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Faculty enacting their daily work-life: A contextual analysis of the academic role in a comprehensive university

Alexei G. Matveev

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FACULTY ENACTING THEIR DAILY WORK-LIFE:
A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE ACADEMIC ROLE IN
A COMPREHENSIVE UNIVERSITY

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

The College of William and Mary

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

by

Alexei G. Matveev

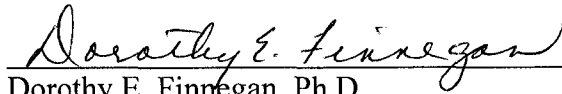
August 2007

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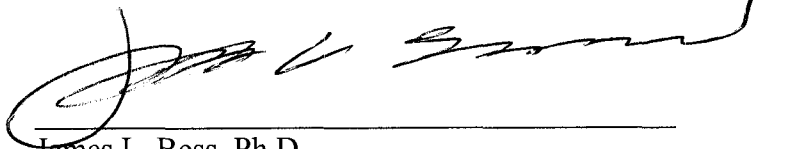
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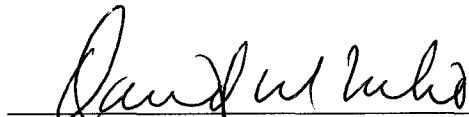
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David W. Leslie, Ed.D.

To my parents and Ania for believing in me

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**FACULTY ENACTING THEIR DAILY WORK-LIFE:
A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF THE ACADEMIC ROLE IN
A COMPREHENSIVE UNIVERSITY**

ABSTRACT

This micro-sociological qualitative study explored faculty enactment of their professional roles in daily work-life in the context of one public comprehensive university. Three categories of the concept of role – role expectations, role identity, and role boundary – provided conceptual underpinnings for the study. To complete this study, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with thirty-six full-time male faculty members.

In my quasi-grounded theory analysis, I uncovered four dimensions of role enactment in daily work: configuration of role-set, role-set schema, primary type of stress or strain associated with daily work, and role-set management technique. Three distinct patterns of these structural, cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of faculty role enactment in daily work emerged based on the faculty members' career stage. Additionally, the findings highlighted the importance of organizational context in affecting faculty role behaviors.

The implications of the findings are discussed and recommendations for future research and practice are then provided.

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Chapter I. Introduction

In the beginning [of my career] I thought life was what I made.
It is not true. Life is what I make plus what others make for me.
But I have to balance it out myself.
(SRU faculty member.)

We live in a time in which the fundamental task of taking care of the self becomes increasingly difficult (Bauman, 1995; Elliot, 2001). In this study, taking care of the self refers to cultivating awareness of and coordinating the multiplicity of role activities that are enacted by an individual in daily work-life (Goffman, [1961], 1997; Foucault, 1988). Following symbolic interactionism dictum “society shapes self shapes society” (Mead, 1934), I define *role*, the foundational concept for this study, as a stable set of expectations of others associated with faculty position in the institutional context *as well as* the meanings faculty members themselves attach to the position itself and to the expectations of role-senders *as well as* recurring social behaviors to enact these meanings in daily work.

Ever more, the time-space paths that previously enabled relatively stable and predictable transitions between well-defined roles are breaking down (Giddens, 1979; Heidegger, 1996). As a result, individuals are increasingly tied simultaneously to multiple – and sometimes ill-defined and conflicting – roles (Shumate & Fulk, 2004, p. 59). This study focuses on the ways faculty members in one comprehensive university articulate the meanings of and coordinate the multiple roles constituting their professional role-sets in everyday work.

Faculty Everyday Work

Faculty members are a crucial investment and resource for higher education (Bowen & Schuster, 1986; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). Under the current conditions of uncertainty, ambiguity, and rapid change, the analysis of strategies for coordinating multiple, and at times contradictory, societal and institutional expectations, personal impulses, extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, and individual behaviors moves to prominence as a concern for students of faculty work and life. This concern is certainly not new. More than sixty years ago, Logan Wilson (1942) observed that “a constant complaint of professors is that tasks to be done are too numerous, and that their energy must be spread over too many activities” (p. 106). More recently, Austin and Gamson (1983), Bess (1998), and Bowen and Schuster (1986) noted that faculty members rarely have enough time to perform effectively in all roles expected of them.

What appears to be new is the intensity of societal, institutional and self-imposed expectations and pressures on faculty members. Faculty work arrangements are increasingly questioned and attacked by critics from inside as well as outside academia. Faculty roles are a frequent subject for heated discussions between administrators and faculty members, for scrutiny by legislators, for criticism and ridicule by mass media, and for envy by the general public (Bennet, 1998; Healy, 2000; Massy & Zemsky, 1994; Sykes, 1988).

Finkelstein (2003) and Schuster and Finkelstein (2006) argued that changing societal and institutional expectations significantly impacts faculty behaviors and pointed out the need to realign faculty roles. Similarly, Gumport and Zemsky (2003) asserted that shifts in faculty roles are among the most important and most commonly overlooked

current changes in academe and called for developing new maps for charting faculty activities. However, it is unclear what specific realignments these authors recommend. Further, earlier scholars suggested that overall faculty productivity had been maximized and that attempts to further reconfigure the faculty role-set would jeopardize the existing balance among competing facets of the academic role (Milem, Berger, & Dey, 2000, p. 461; Olson, 1994). It is important to analyze the faculty members' *daily work-life* to determine whether the faculty roles are, in fact, in need of realignment and, if they are, concrete recommendations need to be developed.

Faculty members work long hours, often far exceeding 50 hours a week (Jacobs & Winslow, 2004). A recent TIAA-CREF-commissioned survey showed that this heavy workload is one of the top factors that stifles academic work (Sanderson, Phua, & Herda, 2000). Similarly, Lease (1999) found that role overload is a major source of occupational stress in academic faculty. Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) note, however, that long hours are not a problem. "What bothers them [faculty] the most is that they do not have enough time to accomplish all that is on their agenda" (p. 295). Lindholm, Szelényi, Hurtado, and Korn (2005) report that self-imposed high expectations and lack of time are the two most common sources of stress for faculty members.

Chief academic officers across the nation "report that their faculty are stressed by fears that they must excel at all areas of their work simultaneously" (O'Meara, Kaufman, & Kuntz, 2003, p.19; Rice, Sorcinelli, & Austin, 2000). Similarly, faculty developers identify "balancing multiple roles" as the top challenge facing faculty (Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy, & Beach, 2006). Purnell (2003) found that balancing the workload across all requirements and expectations is one of the most difficult aspects of faculty life in the

university environment. As a result, “multiple and competing demands on faculty time produce a situation in which faculty feel increasingly schizophrenic.... This need for a personal division of labor produces stress and a lack of clarity [about any of faculty subroles]” (Mitchell, 2001, p. 287).

There is a substantial line of scholarship on faculty roles based on national survey data (e.g., Fairweather, 1996; Finkelstein, 1984; Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006). However, what the national surveys cannot address is the meaning faculty members attach to the roles they perform in everyday work. There appears to be a lack of systematic qualitative research on how faculty members define, relate and coordinate multiple roles in everyday work. This gap in research and knowledge has become increasingly obvious and warrants attention. An investigation of how faculty members structure and live their daily role responsibilities can identify the nature and sources of role stress and role strain¹ associated with enacting multiple and diverse work roles that constitute faculty professional role-sets.

One of the reasons why more systematic qualitative research on internal dynamics of the faculty role is needed is the complexity of the faculty everyday work. An interesting perspective on the complexity of the faculty role-set is suggested by Rudel and Gerson (1999). They argued that the historic pattern of faculty work role development can be best described as *involution*, rather than evolution that presupposes

¹ I define *role stress* as excessive expenditure of time, effort, and emotion in addressing expectations associated with one role in the role-set. A first-year faculty member, for example, might experience stress by spending long hours developing lecture notes and presentations. I define *role strain* as excessive expenditure of time, effort, and emotion in addressing different roles or interplay of different roles in the role set. A faculty member approaching promotion decision, for example, might experience strain caused by the need to attend to several roles simultaneously. In other words, role stress is a function of the intensity of the given role in the roles, whereas role strain is a function of scope and variety of the multiple roles in the role set.

periodic reinvention. Involution is a process whereby a social pattern persists, fails either to stabilize or transform itself into a new pattern but rather continues to develop by becoming internally more complex and complicated (Geertz, 1963; Goldenweiser, 1936).

Faced with a growing number of diverse external expectations, dwindling resources, and highly institutionalized internal environment checking evolutionary development, universities have customarily made efforts to respond to as many expectations as possible without fundamentally changing preexisting patterns. Parson and Platt (1968; in Light, 1974) called the process of developing a current faculty role as “inclusion”. In other words, the faculty role development pattern can be characterized in terms of involutory *role addition* rather than evolutionary *role transformation* (Turner, 1990).

To do so, elaborate role arrangements have been devised for faculty members who have traditionally been the most flexible asset at colleges and universities (Paulson, 2002). In Erving Goffman’s ([1961], 1997) words, the involutory image that emerges of the faculty member “is that of a juggler and synthesizer, an accommodator and appeaser, who fulfils one function while he is apparently engaged in another” (p. 40). This image of the faculty member brings an interesting role management problem.

In what ways do faculty members manage their increasingly diverse and intense work roles? What work roles do faculty members articulate while describing their everyday work? How do faculty members interpret the work roles they play? What mechanisms do faculty members use to enact their role-sets in ways that make sense to them and minimize role-set stress and strain?

The answer to such questions requires explorations into the meanings and processes of everyday faculty professional activities or a micro-sociological approach to studying faculty work in addition to macro-level survey-based research. Further, it is necessary to explicate how these meanings are shaped and how they affect the behavior of individuals in faculty roles. *Symbolic interactionism* provides a useful perspective for explorations in everyday work behaviors (Goffman, 1961; Stryker, 1980).

Symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934; Stryker, 1980, 2000) is based on three principal premises. First, individual's actions are shaped by interpretations of actions; these interpretations are based on shared meanings derived from social interactions of the individual with others. Second, meanings individuals attribute to themselves affect their actions and interactions. Third, these meanings or self-conceptions are also shaped in the process of social interaction. The symbolic interactionism dictum "society shapes self shapes society" summarizes these premises. Applying these premises to role analysis, in this study, I define *role* as a stable set of expectations of others associated with faculty position in the institutional context *as well as* the meanings faculty members themselves attach to the position itself and to the expectations of role-senders *as well as* recurring social behaviors to enact these meanings in daily work.

The symbolic interactionist perspective provides an appropriate lens for studying faculty roles in everyday work. On one hand, this theoretical perspective takes into account strong institutional forces characteristic of higher education institutions (Becher, 1989; Braxton & Hargens, 1996). On the other hand, it acknowledges relatively high levels of autonomy and discretion that faculty members have in structuring and enacting their everyday work (Birnbaum, 1988; Etzioni, 1964; Wilson, 1942).

Erving Goffman was one of the first scholars who applied the symbolic interactionism perspective to the study of micro-sociological phenomena of role enactment in everyday life. Goffman ([1961], 1997) asserted that:

It is a basic assumption of role analysis that each individual will be involved in more than one system or pattern and, therefore, perform more than one role. Each individual will, therefore, have several selves, providing us with the interesting problem of how these selves are related. The model of man according to the initial role perspective is that of a kind of holding company for a set of not relevantly connected roles; it is the concern of the second perspective to find out how the individual runs this holding company (p. 36).

From this perspective, role management would involve two elements – awareness of multiple roles associated with the individual's social position and ability to enact these roles in such a way so that the individual can go about his business of social life without encountering extreme conflict in his role-set (Merton, 1957).

Following Goffman's conceptualization of the individual, I view the faculty member as a holding company or a complex system “with its own structure, cultural values and interests, and *internal* relationships” (Burns, 1992, p. 111). Applying the structural symbolic interaction perspective to the analysis of faculty work roles (Mead, 1934; Stryker, 1980; Stryker & Burke, 2000), I am interested in exploring how internal relationships between roles in the faculty work role-set are affected by individual's values and interests and how the internal relationships, in turn, affect the enactment of the role. Thus, my focus is on the second Goffman's role management problem: how the faculty professional role-set is enacted or how individual structural components of the set or roles are brought together or configured as a system or a network in daily work-life.

Faculty Work Roles

“The work of the faculty is difficult to describe, define, or classify”
(Braskamp & Ory, 1994).

Schuster and Finkelstein (2006) pointed out that “a commonplace theme in efforts to describe the contemporary academic workplace is the unbundling of faculty work into discrete tasks” (p. 353). For decades, conventional wisdom held that “the full-time professor concurrently engaged in teaching, research, and institutional and professional service ... [is] the prototypical American scholar” (Boyer, 1990; Finkelstein, 2003, p. 11). These three basic faculty work roles – teaching, research, and service – are traditionally regarded as defining parts of the faculty role-set and serve as a foundation for analyses of what faculty members do and why and how they do their work. Although the concept of the role has been poorly defined in higher education literature (Austin & Gamson, 1983), scholars have long been interested in using the concept of the role to describe, define, and classify the work of faculty (Arreola, Theall, & Aleamoni, 2003; Bess, 1982; Bowen & Schuster, 1986; Boyer, 1990; Colbeck, 1998; Dill, 1982; Fairweather, 2002a; Finkelstein, 1984; Massy & Zemsky, 1994; Milem, Berger, & Dey, 2000; Wergin, 1994; Wilson, 1942; Yuker, 1984).

Interestingly, literature on faculty work roles can be divided in two groups that reflect two of Goffman’s perspectives in his comparison of individuals with “holding companies”. The first group of studies focuses on the multiple functions that faculty members perform responding to multiple societal and institutional expectations associated with faculty position in the society as well as in the particular institution. The

unit of analysis of this perspective is faculty roles or recurring activities in which faculty members are involved in their work.

The unit of analysis of the second perspective is the relationships between roles in the faculty role-set. These studies focus on exploring how multiple faculty roles are enacted in relation to each other in everyday work and whether the different roles hinder or facilitate each other. The second perspective is concerned, first, with the ways faculty manage or arrange multiple functions that constitute their work roles and, second, with the outputs of these arrangements. In the former case, these are relationships between the role behaviors; in the latter case, these are relationships between the outputs of the role activities.

Over the years, higher education scholars produced a number of taxonomies of faculty work roles from the *functional* perspective or, in other words, descriptions of regularly recurring activities that constitute faculty work role-set (e.g., Kogan, Moses, & El-Khawas, 1994; Kennedy, 1997; Kyvik, 2000; Ladd & Lipset, 1975; Startup, 1979). In essence, this line of research addresses the question “What do faculty do?” Braskamp and Ory (1994), for example, developed a list of seventy-five different activities or components that constitute the faculty work role. In another analysis, Bess (1982) identified 320 separate faculty work activities. He, then, aggregated the activities into 69 subroles and, then, into ten faculty macro roles. The consensus is almost uniform on the complexity and intensity of faculty work role (Bess, 1982, 1998; Kreber, 2000; Kyvik, 2000; Wilson, 1942).

Understanding of such complex phenomena as the faculty work role is complicated by the well-established fact that different disciplines, institutional types, and

reward structures create different role expectations and differently affect time and effort allocation among different activities, thus configuring different faculty work role arrangements (e.g., Becher, 1989; Cataldi, Bradburn, & Fahimi, 2005; Clark, 1987; Fairweather, 1996; Lee, Cheslock, Maldonado-Maldonado, & Rhoades, 2005; Lindholm et al., 2005; Rhoades, 2001). Thus, composition of role-sets as well as definitions of teaching, research, and service are likely to be different across different institutional types and academic fields.

Another problem appears to lie in the identification of an appropriate level of analysis when describing the faculty work role (Bess, 1982). It is unclear how far should the researchers go in the process of deconstructing the faculty work role-set. Terms such as work, role, functions, activities, tasks are often used conceptually liberally and interchangeably; this further complicates the task of describing what faculty do in their everyday work.

Yet another issue arises from the deductive nature of most of the faculty role studies. In other words, these studies are often based on pre-selected role components that are assumed, *a priori*, to form the faculty work role. Potential risk in such cases is to omit those role components that may, in fact, be driving the entire system of role organization but not identified in the survey choices (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). This issue is a common conceptual shortcoming typical of the faculty role studies based on survey findings (e.g., NSOPF, HERI Faculty Survey).

On the other hand, qualitative studies asking respondents to identify components of their roles risk focusing on the socially desirable and/or “embraced” role components (Goffman, 1997). Thus, there is a possibility that qualitative studies leave out recurring

work activities that may, to participants, seem to be too undignified or insignificant to be claimed work role components (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Research utilizing the inductive approach is needed to identify and explicate recurring activities constituting faculty everyday work.

From the *structural* perspective, the faculty work role is primarily described in terms of two archetypes – faculty as a “complete scholar” and faculty as a “juggler”. The first archetype is rooted in the Aristotelian tradition which posits that faculty work is a unitary system of preferences, activities, values or coherent propositions unified by the faculty position in the social structure (Moldoveanu & Stevenson, 2001). From this perspective, faculty members are effective “multiple-function” professionals exhibiting integrity in their role-set (Charns, Lawrence, & Weisbord, 1977) or “complete scholars” who successfully integrate the parts of academic work in the whole (Boyer, 1990; Colbeck, 1998; Rice, 1996). The “complete scholar” perspective is built on the complementary role thesis (Braxton, 1996) which suggests that involvement in activities associated with one role has a beneficial effect on performance in other roles through the development of complementary knowledge and skills. Evidence is, however, growing that the complete faculty member is a relatively rare phenomenon (Fairweather, 2002a).

The second archetype, the faculty member as a “juggler”, is rooted in the Heraclitean tradition which posits that the faculty work role-set is a fragmented entity composed of either a mosaic of roles that are mutually disconnected or as ongoing and irresolvable conflict among competing interests and role identities (Moldoveanu & Stevenson, 2001). The view of faculty as jugglers also reflects the post-structuralist

paradigm which holds that the individual's identity reflects the fragmented, fluid, diverse post-modern reality in which the individual is embedded (Sarup, 1993).

The proponents of this view support the null thesis perspective which holds that no meaningful relationships between multiple faculty roles exist and that they are often unrelated (e.g., Feldman, 1987; Hattie & Marsh, 1996; Marsh & Hattie, 2002). Faculty members are viewed as jugglers who are constantly involved in temporary trade-offs between various functions in the work role. A similar zero-sum perspective on the faculty role-set holds that the commitment of time and effort to one role comes at the expense of productivity in other roles (e.g., Fox, 1992). Bess (1998) exemplifies the zero-sum thesis by asserting that "the multiplicity and diversity of functions performed by faculty are now so broad that adequate preparation for and execution of the tasks of each sub-role are virtually impossible without some compromise in the quality of the performance of each" (p.1).

From the methodological standpoint, I believe, the two perspectives on the faculty role-set structure can be considered as two ends of a continuum representing macro- to micro-level understanding of the faculty work role-set. In fact, proponents of the "faculty as a juggler" perspective tend to ground their arguments in large-scale survey-based quantitative studies with predetermined variables (e.g., Marsh & Hattie, 2002) or conceptual deconstructions of faculty activities (e.g., Bess, 1998). In contrast, the proponents of the "complete scholar" perspective tend to base their arguments on the findings from the qualitative exploratory studies of faculty members' everyday activities (e.g., Colbeck, 1998).

The arguments for “juggler” or “complete scholar” perspectives are often based on faculty productivity studies. Such studies primarily focus on the time allocation to research and teaching activities and whether time allotted to research affects teaching productivity and vice versa. The findings from these studies are, however, unclear, varied and appear to be non-linear (Braxton, 1996; Feldman, 1987; Hattie & Marsh, 1996; Marsh & Hattie, 2002; Mitchell & Rebne, 1995). The reason for inconclusiveness of these studies might be explained by the fact that internal *processes* of developing and coordinating the work role-set structure are often put in the “black box” and inferences about the role-set structure (“juggler” or “complete scholar”) are based on the statistical correlations among role *outputs* rather than on the actual relationships among the role-set components.

Further, faculty productivity studies tend to focus on *role-dyads* rather than on the faculty professional role-set or network of roles. In other words, propositions about the role-set structure are often based on the analysis of the correlation between only two roles, thus ignoring the effects of interferences or spillovers from other faculty roles. Faculty role studies largely avoided analysis of the faculty role as a system or a network of multiple interrelated functions.

In fact, recently Lee et al. (2005) concluded the overview of faculty productivity studies by observing that in order to fully understand faculty productivity, it is necessary to address issues of interaction among various faculty work roles. Carol Colbeck (1996, 1998) began addressing such questions by providing a thick description of the ways faculty organize and relate multiple roles in everyday work. However, while describing these processes, she focused on their apparent outcome, that is, role integration, yet

stopped short of generating a theory of *how* faculty organize multiple roles in their role-sets.

I suggest the absence of a role-set coordination theory stems largely from the difficulty of capturing and analyzing boundaries between the faculty role-set components in everyday faculty work. Schuster and Finkelstein (2006) recently observed that “[a]cademic work is different from many other kinds of work. It defies the establishment of clear boundaries” (p. 78). Ward, Toma, and Gardner (2004) demonstrated the problem of defining boundaries for faculty role components in their study exploring the relation of consulting to the “traditional” faculty roles by observing that “[f]aculty work is not as compartmentalized as we tend to make it. It is not public good versus individual gain, as consulting is often framed, just as research, teaching, and service are discrete categories without overlap. When discussing consulting, faculty, we find, simply cannot make these distinctions” (p. 13). Kreber and Cranton (2000), however, countered this finding by suggesting “[w]hat appears to be integration [of the faculty work role] on the surface may, considered at a deeper level, only be a mosaic or fragmentation of professorial work loosely held together by the pressures of institutional and individual accountability” (p. 220).

In my estimate, these two perspectives are not mutually exclusive. Effective integration of role components in everyday work is impossible if the components are not well defined at a deeper conceptual level, as effective synthesis of an issue is predicated on prior analysis of this issue. Otherwise, faculty members would not know which work role component to attend first, which to attend later, and which to postpone indefinitely (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Erving Goffman (1974), an acute observer of micro-level

social phenomena, asserted that individuals, even in the seemingly simple and continuous everyday life, are constantly engaged in a more or less deliberate process of selecting a relevant component of the role and making it more salient in a given temporal period, in such a way as to relate to a given audience, define a given problem, and/or engage in a particular behavior.

Thirty years ago, Talcott Parsons and colleagues (Platt, Parsons, & Kirshhstein, 1976) posed that analyses of faculty everyday work “frequently are accomplished without reference to faculty’s own interests and without reference to faculty’s conceptions of their own roles. These analyses therefore make . . . assumptions: that faculty are unaware of what they are attempting to accomplish . . .; that faculty are handmaidens to forces beyond their interests or control, lacking their own values and norms of behavior” (p. 298). In my estimation, this observation continues to be apposite. Existing analyses of faculty roles and work tend to be overly socialized, concerned primarily with the outputs of faculty work, and pay little or no attention to the part of the individual in defining, articulating, and structuring role processes in daily work-life. In this study, I focus, first, on capturing faculty interpretations and meanings of their own roles and, second, on exploring the ways faculty actively structure their everyday work by arranging the roles in relation to each other and transitioning from one role to another.

Comprehensive Universities

Comprehensive institutions provide a rich context for this study. First, comprehensive institutions are often described as institutions attempting to serve multiple diverse segments of the student population and society, in general. Consequently, comprehensives are said to have weak institutional cultures, unfocused missions and

poorly defined priorities. Kerr (1993), for example, asserted that comprehensives “have a less distinctive mission and constitute a more in-between category than any of the [other type of institutions] (p. 176). Wright and colleagues (2004) use Coser’s (1974) term “greedy institution” to describe comprehensive institutions as the greediest institutions of all since these institutions “expect from their faculty the service and faculty-student contact characteristic of small teaching colleges as well as the research productivity ... characteristic of research universities” (p. 149). Multiple, often conflicting or ambiguous, expectations of faculty employed by the comprehensives are likely to result in faculty role-sets characterized by high degrees of internal complexity and high levels of internal dynamics.

Second, following Finnegan (1993), I believe that faculty members deliberately *choose* to work in comprehensive institutions. The element of conscious choice is indicative of the high salience of chosen roles. Consequently, faculty members at comprehensives are likely to have well-defined, albeit possibly contradictory, role identities.

The combination of these factors (role-set complexity and strong role identities) makes faculty employed by the comprehensives information-rich cases for the study of the ways faculty define, structure, and enact their role-sets in everyday work. Describing faculty work life at comprehensives, Clark (1987) suggested that faculty at comprehensive institutions have a less focused sense of purpose than their peers in institutions with clear missions, such as research universities. Similarly, Henderson and Kane (1991) observed that faculty at public comprehensive are “caught between the demands of a research university model of higher education and other models....They are

caught in the ambiguity of not having determined their own identity” (p. 339). As a result of unclear mission and institutional priorities, Henderson and Buchanan (2007) suggested that “faculty members at comprehensive universities are often confused about their own roles” (p. 524).

Consequently, Kerr (1993) suggested that faculty at comprehensive institutions “act as though they inhabit a graveyard of disappointed expectations” and “are intent on “upward drift” (p. 176). In contrast, Finnegan (1993) and Finnegan and Gamson (1996) demonstrated that faculty at comprehensive universities deliberately choose comprehensive colleges as places of employment as their career aspirations are more aligned with the teaching missions of the comprehensives than with the mission of research universities.

Recently, based on the analysis of current trends in comprehensive universities, Henderson (2007) concluded that faculty members at state comprehensive universities will continue to

- Often struggle with role conflict engendered by expectations for involvement in research as modeled in their graduate training
- Sometimes experience the loss of the prestige and status (along with more tangible rewards) bestowed on those who do most of the research in American higher education (p. x).

Thus, it is important to expand the limited literature on the work life of faculty members in different types of comprehensive institutions. Such research is needed to develop strategies to minimize potential role conflicts and ambiguities that faculty in comprehensive institutions apparently experience.

The Research Problem

Prior research on faculty roles tends to focus on the identification and description of functional components of the faculty role-set and on the propositions regarding the structural arrangements of individual role-dyads in terms of segmentation and integration. However, how do faculty members define and negotiate their multiple work roles? What factors determine integrated (“complete scholar”) or segmented (“juggler”) arrangements of the faculty role-set? What makes one faculty member describe his work as juggling multiple functions and another faculty member identify herself as a “complete scholar” successfully integrating multiple functions in a synergistic fashion? Is it possible that some role dyads within the same role-set are highly integrated whereas other dyads are highly segmented? Are patterns of role-set arrangements idiosyncratic or influenced by organizational and/or disciplinary factors?

Again, I view the faculty member as a holding company “with its own structure, cultural values and interests, and *internal* relationships” (Burns, 1992, p. 111; Goffman, {1961}, 1997). I am interested in applying the role theory to investigate how the faculty member runs this holding company or enacts his role-set in daily work-life. In this study, I explore the interplay between role structure *and* cultural values *and* the internal relationships among role components. Specifically, I am interested, first, in the ways organizational variables affect individual articulation of the meaning of the roles in the role-set; second, in the ways the meanings assigned to the roles affect the internal relationships among the role elements, and, finally, in the ways internal relationships among the roles facilitate enactment of the role-set as a system of more or less interrelated elements in faculty daily work-life.

Recognizing highly idiosyncratic nature of the ways individuals interpret and enact their daily work, I employed a micro-sociological perspective in designing this study. I focused on explicating patterns of faculty daily work enactment based on the analysis of the interplay between social expectations associated with roles, organizational and disciplinary contexts, and individual's interpretation of role expectations, rather than identifying personality characteristics contributing to the distinct ways the individuals enact their daily work.

The **problem** of this qualitative exploratory study is to apply the concept of *role boundaries* to the configuration of work role-sets of the faculty in one Mid-Atlantic public comprehensive university to determine the extent and manner by which the interaction among organizational structures, role expectations, cultural values, and meanings individuals attach to their work activities produce a work role-set arrangement that allows faculty members to enact their daily work-life without encountering extreme strain in their role-sets. Thus, the research problem may be divided into three distinct parts to define the parameters of the study – the interplay of the variables, concept of role boundaries, and role enactment.

The Interplay of the Variables

The first part of the research problem is to analyze the interaction among organizational structures, cultural values, and individual meanings attached to work roles. I view this interplay through the symbolic interactionist lens (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969; Goffman, [1961] 1997). In other words, I believe that although organizational structures and cultural values set expectations associated with roles, individuals actively enact or make their roles rather than take them passively (Stryker & Stathman, 1985). The concept

of role boundaries recognizes that the boundaries are the function of interplay among organizational factors, culture, and individual role identities (Ashforth, Kreiner, Fugate, 2000; Ashforth, Kreiner, Fugate, & Johnson, 2001). The properties of role boundaries then can be further defined in the context of each of these three levels of analysis.

For the purpose of this study, I define *organizational* factors as the institution-level influences such as the university's mission and goals and university's system of promotion and rewards. The influence of organizational factors on one's daily work is largely manifested through articulated or tacit role expectations. *Cultural* factors are defined as disciplinary or field allegiances, corresponding goals and common practices, and patterns of social organization and interaction. *Role identity* refers to the internalized meanings that individuals assign to specific roles they typically play (Stryker & Burke, 2000) or cognitive schemas serving as frameworks for interpreting specific recurring experiences (Markus, 1977).

The Concept of Role Boundaries

The second part of the research problem is the application of the concept of role boundaries to the configuration of work role-sets of the faculty in one Mid-Atlantic public comprehensive university. *Role boundaries* refer to physical, temporal, emotional, cognitive, and/or relational limits that define roles as separate from one another. Individuals create and maintain work role boundaries as a means of simplifying and ordering their work environment. Further, boundaries enable individuals to concentrate more on whatever role is currently more salient and less on the other role domains (Ashforth et al., 2000, 2001; Nippert-Eng, 1996; Zerubavel, 1991).

Ashforth et al. (2000, 2001) delineated the concept of role boundaries by defining two basic properties of role boundaries: permeability and flexibility. *Role boundary permeability* is the extent to which a boundary allows the behavioral or affective aspects of one role domain to enter another. *Role boundary flexibility* is the malleability of the boundary between two or more role domains or the ability of a role domain to expand or contract to accommodate the demands of another role domain (Ashforth et al., 2000, 2001; Clark, 2000; Desrochers, Hilton, & Larwood, 2005).

Role Enactment

The concept of enactment is defined as “the process by which individuals in organizations act and, in doing so, create the conditions that become the constraints and opportunities they face” (Clark, 2002; Perlow, 1999, p. 58; Weick, 1979). The third part of the research problem is to determine the extent and manner by which the interaction among organizational structures, cultural values, and individual role identities produce a work role-set arrangement that allows faculty members to go about their business of everyday work-life, without encountering extreme strain in their professional role-sets. How do faculty members enact their role sets in everyday work? How do faculty members configure their role-sets in a way that makes sense to them and minimizes role-related stress and strain in daily work?

In order to further outline the research problem, I delineated four research questions. Role expectations defined by organizational context were the focus of the first research question.

1. What role *expectations* are communicated to faculty members?
 - What are the role behavioral expectations for tenure?

- What are the role behavioral expectations for promotion?

The second question sought to capture faculty role *identities*:

2. What does it mean to be a faculty member? What meanings are associated with faculty work roles?
 - What values and feelings are associated with each role?
 - How important is each role for the faculty self-concept?

Role *boundary* was the focus of the third question:

3. How are work roles positioned in relation to each other?
 - To what degree are roles segmented or integrated?
 - What is the flow of energy among the roles?

The fourth question focused on role *enactment* and sought to capture faculty members' experiences of structuring and acting out their daily work-life.

4. How do faculty members enact the role-set as a whole or as network of roles?
 - Are there discernible patterns of role-set configurations?
 - What mechanisms do faculty members employ to enact preferred role-set configurations and minimize role-related stress and strain?

The Purpose of the Study

Self-knowledge, preferred effort given to a role, and the perceived institutional expectation of effort given to the role have been found to be the three strongest predictors of faculty productivity (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995). Understanding the processes for role-set management is important since they are used to align a faculty member's own meanings associated with and preferred effort given to a particular role on one hand and perceived institutional expectation of effort given to this role on the other hand. This need

to address role set management problems leads to reflection that, in turn, cultivates faculty awareness of the self and enhances self-knowledge. In other words, faculty with effective role-set management knowledge and skills are likely to be more productive across their roles.

Increasingly, faculty experience role-set strain (Rice, Sorcinelli, & Austin, 2000). Investigation of how faculty members structure and enact their daily role responsibilities can identify the nature and sources of stresses associated with the role overload. This will, then, facilitate development of innovative faculty work and faculty socialization models to reduce faculty strain and stress and, consequently, improve faculty productivity.

Prior research focused on the faculty role-set as a state, a relatively stable collection of faculty role-dyads. This study was designed to extend the theoretical explanation of how faculty members structure their role-sets by focusing on the role enactment as a dynamic phenomenon that emerges from the interplay among various internal and external factors. This research aimed to capture and describe an adaptive self-regulation framework used by faculty members to respond to the demands of routine enactment of the multiple roles that constitute the faculty role-set. Conceptualization of the adaptive self-regulation might contribute to our understanding of faculty work by essentially illuminating processes used by faculty to reconcile multiple, and sometimes contradictory, institutional role expectations, personal impulses and meanings, and intrinsic and extrinsic motivations.

Finally, this study was designed to further our understanding of faculty work in comprehensive universities. By and large, higher education scholars continue to treat

comprehensives as “ugly ducklings” in higher education (Wong, 1979) or institutions with “unsettled quality” (Kerr, 1969) exhibiting “general dilution” (Clark, 1987) and, thus, unworthy of being studied. Consequently, there is a paucity of research on comprehensive universities in general and on faculty work at the comprehensives in particular (Finnegan, 1992; Henderson, 2007). I suggest that, precisely because of the real or perceived problems associated with the comprehensives, it is scholars’ professional duty and moral obligation to study the comprehensive sector that employs almost a quarter of the full-time faculty in the United States. If comprehensives are in fact “ugly ducklings” and “graveyards” of faculty expectations, it is the responsibility of the higher education community to turn the ugly ducklings into beautiful swans and the graveyards of expectations into blossoming spring gardens.

Delimitations and Limitations

For the present study, the following delimitations apply. This study was conducted by interviewing the full-time faculty members from four clusters of disciplines and academic fields employed in a comprehensive public university in an American Mid-Atlantic state. By delimiting the sample, it is not possible to generalize the results for the entire population of full-time faculty members. Further, the study focused on everyday activities within the scope of one week, which has limited the discovery of some of the activities. The time elapsed between the activities and the interviews might have resulted in difficulty recalling specific activities, thoughts, and perceptions for some interviews. Finally, I focused on exploring the ways faculty define their work roles, arrange and enact them in the professional role-set. Thus, I typically bracketed off potentially significant influences of other roles (e.g., parent, church member, etc.) on work roles.

The following limitations apply to the current study. The participants for the study volunteered after receiving the invitation. Certain individual characteristics of volunteers may limit the ability to generalize the results. Sample size poses another limitation to the study. This study should be viewed in the context of the limits inherent in conducting in-depth qualitative interview research. Conducting interviews as the main data collection method is a limitation. Some interviewees might have focused on the “embraced” role components (Goffman, [1961] 1997) and left out recurring work activities that may seem to participants to be too undignified or insignificant to be claimed as work role components (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Further, participants’ varying degree of willingness and openness to share their opinions might have created another limitation.

