhower exclaimed:

I need your help. I’m awfully green at this job. Damn it, I don’t even know what to call people around here. I find there are sixteen different schools here at the university and each one has a dean or director. What do I call these men? Dean? Director? Doctor (Neal, 1978, p. 244)?

Other faculty members and administrators had similar experiences that convinced them that Eisenhower was out of his depth in regards to dealing with the minutia of academics. In later years, Prof. Lionel Trilling reflected that although he had an “auspicious start... it gradually and quickly disintegrated” (as cited in Smith, 2012, p. 488). Thus, as Eisenhower’s tenure progressed, Trilling “began to sense that he was nowhere in relation to the university and this gradually began to affect people” (as cited in Smith, 2012, p. 488). Douglas Black, a close Eisenhower friend and Columbia trustee concurred, reflecting that Eisenhower “never had the feeling or understanding of Columbia” (Jacobs, 2001, p. 260). Prof. Eli Ginzberg concurred with this sentiment, concluding that Eisenhower “never found a way of responding to anything substantive on campus. Nothing gave him a real kick.... a central focus (as cited in Smith, 2012, pp. 488-489). Campus members attributed Eisenhower’s aloofness to a lack of understanding of all things academic – university operations, curriculum management, and academic governance.
Multiple historians have concurred with this sentiment, arguing that there was considerable tension between Eisenhower and Columbia’s scholarly community (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 1985; Jacobs, 2001; McCaughey, 2003; Neal, 1978; Smith, 2012). According to Clark (2013), Neal (1978), and Smith (2012), Eisenhower was intimidated by Columbia’s learned faculty, and never felt comfortable around them. Even though Eisenhower was a decorated veteran, he felt out of place and inferior in the academic setting of Columbia, and made no effort to understand what made faculty members tick (McCaughey, 2003). Smith (2012) also argued that Eisenhower lacked an intuitive feel to tell him what was important to the faculty.

According to Jacobs (2001), in one widely circulated story at Morningside Heights:

Eisenhower once stated at a faculty meeting, ‘the university is going to do so and so.’ A senior faculty member, supposedly, stood up and replied, ‘you don’t understand, General Eisenhower, the faculty is the university’ (p. 317).

Further, this divide was not helped by Eisenhower’s military assistants, who were stationed at Morningside Heights to assist the general with his military correspondence. Completely unfamiliar with academic culture, these assistants treated administrators and faculty like junior army officers and restricted their access to Eisenhower (Jacobs, 2001; McCaughey, 2003; Neal, 1978). Thus, according to Jacobs (2001) and Neal (1978), such behavior completely alienated Columbia’s scholarly community from their president.

Overall, this lack of academic experience presented multiple problems for Eisenhower during his presidential tenure (Clark, 2013). While he did the best he could under the circumstances, Eisenhower was often at a loss when it came to addressing
Columbia’s most pressing needs. According to Smith (2012), while some observers held great promise initially in Eisenhower’s leadership approach, the “complexity of Columbia confounded him” (p. 484). Consequently, his inability to govern the university fueled discontent and animosity among the institutional community. According to Smith (2012), there was intense hostility toward Eisenhower on the part of the faculty and student body by summer 1950. Ultimately, this tension created a rift that could not be healed between Eisenhower and Columbia’s scholarly community, precluding any chance for him to learn the ways of academic culture.

**Lack of institutional vision.** Another issue that hindered Eisenhower’s ability to adjust to academic culture was the complete disconnect between his personal plans for Columbia and its pressing institutional needs. As noted earlier, Eisenhower only accepted the presidency after he was assured by a couple of overeager Columbia trustees that he would not have to engage himself too deeply in university affairs and could instead focus on his platform of renewing American civic engagement (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 1985; Jacobs, 2001; McCaughey, 2003). Unfortunately for Columbia, Eisenhower took this to heart and failed to develop a vision that advanced the institution (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001). Instead, he occupied himself with developing a national program for civic engagement that addressed the goals he desired, and while based at Columbia, this work did little to support the university itself (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 1985; 2001).

For Eisenhower, the crowning achievement of his Columbia presidency was the creation of the *American Assembly*, an annual conference where the nation’s top leaders from government, business, labor, the military, and the professions could meet to deal
with “basic political and social questions” affecting America (Jacobs, 1985, p. 557). In going to Columbia, Eisenhower believed that he could do more there “than anywhere else to further the cause to which I am devoted, the reawakening of intense interest in the basis of the American system” (as cited in Jacobs, 1985, p. 556). He therefore discussed the American Assembly in over 37 letters during his Columbia presidency. Eisenhower described it as able to “respond to the concern with which American citizens contemplate the possible future of our democracy and individual freedom based on a philosophy of competitive enterprise” (as cited in Galambos, 1984b, p. 1379). Moreover, in an April 16, 1951 letter, he described the Assembly as his “primary Columbia concern” (as cited in Galambos, 1989a, p. 214). This focus was highly apparent during his 1951 leave of absence, when his interest in the Assembly was the main Columbia-related topic in his correspondence (Galambos, 1989a).

However, Eisenhower's work with the Assembly illustrated the enormous gulf between his own personal interests and Columbia's pressing institutional needs. While his intense interest in the Assembly prompted him to go to extensive lengths to facilitate its creation, Eisenhower was not nearly as interested in advancing Columbia itself (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001; Neal, 1978). Even before accepting the Columbia presidency, he made clear that he was no fundraiser, a fact that should have triggered alarm with the trustees (Jacobs, 2001; Neal, 1978). Moreover, in four separate letters during his Columbia presidency, Eisenhower discussed at length his refusal to raise money for the institution (Galambos, 1984a; Galambos, 1984b). In a May 19, 1949 letter to a close friend, Eisenhower asserted that:
Much as I believe that an educational institution like Columbia is essential to the future of the American system, I am never going to use my personal friendships as an avenue for approaching anyone for current or future support of this university (Galambos, 1984a, p. 587).

Eisenhower reiterated this point in a September 22, 1950 letter, when he declared that “I do not personally solicit funds from anyone” (as cited in Galambos, 1984b, p. 1333). He explained this mindset as the result of “a lifetime spent in an atmosphere that promoted respect for ideas and quality of character and which refused to recognize accumulation of money as a true index for success” (as cited in Galambos, 1984a, p. 696). Ultimately, Eisenhower directed most of what fundraising prowess he could muster toward generating funds for the Assembly, and not Columbia itself (Jacobs, 2001; Neal, 1978). This fact was not lost on the Colombia community, which prompted Eisenhower speechwriter Kevin McCann to label his boss as “the poorest excuse for a fund-raising college president in the country” (Neal, 1978, p. 250).

These data from Eisenhower’s correspondence were also supported by writings of his Columbia associates as well as by leading historians. Many of Eisenhower’s contemporaries were distressed at his lack of understanding for Columbia and its institutional needs (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001). Former Columbia president Grayson Kirk noted that Eisenhower “had alienated many on the faculty by making speeches about the purpose of education being to develop citizens rather than develop people intellectually” (Smith, 2012, p. 490). Another veteran professor recalled a heated exchange between Eisenhower and faculty leaders, where they debated the societal role that Columbia’s faculty should play (Neal, 1978). At the meeting, one professor noted
that Columbia had “some of America’s most exceptional physicists, mathematicians, chemists, and engineers” (Neal, 1978, p. 249). Eisenhower then asked if these faculty members were also “exceptional Americans,” and was told in response that he did not understand (Neal, 1978, p. 249). Eisenhower then:

Burst into a rage, a large vein on his forehead throbbing as he said, ‘dammit, what good are exceptional physicists... exceptional anything, unless they are exceptional Americans.’ He went on to say that every student who came to Columbia must leave it first a better citizen and secondarily a more learned scholar (Neal, 1978, pp. 249-250).

The preferencing of his own agenda to build a more democratic society was often at odds with faculty scholars who were focused specifically on advancing knowledge and understanding in their disciplinary areas.

Historians have also noted this considerable gulf between Eisenhower’s vision and Columbia’s institutional needs (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001; McCaughey, 2003; Neal, 1978; Smith, 2012). According to Neal (1978), Eisenhower “saw the purpose of American education much as a high school civics teacher might, to teach the values for ‘effective citizenship’” (p. 249). However, according to Ambrose (1990) and Neal (1978), Columbia faculty found Eisenhower’s perspective embarrassing, considering it to be fatuous zeal. Further, they believed that Eisenhower’s diligent work on behalf of the American Assembly did nothing to support Columbia or address its pressing problems (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001; McCaughey, 2003; Neal, 1978). Ultimately, as Smith (2012) argued, Columbia’s disappointment in Eisenhower stemmed not so much from administrative ineptitude, but from his inattentiveness to the problems
of administration. Consequently, this immense divide between Eisenhower’s vision and Columbia’s needs precluded any meaningful chance for him to learn the ways of academic culture (Clark, 2013). His vision for American higher education was simply too different from that of Columbia’s faculty for there to develop any kind of meaningful relationship or mutual understanding (Clark, 2013).

Summary

Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower concluded his World War II service as one of America’s greatest military heroes. During that conflict, he had led organizations the size and scope of which few could only imagine. Eisenhower also interacted with many of modern history’s larger-than-life figures, including Winston Churchill, Charles de Gaulle, Gen. George S. Patton, and Field Marshall Bernard Law Montgomery, and found ways for them to all work together for a common purpose. For all practical purposes, his presidency of Columbia should have therefore been a success as well. However, despite his celebrated military leadership, he was unable to make the transition to civilian educator or learn the ways of academic culture. As the findings from this study concluded, this failure stemmed from four central issues: frustration over engaging with academic culture as well as the demands of mounting political and military obligations; being too overextended professionally; lacking academic experience; and possessing a presidential vision that did not align with Columbia’s institutional needs.

Thus, Eisenhower’s experience at Columbia demonstrates that despite the best intentions, even a non-traditional college president with a celebrated leadership record may fail to adjust effectively to the ways of academic culture. However, the next chapter will explore a non-traditional president with a professional background similar to
Eisenhower's who adjusted to academic culture seamlessly. Moreover, although he had to overcome some challenges, this college president achieved levels of organizational success and faculty admiration of which Eisenhower could have only imagined. Chapter 5 will analyze Terry Sanford's presidency of Duke University and explore why he was more successful in learning the ways of the academy.
Chapter 5 – Terry Sanford and Duke University

Although Dwight D. Eisenhower had a challenging experience as Columbia University’s president, his difficult adjustment to academic culture was not representative of all non-traditional college presidents. Other such presidents have had highly successful tenures, making the transition to academic culture quite effectively. One such example was former North Carolina Gov. Terry Sanford, a high-profile attorney, businessman, and politician who served as Duke University’s president from 1969 to 1985. According to Gordon (1998), his storied career read like the resume of a dozen men combined: four decorations as a paratrooper during World War II, two years as a state senator, four years as governor, 15 years as Duke’s president, two runs for the U.S. presidency, and six years as a U.S. senator. Moreover, while certainly confronting some challenges during his tenure, Sanford transformed Duke from a respected Southern liberal arts institution into one of the nation’s “preeminent academic powerhouses” (Gordon, 1998, p. 1). This success later led one biographer to refer to Sanford as Duke’s “patron saint” (Gordon, 1998, p. 1). Sanford’s noteworthy service to his native state as well as to Duke also prompted former North Carolina Gov. James Hunt to call him “one of the greatest leaders in North Carolina history” (Gordon, 1998, p. 1). Even today, Sanford is still considered a legend by many North Carolina residents.

During Sanford’s presidency, he also earned the lasting respect and admiration of the entire Duke community, including the institution’s faculty (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton, 1973). Former Duke University President Nan Keohane described Sanford as a “leader-hero,” and she argued that Sanford surpassed the usual expectations of political leadership in pursuing his many projects and overcoming institutional challenges (Rubin
& Stroup, 1998, p. 1). Many others admired his unique leadership style, which was once described as a “rare knack and ability to get ordinary people to do unordinary and extraordinary things” (Rubin & Stroup, 1998, p. 1). Ultimately, Sanford represents a non-traditional college president who effectively learned the ways of academic culture. Using data derived from his personal and official correspondence, along with selected secondary sources, this study found that his success stemmed from a combination of factors. These included Sanford’s ambitious vision for Duke that coincided well with its institutional needs; his strong personal commitment to Duke; his prior exposure to higher education as an education-focused governor; and his highly relational approach as a leader. To put these factors into perspective, this study situated them within a broader framework that included Sanford’s personal history, a historical context of the 1960s-era higher education landscape, and Duke’s institutional context during that period. Those sections follow below.

Personal History

Terry Sanford was born on August 20, 1917 in Laurinburg, North Carolina and came of age during the Great Depression (Barone & Ujifusa, 1987; Gordon, 1998). He paid his own way through the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill by washing dishes, graduating with an A.B. in 1939 (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Gordon, 1998). After college, he served briefly as an FBI special agent before volunteering for the U.S. Army during World War II. As a paratrooper, Sanford saw combat during five separate campaigns and participated in the Allied invasion of southern France as well as in the Battle of the Bulge. Following his discharge as a first lieutenant, he attended law school and became active in the North Carolina Democratic Party (Barone & Ujifusa, 1987;
Covington & Ellis, 1999; Gordon, 1998). During this period, he also married Margaret Rose Knight and would go on to have two children (Gordon, 1998).

Sanford served briefly in the North Carolina Senate before being elected governor in 1961. A firm believer in the value of education, he made that a hallmark of his administration, nearly doubling the state’s expenditures on public schools during his tenure (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Gordon, 1998). Moreover, Sanford consolidated the University of North Carolina school system to ensure its solvency and strength and developed the state’s Governor’s Schools as well as the North Carolina School of the Arts (Gordon, 1998). Most notably, Sanford fought for racial desegregation during a time when that was highly unpopular politically (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Gordon, 1998). To demonstrate his commitment to that cause, Sanford even sent his son to a desegregated public school despite safety concerns (Gordon, 1998). In recognition for Sanford’s work, a 1981 Harvard University survey named him one of the best governors of the 20th century (Gordon, 1998). As recently as the 2012 Democratic National Convention, political leaders continued to heap praise on Sanford. Speaking of Sanford’s North Carolina legacy, former Gov. James Hunt said:

Fifty years ago, this was a poor state – poor, rural, rigidly segregated. But we had a governor named Terry Sanford – a hero of mine…. He broke with most southerners in 1960 and endorsed John F. Kennedy. When other southern governors stood in the schoolhouse door, Terry Sanford stood up for civil rights. He worked with business leaders, political and education leaders to build our great universities, our 58 community colleges and our public schools (Mercola, 2012, p. 1).
Throughout Sanford’s administration, his work attracted the interest of national Democratic Party leaders. A close friend of President John F. Kennedy, Sanford was even rumored to have been Kennedy’s choice for vice president in the 1964 election (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Although that campaign never materialized because of Kennedy’s tragic assassination, Sanford was regarded as a respected and highly influential political leader throughout this period.

After Sanford’s gubernatorial term ended in 1965, his star continued to rise nationally as he reentered the fields of law and Democratic Party politics (Covington & Ellis, 1999). He interacted extensively with President Lyndon Johnson and was even offered a position in Johnson’s cabinet as secretary of agriculture (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Sanford also managed Hubert Humphrey’s 1968 presidential campaign with an eye toward his own run for president in the early 1970s. During this period, a growing number of people began to see Sanford as a possible successor to President Richard Nixon (Egerton, 1973). However, despite all of this political promise, Sanford’s career took an unexpected turn when he received inquiries from Duke University’s board of trustees about serving as their next president.

**Historical Context**

In many respects, the 1960s was a difficult period for American higher education. The nation’s colleges and universities were nearing the end of their “Golden Age,” and new challenges were beginning to materialize, ranging from desegregation to student unrest (Thelin, 2011, p. 260). To be sure, certain institutions still benefitted immensely from the post-World War II funding boom as well as from record student enrollments (Thelin, 2011). However, considering the time and cost involved with building
construction, the question was whether those colleges could respond quickly enough to accommodate the increases in funding as well as enrollment (Thelin, 2011). A common solution during this period was for public institutions to rely upon “formula funding,” which awarded institutions with increased subsidies as they enrolled more students (Thelin, 2011, p. 285). Thus, many public institutions continued to expand rapidly during this period.

However, the environment was more precarious for private institutions. Just as public institutions enjoyed rapid expansion in the 1960s, many private colleges and universities struggled to stay open (Thelin, 2011). One major problem was that private institutions could not keep up with the low tuition prices offered by state-supported public schools (Thelin, 2011). The shortage of funding that resulted from this disparity also made it more difficult for private institutions to hire new faculty members (Thelin, 2011). However, as the 1960s progressed, private colleges and universities turned the tide by designing innovative fundraising programs and capitalizing on the increasing public desire for their children to attend “prestigious” institutions (Thelin, 2011, p. 294).

The more difficult problems for public as well as private institutions during this period stemmed from the challenges of desegregation along with growing student unrest (Thelin, 2011). During the 1950s and 1960s, desegregation was a politically explosive issue for many educational institutions throughout the South (Cole, 2013). According to Thelin (2011), 17 Southern states had legally segregated public educational systems following World War II. While the 1954 Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas court case outlawed such practices, the subsequent desegregation efforts of many Southern states were slow and half-hearted (Thelin, 2011). At various Southern state
universities, court-ordered desegregation often resulted in violent student protests as well as gubernatorial opposition (Thelin, 2011). Further, a number of black student sit-ins occurred across the region, with one of the more notable incidents taking place at Greensboro, North Carolina in 1960 (Cole, 2013). Overall, desegregation was a difficult issue that tested the leadership prowess of many college presidents (Cole, 2013; Covington & Ellis, 1999).

Another challenging issue involved increased student unrest across many of America's colleges and universities (Egerton, 1973; Thelin, 2011). Some of this protest was in reaction to the mass expansion of higher education institutions, which some critics referred to as the growing "impersonality of the multiversity" (Thelin, 2011, p. 307). Consequently, there was growing sentiment among students that they were viewed only as numbers or statistics instead of individuals (Thelin, 2011). Thus, students across the nation protested large lecture classes, cramped housing, and the over-automation of campus services in response to this impersonal, mass expansion (Thelin, 2011). A result of this movement was a trend toward establishing formal student assembly organizations in order to continue the fight for better student conditions (Thelin, 2011).

The national political upheaval of the period, fueled by the tragic assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, also shook college campuses across the country (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton, 1973; Thelin, 2011). Moreover, the unpopular war in Vietnam spurred further and widely publicized student protests (Thelin, 2011). Some of these demonstrations, such as the May 1970 protests at Kent State University and Jackson State University, resulted in violent confrontations between students and National Guard troops (Thelin, 2011). The resulting student deaths
prompted intense national outcry and received widespread media coverage (Thelin, 2011). Thus, many higher education leaders were at a loss for how to respond, as "universities everywhere were caught between the desire to be above the battle and the demand that they be in the midst of it" (Egerton, 1973, p. 29). Overall, it was a very challenging time for college and university leaders across the nation.

**Institutional Context**

In many ways, the wide range of 1960s-era challenges found at higher education institutions across the nation was also present at Duke University. Renamed Duke University after industrialist James B. Duke donated a fortune in 1924 to then-Trinity College, the institution was still struggling to find its identity, even though it aspired to become a preeminent national university (Egerton, 1973). As with many other private schools during the period, Duke's finances were unsettled as it struggled to attract high quality students (Egerton, 1973). The institution even ran its first budget deficit in 1970, prompting many to worry about its future (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Duke also had poor relations with the surrounding City of Durham, which created further problems for its institutional image (Egerton, 1973). Moreover, a lack of strong presidential leadership, along with the absence of a compelling institutional vision, had resulted in "fading and discouraged" support from alumni (Covington & Ellis, 1999, p. 378). By all accounts, Duke was stagnating and in dire need of bold and decisive leadership (Covington & Ellis, 1999).

Although the institution had remained relatively quiet in regards to student protests for much of the decade, Martin Luther King's assassination triggered an intense student reaction, with over 1,500 staging a silent campus vigil in April 1968 (Covington...
Further protests followed when students began campaigning for minority student rights and higher wages for black employees (Covington & Ellis, 1999). This all culminated in a black student sit-in at the Allen Administration Building on February 12, 1969 (Covington & Ellis, 1999). The students, who then declared the building to be the “Malcolm X School of Liberation,” then presented a list of demands, which included the establishment of a black studies curriculum, a black student union, and the elimination of the SAT as a requirement for black student admissions (Covington & Ellis, 1999, p. 368). With little patience for such activity, the board of trustees demanded quick and decisive action from Duke’s then-president, Douglas Knight. Fearing violence, Knight secured assistance from the governor, who sent in state police to dislodge the protesting students. Meanwhile, other police officers in full riot gear fired tear gas to break up the boisterous group of 2,500 students who had gathered to watch the events unfold (Covington & Ellis, 1999).

Although no one was hurt and the crowd was dispersed, the event inflicted “grievous wounds” on Duke’s reputation (Covington & Ellis, 1999, p. 368). Seeing his days numbered as Duke’s president, Knight resigned shortly thereafter (Covington & Ellis, 1999). To respond to this problem, coupled with minimal state support and decreasing alumni involvement, Duke desperately needed a compelling new leader. What follows (See Table 2) is a timeline that highlights key dates pertaining to Sanford’s experience at Duke. The dates are sorted by historical higher education context, Duke’s institutional context, and by Sanford’s personal history. These three categories are placed side-by-side to allow the reader to obtain a thorough contextual overview of the key events and issues that occurred during the Sanford era at Duke.
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<th>Historical Context</th>
<th>Institutional Context</th>
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<td>1998: Sanford dies.</td>
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Selecting a New President

Following Knight’s resignation, the board named a three-person search committee, known internally as “the Troika,” to find his successor (Covington & Ellis, 1999, p. 369). Initially, the committee looked at conventional candidates, ranging from Duke faculty members to up-and-coming academic leaders from other institutions (Covington & Ellis, 1999). However, at one particular committee meeting, a board member named Mrs. Earl Brian suggested Terry Sanford. Brian had known Sanford for years and was impressed by his leadership style (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Combined with his extensive professional background, she believed that Sanford was just the type of level-headed problem solver that Duke needed (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Other board members immediately liked the idea and cleared an impediment to Sanford’s nomination by changing the requirement that the president hold an earned doctorate (Covington & Ellis, 1999).

However, Sanford appeared to be a risky selection to others in the Duke community. In the minds of many, he was a non-academic politician who had graduated from Duke’s bitter rival, the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill (Covington & Ellis, 1999). These reservations were best summarized by one senior Duke faculty member, who said “putting a great university in the hands of a politician seemed to me a perilous course of action” (Egerton, 1973, p. 29). As an up-and-coming politician, others in the Duke community wondered how long Sanford would even remain at the university if he was selected president (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Nevertheless, the board forged ahead and put out official inquiries to Sanford, who was interested but skeptical about his prospects (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Duke’s board members believed that the benefits
Sanford would provide Duke would far outweigh any potential liabilities (Covington & Ellis, 1999).

However, since Sanford still harbored political ambitions, some of his advisors warned him against accepting the position, arguing that it would “embroil [him] in internal affairs at Duke and compromise any chance he had to build a national constituency” (Covington & Ellis, 1999, p. 372). Sanford was intrigued by the possibilities of academic leadership, though, and felt that obtaining Duke’s presidency – for him a lifetime achievement in itself – was worth the risk (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Therefore, he accepted the position and reported for work on April 2, 1970, putting his political ambitions aside temporarily to embark upon a new career in higher education.

Summary of Emerging Themes

Over the next 15 years, Sanford would go on to have a highly successful tenure at Duke, which he often described as the best years of his life (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Gordon, 1998). He was responsible for constructing 40 new campus buildings at a cost of more than $190 million (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Moreover, Sanford led two successful fundraising campaigns, accumulating more than $435 million total (Covington & Ellis, 1999). He also more than doubled the Duke endowment from $80 million to $200 million and helped to increase annual alumni giving from $750,000 in 1970 to more than $6 million in 1985 (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Further, he was responsible for the creation of several academic programs, including the Institute of Policy Sciences and Public Affairs and the Institute of the Arts (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Sanford was also instrumental in the development of Duke’s prestigious Fuqua School of Business (Covington & Ellis, 1999). These achievements led some to label Sanford as an
"academic miracle worker" (Egerton, 1973, p. 28). In 1985, then-U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elizabeth Dole, a Duke graduate, summarized Sanford’s tenure by writing:

The historians of higher education will doubtlessly credit you, as they should, with a strengthened program of arts and sciences, the new Institute of Policy Sciences and Public Affairs, [and] a school of business.... They will write that it was during Terry Sanford’s presidency that Duke became a truly national university (Covington & Ellis, 1999, p. 435).

Along with achieving success in the realms of fundraising and infrastructure development, Sanford earned the respect and admiration of Duke’s academic community. Although he certainly endured some major controversies, including troublesome early 1970s student anti-war protests as well as a major clash with Duke’s faculty over the possible placement of the Richard Nixon Presidential Library on the campus, Sanford concluded his tenure on good terms with Duke’s academic community (Covington & Ellis, 1999). In fact, many felt that Sanford’s presidency represented “a very special time in the university’s history” (Egerton, 1973, p. 29). Duke Endowment chair Mary D. B. T. Semans, a grandniece of the institution’s principal benefactor James B. Duke, once wrote, “Terry Sanford was our hero… he made us feel that we were on his magic carpet and that he expected us to do things we never dreamed we were capable of” (as cited in Rubin & Stroup, 1998, p. 1). Echoing that sentiment, a later Duke president, Nan Keohane, wrote “we are all better, and stronger, and more optimistic about the future because of the lasting legacies of Terry Sanford’s life and leadership” (as cited in Rubin & Stroup, 1998,
Duke trustee Isobel Craven Lewis Drill, who has sometimes opposed Sanford on certain initiatives, once reflected he was “the leader Duke needed during perilous days of student unrest and academic uncertainty” (as cited in Covington & Ellis, 1999, p. 435). Drill also wrote that her strongest recollection of Sanford was his “courageous action in restoring our university to its intended purposes” (as cited in Covington & Ellis, 1999, p. 435).

Unlike Dwight D. Eisenhower, Terry Sanford represents a clear example of a non-traditional college president who adjusted well to academic culture (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton, 1973; Gordon, 1998). The purpose of this study was to determine the specific issues that explained his successful adjustment to academe. To investigate this question, over 300 documents from Sanford’s presidency were examined. Approximately 225 of those documents were letters, interviews, and memoirs produced by Sanford, while the other roughly 75 documents were newspaper articles about Sanford and his Duke tenure. Located in the Terry Sanford Papers at Duke’s David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, these materials included personal and official letters, speeches, newspaper clippings, and other related documents. In consultation with dissertation committee member Dr. Eddie Cole, these specific papers were selected for analysis because they were most germane to this study. Following close examination, all of the papers were coded. For the purposes of data triangulation, the coded data were then compared to analysis by historians as well as the relevant reflections of Sanford’s Duke colleagues to ensure that the findings were consistent.

The objective behind this research was to identify Sanford’s thoughts about academic culture as reflected in his personal and official correspondence with others.
Another key objective was to identify why Sanford was able to adjust so well to academic life. Open coding identified nine applicable codes that appeared multiple times in his papers (See Appendix E). Axial coding later narrowed these codes down to four central issues that helped explain Sanford's success in adapting to academic culture. These included Sanford's ambitious vision for Duke that coincided well with the university's institutional needs, his strong personal commitment to Duke, his prior experience with higher education as an education-focused governor, and his highly relational approach as a leader. As the data ultimately demonstrated, all of these dynamics enabled Sanford to overcome some significant challenges and adjust effectively to academic culture.

**Vision.** Sanford's ambitious and compelling vision for Duke University was a central theme that appeared repeatedly in his papers. Possessing a lifelong interest in history, he was fascinated by Duke's evolution as a higher education institution (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Thus, upon assuming the presidency, Sanford took time to study the university's history as well as the successes and failures of presidents who had served before him (Covington & Ellis, 1999). He then used this information to help craft his own unique vision for Duke's future based on its institutional needs and where it had been in the past. Further, as an education-focused former governor, Sanford had the ability to ponder this vision in the context of state and national educational needs. What resulted was a compelling vision for Duke's future that generated excitement and enthusiasm among Duke's academic community (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton, 1973). Among the approximately 300 documents examined for this study, Sanford discussed aspects of his Duke vision in over 16, primarily in his speeches.
An analysis of Sanford’s speeches revealed that he had gone to great lengths to reflect on the purpose of higher education, particularly at liberal arts institutions, before assuming Duke’s presidency (Sanford, 1977a, 1979a). This approach was likely a result of Sanford’s gubernatorial term, which was noted for its strong focus on developing North Carolina’s higher education system (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Thus, upon becoming president, Sanford had specific ideas about the role of America’s higher education system that he often articulated in his speeches. In one address, Sanford asserted, “the seeker of truth, the insister of truth, may be the ultimate mark of the person with a liberal education” (Sanford, 1979a, p. 5). He echoed that sentiment in another speech, when he argued, “to keep alive a vision of hope and confidence for humanity is probably the greatest responsibility of liberal arts education and of graduates of liberal arts colleges” (Sanford, 1977a, p.1). Thus, this clear perspective on the uses of a liberal arts education likely assisted Sanford in formulating a clear and compelling vision for Duke itself.

This focused and thoughtful vision for Duke’s institutional future also appeared in several of Sanford’s speeches. He envisioned Duke as a university focused primarily on undergraduate learning with a goal of producing well-rounded leaders with a passion for seeking knowledge and truth (Sanford, 1970a). In his inaugural address, he touched on these concepts by remarking:

Duke University can lead, therefore Duke University must lead. We must lead in the strengthening of the internal structure of universities, making them freer to fulfill the aspirations of students. We must lead in providing the dynamic dimension of higher education that will provide
students with the developed capacity to add to civilization. We must lead in preserving the ancient truths of civilization and in solving the recent distresses of society. Duke University accepts leadership as its hallmark... Duke has led and is positioned for leadership today not by chance but by careful, deliberate design (Sanford, 1970a, p. 1).

Sanford’s inspiring language empowered a Duke community that had been in a malaise of sorts based on recent institutional challenges (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Sanford’s aspiration to transform Duke into a nationally prominent university resonated with its community and triggered a renewed enthusiasm and focus (Covington & Ellis, 1999). In many ways, Duke needed a meaningful institutional purpose and Sanford was able to provide it by developing a premier center for learning, leadership, and creativity that remained true to its North Carolina roots (Covington & Ellis, 1999). The heart of Sanford’s Duke vision was also evident in his inaugural address:

I want to see for Duke University a spirit that makes a Duke graduate a Renaissance Man with a purpose. I want to see Duke University applying its special resources in its special setting to seek out and develop as our primary interest men and women who will exhibit and apply both creativity and leadership, no matter what occupations they might pursue (Sanford, 1970a, p. 3).

The power and reach of Sanford’s vision, along with its noticeable impact on Duke’s development as a university, has also been commended by university officials as well as historians over the years. Duke’s first African-American faculty member, Samuel DuBois Cook, once wrote that Sanford represented “the ultimate in vision, decency, and
integrity... I don’t know what I’d do without Terry. I just feel less secure in the world without Terry Sanford” (as cited in Rubin & Stroup, 1998, p. 2). According to Covington and Ellis (1999), even in Sanford’s earliest interviews with Duke’s presidential search committee, the members were impressed by his knowledge of the institution and his compelling ideas for its future. According to Duke Endowment Chair Mary D. B. T. Semans, she believed that “he would bring Duke back into focus as the kind of place Mr. Duke would have wanted” (as cited in Covington & Ellis, 1999, p. 374). Indeed, Sanford and the committee were in full agreement about the need to keep building Duke as a national university while reconnecting with its local roots in North Carolina (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Consequently, early in Sanford’s tenure, a new professor remarked, “Duke is a smug, tweedy place being shaken up by Sanford... they’re trying to decide whether or not they like it – I think they’re about to decide they do” (as cited in Egerton, 1973, p. 29).

According to Egerton (1973), the key objective behind Sanford’s Duke vision was to find a way to mitigate the contradiction between “academic eminence and social usefulness” (p. 29). Sanford believed firmly that Duke could be one of the nation’s great universities while being “actively engaged in seeking and applying solutions to the nation’s problems” (Egerton, 1973, p. 29). Thus, much of Sanford’s presidency was dedicated to this pursuit. According to Covington and Ellis (1999), this aspect of Sanford’s vision was highly effective as it culminated in a strong partnership between Duke and multiple local, state, and national constituency groups. Ultimately, as these data indicated, Sanford’s compelling vision for Duke was an integral factor in his adjustment to academic life. He formulated a powerful vision for the university’s future
that generated excitement and enthusiasm among many members of the Duke community. This vision also allowed Sanford to endure some significant crises during his tenure and keep the university moving in one, unified direction.

**Commitment to Duke.** A second theme that appeared multiple times in Sanford’s papers was his strong, personal commitment to Duke University. Although Sanford engaged in many outside political activities over the course of his presidential tenure, he consistently made it clear that Duke was his number one professional priority. Sanford discussed his commitment to Duke in approximately eight of the letters and personal memoranda examined for this study. This dedication to Duke was significant, since many in the university community wondered initially how long he would remain as president (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton, 1973). Some speculated that he would quickly succumb to the pressure he was under to run for offices ranging from U.S. senator to president of the United States (Covington & Ellis, 1999).

However, Sanford typically resisted such entreaties, arguing that he could not “be president of Duke and keep one eye cocked on a political future” (as cited in Nordheiber, 1970, p. 1). Ultimately, while Sanford did run for political office twice during his Duke tenure, he pursued those campaigns in a manner that was mindful of his university responsibilities (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Specifically, he built his political activities around his Duke schedule instead of neglecting his presidential responsibilities for the sake of his campaign schedule (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Consequently, while Sanford did not give those ultimately unsuccessful campaigns his full energy and attention, it did remind the Duke community that the institution itself was most important to him.
According to Covington and Ellis (1999) and Egerton (1973), Sanford had major political ambitions during his tenure at Duke and dreamed of one day becoming president of the United States. However, he also truly enjoyed serving as Duke University’s president (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton, 1973; Sanford, 1974). This became a challenge as he tried to plan U.S. presidential campaigns in 1972 and 1976, and it often resulted in his campaign timetables being extended (Covington & Ellis, 1999). As Sanford recalled:

I was far fascinated with running Duke... I was in love with Duke. I thought it would be great to be the first [modern] Southern president but not all that damned great... I had accomplished more than I thought I was going to, but I saw how much more I could accomplish here. I could see how this would be a worthy ambition in anybody’s life if they didn’t do anything else. I was really dedicated to Duke and that’s probably why I was reluctant to leave (Covington & Ellis, 1999, pp. 417-418).

Sanford retained this commitment to Duke even when offered significant political appointments. In summer 1977, he was offered two such opportunities (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Sanford, 1977b, 1977c). First, then-North Carolina Gov. James Hunt offered Sanford an appointment to the State Board of Education, which Sanford promptly declined (Sanford, 1977b). In a letter to Duke’s board of trustees’ chairman, Sanford wrote, “I simply felt that I could not devote enough time to it to do the job the way it should be done” (Sanford, 1977b, p. 1). Actions like this underscored Sanford’s commitment to Duke.
Shortly thereafter, President Jimmy Carter asked Sanford to become U.S. ambassador to France (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Sanford, 1977b, 1977c). True to form, Sanford also declined this prestigious appointment, remarking, “I felt morally obligated to stay at Duke, having told everybody that I would not accept a federal job” (Sanford, 1977b, p. 1). Echoing the same sentiment in a private memorandum, Sanford wrote “I simply felt that I could not leave Duke right now” (Sanford, 1977c, p. 2). He believed that there would be plenty of other opportunities in the future and that he wanted to stay at Duke in order to complete the work he had started there (Sanford, 1977c). Overall, these data demonstrated that Sanford considered his position at Duke to be his most important professional responsibility, even though he was offered many other high-profile opportunities during his tenure.

Sanford’s strong commitment to Duke has also been discussed over the years by university officials as well as historians, providing effective data triangulation for this study. Reflecting upon Sanford’s presidential tenure, one faculty member stated, “I thought he would try to make this a base for his political ambitions... but he hasn’t. The man really works at being president (as cited in Egerton, 1973, p. 32). McKnight (1969) seconded that point, arguing that Sanford was genuinely motivated to serve Duke University, along with its students and higher education in general. Covington and Ellis (1999) also echoed that sentiment, asserting that Sanford “approached his responsibilities at Duke with the same high ambition that he had carried into the governor’s office” (p. 379). These data concluded that despite his non-traditional background, Sanford genuinely wanted to serve as an academic leader.
Overall, while Sanford retained a strong interest in politics throughout his Duke tenure, he never felt it necessary to totally abandon his work at the university in order to pursue elected office (Covington & Ellis, 1999). While Sanford was viewed as a serious presidential or vice presidential contender in American politics for much of the 1970s, his work at Duke was ultimately more important to him (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton, 1973). According to Gordon (1998), Sanford “never needed a [political] title to do the work of kings” (p. 1). As these data indicated, Sanford’s commitment to Duke earned him a lasting respect among the institution’s academic community. This respect was vital in facilitating his successful transition to academic culture. However, it also came at the expense of Sanford’s failed political campaigns, as he had to choose Duke as his top professional priority.