In addition, this study focused on a single comprehensive university. This limited the investigation of the study phenomena in a comparative institutional context. Another limitation is that my own socialization in higher education took place in four different Doctoral or Research II universities. Although I am currently employed at a comprehensive institution, my relative unfamiliarity with the comprehensive sector poses another limitation. Finally, the language of the interviews, English, is not my native language. Inadvertently, I might have miscomprehended some words or passages while transcribing the interviews and/or missed cultural connotations in analyzing the data.

Summary

Prior research on faculty roles tends to focus on questions related to inputs and outputs of faculty work roles. Scholars have extensively addressed such questions as What roles do faculty play? Why do faculty members play these roles? Why do faculty members allocate more time and effort to some roles than to others? How do institutional

promotion and reward structures affect time and effort allocation to roles? What are the outputs of faculty role activities? In this study, I focus on the *process* of faculty management of work roles in the context of the faculty professional role-set. I explore questions such as: What work roles do faculty members articulate while describing their everyday work? How do faculty members interpret the work roles they play? How do these interpretations interplay with organizational and cultural backgrounds in which the roles are embedded? What are the effects of this interplay on faculty role interfaces or boundaries? How do the properties of role boundaries affect the ways faculty configure and enact their professional role-set in everyday work? What mechanisms do faculty members use to enact their role-sets in ways that make sense to them and minimize role-set strain?

Chapter II. Literature Review

This study is about the ways faculty members take care of the self or about the ways faculty define or assign the meanings to and coordinate the multiple roles constituting their professional work role-sets in everyday work. The meanings assigned to work roles essentially reflect *self*-definitions of the individual faculty members. Thus, self, the focal point of symbolic interactionism² (Blumer, 1969), provides an organizing concept for this chapter. Becker (1970) defines the self “as a *process* in which the roles of other are taken and made use of in organizing our own activities” (p. 292, emphasis added). Drawing on this definition, I view taking care of the self as a reiterative three-step process.

The first step puts the individual in the interaction with social context. The individual becomes aware of the expectations of the others in the context; this is referred to as taking the role of the other. To address the expectations, individuals are engaged in multiple recurring functional relationships in the course of everyday work and, thus, take multiple roles that form their work role-sets (Goffman, [1961], 1997; Merton, 1957). The second step, involves reflection on the expectations and putting them in the context of personal values, beliefs, and interests. The result of this interpretative process is role identity or internalized meanings that individuals assign to specific roles they typically play (Stryker & Burke, 2000) or cognitive schemas serving as frameworks for interpreting specific recurring experiences (Markus, 1977). The process of enacting personally interpreted and contextualized role expectations is referred to as role-making.

² Also known as the Chicago School of Sociology (Hughes, Goffman).

The third, often overlooked, step involves organizing the roles in the role-set in such a way that an individual is able to go about his business without encountering extreme conflict in the role-set (Merton, 1957).

To frame these steps in a theoretical perspective, I address three theories associated with these steps. First, I overview main propositions of the *Role Theory*, a sociological theory that explains how individual's behavior is influenced by the social positions he holds and the societal expectations that accompany those positions. Second, I review the *Identity Theory*, a micro-sociological theory which is concerned with the meanings that individuals attach to the multiple roles they typically play in social life. Finally, I discuss the *Boundary Theory*, an emerging social-cognitive theory that focuses on how the meanings that people assign to different role domains affect the ease and frequency of transitioning between role domains. I, then, delineate properties and dimensions of the main categories derived from the three theories in a conceptual framework for this study in Chapter III.

Role Theory

Since the 1930s, role theory has been used by the researchers in various disciplines to describe, explain and predict human behaviors through the lens of individual-society relationships (Goode, 1960; Gross, Mason, & McEachern, 1958; Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964; Katz & Kahn, 1966; Mead, 1934; Merton, 1957; Turner, 1990). Three basic concepts – social position or status, expectations, and role – provide the foundation for role theory (Biddle, 1986).

Following Ralph Linton and Robert Merton (Merton, 1957), I define *social status* as a stable position in a social system involving designated rights and obligations. Full-

time faculty social status, for example, refers to a position in a social system involving full-time faculty obligations to teach, conduct research, engage in public and university service, etc. as well as rights to academic freedom, flexible work and time arrangements, and discretionary decision-making, etc.

Expectations are “the major generators of roles” (Biddle, 1986, p. 69) and are defined as a given social group’s definition of the ways the incumbent of a given social position ought to behave. Students in the classroom, advisees, administrators, colleagues, fellow researchers, and clients will have different sets of culturally defined and socially patterned expectations of behaviors of full-time faculty.

Following the symbolic interactionism dictum “society shapes self shapes society” (Bloomer, 1969; Goffman, 1961; Mead 1934; Stryker 1980, 2000), I define *role* as a stable set of expectations of others associated with the faculty position in the institutional context *as well as* the meanings faculty members themselves attach to the position itself and to the expectations of role-senders *as well as* recurring behaviors to enact these meanings in daily work. I suggest that a recurrent set of faculty work activities can be conceptualized as the “faculty role” if the following four conditions are satisfied. First, these work activities must be *expected* of faculty members by others or role-senders. Second, faculty members themselves must *associate* these activities with the faculty member’s social position. Third, faculty members must *interpret* what these expectations of the role-senders mean to them. Finally, faculty members must *enact* these activities in daily work

Katz and Kahn (1966, 1978) described role behavior in terms of a four-stage *role episode*. In the first stage, the role expectations are articulated by the organizational

members (role senders) to whom the focal person is linked through functional and structural requirements of the organizational system. Then, these expectations are communicated by the role senders to the focal person as a sent role with the intention to influence the focal person. The focal person receives and interprets the expectation with greater or lesser distortion depending on the personal experiences, values, and philosophies of the focal person. Over time, the focal person learns how and/or acquires necessary resources that enable him to negotiate sent roles with the role senders (Graen & Scandura, 1987). Finally, the focal person enacts the received and interpreted role expectations through role behavior, “which is the response of the focal person to the complexity of information he received” (Katz & Kahn, 1966, p. 182).

Katz and Kahn (1978) further discussed three confounding factors that can potentially facilitate or distort communication of roles from role senders to the focal person. Organizational or institutional factors such as formal policies, promotion and reward factors as well as cultural artifacts might affect interpretation of the sent role by the focal person. Further, these interpretations can be influenced by the focal person’s attributes or his individual qualities, traits, and dispositions. Finally, the interpretations of the sent role depend on the interpersonal factors or on the type and quality of relationships established between role senders and the focal person.

Essentially, *role theory* is concerned with a triad of concepts: expectations for behavior that are understood by social actors, role identities assumed by social participants, and patterned and characteristic role behaviors within given institutional and individual contexts (Biddle, 1986). There are two basic perspectives to role theory –

structuralist and symbolic interactionist. They differ in the interpretation of the relationships between the three foundational concepts of role theory.

In a nutshell, structuralist perspective emphasizes the constraining and determining features of social positions or patterned social behaviors; whereas the interactionists focus on individuals' creative independence in developing role identities (Callero, 1994, p. 228). In Foucault's (1988) terms, structural perspective to role theory follows the modern Christian paradigm of human behavior, whereas symbolic interactionists are more in line with the ancient Greek paradigm. The former regulates individual behavior through coercion and compulsion, the latter understands behavior as something to be self-managed. I believe that an exercise of social constraints on individuals "needs to be counterbalanced with consideration of how individuals, by their own means, act on their own thoughts, conduct, pleasures and ways of being" (Elliot, 2001, p.84; Foucault, 1985). Thus, in my overview of role theory, I draw on the symbolic interactionist perspective (Blumer, 1969; Mead, 1934; Stryker & Statham, 1985) on roles.

A basic assumption of role analysis is that each individual is involved in more than one system of relationships and has to deal with expectations of more than one set of role senders even within one social position and, therefore, engaged in more than one role (Merton, 1957; Goffman, [1961], 1997). Each individual in a faculty position will, consequently, have multiple roles, e.g., teacher, researcher, university citizen, consultant, etc. that, in turn, form the faculty role-set. By the *faculty role-set* (Merton, 1957; Turner, 1990), I refer to a set of roles that reflects expectations, meanings, and behaviors associated with the faculty member's social position.

In other words, the faculty role-set is a recurrent set of faculty behaviors constituting strategies for operating in a recurrent set of expectations associated with the faculty member's social position (e.g., teaching, research, service, consulting). This recurrent set of roles is identified and configured by social and institutional expectations, interpreted by individual faculty members, and is associated with the faculty position in the given social structure. Thus, on one hand, role-sets are stable social structures configured by the expectations of others relevant to the performance of the faculty in their social positions and exist independently of individual faculty members. On the other hand, however, the role-set is linked to a particular individual's way of interpreting and managing it (Sarbin, 1954).

The role-set has been the focus of an extensive body of research literature from the 1950s (Goode, 1960; Kahn et al., 1964; Katz & Kahn, 1966, 1978; Merton, 1957; Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). Primarily, role-set dynamics has been studied in terms of role strain, role conflict, and role ambiguity. Goode developed a theory of role strain or "the felt difficulty in fulfilling role obligations" (p. 483). Good identified four types of role strain. First, situational strain or stress arising from role demands associated with particular times and places. Second, role strain can be invoked as conflict arising from multiple and potentially conflicting obligations in role relationships that are required at various times and places, and different allocations of resources. Third, normative strain or stress arising from inconsistent norms for various behavior demands of the same role. Finally, strain can arise from conflict between role relationships that accompany role sets.

Similarly, Kahn et al. identified and Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman (1970) operationalized five types of *role conflict*. First, inter-sender role conflict occurs when

expectations of one set of role-set senders in the role-set are incompatible with the demands of other role-senders. Second, intra-sender conflict occurs when one role-sender sets several incompatible expectations for the focal person. Third, inter-role conflict occurs when expectations attached to one role clash with those of the same focal person in another role. Fourth, role overload occurs when a role incumbent cannot realistically meet expectations associated with the role. Finally, person-role conflict occurs when the role expectations of others are incompatible with the meaning the role incumbent assigns to the role.

Role ambiguity refers to the lack of information or feedback needed for role definition and role performance (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Essentially, Kahn et al. (1964) indicated that role ambiguity occurs when the role incumbent or focal person lacks clarity about the work objectives and rewards associated with the sent role, about the expectations of the role senders, and about the scope and responsibilities of the job. In addition, unpredictability of the organization's response to a person's behavior is another important source of role ambiguity (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970).

Multiple studies repeatedly found that role conflict and role ambiguity lead to role stress and, subsequently, to lower performance in the role-set (Katz & Kahn, 1966; Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). Daly and Dee (2006), for example, in their study of faculty in urban public universities found that role conflict has the highest negative correlation with faculty job satisfaction and organizational commitment among thirteen independent variables used in the study. However, there are also studies supporting the role enhancement hypothesis or the position that multiple roles frequently do not conflict

with each other but, in fact, typically result in multiple benefits for the role-set incumbent (Marks, 1977; Marks & MacDermind, 1996; Sieber, 1974; Thoits, 1986).

Much of the current higher education research utilizing the role theory as a conceptual framework (e.g., Daly & Dee, 2006; Gmelch, 2004; Montez, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 2003) is based on the classic studies of roles by Katz and Kahn (1966, 1978) and Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970). This classic research on the role-sets was primarily grounded in the structuralist perspective to the role theory. In my judgment, the structuralist approach to the study of the role-set has an important shortcoming. Role-set dynamics is explained primarily through the structural characteristics of the organization in which the role incumbent is embedded.

Miles (1977), for example, offered the following perspective. He suggested that role-set configuration is a predictor of role conflict, role ambiguity and, consequently, role stress. Miles described role-set configuration in terms of organizational distance and the relative authority of role senders. *Organizational distance* refers to the proximity between the role incumbent and role senders in the organizational structure; whereas *relative authority* refers to the amount of authority discrepancy between the role sender and the role incumbent. Miles found that role-sets configured with high levels of organizational distance and relative authority would experience greater levels of role conflict than individuals with role-sets characterized by lower levels of organizational distance and relative authority. In other words, Miles argued that stress associated with one's role performance is caused by specific properties of the organizational structure in which role incumbent is embedded.

Everyday practice, however, suggests that individuals with the same levels of organizational distance and relative authority experience different levels of role conflict and role ambiguity. Drawing on the symbolic interactionist perspective to the role theory, I suggest that a complementary approach to the study of the relationship between role-set configuration and role stress is needed. I pose that role conflict, role ambiguity and, consequently, role stress are determined not only by the structural or institutional characteristics but also by the specific individual meanings role incumbents assign to their roles.

In fact, in the late 1980s and in the 1990s, scholars become interested in the relationship between role-set stress and the meanings individuals assign to their roles or role identities (Burke, 1996). Identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000), a micro-sociological theory, which is concerned with the meanings that individuals attach to the multiple roles they typically play in social life, has been increasingly used as a complementary conceptual lens in the studies of roles. I will provide the overview of the identity theory in the next section of this chapter.

Identity Theory

By establishing a “linkage between individual behavior and social structure” (Biddle & Thomas, 1966, p.7), role theory primarily takes into consideration powerful institutional influences on faculty work configurations (Beecher, 1989; Braxton & Hargens, 1996). However, overly socialized interpretations of role theory need to be balanced by acknowledging relatively high levels of discretion enjoyed by faculty members as professionals (Birnbaum, 1988; Etzioni, 1964; Wilson, 1942).

I share Foucault's concern with "care of the self", in which the individual attends to the problems of technologies of the self (Elliot, 2001). Technologies of the self refer to the mechanisms used to cultivate awareness of the self by reflecting on and translating social and institutional discourses into particular ways of operation, modified to fit individual life circumstances. Foucault's concept of technologies of the self "does not imply that subjects are autonomous beings free from social constraints and able to invent themselves as they please; rather, technologies of the self arise within struggles and resistance generated in social relationships" (Felstead & Jewson, 2000, 171-172).

In Goffman's ([1961], 1997) words, institutional expectations form a person's "holding company" or a set of loosely connected subroles by communicating expected behaviors (e.g., teaching, grant-writing) and expected amount of effort given to each of the subroles. However, institutional forces are not inimical to variations in the ways the individuals run their "holding companies" based on the individual's self-knowledge and commitment to specific roles. The result of such arrangements is "a variety within uniformity, virtuosity within monotony" (Goldenweiser, 1936, quoted in Geertz, 1963, p. 81) or, in other words, highly idiosyncratic faculty work within highly institutionalized academic environment. Identity theory focuses on these individual idiosyncrasies and aims to explain different behaviors of different individuals in similar roles by linking role identities to behavioral and affective outcomes (Hogg, Terry, and White, 1995; Stryker, 1980).

Identity Theory is a micro-sociological theory that is concerned with the meanings that individuals attach to the multiple roles they typically play in social life (Burke & Stryker, 2000; Stets & Burke, 2003; Stryker, 1980). The fundamental premise of identity

theory is that “people invest roles with self-meanings” (Reitzes & Mutran, 2002, p. 649). Thus, *identity* refers to internalized meanings that individuals assign to specific roles they typically play (Desrochers, Andreassi, & Thompson, 2004; Stryker & Burke, 2000) or cognitive schemas serving as frameworks for interpreting specific recurring experiences (Markus, 1977).

In other words, identities can be defined as one’s answers to his existential questions. For example, what does it mean to me to be a teacher (researcher, advisor, consultant, university citizen, public servant, colleague)? Stryker and Burke (2000) stressed the difference between role and identity by asserting that “[r]ole is *external* [emphasis added]; it is linked to social positions within the social structure. Identity is *internal* [emphasis added], consisting of internalized meanings and expectations associated with a role” (p. 289).

Identity theorists suggest that the individual has distinct role identities for each of the roles he has in his role-set. The multiple and diverse identities are organized according to the identity centrality and identity salience. In my interpretation of McCall and Simmons’ (1978) work, *identity centrality* or identity prominence is the strength of the *values* associated with a given role relative to the self-concept. McCall and Simmons suggested that individuals see their selves as organized in a hierarchy of prominence of multiple role identities. A faculty member might see himself first as teacher, second as a researcher, third as a colleague, fourth as a public servant, and so on.

Identity salience is described as the probability that an identity will be invoked across a variety of situations, or alternatively across persons in a given situation (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Even if people have the same set of role identities they may *behave*

differently in the roles because of differences in identity salience. Identity salience of a role is determined by the role incumbent's *commitment* to that role or "the degree to which persons' relationships to others in their networks depend on possessing a particular identity and role" (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 286). Hogg et al. (1995) suggested that "[c]ommitment to a particular role identity is high if people perceive that many of their important social relationships are predicated on occupancy of that role" (p. 258). Thus, identity salience is determined *socially* and manifested behaviorally rather than affectively (Hogg et al., 1995).

Stets and Burke (2003) captured the difference between the centrality hierarchy and salience hierarchy by pointing out that the former addresses what an individual *values*, whereas the latter focuses on how an individual is likely to *behave* in a given situation. Although there is a significant relationship between the two hierarchies, what one values sometimes may not be related to how one behaves in a situation. An example of such disconnect is Leslie's (2002) finding that although teaching is the most prominent identity for faculty members, research appears to be a more salient identity.

Stryker and Burke (2000) argued that multiple role identities in a role-set "reinforce one another, but perhaps more often do not. . . . When they do not, they introduce identity competition" (p. 290). There are three scenarios of role identity competition in a given situation. First, if two role identities are significantly different in commitment and salience, then the role identity with higher commitment and salience will be invoked. Second, if two competing role identities are both of low commitment and salience, then the competition between these identities will be relatively inconsequential for behavior. Finally, if both competing identities are of high and

equivalent commitment and salience, then considerable stress is likely be generated (Stryker and Burke, 2000). In such situations, “increasing congruence with respect to one identity, decreases the congruence for the another, i.e., if one identity is maintained, then other identities must be interrupted” (Burke, 1991). In role theory, stress resulting from the competition between role identities is described as role strain (Goode, 1960) or role conflict (Katz & Kahn, 1966).

Identity theorists hold that role-set related stress is caused not by role overload or a number of roles and related identities, but by a particular *configuration of highly salient role identities* (Burke, 1991; Thoits, 1986). Interestingly, as I pointed out in *Chapter I*, faculty are stressed by working long hours (role overload) as well as by their own high expectations (high salience of role identities) associated with roles and the need to balance (or arrange) these roles.

Burke (1991) argued that identity combinations that interrupt each other with demands are especially likely to cause distress. He discussed the stress generated by the competing identities in terms of the interruption theory, which holds that “autonomic activity [such as distress or anxiety] results whenever some organized action or thought is interrupted” (p. 836). Burke specified that the degree of distress is a function of how well the interrupted process is organized and how frequent the interruption is. An interruption of a well-organized role behavior will result in high levels of stress. Also, frequent or repeated interruptions of given role behaviors will lead to a high level of distress and anxiety, especially if the behavior is associated with a highly salient identity. Burke (1991), however, stopped short of operationalizing his concept of “the degree of organization” of the role. Boundary theory, discussed in the next section, suggests a

useful framework to describe the degree of role organization and how individual role organization affects role-set dynamics.

Boundary Theory

An emerging role boundary theory proposed by Christena Nippert-Eng (1996), Sue Campbell Clark (2000), and articulated by Blake Ashforth and colleagues (Ashforth et al., 2000; 2001) has made important contributions by further operationalizing roles and role identities and conceptualizing role-set *internal arrangements and dynamics*. In recent years, boundary theory has been increasingly applied primarily in the studies of work-home interfaces or boundaries in everyday work of home workers and telecommuters (Clark, 2002; Desrochers, Hilton, & Larwood, 2005; Desrochers & Sargeant, 2004; Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2006; Neale & Griffin, 2006; Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, in press; Rothbard, Phillips, & Dumas, 2006; Shumate & Fulk, 2004; Valcour, 2002; Wilson et al., 2004). Recently, Colbeck (2006) utilized the boundary theory as a conceptual framework for her study of the ways female and male faculty with families manage work and personal roles. In this study, I employ the boundary theory in my exploration of the ways faculty members define and arrange their work role in the professional role-set and the ways the role-set is enacted in everyday work.

The *Boundary Theory* is a general cognitive theory of social classification that focuses on the meanings people assign to different role domains and the ease and frequency of transitioning between role domains (Ashforth et al., 2000, 2001; Desrochers & Sargeant, 2004; Nippert-Eng, 1996; Zerubavel, 1991, 1996). In this study, *boundary work* refers to processes through which individuals organize role identities and

corresponding people, objects, and other matters; the process allows faculty members to define and refine the essence of and relationships among the role in their work role-set so that they can go about their business of social life without encountering extreme stress in their role-sets (Ashforth et al., 2000, 2001, p. 8; Merton, 1957).

In Goffman's (1974) terms, I see everyday work of faculty members as consisting of transitioning between "strips of activity" constructed by marking the boundaries of role-set components. The boundaries between faculty roles tend to resemble "mental fences . . . [used] to simplify and order the environment" (Ashforth, 2001, p. 262). The boundaries have essentially virtual existence and are enacted only when an individual acts in relation to the role system by exiting one role component, transitioning to another component, and, finally, entering that role component (Ashforth et al., 2000, 2001; Giddens, 1984). To understand how faculty work roles are related to each other within the faculty professional role-set, it is necessary to understand the characteristics of the role boundaries as well as transition mechanisms between and among the role. The overview of the boundary theory can be structured around four areas: (i) role domains and role boundaries; (ii) variables affecting the properties of role boundaries; (iii) role-set management problems; and (iv) management mechanisms.

In the general context of role theory, the first type of boundary work is establishing boundaries between the individual roles thus demarcating *role domains*. This type of work has been referred to in literature as carving islands of meaning out of reality (Zerubavel, 1991, 1996), sculpting (Nippert-Eng, 1996), and framing strips of activity (Goffman, 1974). In this study, I define role domain as temporal and spatial aspects associated with a recurrent set of role-related behaviors.

The configuration of role domains is largely determined by the role boundaries. *Role boundaries* refer to physical, temporal, emotional, cognitive, and relational limits that define roles as separate from one another. Individuals create and maintain work role boundaries as a means of simplifying and ordering their work environment. Further, boundaries enable individuals to concentrate more on whatever role is currently more salient and less on the other role domains (Ashforth et al., 2000, 2001; Nippert-Eng, 1996; Zerubavel, 1991, 1996). Clark (2000) identified three main types of boundaries: physical, temporal, and psychological. Physical boundaries such as classroom walls, library doors and conference hall “define *where* domain-relevant behavior takes place” (p. 756). Temporal boundaries such as a schedule of standing committee meetings, office hours, and personal routines define *when*, for example, advising done from when consulting services are provided. Psychological boundaries are rules that “dictate when thinking patterns, behavior patterns and emotions are appropriate for one domain but not for the other” (p. 756).

Boundaries are typically created by both institutions and individuals. At the organizational level, a number of mechanisms establish role domains thus segmenting or buffering different roles. Examples include scheduling classes in specific classrooms at set time periods, establishing office hours for advising, conflict of interest and consulting policies, and policies on the lab and research facilities use, etc. Individuals also employ various idiosyncratic mechanisms to establish role domains. Examples of this include following daily set routines, using calendars and planners, and utilizing specific spaces for conducting different role activities.

Ashforth et al. (2000, 2001) delineated the concept of role boundaries by defining two basic properties of role boundaries: permeability and flexibility. *Role boundary permeability* is the extent to which a boundary allows psychological or behavioral aspects of one role domain to enter another. Permeability is the degree to which a role allows one to be physically located in one role domain but psychologically and/or behaviorally involved in another role. Faculty members can, for example, grade papers while attending a Faculty Senate meeting.

Role boundary flexibility is the malleability of the boundary between two or more role domains or the ability of a role domain to expand or contract to accommodate the demands of another role domain (Ashforth et al., 2000, 2001; Clark, 2000; Desrochers et al., 2005). A role with flexible boundaries can be enacted in various settings and at various times. Advising, for example, can take place in the faculty member's office during the office hours, the weekends over the Internet or in the bar during happy hour. Teaching, on the other hand, is typically tied to a set schedule and to assigned classrooms—although even this constraint lessens as technology is invented and adopted.

Wilson et al. (2004) described role boundary along two dimensions: “whether the boundary has been externally or internally defined, and whether the boundary itself is concrete and physical, or abstract and conceptual” (p. 193). Wilson and colleagues found that internally defined boundaries (values, norms, use of artifacts) have a weaker influence on behavior than externally defined boundaries (institutional norms, space, time). Similarly, the more concrete boundaries (artifacts, physical location) have greater influence on behavior than abstract boundaries (values, norms).

Further, three factors affect role boundary properties: role identity, situational strength or organizational influence, and culture (Ashforth et al., 2000, 2001). Individuals in the same roles are likely to have differences in the content and salience of their identities. I define the *identity content* as the meanings, values, and beliefs one associates with a given role. Advising, for example, for one faculty member can simply mean presence in the office during office hours, whereas for another faculty member advising involves not just providing guidance regarding an advisee's curriculum pathway, but also interest in and care of an advisee's personal development and everyday life. In the first case, the advising boundary is highly inflexible and impermeable; whereas, in the second case, the boundary is potentially more flexible and permeable.

As I indicated in the previous section, an important property of role identity is role identity salience or probability that an identity will be invoked across a variety of situations, or alternatively across persons in a given situation (Stryker & Burke, 2000). The greater the role identity salience, the more the individual seeks opportunities to express this identity as a part of the overall self-concept. In other words, the greater role identity salience, the more likely one is to create more permeable and flexible boundaries for this role and integrate this role with one's other roles (Ashforth et al., 2000, p. 484; Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, in press). For example, a faculty member with a strong researcher identity is likely to see consulting primarily in terms of a research study rather than service project or source of additional income.

Structural symbolic interactionists (Stryker & Burke, 2000) while emphasizing the individual's role in negotiating role and sculpting role boundaries, also acknowledges that roles are tied to specific social positions, relatively institutionalized, and often

influenced by organizational factors, especially in the cases with strong situational contexts. Ashforth et al. (2001) define a strong situation as an organizational context where “there is consensus on the ‘right way’ and ‘wrong way’ to behave” (p. 484). Ashforth et al. (2000, 2001) propose that in strong situational contexts, the individuals will have a relatively weak part in negotiating roles and managing role boundaries.

I suggest then, that individuals in different types of higher education institutions likely will experience different degrees of institutional influence on the ways they manage their role sets. Comprehensive universities and colleges have been traditionally characterized in higher education literature as having weak institutional cultures, unfocused missions, and poorly defined priorities. Kerr (1993), for example, asserted that the institutions in this category “have a less distinctive mission and constitute a more in-between category than any of the [other types of institutions] (p. 176). Thus, some have suggested that comprehensives have a relatively weak situational context. Faculty at the comprehensive institutions would, then, have a relatively higher degree of influence on defining, structuring, and enacting their role-sets than their peers at other institutions.

In addition to the situational strength, it has been proposed that the concrete cultural background in which the roles are embedded influence work behavior and role-set dynamics (Ashforth et al., 2001). Ashforth and his colleagues used Hofstede’s (1991) taxonomy of cross-cultural values to illustrate how different cultures are likely to affect articulation of role identities and creation of role boundaries.

In higher education, scholars have documented how the culture of academic disciplines influences the ways faculty structure their work (Becher, 1989; Finnegan & Gamson, 1996). Tony Becher’s (1989) typology of divergent/convergent and urban/rural

academic fields is based on the patterns of social construction and interaction. Therefore, it might provide a useful framework to explore the influence of disciplinary cultures on the ways faculty articulate their role identities, arrange roles into role-sets, and enact them in everyday work.

In role-set studies, the interplay of these three variables, role identity, situational strength or organizational influence, and culture, manifests itself in the role contrast. *Role contrast* refers to “the number of core and peripheral features that differ between a pair of role identities and the extent of the differences, where core features are weighted more heavily” (Ashforth et al. 2000, p. 2000). Advising and teaching would typically have relatively low contrast since they have similar core features such as transmission of knowledge and student development. They would typically differ, however, in the peripheral features such as spatial location (classroom vs. faculty office or home) or the primary type of assessment of student learning (summative in teaching and formative in advising).

Combining the concepts of role boundary and role contrast indicates that a given pair or dyad of roles can be arrayed on a continuum, ranging from high segmentation to high integration (Ashforth et al. 2000, 2001). *Role segmentation* has been described as the state when there is no physical, temporal, or conceptual overlap between what belongs to one role in the role-set and what belongs to another (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Segmented roles are highly differentiated (high contrast); they are tied to a specific place or time (inflexible boundary); and do not allow cross-role interruptions (impermeable boundary) (Ashforth et al., 2000, 2001). *Role integration* is the state when no distinction exists between what belongs to one role in role-set and what belongs to another and when

and where they are engaged (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Integrated roles are weakly differentiated (low contrast); they are not tied to specific place or time (flexible boundary); and they allow cross-role interruptions (permeable boundary) (Ashforth et al., 2000, 2001).

Role segmentation and role integrations lead to two role-set management problems: to minimize the difficulty of transitions between roles in the role-set and to minimize the frequency of undesired role interruptions and interferences (Ashforth et al., 2000, 2001). The first problem is more salient for segmented roles; the challenge here is “shifting gears” or effective intra-role-set *transitions*, that is, frequent and recurring physical, behavioral, and psychological switching back and forth among one’s currently held roles and role domains within the role-set. The second problem is a characteristic of integrated roles; the challenge here is to minimize *role blurring*, which refers to boundary ambiguity or the perception of uncertainty or difficulty in distinguishing one role from another role that occurs when these roles are seen as highly integrated (Desrochers et al., 2005).

In a complex role-set, such as the faculty professional role-set, individuals in fact may face both problems. The role contrast between, for example, teaching a general education lecture course and serving on the tenure committee means a relatively wide behavioral and psychological gulf to bridge. Although a faculty member may understand that a didactic disposition and tone of a lecture presentation is no longer appropriate during the committee meeting, it may remain difficult to assume a more collegial disposition discussing a candidate for promotion. Drawing on the research on role

spillover, Ashforth et al. (2001) assert that “moods, stress, and thoughts that are generated in one role domain often influence or spill over into other domains” (p. 269).

On the other hand, somewhat counter to the common perception that role integration is good for individual’s well-being, relative integration of roles may pose role-set management problems and also cause role-set strain (Ashforth et al., 2000, 2001; Kossek et al., 2005). Overlap between consulting and research areas, for example, may foster confusion about which role identity is or should be more salient, if for example, consulting involves work on patents. A faculty member with a high researcher identity might have strong impetus to report the findings associated with a consulting project to fellow scholars at a research conference, even if he understands proprietary nature of results of his consulting project. Further, integrated high flexibility and permeability of boundaries in the integrated roles may lead to frequent interruptions and inferences and, consequently cause role-set strain.

Individuals use two mechanisms to enact roles and the transitions between them. Boundary theory suggests that individuals use *role schemas* to guide role appropriate behaviors and *transition scripts* to facilitate the transitions between roles. “A role schema is a cognitive structure that organizes one’s knowledge about the typical or appropriate behaviors expected of a person occupying a given position” (Ashforth et al., 2001, p. 279). Faculty members generally have an idea what behaviors are required and appropriate in the roles of teacher, advisor, researcher, etc. as well as when and where these behaviors need to be enacted.

Transition scripts are structures that organize role transition tasks “in a *temporal* flow, thereby guiding the individual and providing a sense of predictability and control”

(Ashforth et al., 2000, p. 485). For example, a transition from advising a student to writing a research report might involve closing the office door, putting a cell phone on vibrate, making a cup of coffee, and opening the research report on the computer. Transition scripts range from weak to strong “depending on how precisely the sequence of events is specified” and whether there are multiple paths from one role to another (p. 485).

As one gains experience performing in the given social position, one’s performance in the roles associated with this social position and transitioning between roles becomes more effective. In addition, repeated enactment of roles and transition scripts “are likely to become automatic or *mindless* . . . that is performed with little conscious effort or awareness” (Ashforth et al., 2001, pp. 278-279). This assertion suggests that senior experienced faculty would tend to see specific role activities cognitively chunked together relative to their self-concept as faculty and, therefore, might experience difficulty in delineating specific roles, transition scripts, and role schemas associated with the faculty role-set. Junior faculty are likely to experience similar difficulty but for different reasons; they have not yet defined their work roles in sufficient detail and have not developed relatively stable transition scripts and organized role schemas as suggested by Finnegan & Hyle (in press).

The boundary theory has made an important contribution in the conceptualization of the role-set by delineating four areas affecting role-set internal dynamics: role domains and role boundaries; variables affecting the properties of role boundaries; role-set management problems; and role-set management mechanisms. However, similar to the role theory and identity theory, boundary theorists focus almost exclusively on the

properties of *individual roles* and *role-dyads* within the role set. Boundary theorists stop short of discussing *role-set* schemas or cognitive structures that guide how one arranges multiple roles associated with the given social position, transitions between the roles and how these roles are enacted as a system in everyday work in such a way that enables the incumbent of the social position to go about his or her business of everyday work “without having to improvise adjustments anew in each newly confronted situation” (Merton, 1957, p. 370), thus minimizing role-set strain. In other words, what is needed is a conceptualization of the role-set as a *network of roles* or a system of interrelated role-dyads. In the next chapter, I will offer an approach to such conceptualization.

Summary

In this Chapter, I first reviewed the classic *Role Theory*, a sociological theory that explains how individual’s behavior is influenced by the social positions he holds and the societal expectations or roles that accompany those positions. Second, I discussed the *Identity Theory*, a micro-sociological theory that is concerned with the meanings that individuals attach to the multiple roles they typically play in social life. Finally, I reviewed the *Boundary Theory*, a social-cognitive theory that focuses on how the meanings that a person assigns to different role domains affect the ease and frequency of transitioning between his or her role domains. In the next Chapter, I will further elaborate on and combine the concepts from these three theories in a conceptual framework for this study.

Chapter III. Methodology

This dissertation is a qualitative exploratory study. Quantitative studies have contributed to our understanding of faculty work by providing extensive descriptive data of faculty work activities as well propositions on the nature of faculty work based on the inferential statistics. However, as Schuster and Finkelstein (2006) recently observed “no one of these [quantitative] indicators, or even their sum total, can illuminate some of the important nuances [of academic work]” (p. 78). Are faculty members engaged in any other work roles besides the roles identified in surveys? What meanings do they assign to their work roles? How do faculty members organize the roles? What techniques do faculty members use to minimize role-related stress? These are some of the questions that need further exploration and elaboration.

The problem of this study is to apply the concept of role boundaries to the configuration of work role-sets of the faculty in a comprehensive university to determine the extent and manner by which the interaction among organizational structures, role expectations, cultural values, and meanings individuals attach to their work activities produce a work role-set arrangement that allows faculty members to enact their daily work-life without encountering extreme strain in their role-sets (Merton, 1957). The very nature of the problem is best suited to a qualitative, interview-based method. Merriam (1997) pointed out that “qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (p. 6). In this study, I am interested in capturing the meanings that faculty members attach to their everyday roles, understanding how they

arrange the roles in a role-set or role network that makes sense to them, and describing how they enact their role-set in such a way so as to minimize role strain.

The Research Design: Modified Grounded Theory

“We want to see new possibilities in phenomena and classify them in ways that others might not have thought of before (or, if considered previously, were not systematically developed in terms of their properties and dimensions)”
(Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 105).

For this study, I modify the grounded theory approach to qualitative research (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). The grounded theory was developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in the late 1960s and is based on the symbolic interactionist perspective.³ Strauss and Corbin (1990) defined the *grounded theory* approach to research as “a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon” (p. 24).

Merriam (1997) asserted that the type of theory developed through the grounded theory approach is substantive theory, or the theory that “has its referent specific, *everyday-world situations* [emphasis added]...has specificity and hence usefulness to practice often lacking in theories that cover more global concerns” (p. 17). Further, since the study is set in the context of one comprehensive institution, it is a grounded theory case study. “A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1994, p. 13).

³ In fact, Anselm Strauss was a student of Herbert Blumer; Barney Glaser’s advisor was Robert Merton.

The grounded theory approach is modified for this study because rather than using an entirely inductive approach, I apply the concept of role boundaries to the study of faculty professional role-sets in order to generate a substantive theory of the ways faculty members arrange and enact their role-sets in everyday work. In fact, Merriam (1997) interpreted grounded theory as “a complex process of *both* [emphasis added] induction and deduction, guided by prior theoretical commitments and conceptual schemes” (p. 49). This approach allowed me to develop a framework to identify important topical areas or categories for the study, but did not force me to assume a given interpretative perspective on the role-set dynamics prior to the analysis of data (cf., Finnegan, 1992). In other words, I treated the literature review process in Chapter II as *open coding* (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) or a procedure to introduce categories of role identity and role boundary. These initial categories guided data collection and analysis to define and describe the processes of role enactment, this study’s focal category.

Categories and Levels of Analysis

This study is organized around the three categories outlined in the problem statement: *role identity*, *role boundary*, and *role enactment*. Further, these categories are explored through the lens of Becher’s (1989) two-dimensional typology of academic disciplines in order to investigate the influence of the disciplines on the ways faculty define their roles, arrange the roles in the role-set, and enact the role-sets in daily work-life.

I suggest that the categories of role boundary, role identity, and role enactment should and can be explored at three levels of analysis: single role, role dyad, and role network. Prior studies on faculty roles tend to focus primarily on individual roles and,

less often, on role dyads or two-role relationships. In this study, I suggest that in order to fully understand faculty work experiences, it is also necessary to explore faculty work through the role analysis lens at the role network level. Further, I suggest that role analysis of faculty work can be enhanced by integrating categories of role boundary, role identity, and role enactment at each level of analysis.

These categories are manifested differently at different levels of analysis.

Exploring how these categories interact with each other across different levels of analysis might enhance our understanding of the ways faculty members define their roles, relate them to each other, arrange roles in the role-set, and enact the role-set in daily work-life.

First, the category of role identity was utilized to capture the meanings faculty members assign to their work roles and to investigate whether individual role identities are manifested in dyadic and network relationships. Second, the category of role boundaries was applied to explore structural characteristics of faculty roles, role dyads, and role networks. Finally, the category of role enactment guided my analysis of how roles are configured in relation to each other in everyday faculty work. The three levels of analysis defined the steps of data collection and initial data analysis. I began by exploring individual faculty roles, then I analyzed relationships in role dyads, and, finally, I examined the properties of faculty professional role-sets or role networks.

Properties and Dimensions of Categories

Properties and dimensions delineate abstract categories by describing them in measurable and/or observable terms. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), the *properties* are “characteristics of a category, the delineation of which defines and gives it meaning” (p. 101). The top horizontal row in Table 1 lists the two categories derived

from the literature review – role identity and role boundary – as well as this study’s focal category of role enactment. The left vertical column lists three levels of role analysis: single role, role dyad, and role network. Properties in the matrix’ cells present manifestations of the categories at each level of analysis. These properties are developed based on my review, interpretation, and integration of role, identity, and boundary theories.

Table 1. Properties of Categories

<i>Levels of Analysis</i>	Categories		
	Role Identity	Role Boundary	Role Enactment
<i>Role</i>	Commitment	Domain	Entrainment
<i>Role Dyad</i>	Contrast	Interface	Scripts
<i>Role Network</i>	Hierarchy	Orientation	Arrangement

I further delineate the properties of these categories in terms of their dimensions at each level of role analysis. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), *dimensions* indicate how each property can be positioned and described along a continuum or range.

Role identity is internalized meanings that individuals assign to specific roles they typically play (Desrochers, Andreassi, & Thompson, 2004; Stryker & Burke, 2000). I suggest that the concept of role identity is manifested and operationalized differently at different levels of role analysis. At the single role level, role identity is manifested as an individual’s commitment to the role. Role *commitment* is defined as “the degree to which persons’ relationships to others in their networks depend on possessing a particular identity and role” (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 286).

To analyze a given role identity of an individual, one needs to capture the meaning of the identity and the nature and strength of this individual's role commitment or the nature and strength of social ties associated with the given role domain. Identity meaning refers to the shared symbols that a person attributes to himself in a given role (Reitzes & Mutran, 2002). Specifically, identity meaning includes identity content and identity attributes. Identity *content* refers to values, beliefs, philosophies, and assumptions that the role incumbent associates with the given role. Identity content may also include temporal and spatial aspects that help situate role identities (Ashforth et al., 2000). Identity *attributes* refer to affective characteristics or traits that the individual attaches to the given role. Essentially, teacher identity meaning, for example, is reflected in the answer to the questions "Who are you as a teacher?" or "What does it mean for you to be a teacher?"

Identity meanings can also be described as a combination of core features and peripheral features. "Core features tend to be important, necessary, or typical characteristics of the identity and more defining of the identity" (Ashforth et al., 2000, p. 475). Core features of an advisor identity, for example, might include knowledge of the degree requirements and maintaining office hours; whereas more peripheral features might include interpersonal skills and genuine interest in advisees' personal well-being.

Identity commitment or social ties associated with the given role domain can be analyzed in terms of *interactional commitment* and *affective commitment*. Interactional commitment refers to the breadth or the number of social relationships associated with a given role; whereas affective commitment refers to the depth or affect attached to the potential loss of social relationships and activities associated with a given role (Serpe,

1987, p. 45). These two dimensions of identity commitment are potentially independent. For example, a faculty member can have an extensive network of relationships with his colleagues in the institution but these relationships might be just at the level of familiar face recognition. In other words, these relationships have a low degree of affect attached to them by this faculty member. Thus, this faculty member will have a relatively high level of interactional commitment but relatively low level of affective commitment in his identity of university citizen. Conversely, in the identity of researcher, the same faculty member can attach a high degree of affect (high affective commitment) to a relatively small group (low interactional commitment) of the fellow researchers outside his home university.

At the role dyad level, the category of role identity is manifested through the role contrast. Role *contrast* refers to “the number of core and peripheral features that differ between a pair of role identities and the extent of the differences, where core features are weighted more heavily” (Ashforth et al. 2000, p. 2000). Advising and teaching, for example, would typically have relatively low contrast since they have similar core features such as transmission of knowledge and student development. They would typically differ, however, in the peripheral features such as spatial location (classroom vs. faculty office or home) or the primary type of assessment of student learning (summative in teaching and formative in advising).

At the role network level, the category of role identity is manifested through the ways individuals organize their multiple role-identities in the role-sets. Identity theory suggests that individuals organize the identities in a *hierarchy* of prominence (McCall & Simmons, 1998) or centrality (Stryker & Serpe, 1994) and a hierarchy of salience

(Stryker, 1980). In a survey research project, Stryker and Serpe (1994) operationalized prominence or centrality as the relative importance of a given identity to the way one thinks about himself and salience as the relative priority one assigns to the given role identity if asked to tell others about himself. A faculty member might, for example, have a highly prominent and central identity of advisor when thinking about himself but would not necessarily demonstrate this identity as highly salient in interaction with others, considering advising as too insignificant from the others' perspective.

Another manifestation of the concept of role identity at the role network level is *self-concept balance* or the extent to which a person allocates prominence or salience to his multiple roles (Reitzes & Mutran, 2002, p.651). Reitzes and Mutran constructed balance as the ratio of the number of roles identified as highly important (salient and central) divided by the number of all roles in the role-set. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, faculty members generally tend to have high self-expectations to excel in many or all of their work roles. Thus, faculty members typically tend to have high balance in their role-sets. Reitzes and Mutran (2002) found that individuals with high balance or with many roles identified as important, experience greater satisfaction than individuals with low balance. This finding might shed some light on the apparent paradox: faculty members tend to report relatively high levels of stress associated with high expectations to excel in all roles, but, at the same time, report relatively high levels of work satisfaction.

Role boundary is defined as physical, temporal, emotional, cognitive, and/or relational limits that define roles as separate from one another (Ashforth, 2000, 2001; Clark, 2000). I suggest that the concept of role boundary is manifested and operationalized differently at different levels of role analysis. At the single role level, role

boundary is manifested through the *role domain* established by the boundary. I have defined the role domain as temporal and spatial aspects associated with a recurrent set of role-related behaviors.

At the role-dyad level, the boundaries of two roles create an interface between the roles. The interface between two roles can be described in terms of *permeability* and *flexibility* of boundaries of both roles in the dyad. Role boundary permeability is the extent to which a boundary allows psychological or behavioral aspects of one domain to enter another. Role boundary flexibility is the malleability of the boundary between two or more role domains or the ability of a role domain to expand or contract to accommodate the demands of another role domain (Ashforth et al., 2000, 2001).

For example in an advisor-faculty senator role dyad, the boundary of the role of advisor is arguably more flexible than the boundary of the role of faculty senator. One could advise a student while attending a Faculty Senate meeting via wireless internet connection on the laptop, whereas it would be more difficult to participate in the Senate vote during the advising session. Conversely, in the same dyad, the boundary of the role of faculty senator would be more permeable than the boundary of the role of advisor by permitting behavioral aspects of advising to enter the domain of faculty senator role.

At the level of the role-set or role network, the category of role boundary is manifested through a phenomenon that I have labeled *relational orientation*. I propose that boundaries of a given role may have different levels of flexibility and permeability in relation to different roles. In other words, a role may have multiplex relational orientation in the role-set. In an advising-research dyad, for example, the domain of advising will have a boundary with a relatively high degree of flexibility if a faculty member involves

his advisee in research experiments in the lab. On the other hand, the boundary of the same domain of advising might be relatively inflexible in an advising-consulting dyad.

The phenomenon of multiplex role orientation suggests that the internal structure of the role-set is much more complex and multidimensional than images of the faculty member as a “juggler” (all role boundaries are inflexible and impermeable) and as a “complete scholar” (all role boundaries are flexible and permeable) would project. In a role-set with five roles, for example, each role would have dyadic relationships with four other roles. Thus, in this role-set, there would be ten role interfaces or twenty role boundaries with potentially different degrees of flexibility and permeability. In other words, the degree of this role-set’s overall integration or segmentation is a function of properties of twenty potentially different boundaries.

The category of *enactment* is defined as “the process by which individuals in organizations act and, in doing so, create the conditions that become the constraints and opportunities they face” (Clark, 2002; Perlow, 1999, p. 58; Weick, 1979). Faculty members enact their roles in everyday work and (1) configure their roles in the faculty role-set in a way that (2) makes sense to them and (3) minimizes role-set strain. I suggest that at the single role level, role enactment takes a form of *entrainment* or the adjustment of the pace or cycle of one role to match or synchronize with that of another role (Ancona & Chong, 1996, p. 251).

I use frequency with which a particular role is enacted in daily work-life as well as time allocated to this role as properties of the concept of role enactment at the single role level and measures of role-set entrainment. On one hand, different roles are enacted with different frequency and take different amounts of time. Consulting, for example,

might be enacted only once a week but may take a whole day. On the other hand, different individuals might enact the same roles with different frequency. One faculty member might enact the role of advisor, for example, only twice a week during the office hour whereas his colleague with an “open door” policy is likely to enact that role more frequently. Frequency with which a particular role is enacted and time spent in the role might be affected by both institutional and individual factors. Frequency of enacting and time in the role of teacher, for example, are largely determined by class schedules. Similarly, time allotted to consulting is often limited by the institutional policies (Matveev & Cuevas, 2004). In another example, the time that a senior faculty member spends mentoring a junior colleague is largely determined individually.

At the role dyad level, the category of role enactment is manifested through transition scripts that organize role-dyad transition tasks “in a temporal flow, thereby guiding the individual and providing a sense of predictability and control” (Ashforth et al., 2000, p. 485). *Transition scripts* can be described in terms of the content of the script, the strength of the script, and the degree of “mindlessness” with which the script is cued and enacted. By the *content* of the script, I refer, first, to the cues prompting transition and, second, to specific activities and associated cognitive and psychological processes in which the individual is engaged while transitioning from one role to another. Transition scripts can be cued either externally (e.g., an advisee walking in the office) or internally (e.g., concern over an advisee’s progress on the thesis may prompt a faculty member to call the advisee) (Ashforth et al., 2000, 485). It also should be noted that transition scripts can be asymmetric, that is, transition activities from advising to research might differ from transition activities from the role of researcher to the role of advisor.

Transition scripts can range from *strong* scripts that specify precisely the sequence of steps needed to move from one role to another to relatively *weak* scripts that have multiple and different “tracks” or variations of transition activities (Ashforth et al., 2000; Gioia & Poole, 1984). As scripts develop, they become parts of the individual’s daily routines and rituals. Frequently repeated transitions become relatively automatic or “mindless” (Ashforth et al., 2000, p. 485). Conversely, new roles or new role contexts (e.g., new office location or teaching an on-line course) require intensive conscious development of transition scripts. Thus, the *degree of “mindlessness”* of a transition script for a given role-dyad would be a function of the frequency of transitions between roles and the novelty of the context in which roles are embedded.

At the role network level, the category of role enactment is manifested through role-set configuration. Individuals utilize role-set schemas or cognitive structures to organize knowledge about the typical or appropriate behaviors expected of them in a given social situation. Role-set *configuration* can be described as a network of dyadic relationships between roles characterized by different degrees of segmentation and integration. A key characteristic of a network is network *density*. I suggest that the density of a role network is a function of the following three variables: the scope of the network or number of roles in the network, the degree of role identities balance, and the degree of segmentation/integration of the roles in the role dyads.

Role networks are enacted within limited temporal and spatial perimeters. Thus, the more roles one has in the role-set, the more role-dyads or network relationships are in the network, and, consequently, the denser the role network. Further, individuals have limited physical, cognitive, and psychological capacities to enact their role-sets. Thus, the

higher role identity balance in the role network, or the higher the ratio of the number of roles identified as highly important (salient and prominent) divided by the number of all roles in the role-set, the denser the role network.

Role segmentation refers to the dyadic relationship where there is no physical, temporal, or conceptual overlap between what belongs to one role in the dyad and what belongs to another (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Role integration refers to the dyadic relationship where no distinction exists between what belongs to one role in the dyad and what belongs to another and when and where they are engaged (Nippert-Eng, 1996). A role network with a higher number of relatively integrated role-dyads will be denser than a network with primarily segmented dyads.

Table 2 summarizes this section by presenting dimensions of the categories of role boundary, role identity, and role enactment at the three levels of role analysis. This matrix guided my data collection and initial data analysis.

Table 2. Dimensions of Categories.

<i>Levels of Analysis</i>	Categories		
	Role Identity	Role Boundary	Role Enactment
<i>Role</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity content <i>and</i> attributes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core features • Peripheral features • Breadth or extensiveness of commitment • Depth or intensiveness of commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role senders • Perceptions of expectations of role senders • Activities to address expectations • Temporal and spatial aspects; physical and symbolic artifacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of role enactment • Time in the role
<i>Role Dyad</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differences between roles in role identity content and attributes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boundary flexibility in dyadic relationships • Boundary permeability in dyadic relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content of scripts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cues • Activities • Strength of scripts • Degree of “mindlessness” of scripts
<i>Role Network</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominence hierarchy of identities • Salience hierarchy of identities • Identity balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of relational orientations of a role in the network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Density <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope • Identity balance • Degree of integration/segmentation

Methods

I was a “tool of discovery” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) or the primary instrument for data collection and analysis in this study. My interpretations guided the processes of data collection, data analysis, and conclusion generation. My data collection methods primarily were in-depth, semi-structured interviews. I supplemented the interview data with information from secondary sources such as the strategic plan, faculty handbook, and other documents. The data were analyzed through axial and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) and, then, used to generate propositions about the relationships between and among categories outlined in Table 1.

Site Selection

According to Carnegie Classification 2000, comprehensive colleges and universities (CCUs) offer a wide range of baccalaureate programs and are committed to graduate education primarily through the master’s degree. CCU I institutions award forty or more master’s degrees annually across three or more disciplines. CCU II institutions award 20 or more master’s degrees annually in one or more disciplines. In 2000, there were 496 CCU I and 115 CCU II institutions. CCUs constitute 16 percent of all higher education institutions in the United States (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2000).

In 2003-2004 academic year, CCUs employed 122,015 full-time instructional faculty. This constitutes 23.4 percent of all full-time instructional faculty in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004). Faculty in CCUs work, on average, 47.3 hours per week compared to 52 hours in Doctoral and 48.3 hours in Baccalaureate institutions. However, CCU faculty report slightly higher levels of

dissatisfaction with workload than faculty in both Doctoral and Baccalaureate institutions. Almost a quarter (23.1 percent) of CCU faculty report that they are somewhat dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their workload compared to 21 percent in Doctoral and 22.1 percent in Baccalaureate institutions.

Finnegan (1991) traced the origins of comprehensive institutions to normal schools or teacher colleges, sectarian colleges, YMCA colleges, and historically black colleges. Comprehensives are credited with increasing access to higher education to minorities and economically disadvantaged populations, to contributing to regional economic development, and to preparing professionals committed to solving societal problems (Finnegan, 1991; Harclerod & Ostar, 1987; Lynton & Elman, 1987). Kerr (1991) pointed out that after WWII most comprehensives moved substantially away from the original models, but asserted that it has been a slow development and the old patterns have left their legacy (p. 38).

However, comprehensive institutions are not a homogenous group. Wolf-Wendel and Ward (2006), for example, in their study of academic life and motherhood, distinguished between two types of comprehensive institutions. *Striving* comprehensives are characterized by the state of flux and unclear work expectations. These institutions are “caught between old expectations connected to teaching and new, increasing research expectations” (p. 502). *Regional* comprehensives have a clear mission focused on teaching and addressing regional educational needs.

I refer to the site of my study by using the pseudonym, Striving Regional University (SRU). I selected SRU based on three main criteria. First, it is a comprehensive public university. The combination of role-set complexity and strong role

identities makes faculty employed in the comprehensive universities information-rich cases for this study of the ways faculty define, structure, and enact their work role-sets. Further, I am currently employed as an administrator in a public comprehensive university and very interested in learning more about faculty work life in the comprehensive sector.

Second, SRU is a relatively large institution. The university has a variety of academic departments. I was able to identify four program clusters based on Becher's (1989) typology of divergent/convergent and urban/rural disciplines.

Third, it is within a reasonable driving distance from both the place of my academic studies and my workplace. Being employed full-time, I was not able to allocate significant amounts of non-interrupted time for field work. A reasonable driving distance from my work in Norfolk, VA to SRU allowed me to make fourteen day-long visits to the institution from Fall 2006 through Spring 2007.

The fourth criterion emerged while I was researching potential sites. SRU drew my attention because in 2005-2006 the institution was in the midst of discussing a major curriculum reform that would have significant implications on the structure and intensity of faculty daily work by realigning their workload. Although, the proposal was defeated by a margin of approximately ten votes in April 2006, I felt that SRU faculty members continued to be very attuned to the workload issues thus being very appropriate participants for this study. Finally, I was impressed that this comprehensive university has the highest graduation rate in the state university system that includes some of the premiere public universities in the nation.

Permission

Gaining access to the site and participants involved five steps. First, the permission was sought from The College of William and Mary's Protection of Human Subjects Committee. The proposal detailing the study procedures was submitted to the Protection of Human Subjects Committee after this dissertation proposal was accepted by my dissertation committee.

After the proposal was approved by the Protection of Human Subjects Committee, a letter was sent to the Provost of Striving Regional University (see *Appendix 1*). The letter outlined the purposes of the study and requested the permission to conduct interviews with faculty on the target institution's campus. The Provost replied by stating that he was not able to endorse my study since on the SRU campus this "would be seen by some as unwarranted pressure to participate." However, the Provost acknowledged that the reasons behind the project were good and indicated that I was free to contact faculty on my own without the endorsement of the Provost. Interestingly, this provost was replaced by a new Interim Provost approximately ten days after replying to my letter.

The third step involved contacting the chairs of several departments that represented the four clusters of Becher's (1989) typology of academic disciplines and fields. In an e-mail (see *Appendix 2*), I outlined the purpose of the study and explained the rationale as to why the particular department was chosen. Department chairs were also asked to communicate with their faculty and inform them that they might be contacted for an interview.

At the next step, I contacted all faculty members in the four disciplinary clusters via e-mail (see *Appendix 3*). In the e-mail, I outlined the purpose of the study, explained

the rationale as to why the particular department was chosen, indicated the estimated length of the interviews as well as the time period when I planned to conduct fieldwork, and invited faculty members to participate in my study. Then, I e-mailed prospective informants to set up face-to-face interviews.

The final step in gaining and documenting permission involved obtaining letters of informed consent from the informants who agreed to participate in this study immediately prior to the interview. The letter of consent followed the format suggested by Creswell (1998) (see *Appendix 4*). The letter also contained the contact information for The College of William and Mary's Protection of Human Subjects Committee.

Participants

Creswell (1998) pointed out that in a qualitative study, researchers purposefully select participants that will best answer the research question(s). This study aimed to develop a substantive theory to describe and understand the ways in which faculty members define their roles, arrange them in the role-sets, and enact the role-sets in everyday work. Thus, I employed theoretical sampling to select participants for this study.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) defined theoretical sampling as “the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges” (p. 45). Table 3 presents participants of the study.

Table 3. Study Participants

	<i>Junior Faculty</i> (0-7 Years)	<i>Mid-Career Faculty</i> (8-15 Years)	<i>Senior Faculty</i> (more than 16 years)	
<i>Urban/Convergent</i>	4	2	4	10
<i>Urban/Divergent</i>	4	2	2	8
<i>Rural/Convergent</i>	0	2	4	6
<i>Rural/Divergent</i>	2	6	4	12
	10	12	14	

Merriam (1997) points out that a grounded theory will be more conceptually dense and more useful if it is grounded in widely varying instances of the phenomenon. To achieve maximum variation within the limits of a single-case qualitative study but maintain conceptual parsimony, I interviewed thirty-six full-time faculty members at different career stages across the four clusters of disciplines representing Becher's (1989) taxonomy of academic fields.

The decision to construct the sample with faculty members at different career stages was based on my interpretation of the boundary theory propositions that senior experienced faculty would tend to see specific role activities cognitively chunked together relative to their self-concept as faculty and, therefore, might experience difficulty in delineating specific roles, transition scripts, and role schemas associated with the faculty role-set. Junior faculty members are likely to experience similar difficulty but for different reasons; they have not yet defined their work roles in sufficient detail and have not developed relatively stable transition scripts and organized role schemas. Thus, I hoped to capture different perspectives, insights, and interpretations by interviewing faculty across the ranks.

I defined junior faculty members as those who had been in the profession for less than seven years. This period is typically the maximum amount of time given to SRU faculty to apply for tenure. Also, the year 1999 marked the beginning of the current faculty hiring push at SRU. I referred to mid-career faculty members as those who served for eight to fifteen years and senior faculty members as those who served more than sixteen years.

As a single-case study, this research does not provide for cross-institutional comparisons. Thus, the disciplinary culture appears to be an important variable. To address this possibility, I utilize Tony Becher's (1989) typology of academic disciplines. Becher (1989; also Becher & Trowler, 2001; Trowler, in press) developed a classification of disciplines and fields based along a cognitive dimension and a social dimension. The cognitive dimension is based on work of Kolb (1981) and Biglan (1973) and differentiates disciplines along two properties hard and soft on one hand and pure and applied on the other hand. In this study, I focus on the social dimension of Becher's classification.

I chose the social dimension of Becher's model because it was developed based on the patterns of social organization of and social interaction in the disciplines that are likely to be reflected at the micro-level or in the ways faculty members arrange their roles in role-sets and manage transitions from one role to another. Boundary theory suggests that social organization of and social interaction patterns of academic disciplines would likely affect the ways faculty define their roles, arrange them in role-sets, and enact the role-sets in everyday work.

In my interpretation, Becher (1989) suggested that differences among the disciplines are essentially a factor of the degree of the permeability of their boundaries. Impermeable boundaries are characteristic of “tightly knit, convergent disciplinary communities”; whereas permeable boundaries are typical for “loosely knit, divergent groups” (pp. 37-38). In convergent disciplines and fields, a fairly high paradigm consensus exists and knowledge is organized according to relatively uniform standards. Intellectual diversity and fluidity and low consensus on the problems to be solved characterize divergent fields. The urban/rural distinction centers on the density of scholarly work and patterns of communication within the discipline’s territory. Domains of urban disciplines are relatively narrow and densely populated, i.e., researchers tend to cluster around a limited set of well-defined problems. Rural disciplines occupy a wider intellectual domain with a broad range of unstructured research or applied problems.

Based on my interpretation of Becher’s typology as well as based on the analysis of characteristics of SRU academic departments, I developed four cluster of disciples for this study. Mathematics, Chemistry, and Computer Science represented the urban/convergent cluster in this study. Geosciences, Technology, and Accounting were included in the rural/convergent cluster. Economics, Psychology, and Political Science represented the urban/divergent cluster. History, Literature, and Philosophy faculty members formed the rural/divergent cluster. Representatives from rural/divergent fields constitute the largest segment of my sample, whereas rural/convergent fields are least represented. On the whole, urban and rural fields are equally represented (18 and 18 participants) and divergent fields are slightly overrepresented than convergent fields (20 to 16 participants).

Finally, I focused on *male* faculty members. I expected that men's work life is affected by the spillovers from non-work life to a lesser extent than the work life of female faculty. Thus, since the focus of this study is on faculty daily work, I hoped that focusing on male faculty members would allow me to best address my research questions.

All participants have doctoral degrees from US universities. Five participants are foreign-born; four of them are naturalized US citizens. The participants ranged in age from mid-twenties to late-sixties.

Interview Techniques and Protocols

I used an in-depth, semi-structured interview as a primary method to collect data for this study. Rubin and Rubin (2005) pointed out that “[r]esearch based on in-depth interviews ... helps us understand our work lives” (p. 4). Patton (1990) asserted that “[w]e interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe. ... We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world” (p. 196). Thus, the interview was an appropriate method to collect the data for my study of the ways faculty members define their work roles, organize them in the faculty professional role-set, and enact the role-set in everyday work. Specifically, I used the cognitive interview technique, especially in structuring my follow-up questions.

Cognitive interview technique.

The cognitive interview (Fisher & Geiselman, 1992; Moody & Carter, 1999; Moody, Will, & Blanton, 1996) has a potential to facilitate identification and articulation of roles and transition processes between them in daily faculty work. Human beings use

three types of memory to recall past experiences, process recollections, and apply them in new contexts. *Episodic memory* allows re-experiencing personal past experiences with regard to time and space, *semantic memory* groups items into lists and categories, and *schematic memory* uses a set of expectations as a means to collect and make sense of new experiences (Moody & Carter, 1999, p. 389; Neill, 1984).

The cognitive interview essentially draws on the episodic memory. Episodic memory “is about happenings in particular places at particular places at particular times, or about “what,” “where,” and “when” (Tulving, 2002, p.3). The cognitive interview techniques stimulate episodic memory and facilitate articulation of past episodes and transition scripts, thus weaving past events in a seamless film of everyday work and life.

The cognitive interview is based on “five principles of memory retrieval: context reinstatement, focused retrieval, extensive retrieval, varied retrieval, and multiple representation” (Moody, Will, & Blanton, 1996, p. 128). The principle of context reinstatement suggests that a role or transition between roles is more likely to be recalled and articulated if stimuli surrounding that event are recreated. Physical context reinstatement are applied by conducting the interview in, for example, the faculty member’s office, classroom, consulting site, lab or interviewing the faculty member while she or he is moving between these sites. “Psychological context reinstatement involves having [interviewee] think about and describe his/her feelings during the episodes being recalled (rushed, relaxed, anxious, confident, etc.)” (Moody, Will, & Blanton, 1996, p. 128).

Focused retrieval is facilitated by the interviewer not interrupting the recollection or re-experiencing process, forcing the questions or hastily filling in pauses. Extensive

retrieval will be enacted by having the faculty member search through memory even though she or he feels everything has been recalled.

Varied retrieval involves varying the probes from categorical to temporal, and *vice versa* as in “Did you have any students inquire about assignments?” (categorically cued) to “What was the last task you addressed before leaving the office?” (temporally cued) (Moody, Will, & Blanton, 1996, p. 128). In addition, varied retrieval involves recalling experiences in a different sequence and looking at the experiences from different perspectives. “By changing the sequence of recall, [an interviewee] can look at each stage of the event as a separate entity” (Bennet & Hess, nd, online). This enables interviewees to identify and articulate previously unnoticed items and processes. Asking faculty members, for example, to consider the view of their colleagues or students on their daily work reduces the extent to which social expectations and personal schema influence or limit identification and articulation of subtle daily events and processes.

The fifth principle of the cognitive interview technique, multiple representations, is “based on the premise that an event may be stored and recalled in two forms” (Moody, Will, & Blanton, 1996, p. 128). Each event is recorded in the memory with an episodic code (i.e., a unique ordinal position) and a thematic code (i.e., its commonality with other events). The codes affect how the events are recalled. “Temporally cued recall decreases when retrieval attempts are delayed while thematically cued recall improves after a delay” (Moody, Will, & Blanton, 1996, p. 128). This principle stipulates that interviews should focus on very recent workdays as well as on workdays in the past and that episodic/temporal and thematic cues should be used respectively.

Interview process.

The interview process was structured to reflect my conceptual framework presented in Figure 2. Initially, I planned to conduct all of the interviews in two stages. The first round of interviews would focus on the application of the concepts of role boundary, role identity, and role enactment at the single role level. The second round of interviews would be based on the information collected in the first stage and focused on the application of the three concepts at the levels of the role dyad and role network.

As soon as this proposal was approved by the dissertation committee and the College of William and Mary's Human Subjects Committee permission was obtained, I contacted Striving Regional University (SRU), solicited participants, and scheduled interviews. I began full-scale interviewing in late September 2006 and completed interviews in late November 2006. I visited SRU eleven times to conduct interviews. The interviews were conducted in faculty offices with the exception of one interview when the participant preferred giving the interview in a local restaurant. In Spring 2007, I additionally visited SRU three times to learn more about the ongoing university-wide discussion about the proposed course-based curriculum model. Those additional visits primarily involved document analysis as well as informal conversations with previously contacted informants to check my initial interpretations and conclusions.

Two to five interviews were conducted on each visit to the Striving Regional University campus. The interviews were digitally recorded and downloaded on the computer hard drive immediately after they were completed. The Saturday and Sunday following the interviews were typically used to transcribe the highlights of the interviews and develop memos capturing my impressions of the interview sessions as well as my

initial insights and interpretations of the data. The interviews were then fully transcribed in December 2006 – early February 2007.

As I indicated earlier, initially, I planned to conduct two rounds of the interviews with each participant. However, after I had interviewed the first ten participants twice, it became evident to me that the concepts of role entrainment and role identify at a single role level had immediate effects on enacting the whole role set. I saw an opportunity to capture participants' perceptions of the interplay of different variables at different levels in one interview. I was able to integrate both protocols in one. This modification of the interview process required developing additional follow-up questions and taking extensive notes during the interviews to capture the details of everyday work and slightly extending the length of the interview.

Interview protocol.

Semi-structured interview protocols were utilized to conduct the interviews at both stages of the interview process. Initially, I devised two interview instruments, one for the first round of interviews and one for the second round. The protocols reflect the conceptual framework, but represent different levels of role analysis. The interview protocol for the first round of interviews (see *Appendix 5*) focused on the *single role level* of analysis and was structured around the concepts of role domain, role commitment, and role entrainment (see Table 1) as well as the properties of these concepts (see Table 2). The interview protocol for the second round of interviews (see *Appendix 6*) focused on the *role dyad and role network levels* of analysis and was structured around the concepts of role interface, role contrast, role transition scripts, role relational orientation, role identity hierarchy, and role-set arrangement (see Table 1) as well as the operational

properties of these concepts (see Table 2). After conducting the first ten two-stage interviews, I combined two protocols into a single one.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggested that effective semi-structured interviews consist of three kinds of questions: main, follow-up, and probes. “Main questions are the scaffolding of the interview. ... [They translate] the research topic into terms that the conversation partner can relate to and understand” (pp. 134-135). Follow-up questions are the additional questions to obtain depth and detail on the particular themes, concepts, and ideas derived from the conceptual framework of the study or introduced by the informants. Probes are conversational techniques used, first, to keep a discussion going, and, second, to provide additional clarification (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The cognitive interview technique outlined above is based primarily on using different sequence and slant probes to elucidate information.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) pointed out that questions in qualitative interviews “are not cast in concrete and are often changed” as the researcher learns new information during data collection and data analysis (p. 147). Therefore, I viewed my interview protocols as general guides rather than prescriptive directions for conducting interviews. My interview protocols primarily consisted of main questions expressed “so as not to restrict or predetermine responses but at the same time cover the research concerns” (p. 135).

There are four types of main questions: tour questions, hypothetical examples, comparison or contrast questions, and more focused temporal questions. In *tour* questions, an interviewer suggests to the informants “to act more or less as guides, walking [the interviewer] through their turf while pointing out what they think is

important on the way” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, 159-160). Tour questions such as “Could you *step me* through your last work week?” is an example of a question to start a conversation around the concepts of role domain, role entrainment and their properties.

A variation of tour questions are *mini-tours*. This type of question is used when the interviewer acquires general familiarity with the context and needs to focus on specific areas. “*How do you go about* doing your research?” is an example of a question to focus informants on their research activities as well as on associated temporal and spatial aspects of the research role domain.

Another example of a mini-tour question is to ask the interviewee what is important in a particular context. Such questions are a good way to learn about the prominence hierarchy that the informant uses to organize his role identities. For example, “What are the *highlights* of your everyday work here in this department?” Yet another type of tour question focuses on the interviewees’ interpretation of their experiences. “Overall, what has been *your everyday experience* of being a faculty member at this institution?” is an example of a question used to start a conversation about what it means for a given faculty member to arrange and enact his professional role-set as a whole or as a network of roles in everyday work.

The second type of main questions includes a variety of questions asking about *hypothetical* examples. In this study, hypothetical questions were used to encourage the informants to talk about different groups of role-senders, e.g., “*If I were you*, what groups of people would I interact with in my everyday work?”; about expectations of role-senders, e.g., “*If I were an administrator* at your institution, what expectations do you think I would have for you?”; about role boundary properties such as flexibility and

permeability, e.g., “*Suppose*, you are writing a grant report and your colleague walks into your office, what would you do?”; or about salience hierarchy of role identities, e.g., “*If* you were to tell a newly-hired faculty member about your work responsibilities in this department, what specifically would you tell him?”