Prior academic exposure. A third central theme in Sanford’s writings pertained to how his prior government service prepared him for his academic leadership role at Duke. Although Sanford appeared to assume Duke’s presidency with a non-academic background, he came into office with more higher education exposure than many realized (Carroll, 1969; Covington & Ellis, 1999; East, 1970; Jackson & John, 1969; McKnight, 1969). According to Jackson and John (1969), Sanford’s gubernatorial term had been known as “an administration whose reputation [was] founded on its concern for education” (p. 5). Specifically, higher education was an area of great focus during Sanford’s tenure, and the budgets for state colleges and universities increased by 70 percent during that time (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Jackson & John, 1969). Moreover, Sanford spearheaded the effort to create three new liberal arts colleges and a system of community colleges while in office (Jackson & John, 1969). This commitment to higher
education likely generated a spirit of goodwill for Sanford within North Carolina’s college and university campuses.

Along with pursuing educational goals as governor, Sanford had extensive personal ties to higher education prior to assuming Duke’s presidency (Jackson & John, 1969). He had served for several years as chairman of the board of trustees for both the University of North Carolina and Methodist College (Jackson & John, 1969). Further, Sanford had served on the governing boards for Shaw University, Berea College, Chowan College, Davidson College, Appalachian State University, Guilford College, and Wake Forest University (Jackson & John, 1969). Such extensive board affiliations likely gave Sanford at least a basic understanding of academic culture before even assuming Duke’s presidency. Further, upon accepting the appointment as Duke’s president, Sanford immersed himself in preparing for the job (Covington & Ellis, 1999; East, 1970). For several months, he attended dozens of meetings with Duke officials and pored over briefing books to prepare for his presidential duties (Covington & Ellis, 1999; East, 1970). Thus, between his successful, pro-education track record as governor and his prior higher education exposure, Sanford was well prepared to engage with academic culture, even as a non-traditional president.

In the primary source materials examined for this study, references to this academic exposure were discovered in nearly 10 documents. Appearing primarily in interviews as well as in personal and official correspondence, these references were present in roughly one out of every eight documents examined. As these data indicated, Sanford’s prior experience with North Carolina’s higher education system provided a degree of confidence that he brought into office (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton, 1973;
Sanford, 1974a). Because of Sanford’s unique educational background, academic culture was not entirely new to him, and he felt comfortable engaging with it (Sanford, 1974a). For instance, in response to critics who predicted that as a non-academic, Sanford would have a hands-off approach as an academic leader, Sanford reflected:

Several people said, ‘well, he’ll come in here as a great fund-raiser.’ I said, ‘I’m not coming as a fund-raiser. I’m coming as president of the university and as the president of the faculty. That’s my position.’ So occasionally when somebody wanted to categorize me and say, ‘well, he’s not really a PhD, he’s here for this,’ I slapped that down right then and there. I said, ‘I’m president of the university from start to finish’” (Covington & Ellis, 1999, p. 380).

Further, Sanford believed that his work as Duke’s president was not much different than his previous work as governor (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton, 1973; McKnight, 1969; Sanford, 1974a). In one interview, Sanford drew parallels between the two roles by asserting, “essentially, both jobs require you to deal with people… I think both of these jobs have a number of similarities and one would probably prepare you for the other” (Sanford, 1974a, p. 1). He also believed that universities and government bureaucracy were fundamentally similar, arguing “both are fairly good at resisting change as institutions. On the other hand, individuals within both are ready for change if the climate is right…” (Sanford, 1974a, p. 2). Thus, Sanford believed that his work as a state government executive ultimately provided him the skills he needed to be an effective university president (Sanford, 1974a).
Sanford's conclusions about how his previous experiences prepared him for Duke's presidency have been supported over the years by his Duke colleagues, media observers, and historians (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton, 1973; McKnight, 1969; Nordheiber, 1970). As one faculty member noted, "when Sanford arrived, he made it clear he was going to run the university, it wasn't going to run him" (Nordheiber, 1970). Echoing that point, McKnight (1969) wrote that in appointing Sanford as president, "the trustees undoubtedly were motivated in part by the knowledge that Sanford is a strong man who lets everybody know who is in charge" (p. 1). Nordheiber (1970) noted that even among Sanford's critics, they recognized "Mr. Sanford's adeptness as an administrator and as a man who is not easily intimidated" (p. 1). Further, Covington and Ellis (1999) and Nordheiber (1970) both noted that radical students intent on testing Sanford's leadership discovered quickly that they were up against a true professional. According to one Duke graduate, such students came to believe that "it's impossible to outfox him... he's just plain smarter than the radicals are" (as cited in Nordheiber, 1970, p. 1). In certain cases, this contrasted with other North Carolina college presidents during this period, who sometimes struggled to find ways to respond to the era's tumultuous challenges (Cole, 2013). Ultimately, while Sanford was not a professional academic, his commitment to education and significant involvement with North Carolina's colleges and universities helped provide him the necessary skills to engage with academic culture effectively.

**Relational approach.** The final and most apparent theme derived from an examination of Sanford's papers pertained to his leadership style at Duke. The data revealed a highly relational approach that appeared to endear him to Duke's academic
community. Specifically, Sanford utilized a leadership style that encouraged transparency, welcomed outside input, and interjected humor to ease stressful situations (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton, 1973; Sanford, 1970b, 1971, 1974b, 1975a, 1975b). He was also highly approachable and made it a point to interact extensively with his followers, particularly students (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton, 1973). Sanford’s policy was to be highly visible to Duke students, faculty, and staff when he was on campus (Egerton, 1973).

Moreover, Sanford was a humble leader who never took personal credit for the considerable achievements of his tenure (Egerton, 1973). Often embarrassed by praise, Sanford would typically respond by saying, “changes were coming to Duke anyway… it’s not proper for me to take credit” (as cited in Egerton, 1973, p. 28). In other situations, Sanford would react with self-deprecating humor, remarking:

I told the chairman of the board of trustees when he offered me this job that I didn’t have sense enough to be president of Duke, and his reply was, ‘I know that, but I’ve always admired your luck’” (as cited in Egerton, 1973, p. 29).

Sanford’s unique leadership style was consistently evident in the materials examined for this study. Examples of his relational approach were found in over 30 primary source documents, including letters, interviews, and personal reflections. These data indicated that Sanford’s leadership style played an important role in facilitating his adjustment to academic culture.

Sanford’s relational approach manifested itself in many ways through his writing. He believed strongly in transparency and open communication, and regularly sent
personal letters to the Duke community to keep them updated on university affairs (Sanford, 1970b, 1971, 1974b, 1975a, 1975b). Throughout Sanford's tenure, he also solicited and welcomed input from all members of the Duke community (Sanford, 1974b, 1978). For instance, in letters to alumni, he used phrases such as "you are an integral part of Duke University," and "your participation is essential to the future of Duke" (Sanford, 1974b, paragraphs 2, 6). This pattern was the same with Duke's faculty, and Sanford requested a special mass meeting with them at least once a year where he would address their ideas and concerns (Sanford, 1978). Sanford also kept up to date with faculty research and praised professors for their professional accomplishments (Sanford, 1977d). In one such letter, he wrote, "I want you to know how much I appreciate the work you are doing and the great credit your work reflects on Duke University" (Sanford, 1977d, p. 1). This approach helped Sanford to develop a strong, working relationship with much of Duke's faculty.

Sanford also forged a strong connection with Duke's students, who referred to him as "Uncle Terry" for much of his tenure (Sanford, 1984, p. 1). Sanford preferred open communication and direct dialogue with students, encouraging them to take an active role in building Duke's future and inspiring them to pursue excellence (Sanford, 1979b, 1981, 1984). It was also Sanford's habit to write personal letters welcoming incoming freshmen to the university (Sanford, 1981). In one such letter, he wrote:

Duke is what it is, and what it is to become, because of many people who believed in it, who gave part of their lives to it, and who knew it was worth the love and effort they shared... it cannot flourish without the intellectual excitement you will add to it for the next several years.
It cannot continue to flourish without your love, attention, and support, including financial support, after you have left (Sanford, 1981, p. 1).

Along with inspiring students to be active Duke citizens, Sanford challenged them to do better when their behavior did not meet the university's expectations (Sanford, 1979b; 1984). For instance, responding to rowdy student behavior at Duke home basketball games, Sanford sent letters directly to students to express his concerns (Sanford, 1979b; 1984). In his now legendary "An Avuncular Letter," addressed "To My Duke Students," Sanford wrote:

Resorting to the use of obscenities in cheers and chants at ball games indicates a lack of vocabulary, a lack of cleverness, a lack of ideas, and a lack of respect for other people... I suggest that we change... This request is in keeping with my commitment to self-government for students. It should not be up to me to enforce proper behavior that signifies the intelligence of Duke students. You should do it. Reprove those who make us all look bad. Shape up your own language. I hate for us to have the reputation of being stupid. With best wishes, Uncle Terry (Sanford, 1984, p. 1).

In a sign of respect for their president, Duke students chanted, "we beg to differ" at the following game when they disagreed with a referee's call (Covington & Ellis, 1999, p. 433). This was indicative of the deep bond that Sanford shared with Duke's students (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton, 1973).

Over the years, members of the Duke community, historians, and media observers have also written extensively about Sanford's relational leadership style. These
reflections provided effective data triangulation for this study. Regarding Sanford’s accessibility to students, one Duke undergraduate claimed that he could see Sanford more easily than some of his professors (Egerton, 1973). Similarly, some historians claimed that no senior Duke administrator had ever provided a more receptive ear to students about either public issues or campus matters than Sanford (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton 1973). According to Covington and Ellis (1999) and Egerton (1973), Sanford was also known to directly intervene whenever members of the Duke community needed help, on matters ranging from admissions to job searching. This approach fostered a spirit of goodwill and respect that endeared Sanford to many members of Duke’s academic community (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton, 1973).

This goodwill was in turn essential for Sanford when it came to enduring some of the major crises of his administration – most notably the Vietnam War-era student protests and his clash with Duke faculty over the possible placement of the Nixon Presidential Library on the Duke campus (Covington & Ellis, 1999). In both instances, Sanford faced intense pressure and criticism from many faculty members, alumni, and students (Covington & Ellis, 1999). To counter these threats, Sanford maintained a high visibility level on campus and engaged in both formal and informal meetings with members of the Duke community (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Sanford was also highly transparent in his communications, explaining his actions in full detail through official letters as well as through personal appearances (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Thus, although members of Duke’s academic community may have disagreed with Sanford – sometimes intensely – over various matters during his tenure, the goodwill cultivated by Sanford’s relational approach helped him to weather those storms (Covington & Ellis,
1999). Thus, the data examined for this study indicated that Sanford’s leadership style was integral to his successful adjustment to academic culture.

Summary

Sanford represented a non-traditional college president who adjusted successfully to academic culture. Even today, Sanford is a beloved figure on the Duke University campus because of his achievements and the impact he had on so many people (Gordon, 1998; Rubin & Stroup, 1998). As the findings from this study concluded, Sanford’s success stemmed from four central issues: he possessed a compelling presidential vision that aligned with Duke’s institutional needs; he made Duke his top professional priority throughout his tenure; he possessed prior experience with higher education and government bureaucracy that helped smooth his transition into academe; and he had a unique, relational leadership style that endeared him to many members of the Duke community. Thus, Sanford’s experience at Duke demonstrates that it is possible for non-traditional college presidents to adjust successfully to academic culture. The next chapter will explore a non-traditional president who had a more challenging but ultimately successful journey in adapting to academic culture. His leadership style was somewhat different than Sanford’s, but he also learned to operate within the cultural framework of academe and transform his university in the process. Chapter 6 will analyze Paul Trible’s presidency of Christopher Newport University and explore how he was also eventually successful in learning the ways of the academy.
In the preceding chapters, Dwight D. Eisenhower and Terry Sanford were presented as outlier cases in reference to the issues that non-traditional college presidents face in adjusting to academic culture. Eisenhower’s tenure at Columbia University represented a troubling scenario, highlighting a non-traditional president who failed to adjust to the ways of the academy. Conversely, Terry Sanford represented a more positive scenario, as he succeeded in earning the respect of Duke’s entire academic community and left a lasting positive impact on the institution. Eisenhower arguably failed on both of those fronts during his time at Columbia.

In a presidential tenure of nearly 20 years and counting, former U.S. Sen. Paul Trible’s time in office is the longest of the three non-traditional presidents included in this study. He charted his own unique path at Christopher Newport University (CNU), located in Newport News, Virginia. Like Eisenhower and Sanford before him, Trible took the helm in 1996 of a deeply troubled institution, and was expected to be a “miracle worker” of sorts to help redefine CNU for the 21st century (Hamilton, 2011, p. 208). Over the course of his tenure, Trible took CNU to new heights, transforming a fledging, commuter school into a vital, up-and-coming liberal arts institution (Hamilton, 2011; Heuvel, 2009). For Trible, however, this success did not come easy. It was achieved only after a long and challenging adjustment process to academic culture, which included many clashes with faculty members (Hamilton, 2011).

Thus, for this study Trible represented somewhat of a middle ground between the two outlier cases of Eisenhower and Sanford. As data from this study indicated, he had a more difficult adjustment process to academic culture than Sanford, but was much more
effective in the long run than Eisenhower. Using data derived from interviews along with selected secondary sources, this study found that Trible’s challenges and ultimate success stemmed from a combination of issues. These included his ambitious vision that coincided well with CNU’s institutional needs; his frustration with the ways of academe; his adaptability; and his ability for consensus building. To put these factors into perspective, this study situated them within a broader framework that included Trible’s personal history, a historical context of the 1990s-era higher education landscape, and CNU’s institutional context during that period. Those sections follow below.

**Personal History**

Paul S. Trible, Jr. was born on December 29, 1946 in Baltimore, Maryland (Barone & Ujifusa, 1987; Hamilton, 2011). The son of a salt company executive, Trible grew up in Pennsylvania and Louisiana, but possessed deep familial roots in Virginia’s Middle Peninsula region (Barone & Ujifusa, 1987). With a desire to return to his family’s native state, Trible completed his bachelor’s degree at Hampden-Sydney College in 1968 and later graduated from Washington & Lee University’s Law School in 1971 (Barone & Ujifusa, 1987; Hamilton, 2011; Heuvel, 2009). Following service as a law clerk and assistant U.S. attorney, Trible heard of a vacancy in the commonwealth’s attorney office in his family’s native Essex County and was subsequently elected to that office in 1974 (Barone & Ujifusa, 1987; Di Vincenzo, 1995a; Hamilton, 2011). Intent on a political career, Trible sought federal office and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1976 (Barone & Ujifusa, 1987; Hamilton, 2011). Representing Virginia’s 1st Congressional district, Trible served on the Armed Services and Budget Committees and was viewed as a rising star in the Republican Party (Di Vincenzo,

In 1982, Trible was elected to the U.S. Senate, eking out a narrow victory against Virginia’s popular lieutenant governor (Barone & Ujifusa, 1987). A loyal Ronald Reagan supporter, Trible spent his years in the Senate serving most notably on the Foreign Relations Committee and was best known for his work during the Iran-Contra affair (Hamilton, 2011). However, in 1987 he made the surprising decision to not run for re-election, citing frustration with the legislative process as well as a desire to spend more time with his family as his reasons for departure (Di Vincenzo, 1995a; Hamilton, 2011). The following year, Trible ran for Virginia governor but lost in the Republican primary (Hamilton, 2011; Heuvel, 2009). At this point, he decided to step back from electoral politics and pursue other professional opportunities. In the early 1990s, he served on the American delegation to the United Nations, taught briefly at Harvard, and also ran his own government consulting firm (Hamilton, 2011; Heuvel, 2009).

However, a political appointment during this period unintentionally put Trible on track to pursue a second career in higher education. In 1994, Gov. George Allen appointed Trible to CNU’s board of visitors (Di Vincenzo, 1995a; Hamilton, 2011; Heuvel, 2009). While Trible was certainly familiar with the institution because of his long Hampton Roads governmental service, this appointment allowed him to gain a deeper knowledge of CNU’s problems as well as its possibilities (Hamilton, 2011). As his board service progressed, Trible grew fascinated by CNU’s potential and began looking for ways to serve the institution in a more meaningful way (Di Vincenzo, 1995a; Hamilton, 2011).
Historical Context

As Trible considered pursuing more focused CNU service, the nation’s colleges and universities were undergoing an important period of transition. By the early 1990s, higher education institutions were many years removed from their golden age (Thelin, 2011). While American higher education endured a bleak economic outlook in the 1970s, followed by a gradual recovery in the 1980s, many challenges still remained (Thelin, 2011). According to Thelin (2011), the sore spots in this era included increased competition from the for-profit educational sector, a move toward centralization among public institutions, uncertainty over how to better incorporate women and minorities into the field, and increasing public resentment over rising college costs. Despite intense debate over how to solve these pressing problems, they had to be addressed in order for the institutions to move successfully into the 21st century.

The rapid rise of for-profit educational institutions represented a most challenging predicament for established colleges and universities (Thelin, 2011). The generous provisions of the Pell Grant program and other student financial aid initiatives fueled the growth of many for-profit educational enterprises, which demanded the right to participate in federal financial aid programs (Thelin, 2011). Although the presidents of established institutions fought this vigorously, the government ultimately provided proprietary colleges a “seat at the table” for federal student aid (Thelin, 2011, p. 340). Most predominant among the for-profit institutions were distance-learning programs like the University of Phoenix, which quickly developed a multi-state network of sites (Thelin, 2011). The rise of such schools also compelled established colleges and
universities to consider how to better incorporate new technology, such as online-learning, into their traditional curriculums (Thelin, 2011).

For public colleges and universities, the move toward centralization also presented a unique challenge. This issue had its roots in a 1972 amendment to the 1964 Higher Education Act, which sought to alter the governance of higher education (Thelin, 2011). Its intention was to offer funding incentives to states that created higher education-coordinating agencies, aimed at reducing duplication and promoting long-term collective planning (Thelin, 2011). However, these "1202 commissions" had decidedly mixed results and were often viewed as a nuisance by university presidents (Thelin, 2011, p. 339). Many resented this extra layer of government bureaucracy that only had the power in most cases to offer recommendations on issues ranging from budget planning to academic programs (Thelin, 2011). Overall, these state higher education commissions added an extra layer of complexity to the work of university presidents, even if they did promote some positive outcomes, such as statewide policy deliberations (Thelin, 2011).

Along with struggling to find ways to work with these new state higher education commissions, higher education leaders debated over how to incorporate larger numbers of women and minorities into their profession (Thelin, 2011). As early as the 1970s, higher education observers noted a "chilly" climate for women and an acute lack of female graduate students as well as faculty members (Thelin, 2011, pp. 344-345). Though the numbers in both areas had risen since the 1950s, there was still more work to be done (Thelin, 2011). The famous 1972 legislation, known as Title IX, also had significant ramifications for higher education leaders in the 1990s, as they urgently looked for ways to prohibit discrimination for females, especially in college athletics.
As for minorities, there was a highly publicized debate during the 1990s over affirmative action (Thelin, 2011). In an effort to boost minority numbers in the student, faculty, and administrative arenas, some higher education leaders advocated for affirmative action while other groups lobbied just as forcefully against it (Thelin, 2011). Overall, there was an urgent need among many within higher education to "promote access and acknowledge diversity" throughout the 1990s (Thelin, 2011, p. 349). However, the problem was in finding a clear, realistic path to reach those goals.

Along with increased public debate over Title IX and affirmative action, there was also widespread concern in the 1990s over rising college costs (Heller, 2001; Thelin, 2011). Much of this concern was fueled by allegations of abuses in the federal financial aid system (Thelin, 2011). Some government officials even insinuated that colleges and universities artificially inflated their tuition costs in order to demonstrate greater financial need among their student Pell Grant recipients (Thelin, 2011). As the 1990s progressed, public outcry continued as some in media and government circles accused higher education institutions of increasing their tuition rates beyond the rate of inflation (Thelin, 2011). In actuality, a root cause behind increased college costs was that the sluggish economic conditions of earlier years resulted in deferred maintenance and a backlog of projects (Thelin, 2011). Thus, by the early 1990s those costs were beginning to catch up with many higher education institutions (Thelin, 2011). Nevertheless, the public outcry over college costs often cast private and public institutions against one another, resulting in a highly charged political atmosphere for much of the decade (Thelin, 2011). Overall, while America's colleges and universities were poised to enter a new century full of opportunity and promise, they also faced a number of pressing problems.
Institutional Context

While many established colleges and universities spent the early/mid-1990s confronting these challenging issues, CNU was struggling to even stay open. Opened in 1961 as a two-year extension of The College of William and Mary, CNU (known originally as Christopher Newport College) spent the 1960s and 1970s providing a basic liberal arts education to primarily blue-collar Virginia Peninsula residents (Hamilton, 2011). Although the institution possessed minimal resources, it had a clear educational mission and stable student enrollments throughout this period (Hamilton, 2011). A milestone for CNU during this time was when it gained independence from William and Mary in 1977 and developed its own four-year curriculum (Hamilton, 2011; Heuvel, 2009). However, by the 1980s and early 1990s, growing competition from nearby four-year schools, community colleges, and for-profit institutions created pressing problems for CNU (Hamilton, 2011). Increasingly, it was left without a niche or purpose as prospective students began to drift away toward other educational opportunities (Hamilton, 2011; Heuvel, 2009). Consequently, CNU experienced a steady decline in enrollment during this period, despite milestones such as its elevation to university status in 1992 and the construction of its first residence hall shortly thereafter (Hamilton, 2011).

To complicate matters further, CNU had been led since 1980 by well-meaning but ultimately ineffective presidents who did not have a clear vision for the institution’s future (Hamilton, 2011). Thus, CNU spent these years in a wilderness of sorts, trying to be all things to all people in order to attract any kind of student interest (Hamilton, 2011; Heuvel, 2009). Rather than attracting prospective students, however, this offering of a hodge-podge of disjointed curricular programs further fueled CNU’s downward spiral.
(Hamilton, 2011). Consequently, the institution developed the reputation as being inferior or second-rate, and remained entrenched at the bottom of Virginia's public higher education system (Di Vincenzo, 1995a; Hamilton, 2011).

Unfortunately, there seemed to be little hope on the horizon for CNU as the 1990s progressed. A major problem stemmed from its mediocre status in the Virginia General Assembly (Hamilton, 2011). Since CNU was not really known beyond the Virginia Peninsula, it remained a low priority when it came to state appropriations (Hamilton, 2011). Specifically, it was difficult to get a legislator from elsewhere in the state to really care about CNU if none of his or her constituents had ever heard of it or had their children enrolled there (Hamilton, 2011). This lack of state funding resulted in consistent budget problems for CNU throughout the 1980s and early 1990s (Hamilton, 2011; Heuvel, 2009). Moreover, faculty and staff morale was very poor as members of the CNU community worried about their institution's future (Hamilton, 2011; Heuvel, 2009). Rumors about closure had circulated around campus in earlier years, but by the early 1990s, there was a very real threat of CNU shutting its doors permanently or being merged with another public university within the region (Hamilton, 2011). Thus, as the 1990s progressed, there was an urgent need for a leader who could quickly take CNU out of this death spiral and provide a promising and compelling vision for its future. What follows (See Table 3) is a timeline that highlights key dates pertaining to Trible's experience at CNU. The dates are sorted by historical higher education context, CNU's institutional context, and by Trible's personal history. These three categories are placed side-by-side to allow the reader to obtain a thorough contextual overview of the key events and issues that occurred during the Trible era at CNU.
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<th>Historical Context</th>
<th>Institutional Context</th>
<th>Personal History</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1972: Title IX passed.</td>
<td>Late 1960s: Development of four-year curriculum</td>
<td>1968: Graduated from Hampden-Sydney College.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early 1990s-present: Budget challenges for public and private higher education institutions. Heightened public concern over rising college costs.</td>
<td>1977: Gained independence from William &amp; Mary.</td>
<td>1971: Graduated from Washington &amp; Lee University School of Law.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2003: Budget problems and decision to eliminate certain academic programs.</td>
<td>1994: Appointed to CNU board of visitors.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2003: Explored possible campaign for VA Lieutenant Governor.</td>
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Selecting a New President

In June 1995, CNU's incumbent president announced his resignation, prompting the need for a presidential search (Di Vincenzo, 1995a; Hamilton, 2011). A hiring committee quickly formed, comprised of Trible, other board members, faculty members, and administrators (Hamilton, 2011). As it began its search, the committee commissioned a consulting firm to draft a report that would assess CNU's strengths and weaknesses and outline the key qualities that an ideal presidential candidate should possess (Di Vincenzo, 1995a; Hamilton, 2011). The resulting document stressed that the institution needed a president with proven leadership experience as well as enough political savvy to engage with state legislators in Richmond (Di Vincenzo, 1995a; Hamilton, 2011). The report also suggested that considering the institution's need for a new vision, the committee should possibly look at candidates from outside the academic world, such as business executives or political figures (Di Vincenzo, 1995a; Hamilton, 2011).

After reading this report, Trible began to think that he was possibly qualified for the position (Di Vincenzo, 1995a; Hamilton, 2011). He quickly discussed the possibility with his wife, Rosemary, who was initially cool to the idea, considering that Trible did not hold a PhD and was not a career academician (Hamilton, 2011; Trible, 2009). However, after they thought it over she became more enthusiastic and encouraged him to apply (Hamilton, 2011). Thus, at a November 1995 search committee meeting, Trible announced to stunned colleagues that he was interested in applying for the position (Di Vincenzo, 1995a; Hamilton, 2011). After Trible recused himself from further deliberations, the shocked committee members discussed the matter over three additional
meetings (Hamilton, 2011). By December 1995, they concluded that Trible would indeed be the best candidate for the job and stopped reviewing other applications (Hamilton, 2011). Shortly thereafter, the committee recommended his selection to the board of visitors (Hamilton, 2011). Trible was subsequently selected unanimously as CNU’s fifth president and took office on January 1, 1996 (Di Vincenzo, 1995a; Hamilton, 2011).

While many faculty members expressed “disbelief” over the appointment of a non-academic as president, they were willing to give Trible a chance considering CNU’s dire situation (Hamilton, 2011, p. 208). They realized that desperate times called for unusual measures, and Trible at least appeared to have a compelling vision for the institution’s future, based on content from media interviews and preliminary meetings with faculty members (Hamilton, 2011). In fact, some faculty argued that Trible’s selection made good sense, considering his years of political, fundraising, and leadership experience (Hamilton, 2011). Nevertheless, some within the CNU community were surprised upon hearing about Trible’s lucrative compensation package, which exceeded the salaries former CNU presidents (Hamilton, 2011). However, CNU Rector David Peebles responded to such criticism by arguing “when you’re looking for a miracle worker, you’ve got to pay a miracle worker” (Hamilton, 2011, p. 208). On that note, Trible assumed the presidency of a deeply troubled institution, intent upon achieving transformational change.

**Summary of Emerging Themes**

Since assuming CNU’s presidency in 1996, Trible has achieved much of the change that he promised, namely the complete transformation of CNU from a little-
known commuter college into a premier liberal arts institution. Over the course of his
tenure, public interest in CNU has grown exponentially, resulting in a 700 percent
application surge between 2003 and 2013, and a steady rise in student quality (Cooper,
2013; Heuvel, 2009). Specifically, the average SAT score for incoming students has
increased by approximately 200 points over the last decade, even though mean scores for
both the SAT and ACT have remained relatively stable across the nation for
approximately the same period (Cooper, 2013; State of College Admission, 2011).
Moreover, using his fundraising skills honed by several years of political campaigning,
Trible has transformed the CNU campus with an over $1 billion capital construction
campaign (Barrett, 2001a; Cooper, 2013; Hamilton, 2011). Once a commuter school
with aging facilities, CNU became a majority residential campus with state-of-the-art
(2011), under Trible the school “took on the appearance of a well-endowed private liberal
arts college rather than an underfunded and struggling state university” (p. 203). Trible
also revitalized the institution’s finances by securing larger state appropriations as well as
several multimillion-dollar donations from corporate and private donors (Cooper, 2013;
Hamilton, 2011).

Despite all of these achievements, Trible did not have an entirely smooth
transition into academic culture (Barrett, 2001b; Hamilton, 2011). Early in Trible’s
tenure, some faculty members were either alarmed or skeptical about his transformational
vision, concerned that it would either not work or drive CNU too far away from its
institutional roots (Hamilton, 2011). Further, other faculty members were troubled by
Trible’s lack of patience as well as his frustration with the ways of academic culture
(Barrett, 2001b; Hamilton, 2011). This led to some clashes and a period of strained relations between Trible and some of his faculty colleagues (Barrett, 2000; 2001b; Hamilton, 2011). The most significant confrontations occurred early in Trible’s tenure. They centered primarily on his plans to eliminate several of CNU’s graduate programs and to completely reorganize the university’s administrative hierarchy (Barrett, 2000; 2001b; Hamilton, 2011). Each initiative was strongly opposed by student and faculty coalitions that criticized Trible for not promoting enough open communication and for excluding them from the decision-making process (Barrett, 2001b; Hamilton, 2011).

However, as the data from this study indicated, Trible gradually came to learn the ways of academe, and was ultimately able to work effectively within that culture after several years of trial and error. The purpose of this study was to determine the specific issues that explained his successful adjustment to academic culture. To investigate this question, semi-structured interviews were conducted with Trible along with five senior faculty and administrative leaders. Using an interview protocol that consisted of nine questions, each interview was typically an hour long and held on the CNU campus. For purposes of confidentiality, the names of the five faculty and administrative leaders were excluded. For purposes of identification in this study, they were instead labeled “Participant 1” through “Participant 5” (See Appendix A). Following transcription and analysis, all of the interviews were coded (See Appendix E). For the purposes of data triangulation, the coded data from the Trible interview were then compared to those from the faculty and administrator interviews. Finally, those data were compared to analysis by historians and news media observers to ensure that the findings were consistent.
The objective behind this research was to identify Trible’s thoughts about academic culture as reflected in his interview and in other publications, including newspaper articles and books. Another key objective was to identify how Trible was able to overcome some early challenges at CNU and eventually adjust to academic life. Open coding identified seven applicable codes that appeared multiple times in the interviews (See Appendix E). Axial coding later narrowed these codes down to four central themes that were primary factors behind Trible’s challenging yet successful adjustment to academic culture. These included Trible’s ambitious vision for CNU that coincided well with the university’s institutional needs, the impact of his frustration with academic culture, his willingness to adapt to a new environment, and his unique skill for consensus building. As these data ultimately demonstrated, these dynamics helped explain how Trible was able to overcome some significant challenges early in his tenure and ultimately adjust to academic culture.

Vision. A central theme that emerged from the data was the noticeable impact that Trible’s CNU vision had for not only the university, but for his acclimation to academic culture. While not all CNU students, faculty, and staff originally agreed with the vision, they were nevertheless comforted that Trible at least had a plan, considering the university’s precarious condition (Hamilton, 2011; P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013; Participant 2, personal communication, June 2, 2014; Participant 3, personal communication, May 21, 2014; Participant 5, personal communication, April 4, 2012). As Participant 3 (2014) noted, “we needed a strong leader… we needed someone who could lay out the vision and take charge and make a decision to move forward quickly” (Participant 3, personal communication, May 21,
2014). For this reason, faculty members were generally willing to "cut [Trible] some slack," since CNU was in such dire straits (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). They were also interested to see if his ideas for revitalizing the institution could work (Hamilton, 2011; P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). Over time, this vision had a unifying effect among CNU’s academic community and helped to solidify Trible’s position as president (Hamilton, 2011; P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013).

During interviews with senior faculty and administrators, those participants also noted consistently the importance of Trible’s vision in forging a bond with the university’s academic community (Participant 1, personal communication, March 30, 2012; Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014; Participant 2, personal communication, June 3, 2014; Participant 3, personal communication; May 21, 2014; Participant 4, personal communication, April 9, 2012). Among the seven total interviews conducted for this study (one senior administrator was interviewed twice), there were approximately 38 references to Trible’s vision, its impact on CNU, and how it helped him to forge a sense of common purpose with the university’s academic community.

Trible’s vision centered on highlighting CNU’s traditional strengths of small classes and caring faculty and developing a university where students could get the benefits of a private school education for a public school price (Hamilton, 2011; Heuvel, 2009). Specifically, he endeavored to establish CNU as “a university of choice for every Virginian” (Di Vincenzo, 1995b, p. 1). Trible also sought to transform how CNU students, faculty, and staff perceived their institution and its place in Virginia’s higher education system, asserting:
We will work together and we will succeed together. It is time to think and act like winners. It is time to step out of the boxes in which this university has operated... We will not tolerate those that say it can’t be done or that it can only be done this way. We will not allow others to limit our dreams or diminish our success (as cited in Di Vincenzo, 1995b, p. 1).

Such sentiments were empowering to a CNU community that had for many years lacked a compelling purpose as a little-known and cash-strapped commuter school (Hamilton, 2011). Thus, it gave many at CNU a renewed spirit and optimism for the institution’s future (Hamilton, 2011).

For Trible, this visionary approach was also at the core of his leadership philosophy (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). Leadership for him “is all about vision and values, and sharing vision and values powerfully and persuasively” (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). Moreover, in taking the helm of a troubled university, Trible believed that it was crucial to offer CNU’s academic community hope for the future. Thus, he focused on “eliminating the negatives” from the organization and used his ambitious vision to “align people’s hearts and minds” (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). As Trible further reflected, “you can’t dictate from above, but someone has got to put forward that vision” (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). Ultimately, Trible believed that this vision for liberal arts excellence helped to define CNU for the modern era, giving the university a clear sense of purpose (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). He also noted
that a key component to instilling his vision on CNU's academic community was to communicate it consistently, noting:

It's about wearing those visions and values like clothes on your back. And everything that you say, everything that you do, pointing people in that direction. It's communicating that vision and values powerfully and persuasively and encouraging others to embrace that vision... and I think that's the key to our success here (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013).

Ultimately, the CNU faculty members who adamantly opposed Trible's vision left the university while those who were more receptive became major proponents over time (Hamilton, 2011; P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). Thus, his compelling vision for CNU's future helped him to forge a strong bond with CNU's academic community.

Trible's thoughts on the significance of his CNU vision and how it helped facilitate his adjustment to academic culture were seconded by university officials as well as historians (Hamilton, 2011; Participant 1, personal communication, March 30, 2012; Participant 2, personal communication, June 3, 2014; Participant 3, personal communication, May 21, 2014; Participant 4, personal communication, April 9, 2012; Participant 5, personal communication, April 4, 2012). According to Participant 1 (2012), "in the early days of his administration, he made a real concerted effort to communicate very broadly within the university... to communicate strongly that vision, the values, and the strategic direction." This effort gradually paid off, as reluctant faculty members in particular began to sense Trible's optimism and commitment and come
around to support his plans (Hamilton, 2011; Participant 2, June 3, 2014, personal communication; Participant 5, April 4, 2012, personal communication).

Reflecting on this period, Participant 5 (2012) noted that there was initially great resistance among the faculty to Trible’s plans and to his style of urgency and directness. However, “as time passed, he became more participative in some realms, and faculty recognized the unique value he was bringing to the entire institution and became a little more tolerant” (Participant 5, personal communication, April 4, 2012). This sentiment was supported by Participant 2 (2014), who recalled:

I just remember that he was able to articulate a vision. And I think once he could do that – once he knew enough about running a university to do that in a way that faculty – I mean, you might not have agreed with it, but it was a vision for the university... and so once he had a vision, there was still tension about how to get it done, but I think that was the key.

Some participants noted that another key to Trible’s success in this area was found in his faculty hiring strategy (Participant 2, personal communication, June 3, 2014; Participant 3, personal communication, May 21, 2014). When Trible assumed office in 1996, CNU had only 164 faculty members (Hamilton, 2011). However, he made it an institutional priority to increase the faculty roster, and through aggressive hiring increased the number to 268 in 2013 (Pawlowski, 2013). By fall 2014, that number had reached 273 (P. Trible, personal communication, September 4, 2014). Moreover, plans were put into place to increase the number of faculty to 300 by 2020 (Pawlowski, 2013).