Comparison or *contrast* questions ask the informants to sort their experiences into opposites or compare them. Such questions were used to capture the contrast or difference between roles. For example, “Can you tell me about expectations of you that your students might have? How are they the *same or different* from the expectations of your advisees?”

Another variation of main questions is *chronology* questions about what happened at a specific time (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). This type of question was helpful during the second round or second part of interviews when I already had the chronology of the informants’ work weeks. “What happened *after* your afternoon class ended?” is an example of a chronology question that was designed to capture informants’ transition script from teaching to another role domain. Similar *stage* questions focus on a time period and explore what happened then. For example, the stage question “Could you tell me about what happened *when* you arrived at your consulting site?” explored activities associated with the consulting role domain.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggest that prior to or early in the qualitative research project, the interview protocols should be simple and reasonably short, resembling “a free-hand map to the conversation, pointing out the general direction but not specifying which nooks and crannies will be explored” (p. 150). As research was progressing, the number and type of questions in the protocol were slightly modified. Nevertheless, the

initial main questions served as “the skeleton” of the interviews in that they ensured that the research problem was thoroughly examined and all concepts in the conceptual framework were addressed (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Data Analysis

In the grounded theory approach, data are generally analyzed in three steps: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) described *open coding* as a procedure to develop concepts or building blocks of the theory and formulate categories or cornerstones of the theory. *Axial coding* refers to relating categories to their subcategories or concepts answering the questions of “when, where, why, who, how, and with what consequences” about a given category (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 125). Axial coding results in developing propositions that generalize relationships between categories. In *selective coding*, the researcher identifies a core variable that would have the “ability to pull the other categories together to form an explanatory whole” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 146) thus providing a storyline in the narrative.

As I indicated above, for this study, I modified the grounded theory approach to qualitative research. I applied the concept of role boundaries to the study of faculty professional role-sets in order to generate a theory of the ways faculty members arrange and enact their role-sets in everyday work. In other words, I had already applied open coding in my literature review and presented the identified categories in Tables 1 and 2. In subsequent analyses, I followed Strauss and Corbin’s (1990, 1998) steps in axial and selective coding procedures for data analysis and theory generation.

I used a computer program to organize extensive interview data that I collected. One of the most popular computer programs used for qualitative data analysis purposes is *N.U.D.I.S.T. in Vivo* or *NVivo* by Qualitative Solutions and Research Pty. Ltd. of Melbourne, Australia. Qualitative data analysis software programs in general, and NVivo specifically, are referred to as “theory builders – not, it should be noted, because on their own they can build theory, but because they contain various tools that assist the researcher to develop theoretical ideas” (Gibbs, 2002, p. 11; Bazeley, 2007). Further, Gibbs (2002) stated that “[t]he design of NVivo was strongly influenced by grounded theory and therefore the program gives good support for the method” (p. 165). Thus, NVivo appeared to be an appropriate tool to facilitate data processing and analysis in this study. Further, NVivo was recently used in research utilizing the boundary theory in exploring work/non-work interface (Wilson et al., 2004).

Essentially, NVivo assists the researcher with, first, storing and manipulation of transcribed interviews and, second, creation and manipulation of codes, known in NVivo as *nodes*. “Nodes are names or labels for a concept or idea about your data. Coding text at a node is the process of establishing a relationship or connection between a node and one or more passages of text” (Gibbs, 2002, p. 17). NVivo enables the researcher to easily code the text in nodes, edit the nodes if needed, merge nodes, group nodes in categories, assign memos to nodes, and develop a nodes tree to establish the relationships among the nodes and identify the most critical node for the phenomena under study.

My own experience with NVivo proved the utility of the software in organizing and storing the data. NVivo greatly facilitated coding the text and the subsequent cutting and chunking of the data. However, software assistance in developing a nodes tree or

relationship structure proved to be limited. Therefore, I used a traditional method of multicolored cards and envelopes to identify, develop, and sort main categories and themes emerging from the data.

Summary

In this Chapter, I argued that the problem of this study lends itself to qualitative methods of inquiry and suggested that a modified grounded theory approach is the best fit for this research project. Based on the discussion in the previous two chapters, I delineated the properties and dimensions of the categories derived from the literature review. Finally, I outlined data collection and data analysis procedures that I applied in this study.

Chapter IV. State Institution of National Distinction

Designing this study, I was interested in exploring three areas. First, I wanted to survey how organizational and cultural contexts might affect individual articulation of the meaning of the roles in the role-set. Second, I planned to capture the ways the meanings assigned to the roles affect the internal relationships among the role elements. Finally, I wanted to identify the ways in which internal relationships among the roles affect enactment of the role-set as a system of prospective interrelated elements.

This chapter sets the organizational context of the study. After briefly presenting an overview of the characteristics of Striving Regional University (SRU), I outline the organizational environment for faculty work life at SRU. To elaborate on the contemporary context of the university, I also discuss a controversial course-based curriculum proposal and its potential implications for daily work as perceived by SRU faculty members. The curriculum proposal has been the focal point of faculty debate and discussion for the past two years and appears to be an important reference point for many SRU faculty members participating in my interviews.

Striving Regional University (SRU)

Wolf-Wendel and Ward (2006) distinguished between two distinct types of comprehensive institutions. *Striving comprehensives* are characterized by the state of flux and unclear work expectations. These institutions are “caught between old expectations connected to teaching and new, increasing research expectations” (p. 502). In contrast, *regional comprehensives* have a clear mission, focus primarily on teaching, and are committed to addressing regional educational needs.

As I demonstrate in this chapter, SRU is characterized by both commitment to teaching and addressing regional needs as well as by high aspirations, which are evident in the school's motto, "State Institution of National Distinction". The institution strives to significantly improve its national and international recognition while maintaining and enhancing its reputation of a student-centered teaching institution responsive to regional needs ([SRU] *Mission Statement: 2005*). Thus, the pseudonym for my site is *Striving Regional University* (SRU).

Overview

Striving Regional University is a medium-sized, primarily residential, public comprehensive university offering baccalaureates in liberal arts, sciences, pre-professional and professional programs, including education, nursing, social work, and business, and a limited number of applied graduate programs. The University enrolls approximately 6,800 undergraduate and 600 graduate students. The 2005 Carnegie Classification identifies SRU as a Master's Colleges and Universities⁴ (larger programs) institution, otherwise known as a Master's L institution (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2005). The University is located in a rural area but within a two to three hour drive from three major metropolitan areas in the Mid-Atlantic area.

Less than a hundred years old, Striving Regional University has changed its name five times, reflecting distinct stages in its development. Similar to many contemporary comprehensive universities, SRU was initially formed as normal school with a two-year training program to prepare elementary school teachers. In less than ten years, a four-year

⁴ Generally includes institutions that award at least 50 master's degrees and fewer than 20 doctoral degrees per year.

Bachelor of Science program was developed and the normal school was transformed into Striving State Teachers College.

The early 1960s marked the expansion of the college's curriculum from an exclusive focus on teacher education to a more comprehensive one, integrating the liberal arts and sciences, which soon took a central place in the school's curriculum. At the same time, the long-standing tradition of teacher education was reaffirmed by creating a Master of Education program. However, the college dropped the word "Teachers" from its name and became part of the state-wide system of state colleges. The creation of a single board of trustees for the state colleges "brought new statewide resources but an end to some of Striving's campus self-determination and governance" ([SRU] *Fact Book*, A-5.0).

Rapid growth of the academic degree program size and diversity characterized the last third of the twentieth century. Four academic schools were formed and later endowed: Liberal Arts; Sciences; Business; and Education and Professional Studies. The faculty developed a number of graduate programs, but decided to keep graduate population to approximately ten percent of the overall enrollment in order to focus primarily on the quality of undergraduate education in the liberal arts and sciences. The state recognized the growth and development of the institution by renaming it first Striving State University and then Striving Regional University.

The mission of Striving Regional University is to empower students "with the knowledge, skills, and core values that contribute to active citizenship, gainful employment, and life-long learning in a democratic society and interdependent world" ([SRU] *Mission Statement: 2005*). Two dominant themes—ambitious aspirations and

commitment to teaching—became evident in the analyses of the SRU mission and vision statements, current University Strategic Plan, and President’s speeches.

Strong aspirations to become “a state institution of national distinction” with global recognition are frequently referenced in institutional plans and actions. However, no explicit explanation of what concrete steps would be required to achieve national distinction and global recognition has been forthcoming. Many faculty members⁵ express the opinion that the motto “State Institution of National Distinction” is, in fact, unclear or, even, empty rhetoric. In fact, the official documents do not explicitly identify the specific indicators or criteria for determining “national distinction”. One Professor speculated, “[The motto is] purely public relations. Purely something that administration thought of. The President was unhappy with [another state university] that proclaimed itself ‘an honors university.’ So, I guess, she wanted something to rival, so ... it’s purely public relations.”

Further, a large group of senior faculty members believes that the focus on an ambiguous national distinction undermines the University’s mission and tradition of serving the region and the local students. One Professor put it this way.

I’ve had issues with that [motto] for a long time. We serve the region. Fundamentally, that’s why we are here. I think that if we are going to be nationally eminent, this is the phrase we use, that should mean that we serve our region better than other regional comprehensives serve theirs, that we are doing better job of our mission of being responsive to the needs of those ten counties. I don’t think we are supposed to be Research I University. We are not a flagship. We are not discovering the cure for cancer. We are teaching and providing service and scholarship that should be locally and regionally driven.

⁵ From here on, unless otherwise noted, by “faculty members” I am referring to only those faculty members whom I interviewed. In addition, I limited the sample to male faculty members to avoid gender role complications.

As somewhat of a compromise, many faculty see current initiatives as a means not to build national *distinction* but to further improve SRU's *recognition* as a high quality higher education institution, thus reaffirming the institutional focus on teaching and regional needs. An Associate Professor explained:

Having been here as long as I have, I mean, when I came to Striving as a student in 1984, when I told people, "I'm going to Striving." Their response was, "Oh, you want to be near the beach." That was what people thought of, which, you know. Now, you don't ever hear that. I mean, people say, "Oh, it's near the beach." But it's not their first thought. I think the University has come a long way and we are well-known. And when I'm elsewhere, many people have heard of the University, which would certainly not have been the case back at that point. So, I think, recognition would probably be a better word than distinction... [recognition for] quality education, we are well-known because of these various rankings we have in magazines and so on. It's interesting, I noticed, even in the last couple of years, more and more people know where we are and I think that means something.

Another Professor concurs that recognition of SRU is growing:

When others start noticing us, when they start talking about us – by the way, Striving is this, Striving is that, they have achieved this, they have achieved that. I mean having four Schools that are all endowed. Having Division III NCAA with some teams being national champions. I mean, these are the things that people hear, and then, of course, people are talking about graduation rate, retention rate.

It is apparent that the affirmation and enhancement of SRU's tradition of quality undergraduate education has been an *articulated* driving force behind the institution's quest for "national distinction". Indeed, excellence in teaching and, to a lesser extent, strong town-gown relationships have been identified as the foundation for strategic development of the university as a student-centered learning community ([SRU] *Mission Statement: 2005*). The university Strategic Plan is designed to further enhance the learning-focused, student-centered university community by maintaining high levels of student-faculty interactions in small classroom settings, ensuring that each student has a caring and proactive faculty advisor, and providing opportunities for students to

collaborate with faculty mentors on undergraduate research projects. Committed to active learning pedagogies, the University administration is working on plans to support faculty who encourage student participation in internships, service learning, international experiences, and leadership opportunities by setting examples of personal active engagement in extra-institutional activities ([SRU] *Mission Statement: 2005*).

The institutional focus on student learning and success is demonstrated by relatively small undergraduate class sizes (1:14 faculty-student ratio) as well as by the highest retention (81 percent) and graduation (73 percent) rates in the state system⁶. SRU's graduation rate is the fifth highest average six-year graduation rate among comprehensive public master's universities nationwide ([SRU] *Fact Book*, A-16).

The university's commitment to undergraduate teaching is further evident in various national rankings. SRU is ranked as a top 10 public comprehensive university and as a top-tier institution among both public and private universities in the North by *U.S. News & World Report*. *The Princeton Review* ranks it as one of "The Best 361 Colleges" in America. Also, the *Kaplan/Newsweek* has named the university as one of America's 367 most interesting colleges. Finally, *Kiplinger's Personal Finance* magazine has named SRU one of its 2006 100 Best Values in Public Colleges.

Discussion of faculty research productivity as a means to achieving national distinction is virtually absent in official documents. For example, in a relatively lengthy mission and vision statement, research is mentioned only once in the context of undergraduate research collaborations between students and faculty ([SRU] *Mission Statement: 2005*). Only a quarter of SRU faculty members are involved in grant activity as investigators, evaluators, and consultants. The decrease in external grant awards from

⁶ As of 2005-2006 academic year.

over five million dollars in 2001 to 3.8 million in 2006 might be indicative of the fact that faculty research is not among the current strategic directions of the institution ([SRU] *Fact Book*, I-4.0).

Thus, while reaffirming its commitment to teaching, student development, and community enhancement at this point in time, Striving Regional University appears to be, to some extent, behind in a general trend of adopting the research culture at comprehensive institutions (Finnegan & Gamson, 1996). However, this situation might significantly change as the University is hiring large numbers of new faculty members and is experimenting with faculty workload designs.

SRU Faculty

Striving Regional University employs 337 full-time and 152 part-time faculty members. Since 1996, the number of full-time faculty members has increased by eighty-three faculty whereas the number of part-time faculty members decreased by twenty ([SRU] *Fact Book*)⁷. Interestingly, this growth pattern runs counter to the national trends of increasing reliance on part-time faculty (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001).

Almost 80 percent of SRU full-time faculty members are tenured or on a tenure track. This proportion is just slightly below the national average for public master's institutions (Cataldi et al., 2005). Approximately the same percentage of SRU full-time faculty members have earned terminal degrees. Again, this percentage is comparable to the national average. The average age for SRU full-time faculty members is 50.4 years old, which is comparable to the national average of 50.2 years for public master's institutions (Cataldi et al., 2005). Average years of service for male faculty members at SRU is thirteen and a half years.

⁷ Faculty demographic data presented in this section are obtained from [SRU] *Fact Book*.

Male faculty members constitute 55 percent of the total SRU full-time faculty population, which is slightly below the national average of 59 percent for public master's institutions (Cataldi et al., 2005). Male faculty members overwhelmingly outnumber females in the Schools of Business and Liberal Arts. Men and women are almost equally represented in the faculty of the School of Science and Technology. Not surprisingly, female faculty in the School of Education and Professional Studies greatly outnumber their male colleagues.

Almost one third of the SRU male faculty holds the rank of Professor. Associate Professors as well as Assistant Professors constitute about one quarter of the male faculty population. The rest of the male faculty population includes instructors and lecturers. This distribution of faculty by academic rank generally reflects the national distribution by rank for public master's institutions (Cataldi et al., 2005). At SRU, faculty salaries compared to data on its AAUP peers currently rank at the 74th percentile for Assistant Professors, at the 59th percentile for Associate Professors, and at the 62nd percentile for Full Professors.

The variable expectations for tenured and tenure track faculty workload are designated to range from 65-77 percent teaching, 15-25 percent research or scholarship, and 5-15 percent service. Non-tenure track faculty members' workload is 77 percent teaching, 5-20 percent research, and 3-20 percent service. This amounts to typically seven or eight courses per year for tenured/tenure-track faculty and eight courses a year for non-tenure track faculty. However, faculty members in accredited programs, such as Business, teach three courses per semester.

The SRU Faculty Handbook (2006) acknowledges that the balance among teaching, research and service change over a faculty member's career, but emphasizes that all faculty, including senior faculty, are expected to participate in undergraduate teaching. The *Faculty Handbook* (2006) indicates that "teaching effectiveness is the paramount consideration in faculty tenure, promotion and merit" (chapter 2, p.37).

The average class size at SRU is fourteen undergraduate student full-time equivalents per one full-time faculty equivalent. As measured by the ratio of student credit hours to the full-time faculty equivalent (FTFE), faculty in the School of Liberal Arts lead in the number of credit hours generated by faculty, followed by the School of Business, School of Education, and School of Science and Technology. The sociology faculty generates the highest number of credit hours, 848 per FTFE, while the nursing faculty generates the lowest number, 117 credits per FTEF. The University average is 478 credit hours per FTFE ([SRU] *Fact Book*).

The SRU Strategic Plan indicates that the institution is committed to attracting and retaining dedicated teaching-focused faculty members ([SRU] *Mission Statement: 2005*). In fact, in Spring 2006, reviewing a recent re-accreditation self-study, the SRU President pointed out that "the visiting team made particular note of our 'talented and student-centered faculty' and they stated that 'it is very evident that there is a tremendous dedication of the faculty to the students as well as to the institution and colleagues'" (*State of the University Speech*, April 18, 2006, online).

For almost all participants, SRU is the only higher education institution in which they have worked. Three-quarters of faculty in this study joined SRU immediately after graduate school or after brief stints as post-doctoral students. The majority of the rest of

the participants were employed in public schools or industry before taking faculty positions at SRU.

Interestingly, most participants did not plan to stay at Striving Regional when they accepted their job offers. A typical comment was, “[w]hen I came here, I didn’t think I would stay. I thought I would come here for few years and leave”. However, all participants expressed general satisfaction with their work at the University and indicated no intention to leave the institution. They stay at SRU because of location, growth opportunities and professional autonomy, and quality of students and faculty.

The location of SRU, with its proximity to beaches, national parks, and major metropolitan areas, is an important reason why faculty members consider SRU a good place to work and raise children.

It’s a nice area for people who have families. I think they decided it is a good area to raise children. It doesn’t seem like, [but] we are really pretty centrally located . . . just over two hours to DC or Baltimore, three hours to Philadelphia, about the same to Norfolk. So, you’re close enough to things that you can do things or research or whatever the case might be without actually being in the middle of everything.

This good, central location is supplemented by the relatively low cost of living. One Associate Professor pointed out,

I think it is a quality of life issue. The cost of living here is still relatively low, which is always a consideration, of course, for faculty, you know, the salaries and stuff. So, and my impression always is that people who come here end up liking it and will stay.

Growth opportunities are another important reason that keeps faculty at SRU. A Professor who joined the University in the late 1970s recalled,

When I came here, I thought I would be here for maybe four-five years and then I would go somewhere else and get promoted and all that. There were too many opportunities for growth and I was enjoying what I was doing, so I stayed and I have no regrets about that.

A veteran Associate Professor believes that SRU provided more opportunities than other more wealthy and prestigious institutions by pointing out, “When you have less privileges, you have more opportunities. Most things have yet to be done, so you can do them.” His colleague agrees that opportunities result in “[p]rogression in the job. Being in a growing university, you could be a part of that growth.” The faculty members appear to be able to use the multiple opportunities for growth, successfully navigate the university life, and wisely use their professional autonomy in structuring their work life.

So, I’ve carved out a place that I am happy with and the University is happy with me. So my life ... I love what I am doing, I love my job. The University allows faculty members a considerable freedom to choose the path they can follow towards the life as a professor.

Similarly, an Associate Professor pointed out a relatively high level of choice that faculty members have in regard to professional activities, especially research work. He compared SRU to Research I Universities and emphasized that a more *laissez-faire* environment at SRU was a critical factor in his decision to stay,

I think that the people who are interested in doing research for the sake of research, they certainly have opportunities to do that. People who are interested in research just for the sake of publications, certainly can do that. And people who are more interested in service or community involvement, it is easy for them to do that. I think it gives people the freedom to define themselves a little bit more broadly than they would be able if they were at the “publish or perish” kind of environment.

In this regard, SRU is similar to liberal arts colleges rather than to research universities.

Ruscio (1987) observed that “research in universities is typically very ‘organized’ – bureaucratic – whereas at liberal arts colleges it remains in the hands of the individual”

(p. 210).

The quality of the students is another important factor for faculty decisions to stay. A recently hired Assistant Professor talking about his decision to seek permanent employment at SRU after his visiting professorship term expired, expressed his pleasant surprise. “I also found that I was more impressed with the students than I thought I would be. I have good students.” In fact, the enrollment growth at the institution in recent years also resulted in the improved academic environment. A Professor pointed out,

We’ve been able to grow in size but also grow in the profile of academic excellence. Our students’ SAT scores and grade point averages have gone up even though we continued to grow. We haven’t had to compromise the quality of students that we admit.

The quality of faculty and intellectual environment is also a significant reason for faculty to come and stay at SRU. A senior Professor discussing faculty hiring and retention at SRU expressed his belief that,

We do seem to be hiring good, pretty good faculty. I really think that some of the hires are [a thumbs up gesture]. The teaching load, of course, is difficult. ...I think, you know, those of us who’ve been here a long time may not really recognize that our image has changed to some extent and, probably, changed for the better. So, I think, the institution does have a little bit of the reputation, that younger faculty say, that’s the place I’d like to be. You know, SAT scores are decent, it’s growing, and it is nice school, nice place to live. I think, also, the faculty is pretty good quality. So, I think, a young faculty member, would say, these guys are...they haven’t died! I think that there’s, probably, a pretty good feel in most departments that there is some intellectual activity here.

Overall, SRU faculty members perceive that the university provides them with a complete and balanced package. One Associate Professor explained that

It’s hard for me to look at the complete kind of package—location combined with teaching that I enjoy and I can still do research. It is hard for me to imagine taking a chance at another job where the combination of these factors can be more tricky to put together.

This “complete package”, however, might be realigned soon as the University is designing approaches to address the Strategic Plan objective of developing and

implementing faculty workload standards that are comparable to SRU institutional peers ([SRU] *Mission Statement: 2005*).

Course-Based Curriculum Proposal

The Striving Regional University Strategic Plan explicitly has identified the need to develop and implement faculty workload standards that are comparable to its institutional peers in order to recruit and retain highly qualified student-centered faculty ([SRU] *Mission Statement: 2005*). The Plan does not specify the intended parameters of the revised workload. However, many faculty members believed that the Strategic Plan objective is aimed at decreasing the current teaching load. Further, many faculty members viewed the *course-based curriculum initiative* as a primary structural mechanism to realign faculty workload at SRU, thus addressing this Strategic Plan objective.

Not surprisingly, the course-based curriculum proposal frequently emerged as an important reference point for faculty in my interviews. When discussing faculty daily work at SRU, almost all participants mentioned the proposal and its perceived consequences several times during my conversations with them. Clearly, the proposal has stirred up the campus by aiming, in the words of one faculty member, to “change the nature of our work life.”

In this section, I provide a brief overview of the main characteristics of the course-based curriculum proposal and the results of the vote on the proposal. Then, I outline the administrative process by which the proposal was taken to and through faculty. Finally, I focus on the divided lines among different groups of faculty that the debate over the proposal exposed.

The current SRU curriculum model is based on credit hours. A typical student must complete 120 credit hours to earn a Bachelor's degree. The proposed course-based curriculum delivery model counts *courses* rather than *credit hours*. Under the proposal, students would be required to take 30 to 32 courses rather than to accumulate 120 credit hours.

This proposal to move from a credit-based to a course-based curriculum was initiated by the SRU President early in 2005 after the President had visited the College of New Jersey (TCNJ) with the Middle States Accreditation review team. The President established an ad-hoc committee consisting of four faculty members to study and evaluate the experience of the TCNJ as well other course-based curriculum institutions such as Amherst and Brown.

In Spring 2005, the committee favorably evaluated the TCNJ experience and recommended that they study the feasibility of the course-based curriculum at SRU. In Fall 2005, the SRU Faculty Senate established a twelve-member ad-hoc committee on curriculum change to conduct such a study. By Spring 2006, the committee voted in favor of the proposal (with nine votes for and three votes against the proposal) and developed a set of general principles and operational guidelines for implementing course-based curriculum delivery model at SRU.

In essence, under the proposed model, the number of courses students take would decrease, but the restructured courses would provide more powerful learning experiences. The official *purpose* of this realignment is to improve the quality of undergraduate education and to further promote the mission of SRU as a learning community ([SRU] *Mission Statement: 2005*). Enhancing the rigor of the courses and increasing student

engagement in undergraduate research and student-faculty collaboration on service-learning projects have been identified as the primary *strategies* to improve the student learning experience at SRU (*The Course-Based Curriculum Delivery System at [SRU]*, April 3, 2006).

The proposal also carries important implications for faculty work. Under the proposal, a typical student would be taking four four-credit courses per semester in contrast to five three-credit courses that a typical student takes under the current system. Consequently, the teaching load for a typical faculty member would be realigned from *four three-credit* hour courses to *three four-credit* hour courses per semester. Proposal authors argued that this would enable faculty members to “focus deeply on both the courses they teach and the students with whom they work” and would also provide opportunities to “engage in scholarly work ... within the context of their regular workload” (*The Course-Based Curriculum Delivery System at [SRU]*, April 3, 2006, p. 3).

As the campus-wide debate over the course-based curriculum proposal has demonstrated, SRU faculty members seriously take ownership of the curriculum and exercise their professional responsibility of developing curriculum (AAUP, 2006, p. 139). One of the proposal supporters proudly observed, “Some of the things we do ... are a bit experimental. Going for a four-credit class and basically being the people who initiate that change and implement it and evaluate it and justify it. That’s something you can’t do [in other places].”

This high level of faculty attention and engagement in the debate over the course-based curriculum proposal apparently has led the administration to hold a University-

wide faculty referendum on the proposal rather than merely channeling the proposal through the regular curriculum review and approval process. The proposal was rejected by SRU faculty members in April 2006 by a margin of twelve votes (159 vs. 147).

Since the vote was anonymous, the aggregated results cannot be analyzed. However, most SRU faculty members claim they knew how the votes were distributed, even if the opinions differ. For example, one mid-career Liberal Arts faculty member stated without hesitation, “The Education School voted against it. The Business School voted against it. And in the Science and Liberal Arts, almost all of the young faculty, almost unanimously voted for it.” In contrast, a senior Business faculty emphatically argued that, “I heard, for example, that School of Business was against, nothing can be further from the truth. I think in the School 65-70 percent [voted against the proposal]. This means that a lot of faculty [30-35 percent] wanted it to be course-based.”

Another common perception is that senior faculty members voted against the proposal to preserve the status-quo. One Associate, for example, bluntly stated,

I think older faculty were against the change. And I think that's just a resistance to change. I found this kind of crazy in a way and somewhat irresponsible. Because many of those people are going to be retiring in a couple of years, so why not get out of [the] way to do something that might help the younger faculty? I thought that it was irresponsible that they didn't.

Later in the interview, however, he modified his position by pointing out that, “On the other hand, some of the younger faculty were too, too excited about the possibility [of a reduced teaching load] without thinking what this is going to mean.... I saw both sides' irresponsible approach. Rather than stepping back and saying, what does this really mean?”

Indeed, the debate and vote on the course-based curriculum were based on a sharp divide among SRU faculty by disciplinary and, also, generational lines. However, the final outcome—the rejection of the proposal by the faculty referendum—appears to be a result of the interplay of two variables: administrative process by which the proposal was taken to and through the faculty and the perceived consequences of the proposal implementation for faculty work.

Administrative Process

Two factors characterized the way the course-based curriculum proposal was taken to and through SRU faculty. First, although the proposal was developed by the Faculty Senate committee, many faculty members talked about a top-down administrative tactic by which the proposal was presented to campus. Second, many faculty members believe that the introduction of the course-based curriculum proposal shortchanged the review of the general education curriculum by redirecting faculty attention and institutional resources.

Most participants noted that many on campus could live with the proposed innovations in principle, but did not appreciate the way it was introduced. These faculty members felt that the vote on the proposal was rushed to the table by the administration so that there was not enough time for discussion before the referendum, the details of the proposal were not worked out, and the articulated goals of the proposal did not warrant such a major reform.

All interviewees agreed that they did not have sufficient time to understand the course-based curriculum model, study the model's fit within the SRU environment, and analyze potential consequences of implementation. "It was rushed in. We didn't have

much time [for discussion]”, stated one Professor. Another Professor concurred, “I believe it was speed ... Speed was a major detriment”. A new Associate Professor described how the proposal was presented to faculty in this way,

There were a lot of details that hadn’t been worked out. They [administration and proposal writers] were like—“Trust us, we’ll take care of it.” No, we want it all worked out before we agree to this. And there lies the problem. With some people ... it’s not that idea was not so good or bad as much as the way it was handled was not too good. A lot of people just didn’t care for the way the administration was handling it, so there was like—“No, this is not the way to go about this. This is all wrong.” So, it was no.

More specifically, many faculty, from Liberal Arts and Sciences as well as Business and Education & Professional Studies, thought that they were not given sufficient time to discuss the impact of course-based curriculum on the general education core.

I don’t think that at some level of administration it was handled properly. Because for a lot of people the change in the curriculum, the format of the curriculum, was very closely tied to our general education requirements. And so, there was a real concern there of what was that going to actually mean for the general education requirements. And the Committee that had been working on the curriculum model had come up with the rough idea of our general education requirements and, then, sort of at the last minute, the administration just sort of ignored that and that scared a lot of people. That’s what did it.

Further, a general education reform has been discussed on campus intermittently since 1998. Many faculty members felt that the general education reform agenda had been shortchanged. A Business Professor, for example, emphatically argued that the course-based proposal should be discussed only after the general education is reformed.

One of things in my opinion, [closure on the general education reform is] essential for this course-based curriculum. First, you have to take care of your gen ed. You have to make your gen ed twenty-first century friendly. You can’t have nineteenth century gen ed courses and try to implement ... the course-based ... for the twenty-first century. So, it has to start there.

Many SRU faculty, both proposal proponents and opponents, feel that the course-based curriculum initiative was improperly introduced to the campus community. Insufficient time for discussion, inadequate attention to the details in the proposal, and shortchanged general education review emerged as important process factors that prevented the wholesale acceptance of the proposal by the SRU faculty. Further, faculty buy-in was impeded by the perceived implications of the proposal implementation for faculty work life.

Implications for Faculty Work

Interviewed faculty members perceive that implementation of the proposal would decrease intensity of their teaching load but increase role complexity of their work life. In other words, the faculty expects that the proposed curriculum delivery model would affect the number as well as types of activities expected of them. The factor of *intensity* primarily refers to the reduction of classroom teaching hours under the proposed model. The factor of *complexity* refers to the expectations of enhanced faculty engagement in preparation of redesigned four-credit hours courses and associated co-curricular activities as well as increased scholarly productivity when the proposal is implemented.

Intensity.

The course-based curriculum proposal identifies the realignment of the faculty teaching load as one of the mechanisms to create “a less rushed and more focused and engaged” atmosphere (*The Course-Based Curriculum Delivery System at [SRU], 2006*). According to the proposal, although overall faculty teaching output will not change and will remain twelve course credit hours per semester, classroom contact hours will decrease by a quarter. However, the faculty differ on which indicator – *credit hours*,

contact hours, or number of students served – should be used to measure the faculty teaching load.

Essentially, the faculty translates the calculation of teaching output as a matter of fairness. Many participants feel that the proposed changes are inherently unfair. The change in the classroom contact hours would affect faculty differentially by discipline or field and is skewed toward some departments in particular. Some interviewees seem to be convinced that the course-based curriculum proposal and its discussion were focused on the liberal arts model based on the credit hour and do not take into consideration the realities of teaching in other disciplines and fields.

Under the course-based curriculum the teaching load would be reduced from four to three courses per semester, but the number of credits per course would be increased from three to four. Thus, the proposal was extremely appealing to the faculty who are currently teaching four courses per semester and are primarily in the liberal arts. Indeed, the proposed program would reduce classroom contact hours but maintain credit hours generated by the faculty members. “Most people in the Liberal Arts School really liked the idea, they saw it as definitely the way to reduce the workload,” a social sciences faculty member indicated. A liberal arts Associate Professor acknowledged that his school colleagues would benefit from the proposal implementation, but accused faculty from other schools of partisanship,

A lot of it did come down to – this may benefit faculty in the [name] School of Liberal Arts, but it’s not going to do anything for me. I think they got caught up in the self-interest. People did not see that they are personally going to benefit from it.

However, not everyone, even within the liberal arts, perceives the benefits of implementing the course-based curriculum for the daily work life. One Assistant Professor explained,

In [his field], to be honest with you, I do not see it helping us too much because I teach sometime seven-eight classes a semester. Because we have so many credit hours, so many courses, in order to keep it within 120 to 137 range, many of my classes are one to two [credit] hours, even though I teach it two or three hours. It's less credit hours. It is a good example, I teach [course title] this semester. It meets twice a week for fifty minutes. They only get one credit hour for it. It's not equitable always.

However, he voted for the proposal hoping that he and his department would be able to derive indirect benefits after the proposal was implemented in other departments. He hopes

...to work on the articulation agreement with the Dean and say—"Yes, you are not going to help us by reducing the number of our courses, but can you give us credit for this extra work [compared to other departments in the School]—whether it be stipend pay or release time to do all these other things."

Science faculty who teach courses with laboratories, believed that the proposal was developed to benefit primarily liberal arts faculty and, to some extent, science faculty without lab assignments. Their basic argument was that a science four-credit hour lab course would require significantly more classroom time than a typical four-credit enhanced course in liberal arts. An Associate Professor from the School of Science and Technology pointed out that,

The problem with the School of Sciences is that we have labs. Our loads are counted differently and there is a certain amount of unfairness associated with that, because, basically, we have more contact hours with students but really don't get to see the credit for that. You know, if you compare ... If you want to make their all four-credit classes, in our four-credits with the labs we actually spend a lot more time than, let's say, a four-hour course in the liberal arts would be.

For faculty members in the accredited programs of Schools of Business and Education, the proposal would not decrease the teaching load. Many of them are already teaching three courses per semester. So, they tended not to see any benefits for their work load in implementing the proposal. Further, the proposal did not address the problem that they face, which is large classes. A Business Professor explained,

We are still teaching more students than other schools on the campus, although they are teaching four [courses]. I probably have three classes of 25 to 30 students each, but some faculty, I am not talking about gen ed, may be teaching four courses but the total of the students they have may be 20 or 30. Some are looking at the number of courses they teach, rather than at the number of students they teach.

Business and Education faculty perceive that the Liberal Arts and Science faculty would slash all the benefits out of the proposed change by teaching the same number of courses but serving a significantly smaller number of students.

The debate over the course-based curriculum proposal uncovered the differences in faculty perceptions and practices across the SRU schools. Each school uses different metrics as the primary measures of their teaching productivity; thus, the proposal would affect the units differentially. Most of the liberal arts faculty supported the proposal because the design would maintain the current number of credit hours generated by the faculty while decreasing their course load and classroom contact hours. Faculty members from the School of Science and Technology, especially those who teach courses with labs, view contact or classroom hours as the most appropriate measure of their teaching productivity. However, the Business and Education faculty members, who typically teach large classes in their major's courses, tend to see the number of students served as an indicator of their teaching output.

Complexity.

The participants believe that the implementation of the course-based curriculum model would make their work life more complex by increasing time and effort spent on course preparation as well as by increasing engagement in service-learning and undergraduate research activities. Further, the faculty members perceive that under the new model, they would have more opportunities for scholarly work but, consequently, research productivity expectations would also increase.

Course enhancement.