Since Trible increased significantly the size of CNU’s faculty during his tenure, he was able to bring in professors who already subscribed to his vision instead of having
to focus entirely on converting pre-existing faculty who were entrenched in the old institutional culture (Hamilton, 2011; Participant 2, personal communication, June 3, 2014; Participant 3, personal communication, May 21, 2014). Moreover, long-serving CNU faculty members who were in some cases resistant to Trible’s vision retired and were replaced by these new hires. As Participant 2 (2014) asserted, “if you had only hired a couple of people, it wouldn’t have worked. But to double the faculty – you’re going to be able to get a good body of people who subscribe to your vision.”

This point was supported by Participant 3 (2014), who noted, “with new faculty coming in, you can imprint that mission and that vision upon them because you’re hiring for that.” Ultimately, Trible was able to use his compelling vision for CNU’s future to forge a bond with much of the university’s faculty, which in turn helped to ease his transition into academic culture (Hamilton, 2011; Participant 2, personal communication, June 2, 2014; Participant 3, personal communication, June 3, 2014). He accomplished this through a combination of cultivating allies within CNU’s pre-existing faculty and through hiring new personnel who already subscribed to his vision (Hamilton, 2011; Participant 2, personal communication, June 2, 2014; Participant 3, personal communication, June 3, 2014). Thus, these data indicated that Trible’s CNU vision played a vital role in facilitating his adjustment to academe. By coming into the presidency with a specific plan for CNU’s future, he was gradually able to win the confidence of many faculty members and find a common purpose with them.

**Frustration.** While Trible eventually forged a strong bond with CNU’s faculty by advancing a compelling institutional vision, other aspects of his adjustment to academic culture were not as smooth. Another central theme that appeared in the data
was the frustration Trible experienced in trying to operate within the unique cultural dynamics of academe (Hamilton, 2011; P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). This theme was mentioned approximately 18 times during the seven interviews conducted for this study (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013; Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014; Participant 2, personal communication, June 3, 2014; Participant 3, personal communication, May 21, 2014; Participant 5, personal communication, April 4, 2012). Possessing a personal preference for quick, decisive action, Trible was often frustrated by multiple aspects of academic culture, ranging from shared governance to the typical slow decision-making pace (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). This presented a key challenge for him, especially in the early days of his tenure, which made his adjustment process to academic culture more difficult.

For Trible, several aspects of academic culture troubled him (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). For one, he believed that the faculty tradition of shared governance could be "good and very bad... it's an invitation to endless discussion and debate, and often postpones action... sometimes indefinitely" (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). Further, Trible had great difficulty with the "glacial pace" of academic culture, noting that it can be a real obstacle to achieving great results (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). According to Trible (2013), virtually any other type of organization can move far more quickly and decisively.

Another aspect of academic culture that frustrated Trible was that "academic cultures are highly resistant to change... institutionally they are very conservative [and] they want to embrace the status quo" (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). However,
Trible also noted that to his surprise the CNU community largely embraced change during his tenure, which in his opinion was a key to the university’s revitalization (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013).

Trible was also often frustrated in trying to get faculty members to look beyond their disciplines and departments and understand broader institutional needs (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). As he noted:

I have underscored the challenge of leadership in higher education – getting faculty to appreciate the strategic perspective, because they are so focused on their individual research or scholarship, or on a subset of their academic discipline. Now, that’s not something I dislike – it’s just a reality that one has to deal with (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013).

Overall, it took Trible quite some time to overcome these frustrations and learn how to understand the unique qualities of academic culture (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). Later in his presidential tenure, he learned how to work more effectively within that cultural dynamic, even though he still did not like all aspects of that environment (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). Ultimately, Trible learned how to “survive the landscape and see opportunities and also identify minefields and avoid those” (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013).

Trible’s frustration with academic culture was also discussed extensively by historians as well as by several participants in this study, allowing for effective data triangulation (Hamilton, 2011; Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014; Participant 2, personal communication, June 3, 2014; Participant 3, personal
Several participants noted that this frustration was a significant challenge for Trible in his early years as president, often leading to clashes with faculty on a variety of matters (Hamilton, 2011; Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014; Participant 2, personal communication, June 3, 2014; Participant 3, personal communication, May 21, 2014). Participant 1 (2014) noted that many aspects of academic culture bothered Trible, including its slow decision-making pace, the cumbersome process of faculty hiring and tenure review, and the tendency of faculty members to focus solely on their departments and disciplines.

Participant 2 (2014) supported that point, stressing that academic culture was initially like a foreign environment to Trible, which further exacerbated his frustration. As Participant 2 (2014) noted:

- I think coming from the political world – I mean, this ‘get it done’ mentality – you know, that was like the first main clash. [In academic culture] you can’t just walk in and say, ‘ok, this is what we’re going to do,’ and then everybody just says, ‘ok, yes sir.’ So I think that was probably the first problem – that was his [mistaken] perception. Yeah, and so I think that was the misconception – that you could come in and everything would be fine.

Along those lines, other participants believed that Trible’s impatience was what primarily fueled his frustration with academic culture (Participant 3, personal communication, May 21, 2014; Participant 5, personal communication, April 4, 2012). He believed that rapid and decisive action was needed to stabilize the troubled university, and such action was
not always possible in an academic environment (Hamilton, 2011; Participant 3, personal communication, May 21, 2014). According to Participant 3 (2014), since some faculty members were resisting change early on, Trible grew frustrated and asked himself, "Why can't everybody see this the way I see it? Why do I have to explain it so many times? Why do I have to convince people that this is the best thing for CNU?" As Participant 3 (2014) also explained, "[Trible] was very impatient starting out, very impatient. And that did not bring out the best in him, quite frankly." In this case, Trible's adjustment to academic culture took time, and trial and error.

However, many participants also noted that Trible learned patience over the years, allowing him to better engage with academic culture (Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014; Participant 2, personal communication, June 3, 2014; Participant 3, personal communication, May 21, 2014). As Participant 3 noted, "he's still impatient, I mean - he's not totally cured, but that's the driving force to move things forward." Thus, while Trible's frustration level with academic culture eventually decreased with time and experience, it still represented a formidable obstacle in his adjusting to academe. Moreover, this frustration may have derailed Trible's presidency had it not been for other skillsets that he possessed and the maturity of the university at the time. As CNU was quite young as an institution, Trible had a degree of flexibility there that may not have existed at older, more established institutions.

Adaptability. One of Trible's skills - adaptability - represented another central theme that emerged from the data for this study. Throughout Trible's presidential tenure, he made a concerted effort to understand and adapt to academic culture (Hamilton, 2011; P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). Therefore, this effort has resulted
in a broader perspective and has also been instrumental in his relationship-building with faculty (Hamilton, 2011; P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013).

According to Trible (2013), “Over the years I have developed a much greater appreciation for the academy and for the ways of the academy. I think that my years here have made me just a bit more patient.” However, he also retained his expectations for decisive action and found ways to incorporate that into his interactions with faculty (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). Overall, this notion of adaptability was mentioned approximately 22 times in the seven interviews conducted for this study, and represented an important element of Trible’s academic adjustment experience (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013; Participant 1, personal communication, March 30, 2012; Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014; Participant 3, personal communication, May 21, 2014; Participant 4, personal communication, April 9, 2012; Participant 5, personal communication, April 4, 2012).

After a few years of trial and error, Trible was able to figure out a system of interaction with faculty that respected the traditions of academic culture while being receptive to his preference for decisive action and decision making (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). For instance, Trible came to respect the academic tradition of shared governance, but also established expectations that university committees could not deliberate endlessly on important matters (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). As Trible (2013) noted, “I more consciously endeavored to reach out and consult. But I have imposed on that process the expectation that decisions would be made, and that we would move forward” (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). Ultimately, Trible believed that a good leader could
adapt to any situation or environment and achieve success (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). Thus, he considered it his responsibility to learn about this culture that had been so foreign to him and figure out how to best work with it (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013).

Historians and CNU officials also seconded these points and discussed extensively Trible’s willingness for adaptation, pointing out that his approach involved listening, consulting, and learning not only patience but an appreciation for faculty members and the work that they do (Hamilton, 2011; Participant 1, personal communication, March 30, 2012; Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014; Participant 3, personal communication, May 21, 2014; Participant 4, personal communication, April 9, 2012; Participant 5, personal communication, April 4, 2012). For instance, early in Trible’s tenure, many CNU officials were impressed by his eagerness to both learn and ask questions (Hamilton, 2011; Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014). Specifically, Trible did not pretend to know everything about higher education and solicited guidance from many individuals (Hamilton, 2011; Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014). Reflecting on that period, one participant noted that “one of [Trible’s] greatest strengths as a leader is the recognition that he knows what he does not know” (Participant 4, personal communication, April 9, 2012). Thus, Trible’s humble and information-seeking approach allowed him to cultivate many allies among CNU’s faculty and staff (Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014).

Some participants also noted that a more difficult adjustment for Trible involved learning to respect faculty members and the work that they do (Participant 1, personal
According to Participant 1 (2014):

Trible originally had an outsider’s view of academic culture – that faculty had a pretty easy life, that they only work eight or nine months a year, and they have a lot of freedom. But I don’t think he’s there anymore. I think he has come to really recognize and value the contribution of faculty – the intensity of the work, the sacrifice of the work they do, the hours that they give to students and to research... I think those are things that over the years he’s really learned to appreciate of faculty.

Participant 2 (2014) supported this point, noting that Trible “had to learn to like faculty, and that was hard for him... I think the idea that he didn’t have control and couldn’t control faculty – I think that was a hard adjustment.” According to Hamilton (2011), it took Trible some time to adapt his perspective in this area. Nevertheless, other participants were impressed by Trible’s ability to make this adjustment in attitude at all (Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014; Participant 3, personal communication, May 21, 2014). As Participant 1 (2014) noted, “I’ve been kind of surprised, frankly, by how adaptable he has been. I think he has probably been surprised by how adaptable he has been.” Participant 3 (2014) supported this point, asserting that “as the college was learning and growing, I think [Trible] as president learned and grew along with it.” As these data indicated, Trible’s willingness to adapt his perspective and leadership approach was instrumental in facilitating his adjustment to academic culture.

**Consensus-building.** Along with adaptability, consensus-building was a leadership skill that Trible utilized extensively in order to adjust to academic culture (P.
Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). On multiple occasions throughout Trible’s tenure, he organized groups consisting of faculty members and administrators to advise him on making important institutional decisions (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). While Trible made it clear that the university would not be ruled by a committee, he did appreciate the advantage in soliciting outside input and support for his initiatives (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). This tendency toward consensus-building represented another central theme that emerged from the data, and was cited approximately eight times in the interviews conducted for this study (Hamilton, 2011; Participant 1, personal communication, March 30, 2012; Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014; Participant 3, personal communication, May 21, 2014; Participant 4, personal communication, April 9, 2012).

Along with his willingness to learn and adapt, Trible’s preference for consensus-building was vital in facilitating his adjustment to academe.

Early in Trible’s presidential tenure, he realized that governance by consensus was an important aspect of academic culture (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). However, he feared that committees composed entirely of faculty members would not be nimble enough to make decisions quickly and decisively (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). Therefore, he sought to modify the pre-existing norm by altering the composition of certain university committees (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). According to Trible (2013):

In regard to consultation, debate, and discussion, another way that we have refined a practice of academic culture is that faculty want to have committees to investigate virtually everything that goes on. What we’ve
done at CNU is that we have created committees composed of administrators and faculty at the same table... and we’re able to develop consensus and a shared notion of how we should proceed. We have therefore become much more nimble. We’ve been able to very quickly pursue opportunities, very quickly resolve problems, and we’ve done it in a way that encouraged broad support.

A prominent example of this has been CNU’s budget advisory committee, which has been in operation since 2002 (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). Comprised of senior faculty and administrators, Trible established this committee in order to give CNU’s faculty more involvement in the university’s budgetary process (Participant 3, personal communication, May 21, 2014). In the years since, the committee has evolved into an integral advisory body that provides faculty members a platform in which to dialogue with Trible and other administrators on important financial matters.

While Trible eventually came to appreciate the value of utilizing committees in building consensus, he always emphasized that they would not supersede his decision-making authority as president (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). Specifically, he was adamant about his singular responsibility in being the keeper of the university’s vision, which he felt could not be delegated to a committee (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). Instead, his approach in this area was to “consult, listen, and learn – but then based on one’s own vision and values and all that one’s learned, develop quickly a game plan... and then communicate that game plan” (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013).
Overall, Trible’s consensus-building approach involved his developing a university vision based in part on input from faculty and administrative colleagues (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). However, for it to be successful, Trible noted that it needed to be done in “such a way that people would then join forces and support and encourage the success of that enterprise” (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). Ultimately, Trible learned over time that arbitrary presidential decisions would not always be well received by CNU’s academic community (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). An infamous example of this occurred in 2002, when Trible sought to eliminate the institution’s nursing and education programs due to budgetary concerns (Hamilton, 2011). His unilateral decision was met with a firestorm of criticism from CNU faculty as well as concerned area residents (Hamilton, 2011). Following this incident, Trible sought to achieve his goals by seeking out faculty and administrative supporters who could help advance their shared agenda (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). This emphasis on consensus-building therefore earned Trible many allies within CNU’s professoriate.

Trible’s consensus-building approach, as well as the benefits it generated, was also discussed by historians as well as the participants in this study (Hamilton, 2011; Participant 1, personal communication, March 30, 2012; Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014; Participant 3, personal communication, May 21, 2014; Participant 4, personal communication, April 9, 2012). According to Hamilton (2011), Trible initially had a heavy-handed decision-making style that alarmed many faculty members. However, as Participant 1 (2012) noted, Trible’s decision-making style evolved as his tenure progressed, and he began to seek more input from a variety of
university sources. Yet, Trible always maintained his expectation of decisive action in order to avoid what could sometimes be endless and unproductive faculty debate (Participant 4, personal communication, April 9, 2012).

Further, a key to Trible’s evolution in consensus-building was to rely more heavily on the provost for guidance, which helped him to “buffer and improve the relationships with the faculty” (Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014). There have been a handful of provosts over the course of Trible’s 18-year tenure. According to Participant 3 (2014), the relationship that Trible has forged with the faculty senate has also been beneficial, noting that “it was second to none. It’s a lot of transparency and a lot of open communication.” Ultimately, these data indicated that despite some early setbacks, Trible was able to forge a bond with most of CNU’s faculty through increased use of collaboration and consensus-building (Participant 1, personal communication, March 30, 2012; Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014; Participant 3, personal communication, May 21, 2014). Along with Trible’s willingness to adapt, this focus on consensus-building allowed him to build the faculty relationships necessary to acclimate effectively to academic culture.

Summary

Despite some initial challenges, Trible represented a non-traditional college president who adjusted successfully to academic culture. As the findings from this study concluded, Trible’s challenges and ultimate success stemmed from four central issues: he possessed a compelling presidential vision that aligned with CNU’s institutional needs; he found ways to overcome his initial frustration with academic culture; he had a willingness to learn and adapt to academic culture; and he had a unique ability for
consensus-building that allowed him to forge relationships with many members of CNU’s academic community. In many ways, Trible learned from mistakes as he went and modified his approach accordingly. This willingness to adapt helped to facilitate his transition into academic culture, as faculty appreciated his efforts to learn and evolve.

Thus, Trible’s experience at CNU demonstrated that it is possible for non-traditional college presidents to adjust successfully to academic culture, even if they encounter initial obstacles. It also indicated that non-traditional presidents do not always fall completely into the outlier categories of either successful or unsuccessful when it comes to their adaptation to academic culture. Conversely, Trible demonstrated that non-traditional presidents can sometimes have a difficult time engaging with academic culture initially, but can then learn from their mistakes and facilitate a better outcome over time. The next chapter will take a wider perspective on this issue, comparing and contrasting the adjustment experiences of Dwight D. Eisenhower, Terry Sanford, and Paul Trible. Along with examining implications for future research, it will also seek to draw lessons from the experiences of each non-traditional president that can then be put into practice by future non-traditional presidents as well as the hiring boards that appoint them.
Chapter 7 – Analysis, Conclusions, and Implications for Future Research

As examined in previous chapters, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Terry Sanford, and Paul Trible each had unique experiences as president of their respective universities. These experiences were shaped by different situational dynamics as well as different professional backgrounds. Moreover, as the data demonstrated, Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible implemented distinct approaches and strategies in attempting to learn the ways of the academy. Consequently, they each achieved varying degrees of success in adapting to academic culture. On the one hand, Eisenhower’s experience was very difficult and ultimately unsuccessful, while Sanford’s experience was nearly the opposite. While Sanford had to overcome some challenges during his tenure, his adjustment process was highly successful and he left Duke as a beloved academic leader. Of the three non-traditional presidents, Sanford was most effective in adapting to academic culture and proved to be a good fit for Duke’s organizational purposes. Trible’s experience fell somewhere in between. While his adjustment process was more difficult than Sanford’s, Trible was ultimately much more successful than Eisenhower in adjusting to academic culture. Ultimately, each of these case studies yielded important lessons about how non-traditional college presidents engage with and acclimate to the academic world.

As noted in earlier chapters, the purpose of this study was to explore the issues that non-traditional college presidents face in adjusting to academic culture and derive what lessons could be learned to inform future practice. Another purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions that non-traditional presidents have of academic culture, and how those perceptions help or hinder their adjustment to academe. Chapters 4, 5, and
6 focused on summarizing the findings from the case studies on Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible. This chapter analyzes the findings as a whole, pointing out key similarities and differences in how each non-traditional president perceived and engaged with academic culture. Literature from Chapter 2 on academic culture and leadership are incorporated to provide a more thorough understanding of how Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible adjusted to their academic roles. The chapter also examines lessons that were learned from this study that can be of use to presidential hiring boards as well as future non-traditional college presidents. The chapter concludes by exploring implications for future research in this area.

**Analysis of Findings**

After examining Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible’s academic culture adjustment experiences individually, it was useful to study them collectively in order to identify key themes and to note similarities and differences in their circumstances and approaches. For instance, by endeavoring to glean perception and intention from the historical data, this cross-case comparison was helpful in analyzing how Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible perceived academic culture. A central finding from this study was that their perceptions of academic culture varied widely. Ultimately, these divergent views produced a range of outcomes that either helped or hindered Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible’s adjustment process to academe. Further, the application of relevant scholarly literature on academic culture and leadership yielded several important insights that were useful in understanding the dynamics behind their adjustment experiences (Baldridge, et al., 1999; Beckhard & Pritchard, 1992; Bensimon, 1989; Birnbaum, 1988; Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001; Bolman & Deal, 1997; Bourdieu, 1985; Fullan, 2001; Heifetz, 1994;
Perceptions of academic culture. Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible differed significantly in their perceptions of academic culture, based on inferring their perceptions from the data. Ultimately, these views either helped or hindered them in their adjustment process to academe. Of the three non-traditional presidents, Eisenhower was the most intimidated by academic culture (Clark, 2013; McCaughey, 2003; Neal, 1978; Smith, 2012). Lacking a broad scholarly background or advanced graduate degrees, Eisenhower constantly felt inferior among Columbia’s erudite faculty (McCaughey, 2003). Further, as noted in Chapter 4, Eisenhower lacked the time, interest, or patience to learn how to engage effectively with Columbia’s faculty, and made little to no effort on that front (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001; Smith, 2012). Consequently, the gulf widened between Eisenhower and Columbia’s academic community, which resulted in considerable faculty resentment toward Eisenhower (Smith, 2012). Thus, Eisenhower’s feelings of inferiority and intimidation among Columbia’s faculty played a key role in compromising his ability to adjust to academe effectively.

Among the three non-traditional presidents, Sanford had the most positive perception of academic culture, which was driven primarily by his strong professional interest in secondary and higher education (Covington & Ellis, 1999). He genuinely valued faculty service and demonstrated this commitment through providing the maximum amount of funding possible to support faculty hiring and research at Duke
(Egerton, 1973). As noted in Chapter 5, Sanford also kept up to date with faculty research and praised professors for their professional accomplishments (Sanford, 1977d). This support had a noticeable impact on Duke's faculty, leading one professor to conclude that "you couldn't ask for better circumstances" (Egerton, 1973, p. 31). As opposed to Eisenhower, Sanford's positive perception of academic culture allowed him to gradually forge a bond with most of Duke's faculty (Egerton, 1973). Further, this bond helped Sanford to endure some of the more challenging periods of his administration, including the Vietnam War-era student protests and the controversy regarding the possible placement of the Nixon Presidential Library at Duke (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Thus, Sanford's positive perception of academic culture played an integral role in his successful adjustment to academe.

As opposed to Eisenhower and Sanford, Trible initially had a negative perception of academic culture that gradually grew into a positive one (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013; Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014; Participant 2, personal communication, June 3, 2014). Upon arriving at CNU, Trible had a fairly low opinion of faculty, subscribing to common stereotypes that they do not work that hard and are overpaid for what they do (Participant 2, personal communication, June 3, 2014). Further, as noted in Chapter 6, Trible was critical of many of the cornerstones of academic culture, including the tradition of shared governance and what he perceived to be its stubborn resistance to change (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). However, by consciously endeavoring to learn the ways of the academy, Trible gradually began to appreciate the nuances of academic culture and value faculty work (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013; Participant 1, personal communication,
June 26, 2014; Participant 2, personal communication, June 3, 2014). He accomplished this by forging bonds with several faculty members and striving to learn more about the work that they do (Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014). Over time, Trible began to develop “a much greater appreciation for the academy” (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). This positive perception, forged by years of learning and relationship-building with faculty, proved integral in Trible’s adjustment process to academic culture. Overall, Sanford and Trible demonstrated that positive perceptions of academic culture can help facilitate the adjustment of non-traditional presidents to academe. Conversely, Eisenhower demonstrated that a negative or apprehensive perception of academic culture can contribute to significant adjustment problems for non-traditional presidents.

Leading as non-traditional presidents. The literature on non-traditional presidents provides a useful template to analyze the leadership approaches of Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible at their respective institutions. According to the presidential paths model created by Birnbaum and Umbach (2001), the three presidents all most closely resembled “strangers,” to the academy, meaning none of them had ever held a formal position within a college setting (p. 206). However, Sanford represented a possible exception, in that he could arguably be classified as a “spanner,” or someone who had rotated in and out of higher education over time (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001, p. 206). While Sanford had not held a full-time academic position prior to assuming Duke’s presidency, he had served on the governing boards of at least nine colleges or universities before beginning his presidential tenure (Jackson & John, 1969). Moreover, he had served for several years as board chairman for two of those institutions (Jackson & John,
1969). Consequently, he had a level of exposure to academic culture that most non-traditional presidents, including Eisenhower and Trible did not have. However, all three were similar in that they did not have nearly the same level of academic experience that a traditional college president possessed. Thus, as “strangers,” academic culture was much more foreign to them than it would have been for their traditional president peers. Further, according to Birnbaum and Umbach (2001), the academy tends to prefer presidents who have pursued scholarly endeavors prior to joining the administrative ranks. This preference therefore created an obstacle that Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible would have had to overcome in order to gain legitimacy among faculty members. As the data from this study indicated, they each had varying levels of success in achieving that goal.

Another similarity that Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible shared stemmed from the types of capital they possessed as non-traditional college presidents (Bourdieu, 1985). Using Bourdieu’s (1985) model for capital, each came into office with three distinct forms of capital. First, they all had economic capital, which refers to command over and distribution of economic resources, because they were all hired in part for their possible fundraising potential (Ambrose, 1990; Bourdieu, 1985; Covington & Ellis, 1999; Hamilton, 2011). Also, Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible each had social capital, which refers to resources based on group membership, relationships, and networks of influence, as they all knew influential people who could benefit their respective universities (Ambrose, 1990; Bourdieu, 1985; Covington & Ellis, 1999; Hamilton, 2011). They were each hired in part because of the large networks of supporters they possessed as high-profile public figures (Ambrose, 1990; Covington & Ellis, 1999; Hamilton, 2011).
Specifically, each of their respective hiring boards wanted to tap into those networks for fundraising as well as friend-raising purposes (Ambrose, 1990; Covington & Ellis, 1999; Hamilton, 2011). Finally, Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible all possessed symbolic capital, because they came from professional backgrounds that had brought them honor, prestige, and recognition (Ambrose, 1990; Bourdieu, 1985; Covington & Ellis, 1999; Hamilton, 2011). In turn, each of their hiring boards wanted to draw upon that prestige in order to advance their respective institutions (Ambrose, 1990; Covington & Ellis, 1999; Hamilton, 2011). Thus, it is important to consider what types of capital that Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible possessed, as it provides important insights as to what made them attractive presidential candidates for their respective hiring boards.

However, a challenge they all shared as non-traditional presidents according to Bourdieu’s (1985) model was that from the perspective of faculty members, each of the presidents lacked cultural capital. According to Bourdieu (1985), cultural capital refers to forms of knowledge, skills, education, and advantages a person has, which gives them a higher status in society. While as educated professionals, Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible possessed cultural capital in a broad societal sense, they did not have as much within the higher education realm. Specifically, each had trouble in varying degrees gaining the acceptance of faculty members, who did not think they had backgrounds suitable for service as a college president (Ambrose, 1990; Jacobs, 2001; Covington & Ellis, 1999; Hamilton, 2011). As higher education most closely resembles Mintzberg’s (1980) model for professional bureaucracy, this challenge was highly significant since faculty comprise the academic organization’s operating core. Thus, in order to have any
chance for success, a non-traditional president must gain the support of these academic professionals (Mintzberg, 1980).

For Sanford and Trible, they were eventually able to prove themselves through outreach and relationship-building to reluctant faculty and gain their acceptance (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton, 1973; Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014; Participant 2, personal communication, June 3, 2014). However, Eisenhower was never able to forge such a bond with Columbia’s faculty (Ambrose, 1990; Jacobs, 2001). Ultimately, this played an integral role in explaining why Sanford and Trible were more successful in adjusting to academic culture than Eisenhower. Using Mintzberg’s (1980) model for professional bureaucracy as a reference, Sanford and Trible were eventually able to gain the support of faculty — the operating core of their respective institutions — while Eisenhower was not.

An application of Bolman and Deal’s (1984) Four Frames Model revealed another similarity between Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible. They each modelled the results of Bensimon’s (1989) study, which concluded that college presidents view the institutions they lead through multiple frames of reference. For instance, through his efforts to restructure Columbia’s administrative hierarchy and his fondness for ceremonial events, Eisenhower viewed his institution through at least the structural and symbolic frames (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Jacobs, 2001). For Eisenhower, his tendency toward at least the structural frame, with its focus on hierarchy and rules, would make sense considering his military background (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Jacobs, 2001). Similarly, Sanford viewed Duke through at least the political, structural, and human resource frames, considering his efforts in fundraising, implementation of new academic programs, and relationship
building with faculty (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton, 1973).

Finally, Trible viewed CNU through at least the political and structural frames, considering his work in fundraising as well as in academic program development and administrative reorganization (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Hamilton, 2011). Further, one can argue that Trible also viewed CNU through the symbolic frame, evidenced by his focus on transforming the physical appearance of the campus (Bolman & Deal, 2013; Hamilton, 2011). Thus, this analysis revealed that non-traditional presidents such as Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible may view the institutions they lead through multiple frames, much in the same way as the traditional presidents examined in Bensimon’s (1989) study. Further, the ability to view institutions through multiple frames would be highly useful for non-traditional presidents, as it would allow them to understand the complex dynamics present within academic organizations. However, in reference to Heifetz’s (1994) model for adaptive leadership, developing this ability to view organizations through multiple frames would require a process of learning to which non-traditional presidents would have to fully commit. The data from this study concluded that Sanford and Trible were more open to this process of learning than Eisenhower, who never attempted to adapt to the ways of the academy (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001).

**Engagement with academic culture.** While there were some similarities in the ways that Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible engaged with academic culture, there were also key differences that helped explain why they each achieved varying degrees of success. These differences became even more pronounced when compared with pertinent scholarly literature on leadership and academic culture (Baldridge et al., 1992; Beckhard & Pritchard, 1992; Birnbaum, 1988; Fullan, 2001; Heifetz, 1994; Lane, 1985; Mintzberg,
1980; Rotemberg, 1993). For instance, they each had a different reaction to
decentralization and goal ambiguity, which are two primary characteristics of academic
culture (Baldridge et al., 1992; Lane, 1985). Coming from a military leadership
background, Eisenhower could not comprehend goal ambiguity or the decentralized
environment he found at Columbia (Ambrose, 1990; Jacobs, 2001). Moreover, he made
little to no effort to try to understand those perspectives since they were so foreign to him
and he had neither the time nor patience to learn (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Jacobs,
2001). Ultimately, this helped explain why Eisenhower's transition to academic culture
was so difficult (Ambrose, 1990; Jacobs, 2001).

Conversely, Sanford was more accustomed to decentralization and goal ambiguity
because of his prior higher education exposure and his long tenure working in state
government (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton, 1973; McKnight, 1969; Sanford, 1974a).
Sanford even maintained that his experience as Duke's president in this area was similar
to when he worked with politicians and bureaucrats as North Carolina's governor
(Sanford, 1974a). In certain respects, Sanford believed that state government was similar
to the professional bureaucracy found within academic culture, since in his view both
cultures contained highly trained specialists who had a certain degree of autonomy in
their work (Mintzberg, 1980; Sanford, 1974a). Thus, Sanford was better equipped than
Eisenhower to operate in such a decentralized and ambiguous decision-making
environment, because he had spent several years prior to his presidency operating within
a similar organizational culture (Sanford, 1974a).

For Trible, he also had a difficult time understanding decentralization and goal
ambiguity since he personally favored prompt decision-making (Hamilton, 2011; P.
Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). In many ways, this challenge stemmed from Trible's strictly political and business-focused background and the fact that he assumed the presidency during the height of the neo-liberalism movement in American higher education (Hamilton, 2011; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Consequently, this focus on applying business practices to the academy compelled him to express concern regarding decentralization and goal ambiguity (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). However, unlike Eisenhower, Trible made a concerted effort to adjust to these tenants of academic culture and worked with faculty to find common ground when it came to setting institutional objectives (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). As the data indicated, this outreach to faculty was an important reason why he eventually adjusted to academic culture (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). Ultimately, the reactions that Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible had to goal ambiguity and decentralization helped explain why they had such different adjustment experiences to academic culture.

Differences between academic and non-academic organizational cultures help reveal why Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible had different adjustment experiences in the early stages of their presidencies (Birnbaum, 1988; Lane, 1985; Mintzberg, 1980; Rotemberg, 1993). With the previously-mentioned exception of Sanford, each non-traditional president was more accustomed to more centralized, hierarchical forms of organization (Hamilton, 2011; Jacobs, 2001; Mintzberg, 1980; Sanford, 1974a). Thus, a key challenge for each was to acclimate to the professional bureaucracy found in higher education (Mintzberg, 1980). As Mintzberg (1980) noted, managers in this culture must have the support of professional operators and be professionals themselves in order to
maintain credibility and power. To varying degrees, this was difficult for Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible because they were not academicians (Ambrose, 1990; Jacobs, 2001; Covington & Ellis, 1999; Hamilton, 2011). Thus, they were compelled to earn legitimacy with faculty members in order to get anything accomplished (Bornstein, 2003).

Sanford and Trible were able to achieve legitimacy over time through relationship building and vision setting, but Eisenhower was not (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Hamilton, 2011; Jacobs, 2001). Conversely, many Columbia professors did not respect Eisenhower and believed he was not suited to be the institution’s president (Ambrose, 1990; Jacobs, 2001). This helped explain why his adjustment experience was so difficult while Sanford’s and Trible’s were somewhat smoother. Overall, Eisenhower fell victim to one of Bornstein’s (2003) key threats to legitimacy: the lack of cultural fit (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001). Columbia’s faculty never accepted Eisenhower as an academic leader, and this severely compromised any chance he had for adaptation success (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001). Further, Eisenhower was guilty of another key threat to legitimacy: inattentiveness (Bornstein, 2003; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001). Specifically, Columbia’s faculty did not think Eisenhower was a committed academic leader because he was constantly preoccupied with outside military and political obligations (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2011).

Another significant issue centered on the differences between administrative authority and professional authority, and how those differences impacted the three non-traditional presidents examined in this study (Birnbaum, 1988). According to Birnbaum (1988), leaders from non-academic organizational cultures are more familiar with administrative authority, which is “predicated on the control and coordination of
activities by superiors” (p. 10). Conversely, academic leaders operate in a professional authority environment, which is “is predicated on autonomy and individual knowledge” (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 10). Coming from a military administrative authority background, Eisenhower could not understand why his directives were not immediately followed by faculty members (Birnbaum, 1988; Jacobs, 2001). Moreover, he did not know how to operate within a professional authority-based environment. Thus, Eisenhower was unable to move away from an autocratic leadership approach toward the more collegial style to which faculty members were accustomed (Birnbaum, 1988; Jacobs, 2001; Rotemberg, 1993). To a lesser extent, Sanford and Trible also had challenges adjusting to a professional authority environment (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Hamilton, 2011). However, their political backgrounds spent working with legislators and bureaucrats likely helped them to acclimate in a manner that was not possible for Eisenhower. Sanford and Trible also presided at institutions that were smaller and less organizationally complex compared to Eisenhower. Thus, these factors also helped to explain why Sanford and Trible were ultimately more successful in acclimating to academic culture.

**Implementing adaptive and change leadership.** An examination of the adaptive and change leadership styles that Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible employed as non-traditional presidents also helped to explain why their adjustment experiences varied. As noted in Chapter 2, Heifetz and Linsky (2002) proposed that leaders are confronted by two types of problems – technical and adaptive. Technical problems are well defined with known solutions, and anyone with the right expertise and resources can solve them (Heifetz, 1994; Randall & Coakley, 2007). Conversely, adaptive problems are not well
defined and consequently present no known solutions in advance (Heifetz, 1994; Randall & Coakley, 2007). Instead, it requires learning to formulate workable solutions (Heifetz, 1994). As accomplished leaders in their given professions, Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible were all highly proficient with technical problems. However, given the goal ambiguity present within academic culture, adaptive problems were also regularly present within that environment (Baldrige et al., 1999). For Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible, these adaptive problems ranged from trying to tackle complex budget problems to finding ways during their early tenures to inspire demoralized campus communities in the midst of crisis at their respective institutions. Given these circumstances, adaptive problems were more challenging for them to solve within their respective academic settings.

A key difference between Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible in this regard was in their willingness to learn. According to Beckhard and Pritchard (1992), any successful change or adaptation requires a conscious decision for the leader to transition to a learning mode. In this respect, there was a key difference between the manner in which Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible approached adaptation to academic culture. In Eisenhower’s case, he was too frustrated by academic culture and too overextended professionally to engage in the self-direction of learning necessary in andragogy (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001; Knowles, 1980; Merriam, 2001). In addition, Eisenhower was not willing or able to alter his military-centered frame of reference, which is a necessary step in transformative learning (Mezirow, 1996; Taylor, 2008). Thus, his adaptation capability was severely compromised.

In Sanford’s case, he was the most familiar between the three non-traditional presidents with academic culture, so there was not the same sense of urgency for
adaptation. However, through his humble and relational leadership approach, Sanford demonstrated that he had the ability to adapt if needed (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton, 1973). Renowned for his personal charm and administrative skill, Sanford was a great believer in compromise and adaptation, arguing that “people have to be able to cross lines” (Egerton, 1973, p. 35). Thus, as per Mezirow’s (1996) transformative learning model, Sanford demonstrated an ability to change his frame of reference in order to understand faculty needs.

Overall, Trible demonstrated the greatest adaptation capability, expressing a willingness to learn and ask questions in order to better understand academic culture (Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014; Participant 4, personal communication, April 9, 2012). This process of learning allowed him to transition from a negative perception of academic culture to one that was much more positive (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013; Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014; Participant 2, personal communication, June 3, 2014). Thus, despite some difficult adjustment challenges, Trible was ultimately successful in learning how to work within academe. He overcame some initial clashes with faculty and was able to forge an effective working partnership with them that has culminated in a significant and highly publicized university transformation (Hamilton, 2011; Participant 3, personal communication, May 21, 2014). Overall, this willingness to learn proved to be a crucial indicator of success or failure in examining how non-traditional college presidents adapted to academic culture.

The leadership qualities that Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible demonstrated as college presidents also presented another important clue in evaluating their efficacy
adjusting to academic culture. According to Fullan (2001), the qualities needed for effective change leadership include energy, enthusiasm, and hopefulness. However, each non-traditional president examined for this study varied when it came to possessing these traits. Preoccupied with outside political and military commitments, the data indicated that Eisenhower did not have the energy or enthusiasm to pursue his work at Columbia effectively (Ambrose, 1990; Bornstein, 2003; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001). Eisenhower did seem to be hopeful for Columbia's future, but his lack of a clear vision and general inattentiveness toward the institution precluded that optimism from mattering much (Bornstein, 2003; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001).