Striving Regional University prides itself being a high quality teaching institution ([SRU] *Mission Statement: 2005*). The primary articulated purpose of the course-based curriculum initiative is to affirm the University's commitment to teaching and to enhance student and faculty engagement in enriching educational experiences such as mentoring, undergraduate research, and service learning. Further, the Faculty Senate ad hoc committee on curriculum change believed that the implementation of the proposal would enable the faculty to enhance teaching and other work, including the following:

- Interacting with students on a one-to one basis, thus increasing the student-centered nature of the [SRU] academic community
- Developing curricular materials and implementing new pedagogical methods
- Exploring new directions in their discipline
- Engaging in interdisciplinary activities
- Devoting themselves to scholarly activities (*The Course-Based Curriculum Delivery System at [Striving Regional University], 2006, p.4*).

Under the proposal, a typical faculty member would teach fewer courses. The new four-credit hour courses, however, would have to be substantially enhanced compared to the current three-credit hour courses primarily by increasing the number of course assignments and by developing significant co-curricular activities to supplement and

complement classroom instruction. The School of Liberal Arts, for example, has developed a “course enhancement menu” that offers seven strategies to transform current three-credit hour courses into enhanced four-credit hour courses. The menu includes the following enhancements:

1. Increased course content and/or collateral readings (*e.g.*, more primary, secondary and/or supplemental readings).
2. Undergraduate Research and Information Literacy (*e.g.*, assignments that fulfill department programmatic approaches to undergraduate research and information literacy, systematically building students’ research and writing skills throughout their majors).
3. Technology (*e.g.*, instructor-developed content, commercially developed course packs, digital audio (pod-casting), video demonstrations, chat rooms, course blogs, individual WebCT tutoring, teleconferences with students at other campuses or international groups, field research, student-authored independent research).
4. Higher Level Critical Thinking Exercises (*e.g.*, assignments that specifically develop analysis, synthesis and evaluation, as opposed to lower-level critical thinking exercises that target knowledge, comprehension and application).
5. Service Learning/Civic Engagement (*e.g.*, assignments which place students in leadership positions to conceive of and implement programs that they know will benefit others; assignments which will involve students in developing good civic dispositions).
6. International Education/Cultural Enrichment (*e.g.*, spring break study/experience abroad, museum visits, cultural experiences within our geographical area).
7. Additional hour(s) in class, lab or studio
(*Proposal for Comprehensive Curriculum Reform in [SRU’s] School of Liberal Arts, 2007, p. 9*).

Proposal authors expect that the delivery of enhanced four-credit hour courses would result in increased expectations regarding pedagogical quality of instruction and, especially, co-curricular instruction. Consequently, successful implementation of one or more of these enhancements would require faculty to invest a significant amount of time and effort in course preparation, grading, and learning new skills and materials.

In addition, many faculty members also indicated that the implementation of the proposal would help the University improve the rigor of the coursework across the

institution by holding all faculty members accountable for ensuring and demonstrating the pedagogical quality of courses. An Associate Professor explained,

My students tell me that the University has kind of two tracks and students are very aware of this. There's a set of faculty who they can take and majors they can pursue and they can get through the University without breaking too much of the sweat. And there are other students who go to a different University here. And they take different faculty, more rigorous classes, and do quite a bit of work, but they value that experience.

In fact, implementation of the course-based curriculum is expected to lead to a potentially significant increase in teaching expectations and associated student learning outcomes assessments and accountability measures. A humanities Assistant Professor pointed out that those liberal arts faculty who are currently redesigning courses will have to spend significant amounts of time to prove the effectiveness of the four-credit hour courses to internal and external skeptics and critics.

For the first year or two, it won't mean more time for other things. It'll probably mean more time for teaching because you will be teaching in a very different ways, with more attention how you are meeting your learning objectives, how you can assess and prove that in a four-credit course you are not just trying to get away with what you were doing in a three-credit course.

The proposal, however, does not specify outcomes measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the new curriculum model, thus making it difficult to hold faculty members accountable for implementing truly enhanced courses.

Many faculty members, however, expressed doubts that reformatting the curriculum would result in enhanced course content and more rigorous teaching standards. An Associate Professor, a proponent of the proposal, indicated that the Dean of the School of Liberal Arts encouraged faculty to enhance selected courses as a demonstration or pilot project. However, he does not see that any serious course enhancements are being developed. He explained,

With fewer classes there is also this talk of sort of enhanced experience for the students and I'm not a 100 percent sure that that's going to really mean anything. I don't think that most faculty would really change anything. They'll be just teaching three classes. I've already started to, I guess, enhance my classes, but it really is just requiring slightly more work.

Some younger faculty suggested that older faculty would be reluctant to engage in increased co- and extra-curricular activities, such as undergraduate research, service learning, civic engagement, and others. A recently promoted Associate Professor explained, "In the past, the contract was essentially . . . your work by punch clock. And we do have faculty caught in those expectations." In other words, the younger faculty perceive that the older faculty would resist to develop and implement activities that would require a significant investment of time and effort beyond classroom hours.

Further, another Associate Professor keenly noted that "for a lot of [co-curricular] activities you can't really put a time factor on [them]." He pointed out the difficulty of capturing time spent on co- and extra-curricular activities and, consequently, holding faculty accountable for that time.

In addition, a decreased number of courses required for the students to earn Bachelor's degree increases the importance of careful selection of courses a student takes over his or her student career. Thus, the role of the faculty advisor would significantly increase in ensuring the breadth and depth of student learning experiences. If the proposal were approved, the expectations for faculty advising would increase, especially in programs with high numbers of transfer students. Faculty would be expected to spend more time and effort advising to ensure timely graduation for students. Further, some faculty members fear that the new curriculum model, if implemented, would result in advising nightmares because it is considerably different from the rest of the state system.

A science Assistant Professor pointed out that the implementation of the proposal might negatively affect enrollments in the programs with large numbers of transfer students,

I think, a point of it too was the fact that just how much more work it would take for advising; there are issues for transfer credits, I think it would have really hurt our major particularly. It would be a disaster to advise people under this new system, I think, because it is so different from everything else in the state system.

Overall, faculty acknowledged that reduced classroom time would not necessarily mean less course preparation work or less time dealing with students. An Associate Professor estimated, “If you actually do something to enhance your classes, it’s not going to mean you are working less. It should, probably, end up about the same.” A liberal arts Professor agreed that course enhancement done right would require the same amount of time or even more time than faculty members currently spend teaching four three-credit hour courses.

We are revising our courses and showing how they are going to be enhanced. I don’t know how this is going to work out. I think a lot of faculty hope that our teaching work load will be reduced and there will be more time for research, grant writing and those things. But if you’re really doing an enhanced course, three-four hour enhanced courses, I don’t see how it’s going to be a lot more time for research because you’re probably going to grade more papers. You, probably, will have more discussions. That’s the official goal – courses will be enhanced. We are going to be doing as much teaching, it seems to me, much time for teaching. But I think, people are really hoping that there [would be] more time for research, and I don’t think, I do not see how we can have both. So, maybe it’s just window dressing.

In fact, however, many proposal supporters appear to hope to have both: they hope they will have more time for research while being able to develop and teach truly enhanced four-credit hour courses.

The course-based curriculum proposal primarily focuses on the redesign of classroom pedagogies and the enhancement of co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities. Faculty research was only briefly mentioned as a secondary intended

outcome of the proposal implementation. However, many faculty members believe that research-related issues are, indeed, the primary reasons for initiating the proposal.

Further, in the minds of the SRU faculty members, perceived research opportunities and research expectations are the source of both hope and fear associated with the course-based curriculum proposal.

Scholarly activities.

Many participants suggested that the course-based curriculum proposal is designed by the administration to stimulate faculty engagement in scholarly activities as a part of transforming SRU into a “state institution of national distinction.” An Assistant Professor from the School of Science explained:

I think [the administrators] are trying to build up the reputation of Striving to other universities in the state system. Administrators are in a different field. I think they are trying to address the fact that, unfortunately, the world is changing a lot. You can't really focus 100 percent on [teaching].

Some faculty saw reduction in the course load proposed by the course-based curriculum model as an important administrative strategy to attract and retain research-oriented faculty. A science Associate Professor explained,

The problem we've been facing is that it is hard to hire people with the heavy teaching load we have and so, unless it is someone like me who is really looking to do a serious load of teaching, with a little research done aside, that's pretty much turn off. We have our share of people [who] leave, particularly in the School of Science, but all of the schools here have it. Most people leave here because they are interested in more research than they can handle with the teaching loads here. That's most people I know who've left. That's why they left.

In fact, by and large, junior and mid-career SRU faculty firmly believe that the implementation of the course-based proposal would provide opportunities to reinvigorate scholarly life at the institution. One Associate Professor expressed hope that “[t]he teaching load shift that would occur would be encouraging because it might provide more

opportunities during the school year to get some writing done.” Another Associate concurred, “I hope to do more research, I know that I haven’t done as much as I would like to. I would very much like it if they change the workload to make it more possible.”

However, more than half of the participants suggested that new research opportunities would be translated into increased accountability requirements. One Professor, for example, suggested that the administration is planning to use faculty research productivity increasingly as a quantitative measure in tenure and, especially, for promotion decisions by extending the current business and science promotion criteria to other schools.

I think what happens here is ... It is very difficult for rating ... to look at [the] teaching record and separate good from excellent. If you do a decent job in the classroom, you are good teacher, you are an effective teacher, and you can find enough evidence either from your student evaluations or your curriculum work or your peer assessments that you are effective or excellent teacher. So, the divider between who gets promoted, who gets tenure, and who doesn’t get promoted is easier to quantify in records of research. Especially in business school and then in science school, they count publications, they have the weighted system that is very quantitative. In [field], we are not quite that obsessed with those counts. We also have a little bit higher bar in terms of excellence in teaching. I think teaching is the most important thing for our department and our school and we allow more different forms of scholarship.

Faculty members perceive that the implementation of the course-based curriculum proposal would also permit the administration to increase the expectation that faculty members should engage in research and scholarly activities at higher than current levels. The perceptions of the implications of a research requirement in the course-based curriculum plan exposed a deep generational divide among faculty members at Striving Regional University.

Junior faculty members, especially in sciences and liberal arts, interpret the course-based curriculum as a mechanism to balance out traditional SRU values of

teaching and service with faculty research aspirations. In contrast, older faculty members see the plan as a violation of their original contract that established the current configuration of their work role-sets with almost an exclusive focus on teaching and service. A recently tenured Associate Professor explained,

But really, in my experience, there is a tremendous divide in the faculty between ... the last time we had a large hiring push from 1971 to 1977 and they hired immense number of faculty. Those faculty have been the backbone of the institution. They have been starting to retire in the last few years. Some of them are still here. Those faculty came to a very different school and they, by and large, with some notable exceptions, by and large, they have completely given up on any sort of research or scholarly life. They have devoted their efforts toward service and towards teaching. And it was essential in the kind of environment they came into that was what they needed to do.

An Assistant Professor who joined SRU in the 1970s concurred with such an assessment by observing,

There are five or six of us who have been here long enough to remember when teaching was still the primary goal for the university and we don't do research. So, there's a kind of grouping of young faculty who feel they have to [do research] and older faculty who have chosen not to.

Faculty members hired in the 1970s see their primary mission as helping the University to accommodate growing student enrollments and establish the University's reputation in the region. Older faculty perceive that implementation of the course-based curriculum would result in increased research productivity expectations. "I hope the University never goes off on publications even with this three-course teaching load." They view the administration's push to increase research productivity as a breach of their original contract with the University. One Professor lamented,

We are teaching institution. Research is secondary, and for me, just is not an interest. I think it is my philosophy and my preference of how I spend my time. It was supported by the chair of the department when I first came here who made it very clear that teaching was a priority.

Interestingly, younger faculty members see this resistance of seniors to engage in scholarly life not as the result of their conscious disinterest in research but, rather, as a consequence of burn out. Further, several of them see the possibility that their own research aspirations might be diminished by a heavy teaching load. An Associate Professor explained,

I'm a part of the cohort of . . . since about 1999 they have been hiring another big group of faculty that are younger and all of us have aspirations to be able to manage research and also do the teaching. But maybe it's just because we are still young and we haven't been doing it too long, maybe we [will] end up as [the] earlier generation [has], we'll burn out too. Certainly seems possible.

Thus, it is apparent that some younger faculty members support the course-based curriculum initiative not just because of potential opportunities to engage in research activities, but they also see the new curriculum model as a structural mechanism to balance faculty role responsibilities in such a way so as to avoid burn-out.

The course-based curriculum proposal was rejected in a 147 to 159 vote in April 2006 by the SRU faculty. However, the Dean of Liberal Arts vowed to develop and implement a course-based curriculum within the school, even though the University faculty as a whole rejected the idea. In fact, in Fall 2006, the School of Liberal Arts, the largest academic division at SRU, voted 100 to 24 in favor of the proposal. Further, in early 2007, the SRU President reaffirmed the commitment of the administration to continue exploring the feasibility of implementation of a course-based curriculum model at SRU.

Conclusion

This chapter sets the organizational context of the study. Striving Regional University faculty members are proud of the University's focus on quality undergraduate

education and rich teaching tradition. This focus on teaching is evident in high retention and graduation rates as well as various national rankings. However, many faculty members perceive that the institution is on the verge of important changes as the administration is advancing its initiative to transform Striving Regional into a “state institution of national distinction”. In fact, recently, the SRU provost, while addressing the faculty, noted that the institution is approaching a “landmark transition” in its nature ([SRU] Interim Provost, *Fall 2006 Welcome Back*).

Interviewed SRU faculty view the course-based curriculum proposal as an important component of impending institutional transformation. The proposal has been the theme of heated debates at SRU since Fall 2005. When I interviewed participants of this study in Fall 2006, nearly all of them made reference to articulated or perceived implications of the proposal while answering my questions. Clearly, the proposal provided a lens through which they interpreted their current role-set arrangements as well as envisioned anticipated role-set realignments.

Discussion of the proposal exposed deep divides among faculty by school affiliation and generational lines. Faculty in different schools use different metrics of measuring teaching productivity as the most appropriate for their circumstances. Older and younger faculty primarily differ on the extent to which research expectations should and would increase if the proposal was implemented.

Discussing the course-based curriculum proposal, the participants unanimously reaffirmed the central, overwhelmingly dominant role of teaching in their work role-set. Many of them, however, also acknowledge that this dominant role of teaching in the

faculty role-set is likely to be affected by increasing research expectations in the near future.

Chapter V. Anchoring SRU Faculty Work Life

The focus of my study is to develop a framework for understanding the ways faculty members organize their professional roles in daily work. This research is not an attempt to describe numerous tasks and activities that faculty members are required to carry out in their daily work. It also is not a study of the allocation of time and effort to multiple faculty roles. Rather, I am arguing the merits of a conceptual framework to describe the schema of the faculty role-set configuration or principles underlying organizational pattern of the role-set.

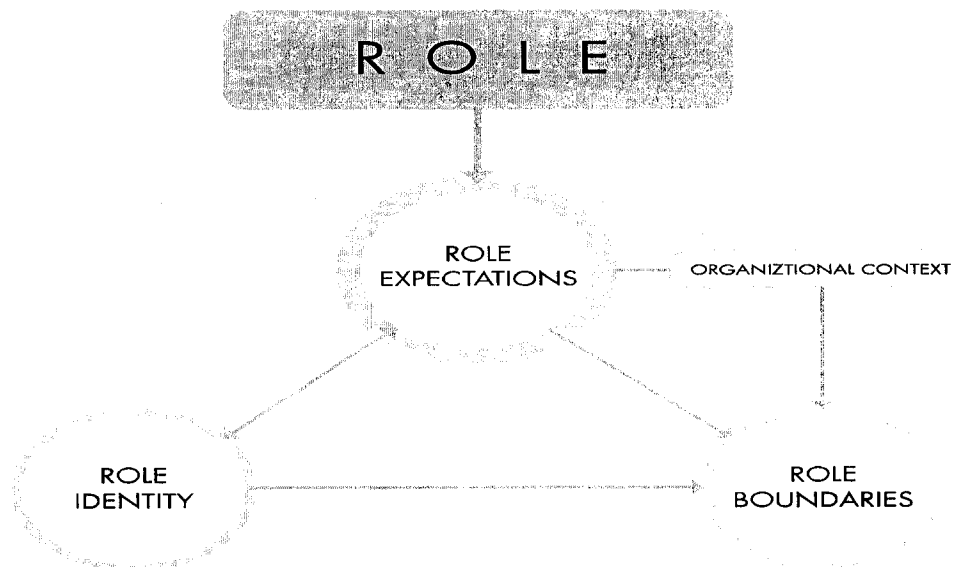
First, I identified major concepts and their properties to capture factors affecting organizational patterns of role-set configurations. From the symbolic interactionism perspective, I defined *role* as a stable set of expectations of others associated with faculty position in the institutional context *as well as* the meanings faculty members themselves attach to the position itself and to the expectations of role-senders *as well as* recurring social behaviors to enact these meanings in daily work. The concepts of role expectations, role identity and role boundary emerged from the literature review as useful concepts to describe how faculty members internalize external expectations associated with their multiple roles and enact them in their daily work.

As a comprehensive public institution, Striving Regional University has traditionally emphasized the teaching role of faculty members, focused on teaching undergraduates, and provided excellent educational experiences as evidenced by various national rankings and high retention and graduation rates. Teaching has been the dominant and the most valued role in the SRU faculty role-set. However, the administration's initiative to transform SRU into an "institution of national distinction"

and potential implementation of the course-based curriculum proposal might result in the realignment of the current faculty role-set configuration by decreasing teaching loads and increasing expectations of faculty engagement in co-curricular and research activities.

In this chapter, I address my first three research questions that focus on utilizing categories of role expectations, role identity, and role boundary to describe factors affecting configuration of the SRU faculty role-set. The first question focuses on the explication of role expectations associated with the faculty role at SRU. My second research question seeks to capture faculty self-identity or meanings faculty members associate with their everyday work activities. The meanings, based on individuals' value systems, work as lenses through which faculty members interpret external expectations. My third research question focuses on properties and dimensions of role boundaries that define the position of roles in the structure of the role set. Figure 1 presents an outline of this Chapter.

Figure 1. Overview of Chapter V



Role Expectations

I define *role* as a stable set of expectations of others associated with faculty position in the institutional context *as well as* the meanings faculty members themselves attach to the position itself and to the expectations of role-senders *as well as* recurring social behaviors to enact these meanings in daily work. Expectations are “the major generators of roles” (Biddle, 1986, p. 69) and are defined as a given social group’s definition of the ways the incumbent of a given social position ought to behave. In other words, I define expectations in terms of expected *behaviors* rather than expected productivity outputs.

Katz and Kahn (1966) described role behavior in terms of a four-stage role episode. In the first stage, the role expectations are articulated by the organizational members to whom the focal person is linked through functional and structural requirements of the organizational system. Then, these expectations are communicated to the focal person. The focal person receives and interprets the expectation with greater or lesser distortion depending on the personal experiences, values, and philosophies of the focal person. Finally, the focal person enacts the received and interpreted role expectations. In this section, I discuss the first two stages of the role episode or, specifically, how the SRU faculty role is defined by the university and communicated to the faculty. The subsequent sections of this chapter focus on the third and fourth stages of the role episode.

Tenure and promotion criteria were identified by the study participants as the main sources of expectations associated with the faculty position at SRU. Tenure recommendations are made at the departmental level. Promotion recommendations are a

prerogative of the University-wide committee. Recommendations are then submitted to the Provost for review and recommendation and, then, to President for review and action.

I begin with the discussion of tenure expectations at the departmental level. Then, I outline expectations communicated to the faculty by the promotion committee. I conclude this section by discussing whether the tenure and promotion expectations produce conflict and/or ambiguity in the faculty role-set.

Tenure and Promotion Expectations

Striving Regional University recognizes the considerable diversity among academic departments and stipulates that each department shall establish its own tenure review committee. The departmental tenure committee develops its own criteria, which must be approved by the department chair. These criteria are communicated to the candidates and applied in tenure decisions within that department ([SRU] *Faculty Handbook*, chapter 2, p.17).

Tenure criteria established in the study participants' departments strongly reflect and reinforce the traditional SRU focus on excellence in teaching. A tenure candidate's effectiveness in the classroom appears to be the dominant, if not the only, tenure criterion in the departments represented by participants. Indeed, participants across the disciplines and ranks repeatedly indicated that tenured SRU faculty members are, first and foremost, expected to be excellent teachers. "Teaching excellence is paramount in [tenure] decisions," explained an Assistant Professor from the School of Business, almost quoting the Faculty Handbook. A Professor from the School of Education described the tenure decision process in his department this way, "It's simple ... you must be effective in the classroom."

Many participants indicated that this emphasis on excellence in teaching is strongly reinforced by regular classroom observation of tenure-track faculty by senior departmental colleagues. A veteran Associate Professor explained,

Every tenure-track faculty is observed every semester until they get tenure. I am actually chairing that committee now, so we observe, we have two [faculty members] right now who are on tenure-track, but are not tenured, so we observe them every semester. There are three of us on the committee and a part of the tenure process includes those evaluations.

Similar to several participants, a recently tenured Associate Professor indicated that his colleagues are still welcome to visit his classes. He sees their feedback as an affirmation of the effectiveness of his teaching style.

We are strongly encouraged to allow people to come in our classes to evaluate our teaching styles. This is the University that prides itself on quality teaching and we want to know what faculty members, from the perspective of other faculty, are doing in their classrooms. We also pay a lot of attention to what students say about evaluations and things like that. But having another faculty member evaluate your teaching is highly important.

Paulsen (2002) points out that the work of faculty members is valued more when it has been subject to peer review. Peer analyses of teaching effectiveness associated with tenure review heightens the expressed institutional and departmental value of teaching for individual instructors, increases the amount of time and effort allocated to teaching, and, thus, raises the quality of instruction at SRU as indicated in the various national rankings described earlier.

Other common faculty roles such as advising students, doing research, and engaging in service are not clearly evident in tenure expectations. Interestingly, the university views itself as a “community of learners” and emphasizes the role of advising and student-faculty interaction as a key element in building such a campus community ([SRU] *Mission Statement: 2005*). However, advising appears only to be given lip service

in tenure reviews at SRU. One Professor expressed a common sentiment among the senior faculty members by attributing this inattention to advising to the difficulty of measuring advising effectiveness.

We always say teaching and advising, but advising is so hard to evaluate. It's taken seriously. But in terms of your tenure evaluation nobody really knows how to look at advising. So, you can be very poor advisor or a very good advisor – it's not going to affect your evaluation.

Discussing the tenure review process, faculty members almost exclusively focused on teaching evaluation and either did not mention research expectations at all or referred to research accomplishments as something not actually important for tenure decisions. For example, an Associate Professor hired in mid-1990s recalled,

I was hired at a time when most of the faculty that worked currently at the institution had been here since 1970s. The guy who previously had this job basically told me – “research, you don't have to worry about very much, present a paper at a conference once a year and you are all right.” He seems to view this as – research is not something you need to worry very much about, but it is really important to connect with the students.

In fact, this lack of attention to research in tenure decisions is also reflective of values and experiences of senior faculty members who see their primary purpose as teaching.

One Professor nostalgically reminisced,

And Striving Regional was the kind of place ... we were growing as an institution and you didn't have to be a super scholar in publications to get promoted. You just had to be active professionally making contributions beyond the campus.

Service accomplishments as a tenure criterion, however, did not emerge in the interviews either. Only one Assistant Professor mentioned that he is currently serving on nine committees. However, he framed his committee service not as departmental tenure requirement but as his own personal professional development and described committee

work as an opportunity to provide input in the university decision-making process on a variety of issues.

It is evident that, at SRU, to receive tenure, candidates continue to be expected to be “first and foremost” effective teachers in the classroom. Research and service expectations play an insignificant and perfunctory role in tenure decisions. In *promotion* decisions, however, the research expectations are gradually emerging as an increasingly important criterion, albeit still a distant second to teaching.

Faculty at Striving Regional University are granted or denied promotion on the basis of their eligibility by time-in-rank, degree, and a recommendation by the University Committee on Promotions. The Committee on Promotions is composed of eight voting members: a designated tenured Faculty Senator, four tenured faculty members, one elected from and by each school, and three tenured faculty members elected at large ([SRU] *Faculty Handbook*, chapter 2.D).

Teaching is also the primary criterion for promotion. Assistant Professors are expected to be *effective* teachers; Associate and Full Professors are expected to be *excellent* teachers⁸. Achievement in scholarship, creative activities and in service is also expected of candidates for promotion. The balance between these latter criteria may differ for individuals, but evidence of both is expected of all candidates for promotion ([SRU] *Faculty Handbook*, chapters 2.C and 2.D).

Traditionally, the research accomplishments of the candidates for promotion did not attract significant attention by the promotion committee members who focused on evaluating the teaching effectiveness of the candidates as well as their service contributions. This has been slowly but clearly changing in recent years. Although

⁸ *The Handbook* does not elaborate on the specific criteria for determining effective or excellent teaching.

teaching excellence remains the main criterion for promotion, many participants perceive that research expectations are gaining significance in promotion decisions.

Veteran faculty members attribute increased role of research for promotion to the change in the University priorities and to the administration's initiative of transforming SRU into a "state institution of national distinction." However, they believe that it is the responsibility of junior faculty, not seniors, to address the new priorities of the administration:

[Research expectations for promotion have] changed over the years. With new administration coming in and new trends toward bringing in outside funding, it is now for the younger faculty an expectation. And they are not getting promotion unless they are actively engaged in research.

Capturing well a common sentiment among the veterans, one senior faculty member explicitly acknowledged that the traditional focus on undergraduate teaching is significantly more important for the veterans than the new research expectations and that, in fact, these expectations are not applicable for senior faculty members.

As the institution is growing up, [the criteria for promotion] starting to shift a little bit. Some of the colleagues that are coming along right now or were hired in the last ten years have far more impressive vitas than I do, but I got there first and that's just the way it goes.

With the strong emphasis on teaching excellence, the university promotion criteria are consistent with the expectations of departmental tenure committees. Similar to tenure criteria and decisions, service did not emerge in the interviews as an important promotion criterion. However, contrary to tenure reviews, research expectations are slowly increasing in prominence in promotion review. Does this emerging inconsistency between tenure and promotion expectations create role conflict and/or role ambiguity for SRU faculty members?

Role Conflict and Ambiguity

Role theorists traditionally analyze role expectations in terms of role conflict and role ambiguity. Generally, *role conflict* refers to the degree of congruency-incongruency of the expectations in the role set, whereas *role ambiguity* refers to the clarity of the expectations and predictability of the organization's response to one's behavior (Kahn, et al., 1964; Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). Both role conflict and role ambiguity have been consistently found to positively relate to job dissatisfaction and to the intention to leave a job (Kahn, et al., 1964; Daly & Dee, 2006). Although, in the previous chapter, I indicated that all participants in this study are generally satisfied with their daily work at SRU and that, for most of them, SRU was the only institution in which they worked as faculty members, do they experience role conflict and/or role ambiguity in their daily work experiences?

Role conflict.

Typically, role conflict is reported from the perspective of focal persons or individuals receiving role expectations. In my interviews, however, it was the *role senders* or senior faculty members serving on tenure and promotion committees who talked about role conflict. In other words, senior faculty members *think* that junior faculty members experience role conflict in their daily work.⁹ Seniors believe that juniors are faced with conflicts between contradictory tenure and promotion signals—between the roles in their role-sets, and between their own values and institutional expectations.

First, the senior faculty indicated a conflict between tenure and promotion expectations. Many of them observed a contradiction between the almost exclusive focus

⁹ In this section, I use “senior faculty members” to describe faculty members who are eligible to sit on tenure and promotion committees. “Junior faculty members” are primarily tenure-track Assistant Professors approaching tenure decision and promotion to the rank of Associate Professor.

on teaching in tenure decisions and the additional emerging focus on research expectations in promotion reviews. This perceived contradiction in the messages they communicate to junior faculty makes the seniors feel very uncomfortable. One Professor emotionally explained,

There is a contradiction. Senior faculty, myself and other senior faculty are very clear that for tenure, we are interested in your teaching, but... And tenure here is still pretty much a department decision, we don't have school-wide or university-wide tenure committee, we have one for promotion, not tenure. And in fairness, we have to tell them, junior faculty, that, you know to get promoted you are going to have to publish. Your primary concern is teaching, that's where we want to put your energy, but you can't...realistically...you will have to spend time on doing research and you need to find time to do it. So, it's a double message, and all of us contradict.

As noted earlier, many seniors view emerging research requirements as a shift in the university mission and violation of their original contract. They make it clear that the new research expectations have been initiated by the administration, not by the senior faculty serving on tenure and promotion committees. Further, they perceive a conflict between formal promotion criteria that still strongly focus on teaching effectiveness ([SRU] *Faculty Handbook*, chapter 2, p. 12) and informal expectations of the administration for faculty to increase research productivity.

I think I lot of [the research expectations] is more spoken, you know, from the Dean to faculty, "you have to be doing some research, doing some grant writing, or one or the other," but it's definitely there. And it may not be reflected in everything that's written, but it's there in almost all the schools.

Junior faculty members, however, do not perceive a contradiction between teaching and research expectations. They expect to engage both in teaching as well as in research activities. In fact, nearly universally, junior faculty supported the emerging research expectations. One recently tenured Assistant Professor summed up the sentiment of the junior faculty that emerging research requirements primarily pose a problem for

the senior faculty, whereas younger faculty members are *already* engaged in research activities. He explained that senior faculty “were hired in the fifties and sixties and expectations obviously were a lot lower. But when you raise the expectations, of course, they are caught in the middle, but they are very close to retirement and the incoming faculty know what they have to do.”

Further, many younger participants perceive that engagement in research is not so much an institutional requirement, but a matter of personal interest and choice. An Assistant Professor in the School of Science and Technology remarked,

There is not a pressure to do [research]. Those people [who are engaged in research activities] choose to be like that. If they go above and beyond of what is expected, it’s because they want to, not because someone is making them. Certainly, most of the people doing cutting-edge research in the School of Science choose to do that.

A recently promoted liberal arts Associate Professor concurred by noting that, “If you want to go and do research, you absolutely can, but it is not something that you are forced into.” Thus, junior faculty members tend to see research as a natural *integral* part of the faculty role-set. In contrast, for the majority of seniors, research is an administrative addition to their role as faculty members.

Further, seniors perceive that the contradictory expectations are translated into a role strain for junior faculty or in conflict between the roles in the role-set. The addition of research expectations is especially viewed by the senior faculty as a source of strain for juniors. Interestingly, senior faculty members are often perplexed about how their younger colleagues are able to be effective in addressing both teaching and research expectations. One Professor expressed a common sentiment among seniors by emotionally exclaiming, “Faculty we hire today, even though the teaching load is four

courses a semester ... they are expected to publish, they are expected. I do not know how they do it! I don't know how you add those kinds of expectations."

However, from the junior faculty perspective, these emerging research expectations for promotion are not significant enough to cause a role strain. "You know, moderate amount [of research] is all you need. Your evaluations are based almost strictly on your teaching evaluations." Another junior concurred that the current research expectations are very moderate: "It is not publish or perish here. There is a little bit of expectation to publish, for sure, but they are not expecting you to bring grants or anything like that." An Associate Professor agreed that the research expectation at SRU is not as heavy as that found in research institutions,

I think there's probably some comfort in ... If you are to compare a place like this to, you know, the Research I University, you know, there is not even a pressure to publish and so on, I mean, it is an absolute requirement. Whereas here it is a requirement to a certain point.

Many seniors perceive active engagement in research as a very strenuous activity. In contrast, for all junior faculty members, the current research expectations appear to be very manageable. All of them have a current research agenda based on their dissertation research activities.

Finally, senior faculty members perceive a conflict between the research aspirations of incoming faculty and the heavy teaching load at SRU. Many seniors think that the heavy focus on teaching at SRU hinders the self-realization of incoming faculty as researchers. One veteran Associate Professor observed,

I guess, ultimately, especially for younger faculty, it is realizing that you may not be able to meet your research expectations here, especially if they were very high, because you are going to spend a lot of time in the classroom. So, there has to be some adjustment.

Again, junior faculty members do not see this conflict. The overwhelming majority of interviewed junior faculty indicated that they knew that their primary responsibility would be teaching and that research would be secondary, but consciously made a choice to join SRU. An Assistant Professor in the School of Science captured a common junior faculty members' perspective,

This is a kind of college I wanted to teach in. It's very much like my undergrad institution. I like to do small amounts of research, not being, you know, a full-blown researcher. So, I was definitely looking for a four-year public institution, although private would be fine too ... and enough of facility where I can do some research. But most of all, I wanted to teach.

A recently promoted business Associate Professor concurred,

I do enough [research] to be legal so to speak ... But I came here because this institution is a teaching institution. It is not publish or perish place. You still have to publish here but there is no pressure to make "A" journals or this type of things.

Although explicitly articulating their interest in research activities, junior faculty members, very much similar to seniors, view teaching as the main role in the faculty role-set. They came to SRU primarily because they wanted to teach. However, it is evident that juniors do not experience conflict between their values as faculty members and the heavy teaching load at SRU, contrary to what the seniors tend to think.

Role ambiguity.

Although, senior faculty members perceive conflict between role expectations, both seniors and juniors agree that, overall, "the expectations are pretty well laid out." A lack of clarity of expectations as well as unpredictability of the organization's response to a person's behavior, which normally would lead to role ambiguity, does not seem to exist (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). In other words, participants did not perceive ambiguity associated with the SRU faculty role.

The teaching tradition of Striving Regional continues to drive many hiring decisions. A veteran Associate Professor, pointed out that although research is gradually becomes a factor in hiring decision, excellent teaching skills firmly remain as first and foremost determinants of hiring decisions. “I’m on hiring committees often for new faculty members and we are still looking primarily for people who can teach undergraduates and to find some pedagogical skills that students can benefit from.”

Senior faculty members serving on hiring committees clearly understand the importance of explaining the teaching mission of Striving Regional to the candidates seeking employment at SRU. They realize that many of the incoming faculty, although interested in teaching undergraduate students, might not be familiar with the teaching load at comprehensive universities. One Professor explained,

We’ve just finished interviewing and hiring a [specialist in the area]. At every opportunity, we made clear we are primarily about teaching. And, I think, it is important to do because ... We had a very strong pool. Our top ten included people from Yale, Harvard, all kind of different, very large and prestigious universities. I think it is important, especially for them, to know exactly what kind of environment they are coming into, because that’s not the environment that they are coming from, from their Ph.D. work. And, I think, that some people expect, well, they will teach two classes and then do research the rest of time. So, it is important for us to make clear – well, look, for now we teach four classes and your focus is primarily teaching.

On the other hand, administrators effectively communicate emerging research expectations as well as associated opportunities and rewards to new faculty members.

One Assistant Professor recalled his interviews with the administrators,

When I was hired, the administration was very clear that they have aspirations to try to promote the faculty research and to make the school more than just an institution that was producing degrees for the state, more than just the place where they overwork the professors.

However, the faculty research expectations are currently only *encouraged aspirations*, not *enforced requirements*. Although research expectations are clearly being advanced by the university administration as an important criterion for promotion, teaching remains the main universal factor in promotion decisions, thus demonstrating the predictability of the University's response to faculty behavior or relatively low ambiguity associated with the SRU faculty role expectations. A first-year Assistant Professor shared his perception of promotion review,

Here if you can work hard and your teaching is exemplary and your research is reasonably good – you get out probably one to three papers before you are ready for review – you will generally do well because this institution is VERY focused on actually the teaching aspect, how students do.