Conversely, by possessing strong commitments to their presidential duties, Sanford and Trible demonstrated all of those qualities effectively (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014; Participant 4, personal communication, April 9, 2012). They each pursued their duties at Duke and CNU with vigor and brought an enthusiasm to their respective institutions that eventually spread to students, faculty, staff, and alumni (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014; Participant 4, personal communication, April 9, 2012). Further, Sanford and Trible each offered compelling visions that came to inspire many members of their institutional communities (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Hamilton, 2011). Therefore, Sanford and Trible were in stronger positions than Eisenhower to overcome their initial adjustment challenges and become legitimate academic leaders. Consequently, this variance in leadership style proved to be critical when determining who succeeded in adjusting to academic culture and who did not. What follows (See Table 4) is a chart comparing and contrasting the adaptive leadership styles ultimately
employed by Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible based on Heifetz's (1994) model for adaptive leadership.

Table 4 – Adaptive Leadership Comparative Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adaptive Leadership Step</th>
<th>Eisenhower</th>
<th>Sanford</th>
<th>Trible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify the adaptive challenge.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Keep the level of distress within a tolerable range for doing adaptive work.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Focus attention on ripening issues and not on stress-reducing distraction.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Give the work back to the people, but at a rate they can stand.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Protect voices of leadership without authority.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

Along with examining how non-traditional presidents perceive academic culture, a primary objective for this study was to identify what lessons could be learned by studying the adjustment experiences of three non-traditional college presidents to academic culture. An examination of Dwight D. Eisenhower, Terry Sanford, and Paul Trible revealed that some non-traditional presidents have been more successful than others in learning the ways of the academy. However, for the benefit of hiring boards as well as future non-traditional presidents, it was imperative to draw lessons from those experiences that could help inform future practice. What follows are four conclusions that were formulated after evaluating the issues behind Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible’s adjustment experiences. On one level, these conclusions should be of great importance for institutional hiring boards who are considering the appointment of a non-traditional president. Further, they would also be of use in guiding a new non-traditional president through the academic culture adjustment process. As there has been little empirical research on non-traditional presidents to date, these conclusions help inform our understanding of how they can most effectively engage with academic culture.

Vision. A central lesson from this study was that non-traditional college presidents need to have a clear and compelling institutional vision to help facilitate their transition into academic culture. While developing an institutional vision would also be expected of traditional presidents, it is particularly critical for non-traditional presidents as it helps to demonstrate their commitment to becoming legitimate academic leaders. A fundamental problem that Eisenhower faced was that he had no vision for Columbia upon assuming the presidency (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001). He had only accepted the
appointment reluctantly and had not given much thought to the university’s future (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001). While Eisenhower intended to use the institution as a platform for his proposed civic engagement initiatives, he had no vision for Columbia itself (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001). Consequently, Columbia’s faculty gradually lost faith in Eisenhower as an academic leader and he lost whatever chance he had to forge a bond with them (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001).

Conversely, Sanford and Trible both had distinct institutional visions that they had created for their respective universities upon assuming the presidency (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Hamilton, 2011). While Sanford and Trible later encouraged the refinement of those visions with their respective campus communities, the precarious nature of Duke and CNU at the beginning of their presidencies compelled them to enter office with distinct visions of their own creation (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Hamilton, 2011; Participant 3, personal communication, May 21, 2014). Sanford and Trible each used these visions to build alliances with faculty members and administrators and identify common areas of interest and concern (Egerton, 1973; P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013; Participant 1, personal communication, March 30, 2012; Participant 3, personal communication, May 21, 2014).

Even if there was initial faculty resistance to the visions, there was at least a comprehensive plan in place for each university’s future (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Hamilton 2011). In both cases, it also impressed many faculty members that a non-academic would take so much time and effort to understand academic culture and to develop a plan for their institution’s future (Egerton, 1973; Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014). It demonstrated to them that Sanford and Trible were
very serious about their academic leadership work. Thus, faculty support for each
president gradually grew as support for each vision began to take shape (Covington &
Ellis, 1999; P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). For Sanford and
Trible, this support was integral in smoothing their transitions into academic culture.

Adaptability. Another important conclusion from this study was that non-
traditional college presidents must be willing to adapt to the academic environment in
order to acclimate successfully. As this study demonstrated, Eisenhower was not willing
to adapt to academic culture for a variety of reasons. First, academe was entirely foreign
to him and he did not understand it (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001). Second,
Eisenhower was intensely frustrated by the intricacies of academic culture and that
frustration prevented him from acclimating effectively (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013;
Jacobs, 2001). Most importantly, because Eisenhower had so many outside professional
commitments during his Columbia tenure, he lacked the time, energy, or patience to
focus on learning academic culture (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001).
Ultimately, all of this conspired to compromise his relationships with faculty as well as
his reputation as Columbia’s president.

Compared to Eisenhower, Sanford and Trible proved to be much more adaptable
in regards to their engagement with academic culture. Emulating Heifetz’s (1994)
framework for adaptive leadership, they both engaged in a process of learning that
culminated in the ability to work effectively within academic culture. As previously
noted, Sanford was arguably the best prepared of the three to engage with academic
culture, thanks to his prior higher education experience and his gubernatorial tenure
(Covington & Ellis, 1999; Sanford, 1974a). Nevertheless, Sanford still demonstrated
adaptability by consulting extensively with Duke’s students and faculty members to learn their priorities, views, and concerns (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton, 1973). This interaction with Duke’s academic community provided Sanford the opportunity to see beyond his own perspective and adjust his views and priorities when needed. The knowledge obtained from these interactions also equipped Sanford to engage in the activities most associated with non-traditional presidents – fundraising and friend-raising – more effectively.

Trible followed a similar path by demonstrating a strong willingness to learn despite his frustration with aspects of academic culture (Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014; Participant 4, personal communication, April 9, 2012). He asked many questions during his early tenure and made a concerted effort to learn about faculty views and concerns (Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014). This approach impressed many faculty members and made them more willing to work with Trible in an effort to find common ground. While traditional presidents could certainly engage in this outreach as well, members of CNU’s community found it reassuring that Trible made such effort to learn about the institution as an outsider with limited prior academic experience (Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014). Ultimately, this willingness to learn proved to be a vital component of Trible’s success in adjusting to academic culture. Therefore, adaptability played an integral role in determining the success or lack thereof that Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible achieved in adjusting to academic culture.

Commitment to institution. The third conclusion from this study was that in order for non-traditional presidents to adjust successfully to academic culture, they must
demonstrate complete commitment to the institutions that they lead. Specifically, they must make the institution their number one priority over all other professional obligations and opportunities. While institutional commitment would also be an important trait for traditional presidents, it takes on an added sense of urgency for non-traditional presidents, who are often exposed to a wider array of professional opportunities. For instance, as noted in Chapter 5, Sanford passed up several political opportunities, including an ambassadorship and a prestigious position on the North Carolina Board of Education, in order to stay at Duke (Covington & Ellis, 1999). Such commitment demonstrated to those within Duke’s academic community that Sanford was focused on the university and that he genuinely wanted to be an academic leader (Egerton, 1973).

However, as this study concluded, Eisenhower did not demonstrate much commitment to Columbia as president (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001). Although Eisenhower had good intentions he was too preoccupied with other obligations, namely important military and political matters, to give Columbia his full attention (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001). As noted in Chapter 4, Eisenhower recognized this and sorrowfully labeled himself an “absentee president” (Smith, 2012, p. 496). Further, Eisenhower offered to either resign or shift to a more ceremonial role, but was prevented from doing so by Columbia’s board of trustees (Galambos, 1989a; Jacobs, 2001). Consequently, this lack of commitment to Columbia eroded any confidence that faculty members had in Eisenhower and prevented him from acclimating to their culture.

Compared to Eisenhower, Sanford and Trible displayed much greater levels of commitment to their respective universities (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Hamilton, 2011). Although they both engaged in other professional activities during their tenures, Sanford
and Trible always regarded their institutions as their top priorities and consistently demonstrated that through their actions (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Participant 1, personal communication, June 26, 2014). For instance, although business and political leaders encouraged Trible to run for lieutenant governor of Virginia in the 2005 election, he ultimately declined, stressing that “my first commitment is to CNU” (Scanlon, 2003, p. 1). In addition, Sanford ran for President of the United States twice during his tenure, but always built his campaign schedule around his duties at Duke (Covington & Ellis, 1999). While that limited Sanford’s efficacy as a political candidate, he made it clear that serving at Duke was ultimately more important to him (Covington & Ellis, 1999).

In each case, this commitment gave Sanford and Trible a level of legitimacy as academic leaders that Eisenhower was never able to obtain. Since neither Sanford nor Trible were initially expected to stay in office very long, they each earned critical faculty support by demonstrating their commitment to remaining at Duke and CNU for significant tenures (Egerton, 1973; Hamilton, 2011). Ultimately, it was crucial to their adjustment experiences into academic culture to have the support and goodwill that this commitment generated from their respective university communities. As the data from this study indicated, for a new non-traditional college president to have any legitimacy with faculty, he or she must demonstrate their commitment to serving as an academic leader and not get preoccupied with too many non-academic endeavors.

**Prior academic exposure.** The final conclusion from this study was that prior exposure to higher education could possibly help non-traditional college presidents adjust more quickly and effectively to academic culture. This type of non-traditional president would most closely resemble the “spanner” included in Birnbaum and Umbach’s (2001)
presidential pathways model (p. 206). While none of the non-traditional presidents examined in this study had worked in academe prior to assuming their presidencies, some were more familiar with it than others. Of the three, Sanford had the most familiarity with academic culture by virtue of his prior college board of trustees service and his work in higher education as governor (Covington & Ellis, 1999; McKnight, 1969). Conversely, Eisenhower had no previous connection to higher education beyond his cadet tenure at West Point (Ambrose, 1990; Jacobs, 2001). Thus, according to Birnbaum and Umbach’s (2001) model, Sanford most closely resembled a “spanner,” while Eisenhower most closely resembled a “stranger” (p. 206). Ultimately, this could help explain why Sanford’s academic culture adjustment process was much smoother and more successful than Eisenhower’s.

As noted in Chapter 6, Trible was situated somewhere in between Sanford and Eisenhower when it came to previous academic exposure. Beyond Trible’s tenure as a student, he had served briefly as a teaching fellow at Harvard and had been on CNU’s board of visitors for only a year before becoming its president (Hamilton, 2011). Thus, he had less familiarity with academe than Sanford, but had more than Eisenhower possessed. Consequently, that could be a factor in explaining why he fell somewhere in between the two when it came to adjusting to academic culture. Overall, the data from this study indicated that prior professional exposure to higher education could play a useful role in helping facilitate the transition of a non-traditional president to academic culture. However, more research in this area is needed to explore this dynamic further.

Conclusions summary. By examining the academic culture adjustment experiences of Dwight D. Eisenhower, Terry Sanford, and Paul Trible, this study yielded
some significant conclusions that will be of use to presidential hiring boards as well as aspiring non-traditional presidents. First, it is imperative for a non-traditional president to have a clear and compelling vision for the institution that he or she has been selected to lead. Such a vision communicates to faculty members that the individual is serious about becoming an effective academic leader. Second, a non-traditional president must be willing to adapt to academic culture by demonstrating a willingness to listen and learn. Specifically, even in an age of neoliberalism, non-traditional presidents must be able to keep an open mind when engaging academic culture and make an effort to understand faculty traditions and needs. As this study indicated, non-traditional presidents who react to academic culture with frustration or stubbornness will have a difficult time acclimating effectively. Third, a non-traditional president must demonstrate a strong commitment to his or her institution and not be preoccupied with other professional obligations or opportunities. This commitment demonstrates that the individual is serious about serving as an academic leader and is not merely using the office as a temporary assignment until something better comes along. Finally, this study indicated that prior higher education exposure could be useful for non-traditional presidents in helping them acclimate to academic culture.

Overall, the fundamental lesson from this study was determined by combining these four conclusions together. Taken as a whole, they ultimately equated to legitimacy with faculty, which is a non-traditional president’s “currency” (Participant 5, personal communication, April 4, 2012). This perspective is rooted in the notion that legitimacy is earned from constituents who are being served and led (Bornstein, 2003). For non-traditional college presidents to adapt successfully to academic culture, they must gain
legitimacy with faculty members in order to survive (Bornstein, 2003; Participant 2, personal communication, June 3, 2014; Participant 5, personal communication, April 4, 2012). Without legitimacy, a non-traditional president would be severely limited in his or her ability to engage effectively with academic culture (Participant 2, personal communication, June 3, 2014; Participant 5, personal communication, April 4, 2012). Thus, this represents a key lesson that should be heeded by hiring committees as well as by new and aspiring non-traditional presidents.

Implications for Future Research

The purpose of this study was to explore the issues that non-traditional college presidents face in adjusting to academic culture and derive what lessons could be learned to inform future practice. Following a statement of the problem, a literature review, and an explanation of methodology, Chapters 4, 5, and 6 focused on summarizing the findings from case studies on Dwight D. Eisenhower, Terry Sanford, and Paul Trible. Further, as the data presented in this chapter indicated, Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible demonstrated key similarities as well as differences in formulating an institutional vision, expressing willingness for adaptation, displaying a personal commitment to their respective universities, and possessing some degree of prior academic experience.

This study concluded that their degree of efficacy in adapting to academic culture was influenced by each of those four factors. Moreover, it also concluded that these factors ultimately equated to credibility with faculty, which a non-traditional president needs to earn in order to adapt successfully to academic culture. Overall, several lessons were drawn from these conclusions that could be of use to presidential hiring committees as well as new and aspiring non-traditional college presidents. Specifically, a non-
traditional president must have a thoughtful and compelling institutional vision in order to generate support within the university’s academic community. He or she must also be willing to adapt, displaying to scholars a strong desire to learn and acclimate to the environment around them. A non-traditional president must also display a strong commitment to the institution, and not be preoccupied with other professional commitments. Finally, prior exposure to academic culture can be useful for non-traditional presidents in facilitating their adjustment to academe. Collectively, these lessons provided a starting point to help guide future non-traditional presidents in their transition into academic culture. They also provided a framework for hiring boards that could be used to help identify prospective non-traditional presidents who are best prepared to adjust successfully to academe.

This framework could include multiple recommendations for practice among hiring boards. For one, as this study concluded, non-traditional presidents with some degree of prior exposure to academe (such as Sanford) appear to be better equipped to acclimate to academic culture than those with no prior academic exposure. Hiring boards should seek out such “spanners” when possible over non-traditional candidates with no academic experience (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001, p. 206). Further, hiring boards should conduct extensive background research to determine the level of commitment a non-traditional candidate has in making a transition to academic leadership. Specifically, hiring boards need to determine whether the candidate really wants to become an academic leader, or if he or she is merely looking for a temporary assignment until the next opportunity in their professional field comes along. This would be particularly important with politicians, where there is always a question of whether or not they plan to
run for office at any given time. To gauge this commitment level, hiring boards should question non-traditional candidates extensively on their knowledge of the institution they intend to lead. Further, hiring boards should compel non-traditional candidates to articulate their vision for the institution’s future. If a non-traditional candidate knows little about the institution and cannot articulate a thoughtful and compelling vision, those are likely signs that their commitment level is not where it needs to be. Ultimately, such strategies could help hiring boards distinguish between non-traditional candidates who could become effective academic leaders and those who could not.

While some useful insights on non-traditional presidents were discovered by examining Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible, the conclusions from this study also generated many questions that should be addressed in future research. Exploring these questions would help researchers better understand the unique dynamics surrounding non-traditional presidents beyond the realm of Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible. For instance, how much does institutional context account for in assessing the acclimation of non-traditional presidents to academic culture? Specifically, is it possible for a non-traditional president to acclimate to any higher education environment, or does it depend upon institutional context? In addition, would differences in gender or ethnicity among non-traditional presidents influence how they perceive and engage with academic culture? Further, what role does historical context play in this process of acclimation to academic culture?

Also, how would “spanner” presidents (sometimes referred to as hybrid presidents), meaning those who possess academic as well as non-academic backgrounds, differ in their adjustment to academe compared to non-traditional presidents (Birnbaum

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Another key question is whether certain professions prepare non-traditional presidents for academe better than others. Specifically, would someone from a governmental background be better equipped to engage with academic culture than someone from a military background? Also, is there a way that presidential hiring boards can gauge the academic culture adjustment potential of a prospective non-traditional president? Further, if non-traditional presidents become the norm in higher education, what are the implications for academic culture? This section will examine these questions in greater depth and explore the implications they have for future higher education research.

**Individual vs. context.** This study examined the adjustment process of three non-traditional presidents in distinct institutional environments. Moreover, Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible operated in unique historical contexts during their tenures. For each non-traditional president, these contexts presented different challenges and opportunities when it came to a pursuing acclimation to academe. As this study concluded, they ultimately achieved varying levels of success in adjusting to academic culture. However, the connection between individual leadership style and institutional context needs to be examined further. Future research should explore the extent to which institutional and historical contexts influence the acclimation process to academic culture for other non-traditional presidents. Looking beyond the experiences of Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible, can other non-traditional presidents adjust successfully to academe in any kind of environment, or does it depend upon the institutional and historical contexts? Further, to what extent does institutional type influence the adjustment process? With the possible exception of Columbia, the institutional type of the universities in this study changed.
over time during the tenure of each non-traditional president, presenting another
important consideration.

Data from this study provided an inconclusive response to these questions. As
examined in Chapter 4, multiple historians noted Eisenhower’s initial desire to serve as
president at a small, Midwestern liberal arts college (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Neal,
1978). Eisenhower believed that he could operate effectively as a college president in
such an academic environment (Clark, 2013). However, as the data from this study
indicated, Columbia University was far removed from that type of institution and proved
to be too complex for Eisenhower to understand or lead effectively (Ambrose, 1990;
Clark, 2013; Neal, 1978). Conversely, Sanford and Trible presided over smaller
institutions that were less organizationally complex, which may have helped to ease their
transitions into academe. What remains unknown is whether Eisenhower could have
adjusted more effectively to academic culture in a smaller and less complex institutional
environment. Further, it is difficult to ascertain whether Sanford and Trible would have
had different adjustment experiences at larger institutions. This would all suggest that for
non-traditional presidents, efficacy in adjusting to academic culture may be influenced by
institutional type, as well as where the institution is in its life cycle.

However, another viewpoint that was expressed in this study is that effective
leadership is universal (P. Trible, personal communication, March 15, 2013). According
to Trible (2013), “a good leader can adapt to any situation and achieve success” (p. 8).
Such sentiment challenges the notion that a non-traditional president such as Eisenhower
could have fared better at an institution other than Columbia, or that he could have even
been an effective academic leader in the first place. This would also suggest that a non-
traditional president with strong leadership skills could overcome any kind of institutional challenge and engage successfully with academic culture. This inconsistency in the data reinforces the need for further research in this area. To understand fully the challenges that non-traditional presidents face in adjusting to academic culture, it is imperative that researchers achieve a better understanding of the role that institutional and historical context plays in this area. Specifically, does institutional or historical context drive the acclimation process to academic culture for non-traditional presidents, or is the process directed by the individual regardless of context? More research is needed to answer these questions more thoroughly.

**Hybrid presidents.** Another question that merits further investigation pertains to the emergence of hybrid college presidents. According to Basinger (2003) and Redden (2008), hybrid presidents are leaders who have spent their careers alternating between academic and non-academic positions. As noted earlier, they are very similar to the “spanner” president included in the Birnbaum and Umbach (2001) presidential pathways model (p. 206). Within higher education, hybrids are desirable as presidents because they combine a familiarity with academe with the benefits of non-traditional presidents – most notably strong professional networks as well as fundraising prowess (Redden, 2008). Thus, they are often better prepared to engage with academic culture than a non-traditional president with no prior academic experience (Redden, 2008).

As this study concluded, the non-traditional president who was closest to being a hybrid (Sanford) was also the most successful in adjusting to academic culture. Sanford had served on multiple college boards of trustees prior to assuming Duke’s presidency and therefore came into office with greater confidence and awareness (Covington & Ellis,
Conversely, the non-traditional president who had the most difficult adjustment experience (Eisenhower) had the least prior experience with higher education. Possessing no academic experience, Eisenhower came into office with a sense of uncertainty and intimidation when it came to dealing with faculty (Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001). This raises the question of whether hybrid presidents may present an ideal solution to the leadership challenges facing higher education. However, what remains unknown is whether there would be enough hybrid presidents available to become a viable type of higher education leader. In the future, efforts such as academic stints for mid-level leaders in business, government, and other related professions may be necessary in order to groom future hybrid presidents. Ultimately, it is currently unclear whether hybrid presidents could be a wave of the future or simply an occasional anomaly at certain colleges and universities.

More research on hybrid presidents is urgently needed in order to gauge their potential efficacy as academic leaders. Little empirical research exists for them and there are still many unanswered questions about their viability as educational leaders. For instance, do all hybrid presidents generally adjust to academic culture successfully, or does their acclimation also depend upon individual or contextual factors? It would be useful to study hybrid presidents who had troubled presidencies to compare them to those who were more successful and derive lessons. Further, most existing literature on hybrid presidents has presented them in a favorable light (Basinger, 2003; Redden, 2008). Therefore, it would be advantageous to examine whether there are any potential disadvantages to utilizing hybrid presidents. A cross-case analysis case study examining multiple hybrid presidents would be useful in addressing such questions. In addition, it
would be useful to study faculty perceptions of hybrid presidents to determine whether they are perceived differently than non-traditional presidents. For instance, would faculty view hybrids as being more legitimate as academic leaders than non-traditional presidents with no prior academic experience? Overall, there are currently more questions pertaining to hybrid presidents than there are answers. As the college presidency continues to evolve, they are a type of educational leader that needs more focused examination.

**Differences in professions.** Another question generated from this study concerns whether certain professions prepare future non-traditional presidents more effectively for academic culture than others. According to ACE’s *The American College President* (2012), non-traditional college presidents come from a variety of professional backgrounds, including K-12 education, business, religion, government, law, the military, medicine, and the non-profit sector. However, what remains unknown is whether some of these professions prepare non-traditional presidents for academe better than others. For instance, would a non-traditional president with a government background be better equipped to transition to academe than a non-traditional president with a business background? Little is known about this question and more research is needed to explore it further.

However, this study provided some insights that could be examined in greater depth by future researchers. For instance, it concluded that Eisenhower’s military background – much of it accumulated during wartime - did not prepare him to adjust successfully to academic culture (Ambrose, 1990; Clark, 2013; Jacobs, 2001). Specifically, the autocratic approach to leadership that he learned in the military was not
effective within an academic culture environment (Bimbaum, 1988). Moreover, Eisenhower did not know how to operate within an organizational culture that is characterized by goal ambiguity and decentralization (Baldridge et al., 1999; Lane, 1985). Consequently, this lack of organizational knowledge produced a significant disadvantage for Eisenhower and his efforts at Columbia.

Conversely, this study concluded that Sanford and Trible were better prepared to acclimate to academic culture because of their backgrounds in government. As a former governor, Sanford in particular was well equipped to engage with academe because he was accustomed to working with professional bureaucrats, who in his opinion were similar to tenured faculty members, in a complex governmental organization (Covington & Ellis, 1999; Egerton, 1973; McKnight, 1969; Sanford, 1974a). This sentiment was supported by another non-traditional president during an October 2013 William & Mary School of Education forum on higher education policy and leadership. At this event, former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, a former president of Texas A&M University as well as William & Mary’s current chancellor, noted that tenured officials can be found in other public sector venues beyond academe (R. Gates, personal communication, October 25, 2013). Thus, this experience gave Sanford a significant advantage when it came to transitioning to academic culture.

While Trible did not have gubernatorial experience like Sanford, his legislative background was useful in preparing him to find common ground with multiple constituency groups. This proved to be useful when he had to cultivate relationships with faculty members to advance his vision for CNU. However, the experiences of Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible in this area represent only a limited perspective onto
what is a broad and complex issue. More research is needed to determine whether these findings were anomalies or representative of most non-traditional college presidents across multiple professions.

**Lessons for hiring boards.** This study concluded that four factors that determined successful adjustment to academic culture for non-traditional presidents were the possession of an institutional vision, adaptability, the possession of institutional commitment, and the possession of prior academic experience. Moreover, a central goal for this study was to provide guidance for hiring boards that were considering the appointment of non-traditional presidents to lead their institutions. However, further research is needed to determine how hiring boards can develop practical methods to apply the conclusions from this study and future studies on this topic. Specifically, is it possible to develop ways to identify potential non-traditional presidents who can adjust successfully to academe versus those who cannot? This would assume that it is possible to identify in advance whether or not a potential non-traditional president possesses such things as institutional vision and commitment. Moreover, would it be possible to implement such methods, which could include interviews or surveys, during the hiring process to ensure that potentially troublesome non-traditional presidents would not be appointed? More research in these areas is urgently needed as non-traditional presidents are becoming a more common sight across the higher education landscape.

As indicated in this study, a non-traditional president who is ill equipped to acclimate to academic culture can cause significant problems for his or her institution. This was evident with Dwight D. Eisenhower, who had such a difficult presidency at Columbia that it left a legacy of bitterness within that institutional community that lasted
for many years after his departure (Jacobs, 2001). Therefore, it is in the best interest of the higher education community to find ways to help non-traditional presidents succeed instead of allowing them to fail. One way may be to develop resources for hiring boards to use in identifying non-traditional presidents who hold potential for transitioning to academe versus those who do not. While this study provided some general lessons for further reflection, more research is needed in this area to develop tangible strategies for hiring boards to implement.

In a similar vein, more research is needed regarding the influence of boards of trustees on the hiring of non-traditional presidents. As previously noted, modern colleges and universities are increasingly limited by insufficient resources, greater calls for scrutiny and accountability, and a highly competitive marketplace (Statement on Board Responsibility for Institutional Governance, 2010). In the cases of Eisenhower, Sanford, and Trible, these challenges compelled their hiring boards to select them against the preferences of each institution's academic community, who would have preferred more traditional, academic candidates. More recently, the aforementioned hiring of veteran Florida state legislator John E. Thrasher as president of Florida State University caused considerable tension between the FSU board and FSU's academic community, which wanted an academic at the helm (Schmidt, 2014). It is likely that this tension between boards of trustees and academics will become only more acute in the future. Thus, the role of boards of trustees in the hiring of non-traditional presidents presents a confounding factor that merits further research.

Non-traditional presidents as the norm. A final set of questions arises when considering the future prospects for non-traditional college presidents and their
relationship with academic culture. For several generations at America's colleges and universities, non-traditional presidents were an exception rather than the rule. Consequently, many academics viewed them as an occasional curiosity and nothing more. However, non-traditional presidents have become more common in the modern era, constituting over 20% of presidents serving across all institutional types in 2011 (The American College President, 2012). As the numbers of non-traditional presidents continue to grow, it raises the question of what impact they will have on academic culture in the years ahead. For instance, if non-traditional presidents someday become a majority among all serving presidents, will that force academic culture to further evolve?

Some scholars have already begun to consider that question. While academic culture has a long and distinguished tradition in Western civilization, many scholars have argued that its long-term survival is under threat (Beck & Young, 2005; Dill, 1982; Rice, 1999; Rowland, 2002; Williams, 2008). As noted in Chapter 2, Beck and Young (2005) identified the modern primary threats as the increased calls for greater professionalism, productivity, and managerial oversight coming from non-academic authorities. Further, Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) noted the rise of academic capitalism, where academic culture is being compelled to take on an increasing number of market-like behaviors. Conversely, Bastedo (2012) concluded that non-academic organizations are actually taking on characteristics found traditionally within academe. Ultimately, more research is needed to examine how and if academic culture is evolving in the modern era. Moreover, research is also needed to examine whether the gradual increase of non-traditional presidents is having a noticeable impact on the evolution of academic culture. What remains unknown is whether in the future non-traditional presidents will have a
greater influence on academic culture, or whether academic culture will have a greater influence on non-traditional presidents. As non-traditional presidents are becoming more common, it is imperative that more research be conducted on that topic.

Summary

This study analyzed the experiences of three non-traditional presidents and concluded that successful adjustment to academic culture involved possessing an institutional vision, adaptability, possessing institutional commitment, and possessing some degree of prior academic exposure. Further, this study concluded that a non-traditional president must gain legitimacy with faculty in order to have a successful adjustment experience to academe. Ultimately, these findings will help hiring boards as well as new and aspiring non-traditional presidents better understand the unique dynamics of acclimating to academic culture from a non-academic background.

However, as the ranks of non-traditional presidents are growing steadily in American higher education, it is imperative that greater scholarly attention is placed upon them. Building upon this study, more focused research is needed to determine what issues they face in adjusting to academic culture. As the rising number of non-traditional presidents is beginning to generate significant potential for a culture clash between the worlds of academic and non-academic culture, this issue needs to be studied further in order to provide current and future non-traditional presidents the information they need to succeed in adjusting to academe. Only then can this new breed of educational leader that is looked to increasingly for leadership be in a position to help guide America’s colleges and universities into the future.
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Appendices

Appendix A – Interviewee List

1) The Honorable Paul S. Trible, Jr. – President, CNU (1996-present)

2) Participant 1 – Senior Administrator, CNU (25+ years of service)

3) Participant 2 – Senior Faculty Member, CNU (25+ years of service)

4) Participant 3 – Senior Administrator, CNU (20+ years of service)

5) Participant 4 – Senior Administrator, CNU (10+ years of service)

6) Participant 5 – Senior Administrator, CNU (15+ years of service)
Appendix B – Search Plan for Archival Research

Search Plan for Archival Research at Duke University:

Step 1 – Obtain inventories of records and papers of Terry Sanford at Duke University.

Step 2 – Review these inventories and identify the specific materials that will most likely have information pertaining to Sanford’s experiences with academic culture (i.e. personal notes, letters, diary entries, newspaper articles).

Step 3 – Share this information with the historical research expert on my dissertation committee (Dr. Eddie Cole) and obtain his feedback, guidance, and suggestions.

Step 4 – Send emails to the head of special collections at Duke University's library that explain my dissertation project and solicit their feedback, guidance, and suggestions.

Step 5 – Schedule research trip and make appointments at the appropriate library departments at Duke University.

Step 6 – Visit those departments and conduct archival research.

Step 7 – Collect data and complete regular field journal entries.
Appendix C – Interview Protocols

1) Interview Protocol for Paul Trible

Project: Culture Clash: A Case Study of the Issues that Non-Traditional College Presidents Face in Adjusting to Academic Culture

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer: Sean M. Heuvel (PhD candidate – The College of William and Mary)

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

[Describe here the project, telling the interviewee about (a) the purpose of the study, (b) the individuals and sources of data being collected, and (c) how long the interview will take].

[Have the interviewee read and sign the consent form].

[Turn on the tape/digital recorder and test it].

Questions

1) How would you define a non-traditional college president? Please add specific examples to illustrate this definition.

2) How would you define academic culture? Please add specific examples to illustrate this definition.

3) In what ways do you find academic culture unique compared to other organizational cultures? (Probes – How does this differ from your experience in the private sector? How does this differ from government?)

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4) In what ways is academic culture similar to non-academic cultures, such as those found in the business, military, and government realms? Please give examples to illustrate how the culture is similar.

5) At the beginning of your presidency, what was your perception of academic culture? Has that perception changed over the years? Please offer examples to illustrate. (Probes – What are some of your earliest memories when becoming president of CNU? Was there a specific critical incident?)

6) What (if any) issues have you faced in adjusting to academic culture? Can you, as the president of the university, actually adjust or impact the academic culture? If yes, can you offer examples to illustrate?

7) Are there aspects of academic culture that you have grown to like? If so, what are they?

8) Are there any particular aspects of academic culture that you dislike? If so, what are they?

9) What suggestions would you give to a new non-traditional college president about how to best adapt to academic culture?

[Thank the individual for his cooperation and participation in this interview. Assure him that he will see the final research product and of the potential for future interviews].
2) Interview Protocol for Senior CNU Administrative/Faculty Leaders

Project: Culture Clash: A Case Study of the Issues that Non-Traditional College Presidents Face in Adjusting to Academic Culture

Time of Interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer: Sean M. Heuvel (PhD candidate – The College of William and Mary)

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

[Describe here the project, telling the interviewee about (a) the purpose of the study, (b) the individuals and sources of data being collected, and (c) how long the interview will take].

[Have the interviewee read and sign the consent form].

[Turn on the tape/digital recorder and test it].

Questions

1) How would you define a non-traditional college president? Please add specific examples to illustrate this definition.

2) How would you define academic culture? Please add specific examples to illustrate this definition.

3) In what ways do you find academic culture unique compared to other organizational cultures?

4) In what ways is academic culture similar to non-academic cultures, such as those found in the business, military, and government realms? Please give examples to illustrate how the culture is similar.
5) At the beginning of Paul Trible’s presidency, what was his perception of academic culture? Has that perception changed over the years? Please offer examples to illustrate. (Probes – What were your first impressions of President Trible? Describe one of your first interactions with him. Was there a critical incident?

6) What (if any) issues have President Trible faced in adjusting to academic culture? Can he, as the president of the university, actually adjust or impact the academic culture? If yes, can you offer examples to illustrate?

7) Based on your observations, are there aspects of academic culture that President Trible has grown to like? If so, what are they?

8) Based on your observations, are there any particular aspects of academic culture that President Trible dislikes? If so, what are they?

9) What suggestions would you give to a new non-traditional college president about how to best adapt to academic culture?

[Thank the individual for his/her cooperation and participation in this interview. Assure him/her that he/she will see the final research product and of the potential for future interviews].
Appendix D – Consent Form

Title - Culture Clash: A Case Study of the Issues that Non-Traditional College Presidents Face in Adjusting to Academic Culture

Principal Investigator – Sean M. Heuvel (PhD candidate, The College of William and Mary)

Co-Principal Investigators – Dr. Pamela Eddy, Dr. Monica Griffin, and Dr. Eddie Cole (The College of William and Mary)

To:

The following information is provided to help you decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that you are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without facing any sort of negative repercussion.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the issues that non-traditional college presidents face in adjusting to academic culture. A case study approach will be used to explore how they adapted to academic culture during their presidential tenures.

Data will be collected by conducting an interview with you and other participants. You will be asked nine questions, along with some follow-up questions in certain cases. The responses to these questions will comprise part of the data collected for this study. The rest of the data will come from archival research and document analysis.

Do not hesitate to ask questions about the study before participating or during the study. The findings of this study will be shared with you upon the project’s completion. Your involvement in the study will be considered confidential and your name will not be included in the final document. Moreover, only the principal investigator will know the true identity of all participants. In the event that the researchers plan to publish the findings or present them in an academic or public setting, your permission will be obtained in advance.

There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with this study. The expected benefit associated with your participation is the advancement of scholarly knowledge concerning college presidents who come from professional backgrounds outside of higher education and how they adapt to academic culture.

Please sign this consent form. You are signing it with full knowledge of the nature and purpose of the procedures. A copy of this form will be given to you to keep.

__________________________________________  ____________________________
Signature                                              Date

[ ] I agree to have this interview recorded.

NOTE: THIS PROJECT WAS FOUND TO COMPLY WITH APPROPRIATE ETHICAL STANDARDS AND WAS EXEMPTED FROM THE NEED FOR FORMAL REVIEW BY THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE (Phone 757-221-3966) ON 2014-01-10 AND EXPIRES ON 2015-01-10.
Appendix E – List of Preliminary Codes

1) Dwight D. Eisenhower:
Frustration over political expectations/military service – 43 references
Vision non consistent with Columbia’s institutional needs – 37 references
Overextended – 30 references
Attachment to Columbia – 20 references
Focus on administrative reorganization – 18 references
Lack of knowledge about Columbia/academic culture – 14 references
Hands-off approach to governance – 13 references
Frustration with academic culture – 10 references
Consideration of resignation – 10 references
Utilizing military governance style – 3 references
Defending Columbia faculty during Red Scare – 2 references
Concern for private colleges and universities – 1

2) Terry Sanford:
Relational approach: 20 references
Compelling vision for Duke: 16 references
Firmness/very direct communication style: 11 references
Strong commitment to Duke: 8 references
Solicits outside input: 7 references
Folksy/humorous approach: 4 references
Prior academic exposure: 3 references
Comfortable with change: 2 references
Promotes diffusion of power: 1 reference
3) Paul Trible:

Compelling vision for CNU: 38 references

Adaptability: 22 references

Frustration with academic culture: 18 references

Determination: 9 references

Consensus-building: 8 references

Strong commitment to CNU: 1 reference

Prior academic exposure: 1 reference