An Associate Professor concurred,

Certainly, for junior faculty, they have the expectations – they'd better publish. But when push comes to shove, there are people who are promoted and published very little ... and they can get through ... if they are outstanding teachers, committed teachers.

Fairweather (2002b) keenly noted that faculty “draw inferences about what their institution...value the most by viewing outcome of promotion and tenure decisions” rather than from promotion and tenure criteria (p. 97). Fairweather continues to point out that promotion “decisions rest on values and judgments, not on measurements or clear expectations” (p. 97). At SRU, although new research requirements are being integrated into promotion criteria, the promotion as well as tenure decisions are made, at least for now, based on the traditional SRU values of teaching and quality undergraduate education that are reflected in the judgments of senior faculty members serving on tenure and promotions committees.

Summary

Excellence in classroom teaching remains the primary, even dominant, expectation associated with the faculty role at Striving Regional University. This central role of teaching reflects the traditional SRU focus on undergraduate education. Further, teaching reflects the values and skills of senior faculty members who lead tenure and promotion committees.

Given the strong record of regional and community service as well as indication of a vibrant faculty self-governance life at SRU, I was surprised that service expectations did not emerge as an important element within the faculty role in the interviews. Faculty members raised the element of service only a few times during the interviews. Further, they did not mention service in terms of expectations, but rather in terms of personal or political interest.

Research expectations, advanced by administration, are gradually emerging as an important part of the SRU faculty role-set, and especially in promotion review. Although, the research expectations are not yet enforced, they cause significant anxiety among many senior faculty who perceive a developing role conflict between the traditional focus on teaching and the emerging emphasis on research. This anxiety was especially evident during the discussion of the course-based curriculum described earlier.

Interestingly, for the senior faculty members, the issue of competing or contradictory teaching and research expectations should be moot since all but two of them are tenured Professors. Two potential motives might explain the anxiety among senior faculty members. First, seniors might be concerned about the changes in institutional values and directions of the institution that they have been building in the

last thirty years. As SRU is gradually changing its course, senior faculty might perceive negative organizational feedback relative to the value of their past experiences and contributions in the emerging research-oriented SRU environment. Annual evaluation criteria might offer another explanation. Although annual evaluations were not mentioned in the interviews, administrators might have included research accomplishments in annual evaluation reviews in the recent years.

In contrast to the seniors, junior and early mid-career faculty members do not perceive role conflict between the traditional focus on teaching and emerging research expectations. First, almost universally, faculty hired since the late 1990s reported that they consciously chose the teaching-intensive career at SRU from several options (see Finnegan, 1993). Second, and most importantly, the addition of research expectations to the SRU faculty role-set is perceived by junior and early mid-career participants as a *natural*, if not an institutionally delayed, development of the faculty role-set.

The graduate training of interviewed faculty members hired since the late 1990s took place in research universities where they were likely to develop some predispositions to research through anticipatory socialization processes (Bess, 1978; Fairweather & Rhoads, 1995). Van Maanen (1983; also Fairweather & Rhoads, 1995) argued that recruits' predispositions and norms or culture of orientation "help shape their understandings and responses to task demands and performance requirements made of them in any new setting (p. 217).

In fact, all study participants hired since the late 1990s indicated that they do not perceive that the introduction of research requirements is likely to result in role conflict for them. Rather, they see the introduction of research expectations as an affirmation by

SRU of their research capabilities and predispositions. The anticipatory role orientation of the faculty hired since 1999 is aligned with the SRU administration's intentions to encourage more faculty research while maintaining high teaching standards. In other words, incoming faculty tend to exhibit realistic role anticipation or expectation that teaching as well as research requirements will be applied to them when they assume a faculty position.

Despite emerging research expectations gradually advanced by the SRU administration and a strong service tradition, SRU faculty members are primarily expected to be effective teachers. Excellence in teaching is the main, if not dominant, message that senior faculty members send to juniors seeking tenure and promotion. In turn, junior faculty members realize that they must demonstrate, first and foremost, good teaching and, *only then*, can they engage in other faculty role activities.

Role Identity

Sanford (1962) discussing the role behavior of faculty members suggested that "intervening between the structurally given role demands and the role performance is the teacher's conceptions of the demands" (p. 52; see also Katz & Kahn, 1966). Academics translate faculty role-set expectations communicated to them through the lens of their self-concepts or their own conceptions, values, and feelings associated with the faculty role. Faculty members' professional identities help them to interpret the role-set requirements, structure the roles in the set, and guide performance in the roles.

From the identity theory perspective (Stets & Burke, 2003; Stryker, 1980; Stryker & Burke, 2000), a set of role identities or self-meanings that faculty associate with their role-set comprise the faculty member's professional self-concept (Rosenberg, 1979).

What role identities constitute the SRU faculty professional self-concept? How do SRU faculty members define their professional identities?

In this section, I discuss the meanings that my interviewees articulated while describing their role-sets. In other words, I present what it *means* for the participants of this study to be faculty members at Striving Regional University. I begin this section by describing the SRU faculty self-concept. Then, I focus on the SRU faculty teaching role identity that participants in my study identified as the dominant meta-identity in their professional self-concept. I discuss shared content and main attributes of SRU faculty teaching role identity. I conclude this section with the discussion of the place of the teaching role in the SRU faculty role-set by delineating the centrality and salience of the teaching role identity in the SRU faculty self-concept.

Faculty Self-Concept

Rosenberg (1979) defined self-concept as “the totality of an individual’s thoughts and feelings having reference to oneself as an object” (p. 7). In this study, the self-concept is limited to meanings and feelings participants attach to themselves as faculty members. In other words, the object for reflexive examination is *oneself in the faculty member role*.

Following the identity theory (Stets & Burke, 2003; Stryker, 1980; Stryker & Burke, 2000), I refer to the faculty self-concept as a portfolio of faculty professional role identities or a collection of self-meanings faculty associate with their professional roles. How do participants view themselves in the roles of SRU faculty members? What images, meanings, thoughts and feelings do SRU faculty members invoke when referring to themselves as faculty members?

In this sub-section, I delineate the teaching role meta-identity that emerged from the participants' discussions of what it means to be a faculty member at SRU. I also discuss factors that influenced the development of the teaching meta-identity.

Teaching as meta-identity.

Although engaged in numerous activities traditionally associated with the faculty role, SRU faculty universally described their daily work as well as themselves almost exclusively in terms of their teaching identity. "Primarily, it is to teach students", "Instruction", "I am a teacher" were common and firm accounts of what it means to be a faculty member at SRU.

While describing their daily work, participants enumerated various activities such as scholarly endeavors, university service, peer mentoring, administration, and consulting. However, what was somewhat surprising to me was that these activities were not reflected in the participants' responses to the questions about the *meanings* they associate with their faculty work at SRU.

In fact, teaching emerged as a *meta-identity* that encapsulates the faculty self-concepts of the participants. In other words, for participants teaching forms the core of faculty work, defines faculty work, and, in fact, *is* faculty work. SRU faculty members certainly engage in other activities, but, at least for the participants of this study, those activities are derived either from external expectations or personal interests, not from the meanings they *themselves* attach to faculty work. The meaning of faculty work for the participants is encapsulated in their teaching activities.

Not only do participants derive the meaning of faculty work from teaching activities, but they also *like* faculty work because their faculty position provides them

with opportunities to engage in teaching. Teaching also appears to play a major role in the affective domain of the SRU faculty self-concept. Teaching is a primary source of satisfaction and motivation for participants. The joy teaching brings to faculty members' daily work is exemplified by the remarks of one social science Associate Professor, who deliberately links his instructional role to his concept of being a professor.

I am really a teacher. That's what I enjoy the most. I think that's where my skill is in terms of ... as a *professional*. I will teach pretty much—I have my preferences—but I will teach pretty much whatever the department asks or wants me to teach. And I'm 100 percent OK with that. And I would say, *professionally*, I am happiest in the classroom. So, the highlight of my day is going to class and lecturing.

Interestingly, many participants shared the perspective of this Associate Professor that *academic profession* in general, not just faculty work at SRU, presupposes the possession of teaching skills, willingness to teach, and enjoyment of teaching. For the majority of participants, being an academic, first and foremost, means to be able to teach and like the teaching process itself more than addressing their own subject-related preferences.

Essentially, participants identify the faculty professional self with being a teacher.

One Professor explained,

First thing in your job is that you are a teacher. Anywhere, be it Harvard or, let's say, be it Walden, you have to be a teacher. You TEACH. That's your main goal. You have been given a job as a teacher, no matter at which school. So you must teach.

For participants, teaching and teaching well, is a primary normative requirement associated with faculty work.

In other words, for the participants of this study being a faculty member at SRU or anywhere else *should*, first and foremost, mean being a teacher. Such a strong

orientation to teaching in faculty work was neither uncommon nor something new. What apparently distinguishes SRU faculty is the intensity of their professional identification with teaching. Participants do not simply espouse teaching values; they, *in fact*, consider themselves to be first and foremost teachers. Participants do not simply associate faculty work with teaching; in their minds, they bond teaching and faculty work together. Thus, the teaching identity occupies a dominant, in fact, overwhelming place in the professional self-concepts of SRU faculty members. How did participants develop such strong, if not exclusive, orientation to teaching in their work?

Development of teaching identity.

Interestingly, participants took two distinct approaches in developing this strong identification of faculty work with teaching. When discussing their professional self-concepts, faculty invoked two paths that affected the development of their understandings of themselves as teachers: contractual and existential.

First, approximately one-quarter of participants view themselves as “service providers.” They were quick to explain what it means for them to be faculty members. These faculty members, primarily early mid-career Associate Professors from urban-divergent fields,¹⁰ such as professional and applied fields, see themselves as hired by Striving Regional to advance its mission of providing a high quality undergraduate education.

The *service providers* consider good teaching as a critical requirement of fulfilling their contractual obligations. For these faculty members, faculty work means addressing the educational needs of students whom they view as their fee-paying

¹⁰ Interestingly, this is the only instance when a group of participants emerged based on the type of discipline/field.

customers. Although hired by the university, service-providers subscribe to the slogan “putting customers first” and see themselves working directly for the students. One business Associate Professor captured well the common perspective of the service providers, “I have many, many bosses; they are my students. That’s how I see it. I work for them. That’s what we are getting paid for – to teach.”

Further, these faculty members strive to be *responsible* service providers by ensuring that students achieve intended learning outcomes. It is important for them not just to teach, but to teach well. In fact they often take pride in themselves for being good teachers. A Professor shared this common perspective for service-providers.

I care for the students. They paid to get an education, not to meet the requirements, pass the requirements. Here, I see myself as someone hired to do a task and I’m getting paid for that. I want to be a good contractor, not a lousy one.

What does it mean to be “a good contractor”? It appears that for service providers it means not just meeting the educational needs of their customers, i.e., students, but also addressing the goals and objectives of their employer, i.e., the university.

In general, service providers developed their understanding of faculty work as primarily teaching after they had assumed the faculty position at SRU. When discussing their work, service providers almost uniformly referred to the mission and traditions of SRU and emphasized its focus on undergraduate education. They appear to have developed their self-concepts of faculty members primarily as educational service providers through *interpretation of contractual requirements* of the faculty role in a student-centered institution such as SRU. Essentially, service-providers believe that faculty members in a teaching institution such as SRU should consider themselves first and foremost as teachers providing high-quality educational experiences to their students.

In contrast, a much larger group of faculty members, approximately three-quarters of them, whom I label *missionaries*, have developed their professional self-concept as, first and foremost, being teachers based on their own individual existential principles that transcend the specifics of interpreting given contractual obligations or a given institutional context. Essentially, missionaries see teaching as their existential calling and life duty.

If service providers typically developed their self-understanding as teachers *after* they had assumed a faculty position at SRU, the missionaries generally become faculty members *because* they saw themselves as teachers in the first place. Whereas for service-providers, teaching is a contractual, albeit often internalized, *requirement* associated with their faculty position; for missionaries, this faculty position is an *opportunity* to enact their existential calling to teach.

Faculty missionaries attributed the development of this existential calling, or their conversion to strong teaching orientation in their work, primarily to three interrelated factors: individual dispositions, spirituality, and transformative educational experiences. About a quarter of missionaries believe that their strong teaching values and commitment to students come as a part of their personal duties to help other. Typically, these faculty members always wanted to help people and sought a career that would enable them to carry out their helping proclivity. A veteran Associate Professor shared, “I have a kind of helping personality. I always...I knew from the tenth grade in high school that I want to be in the classroom. I was a president of Future Teachers of America when I was in high school.” Having taught in high school, he decided to change careers and become a college professor when he realized that the high school teaching environment limited his

desire to guide student growth and development just to classroom instruction. College teaching provides him as well as other missionaries with opportunities to engage in numerous helping activities.

For several missionaries, being a faculty member is about spiritual servanthood. For example, an Assistant Professor approaching tenure, a deeply religious man, sees his teaching as serving God by developing his students' maximum human potential. He shared his feeling that, "I kind of see myself as a dream releaser. God gave me different abilities, so I can release dreams." He sees his mission in life as developing others and, again, teaching provides him with plenty of opportunities to do this.

We are there. We got thirty students in front of us. They all want to do something. They want to be a teacher or coach or police or something and we got to help them reach that, we got to show them how to get there. ...I'm getting old, I'll be forty this year. I've done everything I wanted ... I say "I", the word "I" should not come out anyhow. What can I help someone else to do for themselves?

Almost all missionaries had one or several transformative educational experiences that led them to realize their life calling to teach. For example, a liberal arts Professor, reminisced about how one instructor in his undergraduate class changed his career plans, and, in fact, changed his life, thus showing him the power of good teaching. He recalled that suddenly he realized that being a teacher would give him meaning in life. And now, for him, "Teaching is a vocation. I really do believe that teaching is a vocation. I do that out of faith, I do that on a principle of belief."

Similarly, an education Professor told me how interaction with his teachers in the undergraduate program changed his worldview and led him to follow their steps. "This is my mission in life. I want to make ... I want to help produce good teachers." He hesitated

for a second, contemplating whether the word “mission” was too pretentious, but firmly continued, “it sounds a little corny, but I really believe that and I like that.”

Thus, for the SRU faculty, to be a faculty member means to be first and foremost a teacher. Albeit the participants took different paths, they all came to defining faculty work primarily in terms of teaching. Interpreting faculty work as teaching allows the participants to address their contractual obligations of being responsible hires in a teaching-focused institution as well as to fulfill their existential callings to facilitate student learning and development.

The construction of the faculty professional self-concept primarily in terms of teaching is not unique for SRU, however. For example, Lee, et al. (2005) analyzed recent national data and research on faculty work and concluded the vast majority of faculty members “have a primary interest in teaching and believe that it should be the primary criterion in their review” (p. 74). Similarly, Schuster and Finkelstein (2006) provided the national data demonstrating that the proportion of male¹¹ faculty members describing themselves as “leaning or heavily oriented to teaching” did not change significantly between 1969 and 1997 and remains about seventy percent. However, what the national surveys cannot address is the meaning of such a strong orientation to teaching.

What appears to distinguish SRU faculty is the intensity of their commitment to teaching. Although many of the participants have published books, many are extensively engaged in shared governance, and several are active consultants, teaching is what brought many of them to their faculty positions and is what brings them meaning in their daily faculty work. In other words, teaching encapsulates the participants’ self-concepts as faculty members.

¹¹ I focus this study on male faculty members.

In the next section, I focus on explication of what meanings and feelings SRU faculty members attach to teaching. If in this section I focused on what it means to be a *faculty member* at SRU, in the following section I address the question what it means to be a *teacher* at SRU.

Teaching Role Identity

“Instruction in itself has an aphrodisiac effect”
(SRU Professor).

Thirty years ago, Bess (1977) observed that “despite the many difficulties and frustrations in teaching, most faculty members claim to enjoy it and would not choose to give it up” (p. 243). Similarly, thirty years later, according to a national faculty survey, almost 100 percent of male faculty members report that “being a good teacher” is an essential or very important personal goal for them and four-fifths of male respondents indicate that they would still want to be a college professor if they were to begin their careers again (Lindholm et al., 2005).

Indeed, teaching is a satisfying, albeit difficult, process for SRU faculty participating in this study. A veteran Associate Professor expressed a common sentiment among the participants: “Faculty do live in many ways a very blessed life. Although teaching is a LOT of work, it’s a kind of work that feels rewarding and gratifying.” A recently promoted Associate Professor concurred by sharing his feelings,

I can’t imagine really doing anything other than this. And the interesting thing is, I have the opportunity to potentially walk away from this and do something that would be fascinating to me, but honestly, as frustrating as it is. I have sabbatical next semester and I’m really looking forward to it. As frustrating as it is, it’s, probably, also the most rewarding kind of thing that you can do. I mean teaching, being involved in the education process is just amazing.

But what is so satisfying about teaching for SRU faculty members? What accounts for high levels of their commitment to teaching, despite challenges and frustrations associated with teaching? An analysis of SRU faculty teaching role identity can shed some light on these questions.

According to the identity theory, role identity can be analyzed in terms of identity content and identity attributes. Identity *content* refers to values, beliefs, philosophies, and assumptions that the role incumbent associates with the given role. Identity *attributes* refer to affective characteristics or traits that the individual attaches to the given role (Stets & Burke, 2003; Stryker, 1980; Stryker & Burke, 2000).

In this analysis, I define the teaching role identity content as major factors or themes that faculty members use in describing their teaching role. Teaching identity attributes refer to the feelings or perceptions that faculty associate with teaching or the affective ways in which faculty members experience enactment of teaching identity in daily work.

Representing different disciplines and different age groups, it is not surprising that participants of my study associate a diverse range of values and feelings with the teaching role. However, three related teaching role identity content themes clearly emerged in the analysis of my interviews with SRU faculty. The ability to guide students, interaction with students, and participation in students' growth and development constitute the essence of being a teacher for SRU faculty members. Three common teaching identity attributes are associated with the three identity content themes: a reluctance to use subject expertise in structuring learning experiences, the construction of teaching as acting, and

self-efficacy. These content themes further characterize the ``enactment of the teaching identity in SRU faculty members' daily work.

Guiding students.

The ability to guide students in the learning process as a component of the teaching identity content was mentioned frequently by most participants. Faculty members enjoy multiple opportunities to provide guidance to students. They like to structure classroom learning experiences and serve as role models for students. However, surprisingly, participants often feel uncomfortable doing this.

For many participants teaching is very similar to leadership. One Assistant Professor, for example, pointed out, "I like leadership. Teaching and leadership are so entailed together. And I like leading people." Teaching for many of the faculty is not so much a transmission of knowledge as helping students to identify developmental goals and structure learning experiences to facilitate student achievement of their goals.

Interestingly, several participants perceive a contradiction between the goal of facilitating the students' achievement of their own learning goals on one hand and setting the path to achieve these goals on their behalf on the other hand. These faculty members feel that they constrain students' creativity and exploration of learning paths by imposing their own structures, interests, and expertise on them. For example, one Associate Professor interprets the application of his expert knowledge of course materials in structuring learning experiences as a self-interested and dominating act. "I suppose it is a selfish thing. In a class, I get to set an agenda. So, it is a discussion seminar about what I'm interested in. And more cynically, I'm the one who knows most of it."

Almost universally, participants enjoy being role models for students. They like when students ask them for advice and assistance. Again, interestingly, many of them believe that they can best help students through interacting with them or by serving as role models rather than by using their subject expertise in guiding and helping students.

In fact, several of the participants downplay their subject expertise. One Professor captured well this common perspective.

If I had worked in [state government], my contacts would've been peers and legislators for whom I would've been an underling. With students ... there are several things ... they always think you know a lot, [chuckled]. I am not sure I do. They do sort of look up to faculty, I think. And they seem to appreciate faculty contact ... so, there is a real sense of satisfaction of contact with students and, then, being able to help students, advise them, and try to guide them. So, that's sort of egotistical, but ... being able to help them, they think you know something, [chuckled]. They appreciate the contact. Maybe it's sort of father – son – daughter relationship or something, but, frequently, I think I'm actually helping, not sure that I am, but I hope, I am. Most students seem to appreciate that.

Yet, the SRU faculty see themselves as effective teachers. Faculty members believe that they are able to guide students in achieving their goals. What is interesting is that they attribute this not to their subject expertise but to their instructional skills to guide students by structuring learning experiences, engaging students in learning processes, and serving as role models to models.

Robertson (2003) suggested that learner-centered college teaching often constitutes a conflicted helping relationship, characterized by the necessity to combine the guiding and facilitative roles of the teacher. Striving Regional views itself as a “learning community where students, faculty, and staff engage one another as teachers, scholars, and learners” (*[SRU] Mission Statement: 2005*). In the spirit of the institutional mission and culture, many participants appear to view students as protégés rather than

followers in the learning process and feel uncomfortable when required or asked to provide direction rather than facilitate exploration.

In Weimer's (2002) terms, many participants of this study appear to prefer to walk *alongside*, rather than in front of, the students in their learning process. In what ways do SRU faculty members walk alongside the students? What are the main characteristics of student-faculty interactions at SRU?

Student-faculty interaction.

Interaction with students is the second major component of the SRU faculty teaching identity. Essentially, faculty members derive intrinsic satisfaction from the *process* of dealing with students. For example, one Associate Professor exclaimed, "I like contact with students. And that's probably one of the real pleasures of the job – contact with young people." Interaction with students energizes faculty members, provides multiple opportunities to engage in helping behaviors, and brings variety into daily work routines.

Participants commonly pointed out that interacting with students energizes them. For example, one Assistant Professor shared, "I enjoy interaction with students a lot. I think I get a lot of energy out of that interaction." Interestingly, as did several other participants, he stressed the reciprocal nature of his interactions with students. He returns the energy he receives back to students by caring for his students' well-being. His effort and enthusiasm become infectious for students who in turn seek his mentoring and guidance.

He continued by emphasizing the authenticity of his genuine interest in the welfare of the students. "And students recognize that. It's something you can't fake. You

either like and have it, or don't like it and you don't have it." For many participants, an important characteristic of a good teacher is his authentic desire to interact with and help students.

Many participants enjoy interacting with students not just because they like to be near young people, but primarily because they can help students. This perspective is exemplified by the remarks of one Associate Professor:

Every day I have some sort of interaction with students. To me, they are the main stakeholders. They are my reason of being here as a professor. I am here for the student. At every level ... I put everything on the backburner and [helping students] takes priority.

Faculty members realize that students need positive role models and supportive social networks to succeed academically. Many participants serve as advisors for student clubs and are engaged in mentoring individual students. Several faculty members talked at length about joining students for the University-sponsored as well as student organized trips, hikes and other recreational activities.

Interestingly, several interviewees noted that interaction with students constantly renews them and helps them to deal with mundane routine teaching activities. The necessity to adapt to different student needs and learning styles fosters new faculty interests and ideas, and consequently, energy is renewed. One Assistant Professor explained,

And there are new ones coming through to start over again, so it's not like once you're done. There is always a new challenge. Every semester's new and different and fresh and each class is always of different composition.

Many participants construct faculty-student interactions in terms of theatrical performance. Indeed, most of them like being the center of student attention. One Assistant Professor summed up this perspective. "I enjoy getting up in the front, walk

around, perform a little bit, that's fun. I really enjoy doing lectures." An Associate, describing his classroom presentation style, observed, "I'm a very dynamic speaker, loud, fooling around...high energy. When I get going, I keep going...giving it 100 percent."

Performing, however, is not the end in itself. Rather, participants conceive of performing as a *tool* or means to engage students in learning processes and as a mechanism to respond to multiple needs and learning styles of students. Performance for participants is the ability to utilize a set of acting techniques to engage students in an interactive exchange of ideas as well as the ability to change masks or teaching styles in order to meet diverse student needs.

Many participants view performing as a means to improve the delivery of their course material. One recently promoted Associate Professor explained,

You have to present material in a way, number one, it's not boring. I can just stand up and read the book verbatim...but, then, what's the point of me even showing up? I want to try to deliver [material] to them in an alternate way that's not really delivering the text and in a way that's interesting enough.

Participants see performing as a way to build students' interest in material thus engaging them in intentional learning. A first-year Assistant Professor noted, "You are constantly trying to make people, not make, but get people interested in the material enough so that they actually want to study."

Participants also referred to teaching as performing in the context of the necessity to adapt to diverse student needs and learning styles. They compare themselves to actors who constantly must gauge their audience's reaction to evaluate their performance and modify it if necessary. Performing in this sense is flexibility in their teaching styles and utilization of an extensive toolbox of classroom teaching techniques. An Associate Professor explained,

I am also a performer. It [teaching] is similar to the feeling of being on stage in a way. And it is in a way. You feel like if you are doing a good job, you are going to get some energy back from the students, you are going to feel them paying attention and learning and enjoying it sometimes, maybe.

Further, viewing teaching as performing allows faculty to assume and quickly change different roles to respond to diverse student needs. Another Associate Professor described his classroom behavior in this way,

Well, the performance . . . You are an actor, you are performing, but, then, again, you are also a facilitator, you have to react to people's notions and abilities, so you have to be a psychologist or social worker. So, you are an actor, social worker, psychologist, you know, all these roles in the classroom.

Student growth.

Student growth and development emerged as the third, and most prominent, culminating component of the SRU faculty teaching identity content. Essentially, the participants receive satisfaction and energy from watching the students grow. Consequently, they work to facilitate student learning and development. Finally, faculty members experience feelings of their own self-efficacy when they observe their students grow and succeed.

Almost universally, participants indicated that observing how their students grow and develop brings them immense satisfaction and invokes positive emotions. One Associate Professor explained,

[Instruction] provides an ultimate sense of satisfaction because it puts you in touch with the growth factor. You impact the minds of people, and literally see them grow. You see the eyes sparkle because of something you said or did and you feel good about it.

A veteran Professor concurred by noting, "When I see some of students at the present time appreciate what you do . . . and, especially, when they go to [graduate] schools . . . that makes me kind of emotional at times." Indeed, he became very emotional

several times during the interview recalling episodes from his teaching career and talking about his love of teaching.

Further, observing how students grow and develop energizes and motivates faculty members.¹² One recently tenured Assistant Professor shared,

I feed off that tremendously. I like seeing them grow, mature, you know, it's that parental thing – I like to see them come through and then go out and being successful in grad schools or in job. That's really keeps me happy because you see the results of your work, you see satisfaction, all it takes is just one that student on your evaluations who says "Even though I got a C in your class because it was really hard, I really enjoyed it anyway, I really learned a lot, and thank you". Those are kinds of things that make you want keep doing it.

Several faculty members invoked the comparison of faculty-student interactions to parent-child relationships. These faculty members tend to extend student success to include themselves and to internalize student accomplishment as their own. Student success brings significant satisfaction to them and reinforces their teaching orientation in daily work.

Indeed, being a teacher is not simply watching students grow, but actively participating in their learning processes.¹³ "I like to see that I'm a part of [students'] knowledge-gaining process," noted one Associate Professor. Another Associate concurred, "I like working with the students. It's fun to watch them develop over a few years and watch them go off and succeed. I always liked that feeling of participating in [their growth] process."

¹² Earlier, I indicated that faculty members also receive energy from the process of interacting with students. There is a difference between the energy sources in these two cases, however. By interacting with students, faculty members receive energy from the *process* of exchange itself. In this case, faculty members receive energy from observing the *outcome* of the interaction, i.e. student learning.

¹³ Again, here, faculty-student interaction is different from the interaction described in the previous subsection. In the previous case, instructor and student are essentially peers and interaction focuses on the *process* of personal exchanges. In this case, the instructor is an expert or an authority figure who facilitates student learning. Here, interaction focuses on the *outcome*, i.e. student learning.

Almost universally, participants perceive themselves to be effective teachers whose work positively impacts student growth and development. Faculty self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Deci & Ryan, 1982; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998) emerged as another common attribute of teaching identity. Teaching well and perceived faculty teaching self-efficacy fosters intrinsic motivation and satisfaction to the participants in their daily work. Successful outcomes of teaching or effective student learning and development make faculty members “feel good”.

For many participants, the intrinsic motivation derived from perceptions of self-efficacy in the teaching role is significantly greater than monetary rewards. “I don’t care about rewards or recognitions or so on, I just love watching people grow,” succinctly stated one Associate Professor. A recently promoted Professor concurred, “Because my satisfaction for impacting upon my original intent, which is student development, is so high, it allows me to overlook the compensatory part of what I do.”

Many SRU faculty members often conceptualized teaching broadly in terms of student learning. Barr and Tagg (1995; Tagg, 2003) hold that a paradigm shift is taking place in American higher education. They argue for expanding the concept of teaching from the primary focus on providing instruction to adding emphasis on producing learning. In fact, this paradigm shift is evident at SRU. For many participants, especially seniors, being a faculty member means active facilitation of the student learning processes rather than mere delivery of material. This perspective is typified by comments of one science Professor,

I see myself as someone who facilitates learning. I don’t like to be called a teacher because these days that word means just telling the students certain things and expecting them to give you back what you told them and then giving them grades. I want them to learn.

Further, many faculty members express interest in student growth and development beyond the college years. Many participants talked about the meaning of teaching in terms of ensuring student success in life by helping students build solid foundational knowledge and skills that they could later apply to advance their careers. A business Professor, for example, succinctly described his main purpose as a teacher as providing “understanding and knowledge for people who have the opportunity to use it in the future.” Another business Associate Professor concurred, emphasizing student continuous development as an ultimate purpose of teaching, “As a teacher, what I’m trying to do is to make students life-long learners, to love learning ... being able for the lives to continue to develop.”

Growth and development of students attending SRU is evident not only in high retention and graduation rates but also in multiple national rankings. SRU faculty are proud to observe that their teaching results in student accomplishments. Establishing the link between student successes and their teaching nurtures participants’ self-efficacy beliefs that, in turn, motivate them to further expend time and energy in facilitating student learning, thus confirming and affirming their teaching identity.

Participation in student development and association with college-age people have long been identified as important sources of satisfaction for faculty members (Eckert, Stecklein, & Sagen, 1959 cited in Bess, 1977). Further, the faculty focus on student growth and high levels of faculty-student interaction is not unique to SRU faculty. In fact, Schuster and Finkelstein (2006) pointed out that the faculty interest in undergraduate student growth and development is on the rise nation-wide. “In 1997 fully four out of five faculty members agreed ‘very much’ or ‘somewhat’ that faculty interest

in the academic progress of undergraduate students was gaining strength, in contrast to about three out of five...who said so in 1969” (p. 127). However, the cause for this increase may reflect not the values of faculty, as it appears to be the case at SRU, but may be an indication of increased accountability requirements as well accreditation standards focusing on the assessment of student learning outcomes.

What appears to distinguish Striving Regional is that the faculty focus on student growth and student-faculty interactions is strongly supported by the University mission and explicitly reflected in tenure and promotion requirements as well as decisions. Further, the proposed course-based curriculum model is designed to nurture further faculty teaching identity by stimulating experimentation with pedagogical practices to facilitate student learning and by encouraging student-faculty collaboration in co-curricular activities. The combination of strong identification of SRU faculty members with the teaching role on one hand and institutional environment that values and encourages teaching on the other hand result in a high degree of centrality and salience of the teaching identity for the participants.

Teaching in Faculty Role Hierarchy

According to the identity theory (Stets & Burke, 2003; Stryker, 1980; Stryker & Burke, 2000), individuals organize their role identities, and consequently arrange roles in the role-set, in hierarchies of importance. Identity centrality and identity salience of a given role are essential indicators of the role's place in the role-set hierarchy. Although centrality and salience are related, they refer to different phenomena. Identity *centrality* or prominence reflects what an individual *values* or the perceived affective importance of the given identity to the individual. Identity *salience* reflects the *behavior* of the

individual in a given situation or probability that a given identity will be enacted in a variety of situations (Stets & Burke, 2003; Stryker & Serpe, 1994).

In the previous section, I demonstrated that teaching brings *satisfaction* and intrinsic motivation to SRU faculty members. But how *important* is teaching in comparison to other faculty role activities? How likely is it that faculty members *engage* in teaching activities when given the chance to enact other faculty roles?

Teaching identity centrality.

How important is teaching for SRU faculty members? How important is teaching in comparison to research, a faculty role expectation increasingly promoted by the SRU administration? Since many participants became faculty members because of their existential calling to teach, it is not surprising that they attach very high affective importance to teaching. Comments of one social science Associate Professor exemplify the centrality of the teaching identity for the interviewed faculty members. For him, positive affective effects of engaging in the teaching role are so strong that they even can prevail over physical sickness.

There are days, and everybody has those, when you are really don't want to do anything. I come to campus and I, like, man, I just don't want to do anything. But when I get to class, I'm fine. I can be sick and I get to class and I'm fine. And it's always been that way.

The centrality of the teaching identity is especially evident when teaching performance is compared to research activities. Simply stated, for the participants of the study, good teaching is significantly more important than research accomplishments. A Professor captured well the value SRU faculty members attach to teaching in contrast to research.

As a matter of fact, if I did some research, and it did not come out as good as I thought, that feeling depresses me much less than the feeling that I don't teach properly in the class, because when I...because I know that, I can see that I did not teach well today. That feeling of not doing a good job before the students is much more humiliating than the paper not coming out correctly. Because fifty eyes, fifty pairs of eyes are looking at me and I am humble every time – I do not know what I am talking about. I always go back there . . . I cannot explain things properly or answer questions properly – that's much more stressful than my research not being right. "You have been a wonderful teacher. Now I am a CEO, but I started by you and that class was wonderful." That's completely different feeling than someone saying your paper is very good.

Clearly, for this professor, as for almost all of the participants, local, concrete SRU students, rather than the outside, cosmopolitan, "invisible college" colleagues serve as a reference point in self-assessments (see Gouldner, 1957).

In fact, several participants pointed out that teaching activities are often undervalued outside SRU. For example, a recently promoted Associate Professor bitterly shared the reaction of his peers at a conference after he led a roundtable on teaching techniques in his field, "[a] lot of people tell me 'you are crazy, spend your time writing papers, that's where actually the money is, academic glory, recognition'". However, to the faculty in my study, teaching well, not producing cutting-edge research, is critically important for self-satisfaction. A Professor captured this common sentiment well. "Teaching is . . . what you call . . . almost your religion. Publications are best for the reward system . . . mostly . . . I understand that point of view. For your own satisfaction you have to stand before your students and say I am a good teacher."

In the identity theory, the commitment to a role is measured by the costs of giving up meaningful relationships with others should individuals pursue an alternative course of action (Stryker, 1980). In other words, if an individual is truly committed to a role, it would be very difficult for the individual to under-perform in or disengage from the role.

Indeed, SRU faculty members tend to exhibit high affective commitment to the teaching role, especially, in contrast to research activities¹⁴. Affective commitment refers to the depth of affect attached to the potential loss of social relationships and activities associated with a given role (Serpe, 1987, p. 45). For the majority of participants, the costs of poor teaching is much more “depressing” and “humiliating” than the peer criticism of their research outputs. In other words, student reactions to faculty teaching performance, not peer reviews of research products, are more important for the participants.

The perceived costs of not establishing meaningful relationships with students through good teaching are, in fact, so high that it is often a cause of anxiety for SRU faculty members. Many participants reported that although they believe that they are effective teachers, they constantly worry if they are good enough for their students and feel stress trying to constantly improve their teaching. However, participants described this kind of anxiety as a challenge or “affirmative” and “self-induced” stress rather than strain or burn-out.

Since teaching takes a central place in their professional self-concepts, the participants, not surprisingly, often talked about anxieties associated with their teaching role in affirmative terms. A Professor, for example, noted, “I don’t find stress unmanageable. It’s kind of a *good stress* anyway. I love being busy and doing important things with my students, so that doesn’t bother me to feel that kind of stress.”

¹⁴ Although the extent of interactional commitment (breadth or the number of social relationships associated with a given role) to the teaching role did not emerge from the data, one can speculate that, for SRU faculty, interactional commitment to teaching is much stronger than their interactional commitment to research given the participants’ heavy teaching loads, interest in student-faculty interactions, and relatively low engagement in research activities.

In fact, for many participants, stress is a *natural* indicator of their commitment to teaching. One Associate explained, “If you are not passionate about what you are doing, then you don’t have any stress, therefore, you are here just to pick up check. But if you are using your energy to help people, then, obviously, you are going to be stressed.”

Further, experiencing this type of anxiety, also, intensifies the feeling of self-efficacy and, consequently, satisfaction when faculty time and effort result in student success. A Professor observed,

I stress myself all the time worrying if I am being a good enough teacher for my students. Satisfaction comes from seeing your students succeed after you have put in all that stress, all that sweat and grit. And, then, you see people succeed and it makes you feel good.

An Assistant Professor concurred, “It is a high stress level, but it’s a great return because as a faculty person you feel good when you know that a student...you see progress from pre-test to post-test in over the semester.”

Further, the participants often perceive the stress of teaching as *self-imposed*. They consciously and voluntarily expend significant amounts of time and effort striving for excellence in the classroom. Many participants report that higher stress associated with teaching activities actually results in higher levels of satisfaction. One Associate Professor explained,

The stress, by and large, is of our choosing. I can instantly eliminate the stress from my job by not caring. I’ve got tenure. I can teach the same notes I have now for the rest of my life, be a very poor instructor, could blow off students. I could be unwelcoming. I could be not in my office except for mandated office hours. I can have small classes by being particularly brutally hard and I can do no more research for the rest of my life, and I would have very little stress. Satisfaction is combined with stress because we are choosing the stress, because that’s what satisfies us.

Thus, high centrality of the teaching identity for SRU faculty daily work leads participants to translate their values in actions, that is, to walk the talk. In other words, for SRU faculty the teaching identity is not only very central, but also salient.

Teaching identity salience.

For the participants, teaching not only takes a central affective position in their professional self-concepts, but also plays a prominent role in their everyday work. In other words, affective centrality of teaching is reflected in the faculty role behaviors of the participants, thus demonstrating *salience* of the teaching identity in the SRU faculty self-concept.

Similar to several participants, an Assistant Professor shared that his desire to be an excellent teacher motivates him to invest time and effort in preparing and delivering course materials.

Positive stress makes us do a lesson plan. It makes you come prepared. It is enough to make you not to go off shooting from the hip as they call it. When you shoot from the hip, you walk in the class and then you teach off the top of your head when you could have been better prepared. The students may not see it, but you know you could have really sat down and develop a nice lesson plan or activity, questions, and assessments.

Identities become salient when identity content is translated in everyday behaviors or when values and philosophies are evident in the individual's actions in daily work. For example, a veteran Professor recalled that his desire to continue being an effective teacher prompted him to change his teaching schedule, even though it created a series of inconveniences in his established work and non-work routines.

I asked my chair this past semester, I want to teach on a four-day schedule rather than two-day schedule. I've been on a two-day schedule for a long time. I noticed as I get older, my efficiency goes down when I am teaching three classes in a row within a day and I don't want students to be shortchanged. Therefore, I want to do

two courses in two days and another course in the other two days. I want to go to the class with the same enthusiasm I went to the previous class.

Student-centeredness is not just a professed value statement in the SRU mission.

It is evident in faculty members' daily work. For instance, a recently promoted Associate Professor, discussing the intensity and complexity of faculty work schedules, suddenly changed his line of thought and noted that students' schedules are even more complex than faculty schedules. He shared that he structures his workday to meet the needs of his students at the expense of his own time.

A lot of the students are in similar situations with us. They are actually taking five classes, so in some respects their schedules are tighter than ours. If I am here, they can come in. And I will stay around late or come in early to accommodate a student if they tell me that they need to see me.

Similarly, another Associate Professor is open for student consultation or simple chat anytime when he is in the office, despite the fact that frequent student visits distract him from other activities. "I spend quite a lot of time in the office. My door is always, always open [for students] ... Sometimes I think maybe that's a mistake; sometimes, I feel this way."

The salience of an identity is especially evident when the individual invokes that identity in contexts that would potentially allow invoking several alternative identities. Participants repeatedly pointed out that they not only highly value teaching compared to other work identities, but that they actually invest significant time and effort in teaching activities. A veteran Associate Professor, for example, not only believes that teaching is more important than research, but he actually stopped his successful research and publishing endeavors and is now almost exclusively focusing on teaching and student-faculty co-curricular activities.

I don't do a lot of heavy duty scholarship. I don't do a lot of publishing. I enjoy writing. I write pretty well. But I'd rather write a letter of recommendation for a student than an article. Because I think it will do more good. I put a lot of energy into that.

Again, centrality of the teaching identity to the faculty self-concept is not unique to SRU faculty members. Leslie (2002), for example, concluded his analysis of national survey data by asserting that “faculty express an impressive normative unity about the value of teaching and the intrinsic satisfaction they derive from it” (p. 70). Similarly, a higher salience of teaching than research or investment of significantly larger amounts of effort to teaching activities is a common characteristic of American faculty. For example, in 1998, a typical male faculty member spent 5.5 times more effort on teaching than research; in 1972, the ratio was three (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006).

However, two characteristics appear to distinguish SRU faculty. First, the centrality and salience of the teaching role identity exhibit a strong degree of alignment. In other words, SRU faculty members do indeed enact their teaching values in their daily work. The second characteristic is, again, the intensity of their teaching identity. High salience and centrality of teaching tend to make other roles not so much unimportant but rather *indistinctive* in comparison to teaching. Although SRU faculty members are engaged in multiple professional activities in their daily work, they tend to associate the meaning of faculty work with teaching and focus their attention and effort on teaching activities. The resulting configuration of the faculty self-concept – a meta-identity of teaching and then everything else – is especially evident in faculty descriptions of their identity hierarchies.

Identity hierarchy.

The identity theory holds that individuals organize their multiple identities and corresponding role behaviors in a *hierarchy* based on the relative centrality and salience of the identities (Stets & Burke, 2003; Stryker, 1980; Stryker & Burke, 2000). Given the discussion above, what does the SRU faculty identity, and consequently, role hierarchy look like?

Since the participants universally attach high centrality and salience to their teaching identity, it is not surprising that teaching takes a top position in the SRU faculty self-concept. As typified by the comments of one very recently promoted Associate Professor, “Teaching out of those three primary [faculty roles] is ... if we could look at the metaphor of Trinity ... the Father, which is the source of the Son and the Holy Ghost.”

Indeed, for participants, the academic profession is mainly a teaching profession. Further, extending the metaphor from the previous quotation, participants tend to view faculty work from the strict monotheistic doctrine where teaching is the supreme being, thus rejecting the relative plurality of the divine assumed by the concept of the trinity. In other words, for many of those interviewed, one cannot worship simultaneously two deities or attach equal importance and extend equal effort to two or more roles.

This perspective is especially evident when participants contrast teaching and research. Several participants firmly believe that the faculty position is socially designed to facilitate solely the transfer of knowledge, not its discovery. Research activities are seen by these participants as an expression of personal interests and should be placed outside of the faculty role. For some, it is unethical for a faculty member to engage in

other activities besides teaching since this can negatively impact student learning, which is constructed as the main purpose of faculty work. The remarks of one Professor exemplify this perspective:

Your job is the first thing. Research comes later. You have to make your customers happy. Your customers are students. You need to make them happy first. Because your basic idea is to impart knowledge and you should impart knowledge efficiently. If you don't do that, if you are going after research to build career at the cost of those guys who have paid money and come to learn, then, you don't belong to the teaching profession... If you are using teaching as a vehicle to build your career in research, that's not good.

All faculty members in the study place the teaching identity on the top of their identity hierarchy in their professional self-concepts with other identities and roles placed significantly lower than teaching. Further, the majority of participants, in their accounts of the value they attach to daily work, do not specify role activities beyond teaching and generally refer to them as *additional supplementary activities*. “To me teaching is number one activity, *everything else* [emphasis added] – number two, number three, number four,” stated a veteran Associate Professor. An Assistant Professor approaching tenure and promotion reviews concurred, “Teaching scores first and, then, you have to figure out how to do *other things* [emphasis added].”

As I indicated earlier, Reitzes and Mutran (2002) developed a measure of self-concept balance or the extent to which a person allocates centrality or salience to his multiple identities in the hierarchy of importance. The self-constructed balance is the ratio of the number of roles identified as highly important (salient and central) divided by the number of all roles in the role-set. If applied to the SRU faculty, their self-concept might be characterized as a low balance.¹⁵ However, the concept of self-concept is likely

¹⁵ $1/n$, where n is a number of professional roles performed by faculty members and 1 represents teaching, the only central and salient identity that emerged in the SRU faculty role-set.

to be not applicable for SRU because the SRU faculty do not associate high importance to multiple roles.

Reitzes and Mutran suggested that that individuals with high balance or with many roles identified as important, experience greater satisfaction than individuals with low balance. SRU faculty may have a low faculty self-concept balance according to the concept, but, also, are satisfied with their work. Despite the usefulness of Reitzes & Mutran's concept for other venues, at SRU, the participants construct their professional identity as faculty members solely in terms of teaching, i.e., the professional self-concepts of participants generally contain one highly central and salient identity.

Summary

Essentially, SRU faculty members define faculty work in terms of teaching. Teaching emerged as a meta-identity that encapsulates participants' self-concepts as faculty members. Dominant teaching orientation in the faculty role-set appears to be a result of the integration of personal value commitments and institutional expectations.

In the previous section, I discussed that SRU faculty role expectations first and foremost focus on teaching. In this section, I showed that faculty members attach high importance and salience to teaching in contrast to their other daily work activities. Teaching provides immense satisfaction and intrinsic motivation to the participants. The ability to guide students, interaction with students, and participation in students' growth and development constitute the essence of being a teacher for SRU faculty members. An important characteristic of effective teaching for the participants appears to be not so much the mastery of the subject matter but the ability to connect with students and keep them engaged in the learning process.

For participants being a faculty member means being a teacher. What emerges from SRU faculty members' reflective appraisal of their daily work is a somewhat unexpected configuration of their role-sets. In contrast to a traditional image of the faculty role-set that contains teaching, research, and service roles, the SRU faculty role-set appears to contain a teaching role that anchors all "other role activities."

Nevertheless, although SRU faculty members continue to be expected first and foremost teachers and although teaching emerged as a meta-identity for participants, faculty daily work is not limited to teaching. This poses another question, how does teaching relate to other faculty daily work activities?

Role Boundary

My third research question focuses on explicating how faculty work roles are positioned in relation to each other. In the previous section of this chapter I made two conclusions. First, SRU faculty members are *expected*, first and foremost, to be effective teachers and, only then, can they engage in other faculty work activities. Second, SRU faculty members view faculty work primarily in terms of teaching. Although faculty members are engaged in multiple and diverse professional activities in daily work, essentially, for them, to be a faculty member *means* to be a teacher who skillfully facilitates the student learning process. Further, teaching brings faculty members immense satisfaction in their daily work.

I define the faculty role-set as a set of roles that reflects the faculty member's social position in the given institutional context. Further, following the symbolic interactionism dictum "society shapes self shapes society", I defined role as a stable set of expectations of others associated with the faculty position in the institutional context

as well as the meanings faculty members themselves attach to the position itself and to the expectations of role-senders *as well as* recurring behaviors to enact these meanings in daily work.

In other words, I suggest that a recurrent set of faculty work activities can be conceptualized as the “faculty role” if the following four conditions are satisfied. First, these work activities must be *expected* of faculty members by others or role-senders. Second, faculty members themselves must *associate* these activities with the faculty member’s social position. Third, faculty members must *interpret* what these expectations of the role-senders mean to them. Finally, faculty members must *enact* these activities in daily work. Given these conditions and based on the previous discussion in this chapter, the SRU faculty work role-set appears to consist of a *single meta-role*, teaching, with other work-related activities tangentially attached to teaching.

Thus, I need to modify my third research question. In this section, I utilize the concept of role boundary for explicating how SRU faculty members position *teaching* in relation to other faculty professional activities in their daily work. I focus on two role boundary properties, permeability and flexibility, to structure my analysis of how teaching is positioned in relation to other faculty work-related activities.

In addition, I conclude this section with a brief discussion of the work/non-work boundary. Although, this study focuses on faculty work activities, spillovers between work and non-work lives were frequently mentioned by the participants.

Role Domain

I define *role domain* as the temporal and spatial aspects associated with a recurrent set of role-related behaviors. Simply put, the explication of the faculty work

role domain involves addressing when and where faculty members carry out their professional activities in daily work.

One might argue that temporal and physical boundaries of daily work are set very subjectively. However, for the SRU faculty members daily work typically means faculty professional activities that take place *on campus during the daytime*. For the majority of participants, professional activities that they refer to as work take place primarily *on campus*. One Associate Professor explained,

I like to leave work at work. I do work at home when I have to. But I try my hardest just to get everything done here [in the office], that's probably why I work long days, so I can go home and not think about it for the night.

An Assistant Professor concurred,

I don't take work home. I put in long and hard hours and why get work home -- that's my time. I don't take work home. Most of the time I don't ever take work home, I intentionally leave everything right here [in the office].

Further, for many participants, the *daytime* often exceeds the typical business hours. It is common for the SRU faculty members to structure their work time similar to one Professor who shared,

I'm in a habit of being on-campus for a long period of time, it's just my work style. I will finish up my stuff here about six o'clock tonight and I was here before dawn this morning. Yesterday, I was here from about eight o'clock in the morning until nine o'clock at night. I love it. I just love it. You know everybody has his or her thing and I enjoy it.

Two conclusions emerged from the analysis of the SRU faculty work role domain. First, in general, participants indicated that teaching is *daily* work for them. When they are on campus, faculty members tend generally to concentrate their time and effort exclusively on teaching. Thus, the teaching role domain characteristically is equivalent to the faculty daily work domain.

Second, faculty members typically conduct their research activities outside the daily work domain. Consequently, apparently teaching and research domains of SRU faculty members generally do not intersect and do not form boundaries between each other.

Teaching as meta-activity.

Since effective teaching is the main expectation of SRU faculty members and since SRU faculty members construct faculty work primarily as teaching, it is not surprising that teaching is their daily work. In other words, teaching generally encapsulates faculty daily work with other professional activities bracketed off or relegated beyond the boundaries of daily work. Thus, participants typically tend not to establish boundaries or experience interaction or spillovers between teaching and other professional activities.

Indeed, SRU faculty members allocate most of the time in their daily work to teaching activities. Teaching four courses every semester or conducting up to ten class meetings per week requires stamina, concentration, and focus. Further, as I discussed in the previous section, the high centrality of teaching in the participants' faculty self-concept creates positive stress for them that they experience as a moral obligation to be good teachers. In turn, the stress and obligation lead to significant expenditures of effort and energy in creating and facilitating effective educational experiences for students.

However, most importantly, for allocation of time and effort in daily work, is the fact that for SRU faculty members teaching is much more than classroom instruction. One Associate Professor explained, "Teaching certainly takes up the most time if you start to include not just formal classes, discussions and marking, preparation, but contacts

with students and advising and talking to students about various aspects of their education.”

Thus, for participants, teaching is a complex activity or, rather, a complex *set* of interrelated, albeit cognitively and behaviorally different, activities aimed at facilitating student learning and helping students to achieve their goals. In this study, teaching emerged as an integrative meta-activity that bundles together a number of student-related faculty work activities under the label of the “teaching role.”

When interpreting the meaning of faculty work, the participants identify teaching as a meta-identity that encapsulates what it means for participants to be faculty members. Further, teaching appears to be a meta-role that anchors all other activities in the faculty work domain. Finally, teaching emerges as a meta-activity in the faculty members’ daily work.

In addition, although the boundary between work and non-work is not the focus of this study, interestingly, as technology is refined and adopted, the teaching meta-activity is expanding beyond campus and traditional teaching hours thus permeating faculty non-work life. Many participants noted that technology compresses time and space thus making student-faculty interactions, an important component of the SRU faculty teaching identity, grow in intensity. One Professor explained,

Teaching never ends. Because of e-mail nobody comes during office hours; they just send you e-mails. I have all the files kept in e-mail. I tell them, I usually check my e-mail toward 10 or 10:30pm, if you have burning questions, ask me. If it requires a quick answer, I’ll do it. Otherwise, I say, stop by the first thing in the morning. I’m there all the time.

This expansion of teaching beyond traditional physical and temporal boundaries further reinforces and demonstrates the high salience of teaching for the participants.

If participants spend most of their daily work time and expend most of their effort teaching, then another important question arises: when do faculty members engage in research and service, activities that are a distant second and third to teaching but are still required for tenure and promotion?

Teaching as daily work.

Many SRU faculty members are engaged in research or scholarly activities. However, very frequently these activities are taking place outside of their daily work. Research activities are most often relegated to the breaks between semesters or, less often, conducted at home at night. Thus, participants tend to place research activities beyond the temporal and, sometimes, physical boundaries of their daily work that typically focuses exclusively on teaching activities and takes place on campus during the daytime.

Heavy teaching loads prevent the participants from maintaining active research agendas during teaching semesters. For the majority of the faculty members, research is relegated to non-teaching periods. Similar to many of his colleagues, one Associate Professor conducts his research when classes are not in session. "It's really hard during the semester to spend the time doing research. Most of the time, research gets pushed to January or summer time. So, most of it gets done during the break."

One Assistant Professor, who is approaching tenure and promotion reviews, concurred by noting that he has difficulty finding time to meet his own research productivity goals while teaching. "Practically, I get very little research done during the actual teaching semester. I always have goals and aspirations to do so much research, but in reality it doesn't happen. I have to concentrate it in the breaks."

In addition to relegating research activities to breaks, several faculty members try to engage in research activities at night. For example, an Associate Professor shared, “I am able to do quite a bit of research still. But often, the research requires that I be particularly motivated late at night and I am very efficient during the summers and we get an extended January term.”

Several participants noted that the heavy teaching load is not the only thing that keeps them from doing research on campus or during the daytime. These faculty members need concentrated time to focus on their scholarly activities. However, frequently, when they are on campus, their research interests or obligations lose in the competition with their teaching identities.

Having high centrality and salience of the teaching identity, these faculty members cannot ignore students seeking their advice or assistance. Thus, in order to be able to meet their research goals or address research expectations of tenure and promotion reviews, they must find time for scholarly activities. These participants make space for and place their research activities outside their daily work. For example, one recently promoted Associate Professor shared,

If I really want to do research, when I need my full attention, if I get interrupted while I'm trying to get an argument into my head, I work at home. So, for things that absolutely can't be interrupted, I work at home or I come here at night, even at night there are sometimes students around.

Interestingly and somewhat surprisingly to me, none of the participants expressed frustration or dissatisfaction with the fact that they have to postpone most of their research activities to breaks or to work on them at home at night. For them, these arrangements of faculty professional activities are normal and they are comfortable with the segregation of time and activity.

Further, for many participants relegating research activities outside the daily work schedule is not just a normal arrangement, but also is the *right* arrangement. Such a configuration allows them to focus exclusively on teaching, which is highly central and salient for their faculty self-concept. They tend to support the zero-sum perspective that holds that commitment of time and effort to one role comes at the expense of productivity in other roles. One Professor captured a typical among the SRU faculty members perspective on the relationship between teaching and research.

Even though you always get this – research helps my teaching and stuff like that [chuckles]. I've always found that it may help a little bit but sort of marginally and in the long run, I'm not doing a good job as I wanted to do it.

Very few participants discussed a boundary between teaching and university service and no one mentioned the boundary between teaching and outside service in the context of faculty daily work.¹⁶ Interestingly, SRU sets specific dedicated time for holding the university, school, and department committee meetings. These times are intentionally scheduled not to interfere with faculty classroom instruction. One Associate Professor explained,

And that's [service] just something that gets fit in. We actually have standard meeting times on this campus when theoretically nobody's in class. Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30 to 5 are supposed to be open times when nobody has class.

High expectations of teaching excellence and low to moderate expectations of research productivity on one hand and high centrality and salience of teaching identity on the other hand result in faculty members associating most, if not all, of their daily work with teaching activities and relegating research activities beyond their daily work. Thus, since teaching and research activities generally do not intersect in the SRU faculty members' daily work, typically, no boundaries exist between them.

¹⁶ Most outside service is done either on weekends or during breaks.

Then, is discussion of teaching role boundaries in faculty daily work moot? On one hand, yes, if research is generally conducted outside faculty daily work and if university service is typically taking place at specific dedicated times, then the teaching role boundary becomes, in fact, the faculty daily work boundary. Then, to analyze the properties of this boundary, it is necessary to study the intersection of faculty work and non-work activities. Thus, although, the focus of this study is on faculty work, I briefly address the boundary between work and non-work at the end of this section.

On the other hand, however, the same faculty members who indicated that they relegate research activities outside their daily work schedules also reported that they are engaged in research activities in the context of teaching activities. Similarly, even though standard committee meetings are set up outside classroom teaching hours, many faculty members discussed the intersection between teaching activities and administrative service assignments. Thus, the boundaries between teaching and research and between teaching and service do exist, but they are frequently embedded in the context of the teaching meta-identity.

This apparent paradox appears to be a function of two variables: the contrast between the activities and the control faculty members exercise over the activities. *Role contrast* refers to the number of features that differ between a pair of role activities and the extent of the differences. *Role control* refers to faculty member's ability to accept or decline the expected activity and to schedule the activity in a time and space at his discretion.

The interplay between the contrast and control affects whether given work activities are included as elements of daily work. If a given work activity has high

contrast to teaching and if a faculty member controls that activity, then, this activity is likely to be relegated outside the daily work as discussed previously in this sub-section. Faculty members tend to relegate their research activities outside their daily work domain and focus their daily work on teaching activities.

If a given work activity has low contrast to teaching, which is central and the most salient identity in the faculty self-concept, and if a faculty member controls that activity, then, this activity is likely to be addressed in daily work, which I discuss in the next sub-section. If a faculty member does not control the given activity, then, this activity is likely to be addressed in daily work. I discuss this scenario in the third sub-section of this section.

Teaching Role Boundary Permeability

Role boundary permeability refers to the extent to which a boundary allows the behavioral or psychological aspects of one role to enter another (Ashforth et al., 2000, 2001). More specifically, in this study, teaching role boundary permeability refers to the extent to which the boundary allows aspects of other faculty professional activities to affect the teaching role.

As I indicated earlier, somewhat paradoxically, many faculty members reported that they relegate research activities outside the daily work domain. But, then, they discussed permeability between teaching and research in the context of daily work. Participants also talked about the boundaries they tend to establish between different instructional activities. Finally, faculty members addressed the boundary between teaching and non-work.

Teaching—research boundary.

What differentiates research activities that SRU faculty members include in their daily work from the research activities they relegate outside their daily work domain? The former research activities tend to have low contrast to teaching activities.¹⁷ In other words, research activities that participants invoke in the context of their daily work are *adapted* or *designed* to facilitate student learning. These research activities share certain aspects with teaching activities. Thus, for SRU faculty members, boundaries between teaching and research activities, which they include in their daily work, are characterized by relatively high permeability.

Several participants talked at length about how they *adapt* their research projects for classroom instruction. These faculty members use their research activities as a source for case studies and examples to elevate student interest in the material and engage them in intentional learning.

Further, quite a few of these faculty members believe that, by infusing their research in classroom activities and sharing their research procedures and findings with students, they serve as role models for students thus encouraging them to develop research skills and dispositions. Participants perceive research as an obligation for a conscientious faculty member who wants his students to develop solid scientific reasoning and critical thinking skills. One Professor captured the perspective of these faculty members,

If I don't do research, how can I expect my students to do projects, write papers, not just writing papers, doing data gathering, real data, analyzing it. If I am doing a study on a 3-4-5 years basis, I do it in my class for my students at a very basic

¹⁷ Although in my interviews I did not explore the nature of the research activities relegated outside the daily work domain, many participants referred to those activities as “research for the sake of research” or “research for publication”; these phrases were used by many participants and appear to be a part of the SRU faculty jargon.

level for 30 days. So they see what they learn, what it means, how they implement it, how they can make decisions.

Thus, the research agenda does permeate the teaching boundary for some faculty. By integrating their research to classroom instruction, they enrich student learning experiences as well as reinforce their teaching identities.

For a larger group of participants, approximately two-thirds, teaching agendas drive or determine their research activities. In other words, they *design*, rather than adapt, their research projects to find interesting examples, artifacts, and case studies in order to facilitate student learning. For these faculty members, the real value of research lies not in the research findings *per se* or in publications but in the utility of research activities and findings that enhance the quality of their classroom teaching.

Engagement in research activities unrelated to teaching or student learning is not considered by many SRU faculty members as appropriate behavior. For them, research projects must be essentially designed in such a way so that research findings inform and enhance their teaching activities. One Associate Professor shared his research philosophy that reflects the perspective of many of his colleagues.

Most of things I prefer to research are things that to me have a more practical value, things that I will use in class or can use in class. So, 90 percent of my research goes towards things that I will do in class or improving lectures or changing activities as opposed to publications and so on. To me, publishing an article is a kind of research for the sake of doing research. So, you can say – hey, I did an article. I got a book published in 2005 which I'm very proud of, but I don't think I want to do another one. It's ... It doesn't hold. I feel it's time that could be better spent doing other things, like improving my classes.

Essentially, these faculty members do not identify problems and questions for their research activities in the scientific journals or professional conferences. Rather they find

them in their own classrooms, in the questions that their students raise, and course evaluations they receive.

Undergraduate research emerged as an important theme in my conversations with the participants. Many faculty members design their research projects not just to unearth material to enhance classroom presentations but also to involve their students in the research process. Thus, for them, research activities are not something that just supplements instruction, the research process *is*, in fact, part of the teaching and learning process. One Associate Professor explained,

My research projects are usually straightforward, very simple, not anything cutting-edge. It's more fieldwork, so just collecting stuff – what's there? This is what we think is there. It is easy. For me, it is more teaching students how to do research. Most of my research projects are teaching students how to be a good researcher. It doesn't really matter what they are doing ... but doing it well.

Many participants are engaged in writing and reviewing textbooks. Their desire to continuously improve the teaching and learning processes lead them to engage in developing teaching tools. Scholarly products that would help them and their colleagues to be better teachers are much more important for them than research publications in professional journals. One Professor captured this sentiment.

I do a lot of textbook reviews and those kinds of things. That's how I prefer to spend my [research] time. And those are the kinds of things that actually make me feel like I'm really doing something, instead of publishing something that, you know, fifty people are going to read.

It is apparent that SRU faculty members are engaged in two types of research. More than half of participants frequently indicated that they tend to relegate the work on their research projects to breaks or do research at home, typically at night. They often referred to those research activities as “research for the sake of research” or “research for publications.” At the same time, another half of faculty members discussed research

activities in the context of teaching and learning processes in their daily work. The research activities conducted as a part of daily work or as a part teaching meta-activity are characterized by the fact that they are either adapted or designed to facilitate student learning.

Permeable boundaries between teaching and research create multiple opportunities for faculty engagement in scholarship of teaching and learning (Boyer, 1990). In fact, recently Henderson and Buchanan(2007) suggested that “the scholarship of teaching and learning seems a natural fit for teaching intensive settings [such as comprehensive university] where the blend of scholarship and teaching issues can lead to work that will be appreciated and rewarded by colleagues in the faculty and administration” (p. 536).

SRU faculty members tend to establish permeable boundaries between teaching and research roles or integrate teaching and research activities in the context of daily work *if* the research activities are designed or can be adapted for facilitating classroom instruction. If faculty members see research activities as unrelated to teaching, they tend to segment research and teaching, thus placing those activities outside their daily work domain.

Teaching—teaching boundary.

Interestingly and unexpectedly to me, several participants discussed boundaries established by their teaching schedules between classes. In other words, they talked about boundaries not between roles but, rather, within one aspect of the teaching role, classroom instruction. Indeed, classroom instruction is a complex cognitive and behavioral process that requires effective class scheduling. However, for the faculty,

effective class scheduling is a very subjective notion. Participants expressed highly idiosyncratic preferences in structuring their teaching schedules.

First, several faculty members talked about the difficulties they have when teaching different sections of the same course back-to-back. The content of the instruction and the students enrolled in the sections tend to be very similar, thus the boundaries between the classes tend to be very permeable. As a result, for these faculty members, back-to-back sections frequently blur in a single class period, thus often causing confusion. One Associate Professor explained this type of scheduling challenge. “If I teach my sections back to back, I can’t remember what I tell my students. So, I have to change classrooms and change days to keep the sections straight.” Similar to several of his colleagues, he prefers to establish relatively impermeable temporal and spatial boundaries between sections of the same course in order to *structure* and organize his daily work.

In contrast, several participants enjoy teaching different sections of the same course back-to-back. For them, the main challenge is not differentiating between two very similar sections with permeable boundaries, but *transitioning* between the different courses with relatively impermeable boundaries. These faculty members find it difficult to make the cognitive and behavioral shifts required when one teaches different level courses back-to-back. Thus, they prefer if their teaching schedules provide transition periods that allow them to change gears and prepare for different types of course content and student audiences. One Assistant Professor noted,

I usually have my two intro level classes back to back. They are just lectures one right after the other – same course [but different sections]. We usually don’t do back-to-back for different courses. But if the content’s the same that makes sense. You’re on a roll; I’m going to just do the same thing again. But it’s always been

split out in terms of different ... just trying to give you a break somewhere and there ... when it's different classes – you can't go from a general level class to an upper level major's class – they are usually split up.

Yet for another group of faculty members, the main challenge is when two different but similar courses are scheduled back-to-back. An Associate Professor explained this type of scheduling problem,

Thing that's somewhat difficult is if things are somewhat similar, if it makes any sense. One semester I taught both halves of our U.S. History survey back-to-back, so I taught first half and, then, the second half, and that was difficult because I was in the U.S. , but in a completely different time, so that's was awkward.

In this case, the cognitive boundary between the courses is both permeable in some aspects (same country) and impermeable in other aspects (different eras). The challenge here is, on one hand, to keep the two courses separate or to keep two different time frames analytically distinct even if the context is the same. On the other hand, the challenge is to make a transition or cognitively disengage from one time period and engage in another one. These faculty members prefer to teach back-to-back either sections of the same course or very different courses.

Faculty members establish, remove, or modify boundaries between the classes they teach as one way to facilitate structuring and organizing their daily work as well as to facilitate transitioning from one activity to another. Boundary preferences are highly subjective and appear to reflect the individual dispositions of participants.

Teaching—non-work boundary.

Again, although faculty life outside their daily work domain was designed to be beyond the focus of this study, the non-work factor strongly emerged when participants discussed the way in which their daily work activities relate to each other. Specifically, many faculty members mentioned the cognitive intersection or cognitive boundary

between teaching and the non-work domain. Clearly, this boundary is characterized by one-way permeability.

On one hand, when engaged in teaching activities, especially classroom teaching, faculty members establish highly impermeable boundaries. In addition to temporal and spatial boundaries established by teaching schedules and classroom assignments, faculty members create a strong cognitive boundary. This allows them to focus exclusively on teaching.

One recently promoted Professor exemplifies this perspective. He reminisced at length about his experiences a few years ago when his twin sons were born and when he was going through a frustrating process of arranging immigration paperwork for his parents. However, even at that busy time, in his classroom and in his office, he was able to bracket off his personal problems and focus on teaching. Further, he pointed out that compartmentalizing teaching and non-work activities was not difficult for him to do. In fact, in his teaching situations, he always completely focuses his attention on his students. He emphatically noted, “When I am teaching, of course, everything disappears from my mind naturally. But other times, my mind is there – there is an appointment, I need to take care of this and that. Not when I am teaching, then, I cannot think of anything else.”

On the other hand, at home, teaching is often on the participants’ minds. Many participants noted that thinking about their teaching does not stop for them when they leave campus. In other words, it is difficult for faculty members to cognitively disengage from teaching, even when they leave their daily work domain and transition to non-work activities. Like many participants, one veteran Professor frequently thinks about his teaching while engaged in non-work activities.

I am always [thinking] what should I teach? What should I say on these topics? What examples should I cite for them to understand? So, while I am sleeping or reading, I know I have a class tomorrow and I have to cover this topic, I am thinking what examples I will be using so that they understand.

Similarly, an Assistant Professor who is striving to become an exemplary teacher often prepares for his classes at home very early in the mornings.

Lots of time I get up at 3am-4am, I am getting lesson plans together to make sure I am saying the right things, or home work together, or class projects together. So I make sure that my teaching is ready for the next day.

SRU faculty members establish a strong boundary between teaching and non-work. This boundary is characterized by one-way permeability. Teaching aspects often enter participants' non-work domain. However, when in the classroom, faculty members dedicate their attention to teaching activities. This might be indicative of the fact that the teaching identity is highly central and salient not just for faculty self-concepts of the participants but also for their global self-concepts as individuals.

Teaching Role Boundary Flexibility

Role boundary flexibility is the malleability of the boundary between two or more role domains or the ability of a role domain to expand or contract to accommodate the demands of another role domain (Ashforth et al., 2000, 2001; Clark, 2000; Desrochers et al., 2005). Earlier, I indicated that role contrast and role control emerged as important variables that affect properties of role boundaries. Role contrast refers to the number of features that differ between a pair of role activities and the extent of the differences. Role control refers to a faculty member's ability to accept or decline the expected activity and to schedule the activity in a time and space at his discretion.

Role contrast appears to affect primarily the permeability of boundaries. A boundary between two low-contrast activities is typically characterized by high

permeability. For example, a boundary between undergraduate research and classroom instruction is highly permeable since both activities focus on student learning. On the other hand, two high-contrast activities will have impermeable boundaries or a one-way permeable boundary if one of the activities is highly salient.

Role control appears to affect primarily the flexibility of boundaries. For example, participants tend to relegate many of their own “research for the sake of research” projects outside their daily work domain thus expanding their teaching domain in daily work. However, engagement in the activities over which faculty members have limited control tends to come at the expense of engagement in their teaching meta-activity, more specifically at the expense of the *prep time*, that is, the time and effort allocated to the preparation for classroom instruction.

In other words, prep time emerged as the most expendable resource in faculty daily work. Similar to many of his colleagues, one Associate Professor indicated that, if pressed for time because of deadlines he has to meet, he would sacrifice his prep time. “If worse comes to worse, I just go in there and do it without prepping it all. Most of the time would come from there—less prep time.”

Service assignments emerged as faculty daily work activities that most frequently contract the prep time. Interestingly, participants mentioned service neither when talking about SRU faculty role expectations nor when discussing what it means for them to be faculty members. However, many participants repeatedly invoked service assignments when describing their everyday work. Further, when discussing committee service assignments and various administrative responsibilities, they primarily focused on how

these assignments negatively affect the time and effort faculty members usually allocate to class prep time. And this negative effect does not feel right for them.

One Associate Professor explained,

I'll be honest with you. I spend longer hours [working] . . . but I'll be honest with you, [service] tends to come out of teaching. I found that any time I have administrative responsibilities, that any time I have something like that, it always comes out of my teaching . . . *unfortunately*. It always comes out of my teaching. And I always felt, I'm probably not doing a good job teaching because I have this administrative responsibility or I have this deadline that I have to meet.

Similar to several other participants, this Associate Professor was somewhat apologetic when talking about frequent necessities to compromise his dedication to teaching because of service assignments. Further, he emphasized that often he is forced by circumstances beyond his control to allocate less time and effort to the prep time than he, himself, believes is necessary.

Service assignments are not the only responsibilities that tend to contract the time that faculty allocate to teaching role activities. Several junior faculty members perceive that working on research projects for promotion review sometimes make them to cut back on the prep time for their classes. And, for some of them, doing research at the expense of teaching activities is an important reason to downscale their research agenda after promotion. One Assistant Professor who is approaching promotion review observed,

If I was to put out another book, which I don't think I will do. I mean, if I do some more research, it would be an article or two. But I have to take the time . . . I would not be as fresh and prepared for class as I, probably, *should* be.

Faculty cited two primary reasons why prep time is the most expendable resource in their daily work. First, the prep time is the most plentiful resource. The prep time appears to take the largest share of time among the teaching activities. One Assistant Professor, for example, indicated, "The obvious huge time commitment is preparation for

class and grading. Preparation and the grading both exceed [the] actual twelve hours in class.” An Associate Professor concurred by estimating that, “If I’m doing a new class ... a new class, probably, [requires] twenty hours of prep a week. This would include writing lectures, going over lectures, just in general preparing for class.”

The second reason why faculty members tend to draw on their prep time is that they have more control over prep activities than any other major activity in the teaching meta-activity, such as classroom instruction, grading, and advising. Thus, prep time is also the most available resource. One Associate Professor explained why he usually cuts back on prep time and effort when pressed for time for other work activities.

I find, sometimes, my teaching preparation suffers because, you know, I’m teaching courses on material that I’m fairly familiar with and I teach discussion-based courses and I can do it on the fly. Which is not to say that I don’t have to prepare at all, but I do have to prepare a certain amount. But it’s more fluid kind of preparation that I can get away with. And sometimes, I am tempted, then, to this – all right, I’ve got to talk about [topic] this afternoon, but I talked about [topic] last spring and I will give it light re-reading for an hour, but, really, the subject in the class deserves two or three hours of preparation.

Among activities comprising the teaching meta-activity, preparation for classroom instruction appears to have the most flexible boundaries. Faculty members tend to reduce the time and effort allocated for prep work when they are required to address other work activities, especially service and administrative assignments.

Work—Non-Work Boundary

Although faculty life outside their daily work domain was designed to be beyond the focus of this study, two non-work factors strongly emerged in my conversations with SRU faculty members. First, many participants talked at length about the boundary between faculty members’ family life and their daily work domain. Specifically, the participants pointed out the one-way flexibility of the boundary between family life on

one hand and faculty co-curricular and research activities on the other hand. Second, several participants pointed out that it is important for them to schedule rest time in order to be effective in the faculty member role.

Flexibility of non-teaching work activities—family life boundary.

The primary reason to focus this study on male faculty members was my expectation that men's work life is affected by the spillovers from non-work life to a lesser extent than the work life of female faculty. However, many participants talked extensively about the influence of home life circumstances, especially the influence of the parental role, on their daily work domain. Similar to several SRU faculty members, a Professor recalled that aligning of work and home responsibilities required a lot of self-discipline and focus.

I was a primary caregiver to my children. I was the primary, stay at home kind of parent even though I was teaching. I organized my day a little bit differently then. I always tried to be home when the kids came home from school. I think you can do it. It really does take discipline. It takes the sense of laying out the record of the day. And also making a lot of self-assessments.

However, being a good parent often involves more than self-discipline and focus. Several participants have to reduce some of their work activities in order to accommodate the demands of their parental roles. Faculty co-curricular activities emerged as the primary source of time that the faculty members tend to reallocate to the non-work domain.

In the previous section, I indicated that student-faculty interaction is an important content component of the SRU faculty identity. Thus, many SRU faculty members tend to engage in various University-sponsored, faculty-initiated, or student-organized co-curricular and recreational activities. However, frequently, participants reduce the extent

of their involvement in such activities in order to meet their family responsibilities.

Similar to several of his colleagues, one Associate Professor consciously decreased the intensity of his involvement in co-curricular activities to channel more energy to his home life.

Prior to having children, I was doing several [co-curricular] things, I quit them all. Prior to having children, I went to trips with students, just about seven or eight weekends in the semester. I don't do that now. So I pulled back in that way. And I don't stay in the office to do preparation work, I go home.

He, however, hopes to renew his commitment to initiating and participating in co-curricular activities when his children get older.

Research activities emerged as the secondary factor that the participants tend to contract when faced with increased demands in family life. For example, another Associate Professor shared that he largely gave up his research aspirations in order to be a good father.

My children are two and four and these years won't come back and I don't want to dive into next research project at the expense of not being able to remember my children.

The rapidly growing research on work/non-work boundaries in faculty work lives tend to focus on female faculty members (e.g., Colbeck, 2006). However, it appears that non-work roles, especially parental roles, also have an important impact on the ways male faculty members structure their daily work.

Rest time.

Interestingly, many participants invoked the theme of rest time when talking about their daily work. Essentially, faculty members believe that, in order to perform effectively in faculty roles, they must structure daily work in such a way so some rest time is scheduled during the day. One Professor succinctly captured this common

perspective, “I think I am a better teacher when I get myself a break.” A recently promoted Associate Professor further explained the importance of rest time for faculty daily work,

It is so easy to get sucked in to working all the time and not making sure that your schedule has some free time too. That’s a part of a true meaning of being a *professional*. I like this profession because I like the freedom and I try to take the advantage of this when I can . . . so, unless I do it to myself. I really try to schedule some free time. I don’t want to do this twelve hours a day six days a week, I’ll burn myself out doing that. So I’m very conscious to not burn myself out.

Primarily the faculty members categorized their rest in terms of *quiet* time and *gym* time. Quiet time emerged as an important mechanism participants use to plan or reflect on their daily work. Faculty members typically take their quiet times in the mornings. For example, one veteran Assistant Professor customarily visits church in the morning to reflect on his teaching activities and prepare for interactions with students.

In the morning, I get up early. I’ve been going to church in the morning, because it is my quiet time that keeps me focused. So once I get here, I’m open to anybody, their needs. So, mornings . . . my first couple of hours before I teach.

Similar to many of his colleagues, an Associate Professor likes his morning walks with his dog. He uses these walks to plan his work days.

I wake up very early and I walk for an hour every day. I take my dog for a walk. Best type of therapy! I think while I’m walking. The dog is exercising, I am exercising. And I’m just planning how my day is going to go.

Many participants indicated that they regularly go to the gym. For them, physical exercise is an effective way to relieve work-related stress and maintain their health and the stamina needed in daily faculty work. In the words of one Associate Professor, “If your body is not healthy, you cannot have stamina.” An Assistant Professor shared his perspective that is common for many participants,

I exercise a lot. If I didn't exercise, I think, I would go crazy. So after work, even if I get out late, I make myself to go to the gym. I value . . . being able to physically release the tension.

Rest time emerged as an important component of faculty daily work. Participants ensure that they schedule quiet time and/or gym time in their daily work schedule. They use this time to reflect on their daily work and relieve work-related stress.

Summary

In general, participants indicated that teaching is their daily work or the meta-activity for them. When they are on campus, faculty members tend generally to concentrate their time and effort almost exclusively on teaching. Thus, the teaching role domain characteristically is equivalent to the faculty daily work domain. In other words, teaching generally encapsulates faculty daily work with other professional activities bracketed off or relegated beyond the boundaries of daily work. Thus, participants typically tend not to establish boundaries or experience interaction or spillovers between teaching and other professional activities.

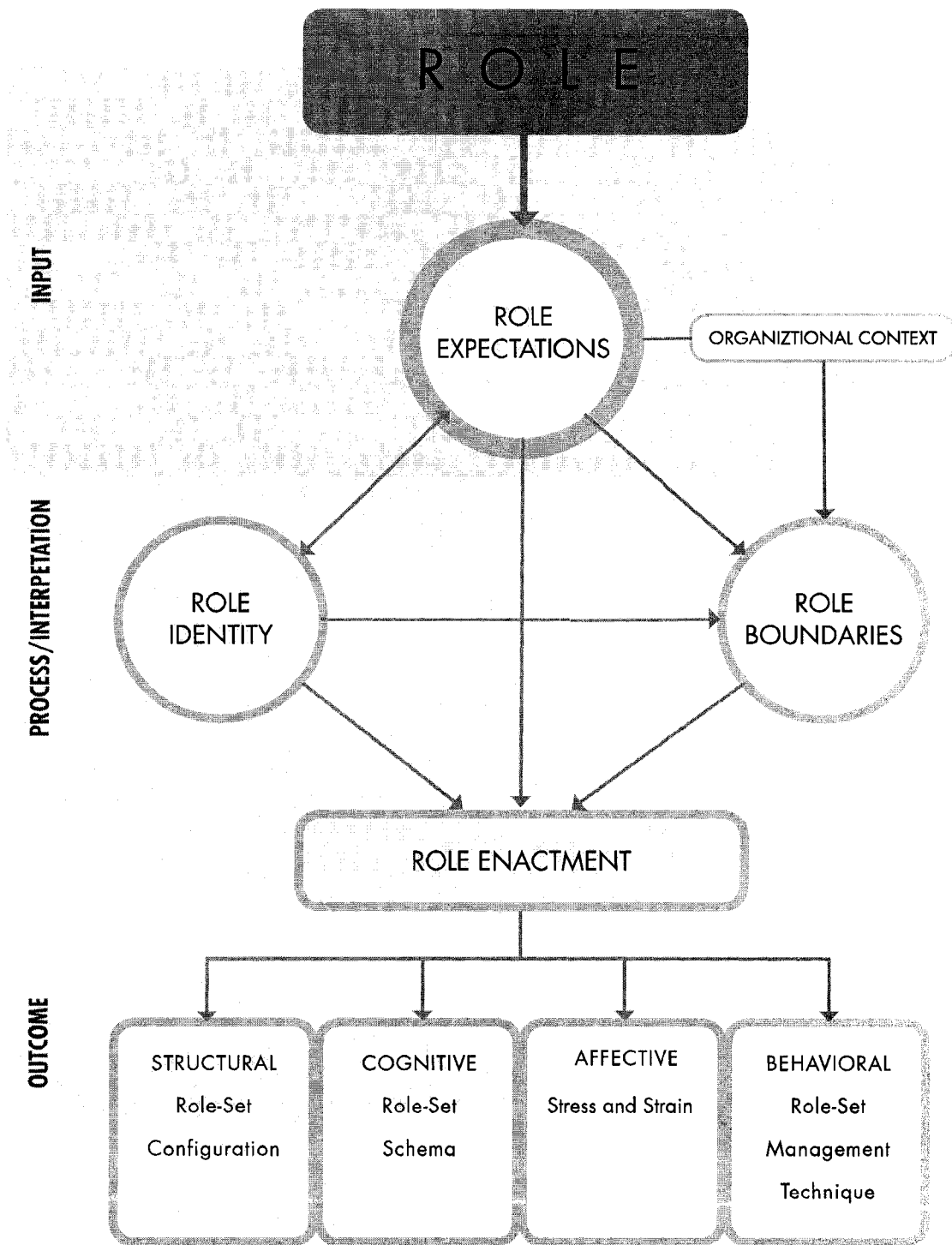
A closer analysis, however, reveals the existence of boundaries between different activities within the teaching meta-identity. Further, the boundaries of diverse teaching activities exhibit different degrees of permeability and flexibility in relation to each other and to other faculty work activities. Boundary properties affect the ways faculty members perceive and structure their daily work. In addition, the type of boundaries between the non-work domain and various work activities also affect the organization of faculty work activities.

Conclusion: Role Enactment

In this chapter I explored the properties of three concepts – role expectations, role identity, and role boundary – in the context of the SRU faculty members' daily work. As a general conclusion, teaching appears to be a single meta-role that anchors all other work activities in the SRU faculty work domain. SRU faculty members are expected to be, first and foremost, effective teachers. When interpreting the meaning of faculty work, the participants identified teaching as a meta-identity that encapsulates what it means for them to be faculty members. In addition, teaching emerged as a meta-activity in the faculty daily work.

Having described the properties of the categories of role expectations, role identity, and role boundary, I applied axial coding to relate these categories to the study's focal category of *role enactment*. Figure 2 presents the outcome of axial coding.

Figure 2. Role Enactment



In grounded theory, “axial coding is the process of relating categories to their subcategories” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 123). Axial coding is conducted by developing a paradigm model to describe the focal category. The paradigm model consists of inputs or *conditions*, processes or *actions*, and outcomes or *consequences*.

Teaching mission of SRU, recent efforts of the administration to transform SRU as an “institution of national distinction” and to a course-based curriculum set *causal conditions* for role enactment or “events and happenings that influence the phenomenon” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 131). Based on the literature (Becher, 1989; Braxton & Hargens, 1996; Clark, 1987), discipline influences on role enactment are likely to set *intervening conditions* or conditions that might or do “mitigate or otherwise impact causal conditions on phenomena” (p. 131). In this study, however, discipline did not emerge as noticeable intervening condition mitigating the influence of organizational context. Finally, SRU faculty role expectations described in the first section of this Chapter set *contextual conditions* for role enactment or the “specific set of conditions (patterns of conditions) that intersect dimensionally at this time and place to create a set of circumstances or problems to which persons respond through actions/interactions” (p. 132).

Actions essentially represent processes of how individuals handle the conditions or how faculty members address expectation associated with the faculty role at SRU. In this study, the development of role identity through articulation of one’s meanings associated with role activities and the interpretation of role expectations represents *strategic actions*. Relating different roles in daily work by establishing and maintaining

role boundaries is a *routine action* or action “that tend to more habituated of responding to occurrences in everyday life” (Strauss & Corbin, p. 133).

Consequences are the outcomes of actions for the phenomenon, i.e., role enactment. Although SRU faculty members generally share the same role expectations, exhibit common role identity properties, and construct similar role boundaries, important variations appear in the way individuals *enact* their role activities in daily work-life. Through their interviews, faculty members displayed differences: first, in the way they structure or *configure work* activities in the context of daily work-life; second, in the sense or *meanings* they attach to specific configurations; third, in the type of role *stress* or *strain* they experience; and, fourth, in the *behavioral techniques* they use to minimize stress. Thus, four dimensions of role-set enactment emerged from the analysis of data: structural, cognitive, affective, and behavioral. These dimensions represent consequences in the axial coding paradigm model for the category of role enactment in this study. In the next chapter, I introduce role enactment dimensions by describing how faculty members *enact* their daily work as a *gestalt* or as a collection of role enactment structural, cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions that creates a concept, configuration or pattern. The pattern is so unified that its properties cannot be derived from a simple summation of the properties of individual work activities.

Chapter VI. Conclusions

My fourth research question focuses on how faculty members enact their role-sets *or how faculty members (1) configure their role-sets in a way that (2) makes sense to them and (3) minimizes role-related stress in daily work.* In *Chapter IV*, I described the organizational context in which SRU faculty enact their role-sets. In *Chapter V*, I described three important factors that affect the enactment of roles: role expectations, role identity, and role boundaries.

I use the term *gestalt* to describe role-set enactment patterns that characterize specific stages of the faculty career. The German word *gestalt* can be loosely translated in English as “a way a thing has been put together.” In fact, a role-set enactment pattern is a combination of several role behavior characteristics put together as a whole. A role-set gestalt (1) presents a way in which an individual *configures* work activities in relation to each other in his daily work domain, (2) represents *a role-set schema* or a cognitive prism through which the individual interprets daily work in a way that makes sense to him, (3) reflects work-related *strain* or *stress* that the individual might experience, and (4) includes role-set *management techniques* that the individual utilizes to minimize that strain. A gestalt approach allows me to describe faculty daily work as a systemic whole which is more than and different from the sum of individual factors or patterns.

To delineate gestalts I applied the third type of grounded theory coding: *selective coding*. Selective coding is the process of selecting the central or core category that defines the storyline of emerging theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). “In an exaggerated sense, it [the central category] consists of all the products of analysis condensed into a

few words that seem to explain what ‘this research is all about’” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 146).

In this study, *career stage* emerged as a central category or the category that pulls the four dimensions of role enactment together to form distinct gestalts and is able “to account for considerable variation within categories” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 146). In essence, faculty role enactment patterns are reflective and indicative of faculty career stage.

Three distinct role-set gestalts emerged from the analysis: Constellation, Solar System, and Comet. The Constellation gestalt reflects daily work organization of faculty members approaching tenure and first promotion review. I refer to these faculty then as *Constellations*. Solar System gestalt reflects daily work organization of participants in the mid-stages of their faculty career, whom I call *Solars*. The Comet gestalt is characteristic of either faculty members in the very beginning of their faculty career or senior faculty members approaching retirement. I respectively refer to them as *Junior Comets* and *Senior Comets*.

Each role-set gestalt can be characterized by its manifest theme. Further, each gestalt can be delineated along the four dimensions of configuration, schema, stress, and management techniques as outlined above. The comparative summary of the gestalts is presented in Table 4. The remaining sections of this conclusion present the three gestalts, with their four characteristic dimensions.

Table 4. Summary of Role-Set Gestalts

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Gestalt</i>	<i>Role-Set Configuration</i>	<i>Role-Set Schema</i>	<i>Type of Strain or Stress</i>	<i>Role-Set Management Technique</i>
<i>Time</i>	<u><i>Constellations</i></u>	Work activities structured around teaching schedules	<i>When?</i> Setting the pace	Allocating time	Time management
<i>Tasks</i>	<u><i>Solars</i></u>	Work activities organized around teaching demands	<i>What?</i> Choosing the direction	Streamlining tasks	Task prioritization
<i>Learning</i>	<u><i>Junior</i></u>	Teaching as foundation	Finding one's bearings	Mastery of content	by omission
	<u><i>Comets</i></u>	Work activities are teaching	<i>How?</i>	Reductionism	
	<u><i>Senior</i></u>	Teaching as culmination	Walking on the moon	Mastery of delivery	by commission

Constellations

The first role-set gestalt, Constellation, characterizes the pattern of organization of everyday work for *ten* participants of my study. Seven Constellations are Assistant Professors who are approaching the tenure decision and first promotion. Two Constellations are recently promoted Associate Professors. Finally, the tenth member of this group is an Assistant Professor who was recently tenured and now is in the process of promotion review.

Four Assistant Professors represent the Urban/Convergent cluster of Becher's (1989) typology of academic fields. Two Assistant and two Associate Professors are members of Rural/Divergent disciplines. The Urban/Divergent cluster is represented by two Assistant Professors. No faculty members represent the Rural/Convergent disciplines in the Constellations group. Thus, six representatives belong to urban disciplines, four representatives to rural disciplines, four representatives to convergent disciplines, and six representatives to divergent disciplines.

Nine Constellations have been employed by Striving Regional between two and seven years. One outlier, an Associate Professor from a rural divergent discipline, has been employed by SRU for eleven years. All but two Constellations joined SRU directly after receiving their doctoral degrees. One Constellation had extensive teaching experience in public schools and another worked for several years in industry before seeking and accepting a faculty position at SRU.

Role-Set Configuration: Constellation

The American Heritage Dictionary (online) defines a constellation as a formation of stars perceived as a figure or design. In my layman's view of astronomy, constellations

usually contain several relatively independent components, stars, which typically form the pattern based on the two primary factors: gravitation effects of the host star, which is the brightest star in the constellation and the gravitation effects of surrounding constellations and other celestial formations.

Many SRU junior faculty members structure their daily work activities in a pattern similar to the constellation. Teaching takes the role of the host star. Other work activities represent the other stars in the constellation. All objects or work activities are loosely held together in the Constellations' work domains by, first, moderate levels of teaching identity centrality in the Constellations' faculty self-concepts, and, second, by tenure and promotion requirements.

More specifically, classroom instruction as a temporal anchor for other work activities and a relatively low network density of work domain are two descriptors that characterize the manner by which Constellations configure the work activities in their daily work domains. Centrality of teaching is reflected in the temporal entrainment of Constellations' work activities around their teaching schedules. The density of the work domain is reflective and indicative of the role expectations and the meanings that Constellations attach to their work activities.

Centrality of the teaching identity in the Constellations' faculty self-concepts as well as the focus of tenure and promotion expectations on teaching are evident in the prominent role teaching plays in configuring Constellations' daily work. Essentially, classroom instruction structures all other work activities of Constellations through the process of *temporal entrainment*. Earlier, I defined entrainment as the adjustment of the pace or cycle of one role to match or synchronize with that of another role (Ancona &

Chong, 1996). By temporal entrainment, I refer to the finding that the Constellations' teaching schedules affect *when* they enact their other faculty work activities.

All Constellations repeatedly referred to their teaching schedules as mechanisms that provide them with a daily work structure or with a mode of arranging their professional activities in daily work. One Assistant Professor captured a common perspective among the Constellations. "My day is structured by teaching schedule, I have classes that meet at certain time, and, then, around and above and beyond that are all my other sessions." For Constellations, classroom instruction, with its inflexible and impermeable temporal boundaries, serves as a kind of main beam that determines the shape and pattern of the Constellations' daily work domain.

A recently promoted Associate Professor concurred by observing, "You see my courses are planned to the minute before I even start the semester. So they tend to be the backbone of everything I do." Similarly, another Constellation reported, "I tend to put together basically my plan for the semester when I put together my syllabi ... I usually have a pretty good feel for what's going to happen in the semester by the time I finish my syllabi."

The temporal position of classroom teaching activities in daily work schedules largely determines when Constellations enact their other professional activities within the context of daily work. Teaching schedules and course syllabi serve as time management tools that establish structured temporal space in which Constellations embed other work activities expected of them.

A relatively low network density of their work domain is the second descriptor that characterizes the way Constellations configure work activities in their daily work

domains. In Chapter III, I defined the density of a role network or network of various role activities in the daily work domain as a function of three variables: number of role activities, degree of balance of identities associated with the role activities, and the degree of segmentation or integration between the role activities.

First, preparing for tenure and promotion reviews, Constellations are expected to engage in various professional activities and successfully meet tenure and promotion performance criteria. Although effective teaching firmly remains the dominant expectation at SRU, Constellations are increasingly expected to provide evidence of research productivity and service accomplishments. Numerous work activities associated with teaching, research, and service make the work domain of Constellations relatively dense. Consequently, Constellations need to expend significant time and effort to attend to their multiple work responsibilities.

Second, since for SRU faculty members, including Constellations, teaching is a dominant identity in their faculty self-concept, the identity balance in the faculty work domain is low. This decreases the density of the work domain, since other work activities appear to be somewhat indistinctive in comparison to teaching, which is characterized by high degrees of centrality and salience for SRU faculty members. However, it is not so much that the other work activities are not important for Constellations; rather, it is often *unknown* for junior Constellations what is involved in carrying out specific work activities associated with general expectations of teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and service accomplishments.

In fact, many Constellations are engaged in the process of discovering faculty work activities beyond teaching. In other words, these faculty members try to grasp the

meanings of various faculty activities and develop the necessary skills to be able to carry out those activities. This role learning process is not easy for Constellations and requires a significant allocation of time and effort. One Assistant Professor shared a common sentiment, “A lot more involved [in faculty work] than you tend to think sometimes. I was certainly not prepared for how much work I have to do this year. I was very surprised how much I was working.”

Third, as Constellations discover multiple work activities associated with the faculty role they tend to view them as unrelated to each other or segmented. Interestingly, two perspectives emerged among the Constellations in regard to the segmentation of work activities within the work domain. On one hand, approximately three-quarters of Constellations reported that engagement in numerous diverse work activities is a very taxing process for them. It is difficult for them to integrate various activities characterized by relatively high degrees of contrast. “I think faculty work life brings stress, natural stress, because you have to multitask, because you have to do a variety of things – scholarship, community service, grading, teaching excellence. ... So this brings along a lot of stress.”

In contrast, another third of Constellations finds relief in the fact that their work activities are different and segmented. Although teaching is very important for them, they need to recharge their interest and dedication to teaching activities by temporarily disengaging from these activities and changing their cognitive and behavioral frames. The comments of one Assistant Professor exemplify this perspective,

Teaching is very important, but you can't do it all yourself, you can't be the super teacher and teach, teach, teach because you will burn yourself out, so the other roles actually help you stay sane. Different [roles] ... the multiplicity of roles, rather than being just the workhorse teacher. That actually does keep me sane

because teaching involves a lot of drudgery and in research and doing service you can be more creative actually than in the classroom, you are allowed to be.

Despite these different perspectives, all Constellations tend to perceive their work activities as unrelated or segmented. Further, it appears that a common challenge for Constellations is to transition between the segmented work activities. Inclined to keep work activities separate and not to multi-task, Constellations need time to disengage from one work activity, transition to another activity, and engage in that activity.

Classroom instruction time and office hours specified in teaching schedules and syllabi provide overall structure for the Constellations' daily work. However, beyond classroom instruction time, Constellations need to allocate time for discovery and mastery of multiple work activities associated with the faculty role. Further, they need time for cognitive, behavioral, and affective transitions between the diverse and often segmented faculty work activities. Thus, it appears that Constellations' main challenge is to learn how to effectively structure their work tasks around scarce work time. In other words, the daily work life of Constellations is characterized by the concern of *finding time* to address their multiple and diverse work responsibilities.

Role-Set Schema: Setting the Pace

Not surprisingly then, for the Constellations, organization of daily work is all about time. For these faculty members, the temporal pattern of work activities provides cognitive generalization about the role-set organization that, then, serves as a guide for the processing of role-related information contained in their daily work experiences. Essentially, Constellations see their work day as *a set of activities or work tasks structured around time*.

Somewhat surprising to me was that many Constellations, who are generally advanced junior faculty members, talked about the exercise of their own agency when structuring temporal aspects of their daily work. In other words, although, by and large, the number and type of their work activities are determined by external expectations, Constellations believe that they can control their work schedules or sequentially arrange those work activities in temporal space according to their own preferences.

Constellations frequently indicated that their ability to set the pace of their daily work is a very important characteristic of the faculty profession. Constellations clearly enjoy being in charge of their work time. “Those practical things. I can pretty much control my time. And that’s very nice. You can create your time. You are always on your own schedule.”

Further, Constellations tend to extend their control of work time to the control of their work in general. For many of these faculty members, being in charge of their work *schedule* means to be in charge of their *work*.

I like the freedom I have; there are no bosses, I am my own boss. I do not have 9 to 5 job, although I am here every day, but I am not pressed to be here at 9 o’clock, I like that part.

This ability of faculty members to set the pace of daily work was an important factor that affected the decisions of several Constellations to choose the faculty career in the first place or change their previous careers. For example, for one Assistant Professor, faculty control over work schedules was the main motive for his career change. He explained, that in contrast to the teacher’s work in high schools, the college professor has the ability to structure his workday schedule according to his own preferences.

One reason why I came to the University is for those choices. When I taught public school – you don’t have those, you have to be there at seven in the

morning, you have to stay until 3:30. Here, I'm here, usually more than that, but because I wish to. But I'm just expected to be here for certain amounts of time as long as I'm here for my classes and my students.

Interestingly, several Constellations pointed out that their ability to control the scheduling of their work activities comes with responsibilities. These participants stressed faculty accountability for effective distribution of work time to multiple faculty work activities. One Assistant Professor explained,

I call it [faculty work] self-directed in many ways. It's self-directed meaning that if you are not self-disciplined and if you only limit your work really to your [classroom] performance, then you shouldn't be tenured or kept around because you are accountable for the use of your time. Eventually that comes out in student evaluations, in how many presentations you do, if you are on any boards or you are invited to committees, or your committee work.

Constellations see the factor of time as the most critical element in successful organization and enactment of their daily work. When they encounter problems in their daily work they tend to seek the cause of those problems in the temporal organization of their work. Further, since they believe that they control the time, they tend to put the blame for the problems in their work on their own errors in setting the pace of their work. For example, "I did not put enough hours preparing my lecture notes," was a common explanation by Constellations when they discussed occasional sub-standard performances of their students.

In another example, a recently promoted Associate Professor recalled that he was on the brink of exhaustion when trying to finish his book prior to the promotion review deadline. However, he believes that the cause of stress was his own time management mistakes rather than excessive external requirements.

That was one of the bad judgment calls on my part; I did not give myself enough time, so I ended up getting it to the deadline and having a lot to do, working a lot

of hours to finish it. But I did it to myself; because it's not someone else who did it to me, because I simply miscalculated the amount of time. I suffered for that.

Constellations view their daily work as a sequence of relatively unrelated activities arranged in time. Time allocated for classroom instruction provides a structural core for this sequence. Further, Constellations value and enjoy their ability to arrange and rearrange their work activities in the temporal sequence. Interestingly and somewhat paradoxically, although emphasizing that they control their work schedules, Constellations consistently pointed out that they work long hours. They, indeed, appear to control *sequencing* or ordering of their work activities in the temporal space. However, they do not necessarily know how to calculate the *amount of time* that needs to be allocated for each activity. In fact, long work hours or the amount of time expended on work activities appear to be the major source of work-related stress for Constellations.

Strain and Stress: Allocating Time

As I indicated in the previous chapter, SRU junior faculty members generally know the expectations for tenure and promotion. They know what activities they need to include in their work domain. This knowledge of expectations, coupled with their ability to control work schedules beyond classroom instruction, enables Constellations to identify various activities associated with faculty role expectations and, then, sequentially to arrange them in the temporal space of their work domains according to their preferences.

Nevertheless, setting the pace of work is often difficult for Constellations. Setting the pace involves not just arranging the work activities in time, but *also* allocating specific amounts of work time to specific work activities. Relatively new to faculty positions, Constellations often do not know what many faculty work activities involve;

typically, they are not certain of the amounts of time required to properly address daily work tasks.

This lack of time allocation knowledge brings significant stress to the Constellations' daily work. First, these faculty members are stressed by uncertainty; they are uncertain of how much time they need to allocate to various work activities. Second, to minimize this uncertainty, Constellations need to learn the skills associated with these activities; these learning processes require significant expenditures of time and effort.

As I indicated earlier, Constellations are often surprised to find out how many diverse activities are associated with faculty work. Further, when engaged in daily work they begin to see that the real challenge is not just the number of work activities but the time and effort needed to carry out those activities. Characteristically for Constellations, one Assistant Professor exclaimed, "I always respected professors because they work hard. My father works really hard. But you don't really know until you really do it." Constellations know what activities they must include in their daily work schedules, but they are typically uncertain of how much time they need to allocate to those activities *before* they actually are engaged in them.

This challenge of allocating time to work activities is reinforced by the fact that Constellations do not have specific performance criteria established for them. When a conscientious and ambitious individual knows what tasks need to be addressed and he can control the allocation of time to these tasks, but, at the same time, does not know exactly what level of performance is required, then, he tends to allocate as much time to his tasks as he is physically able to. This situation is generally characteristic for faculty members, especially those approaching tenure and promotion reviews. In fact, Lindholm,

et al. (2005) report that self-imposed high expectations and lack of time are two of the most common sources of stress for faculty members.

The lack of clearly specified performance criteria predisposes Constellations to spend long work hours pursuing the vague notion of excellence in teaching, research, and service. Further, since they control their work schedules, they enact this predisposition and, in fact, spend long hours working.

One Constellation compared faculty work with work in industry. For him, the most striking characteristic of faculty work is an apparent paradox of controlling time on one hand but working long hours on the other hand.

[When I worked in industry] the goals were externally set. I really did not feel that I was in control. What I do right now, I control completely. I don't have a boss. ... [When you work in industry] your time is not so consumed with everything. [In industry] you work, what, nine to five, five days a week. Here you work ... I get here at seven every morning and generally leave around six.

A possible explanation of this apparent paradox is that Constellations have high-self expectations for excellence. When faced with a work task with unspecified performance criteria, they tend to over-allocate time for that task rather than under-allocate for the fear of not meeting tenure or promotion requirements. This approach translates in long work hours and often causes stress. "Stress is . . . because the job is never finished." An Assistant professor explained this common Constellation problem,

We feel stressed because it's hard to know when you are done, what's enough. Do I need one more article or one more presentation? Or have I done enough in this class to get the kind of student rating that will give me the excellence that I need or should I do a little bit more? Or is there another committee that I can join, that will give me one more line in my vita. We tend, – look, people do as much as they are willing to take on and that sometimes creates stress.

Interestingly, for senior faculty members, the long work hours of their junior colleagues is an indication of a normal learning process to balance the multiple

expectations associated with the faculty role. For example, a Professor referring to one of the Constellations pointed out, “Our two younger faculty are doing pretty good job. ... He seems to really be able to balance – *he works all the time* – the research and the teaching.”

Indeed, Constellations work long hours, far exceeding fifty hours a week. Interestingly, they apparently do not realize that they work so much. One Constellation talked about his unpleasant surprise when he found out how many hours he actually works,

Actually tried to keep track of exactly how many hours I worked each week. And I was horrified and I've been trying to . . . because I never knew. But I was averaging over the course of six weeks, I averaged 59 hours of work a week. I knew I was working a lot, but I didn't know that I was working so much.

Similar to their senior colleagues, Constellations perceive long hours as a natural characteristic of faculty work. Although often complaining of working long hours, Constellations anticipate and are prepared to expend significant amounts of time and energy in daily work. One Assistant Professor explained,

I generally feel quite tired in the end of the day. But I expect when I am at work I will generally be running from thing to thing – I drink a lot of caffeine. And I don't have much downtime. I come expecting that I will be very busy and quite active.

Constellations allocate significant amounts of time on the multiple work activities that are expected of them. The long work hours appear to be a result of the interplay among the three factors characteristic of Constellations: emerging, but under-developed skills required to carry out various activities associated with faculty work, absence of a clear personal understanding of role performance criteria, and high self-expectations. Although

stressed by long hours, Constellations see their significant expenditures of time on work activities as an integral part of learning what is involved in faculty work.

Role-Set Management Techniques: Temporal Organization

The classroom instruction schedule provides an overall structure for the Constellations' daily work. But how do Constellations structure multiple work activities associated with the faculty roles in everyday work beyond classroom instruction? What approaches do they use to go about their daily business without encountering extreme stress?

Constellations appear to use time management techniques to plan and organize their daily work. Specifically, Constellations utilize two primary techniques to organize their everyday work. First, they arrange their work activities in a temporal perspective. Second, they address their work tasks by attending to one task at a time.

Since Constellations are expected to address numerous expectations effectively in a limited period of time, it is not surprising that all of them talked about the importance of planning their work activities. "Plan or fail"; "I start with planning my week"; "I must plan my day" are common accounts of Constellations describing the strategies they use to maintain sanity in a busy atmosphere of everyday work.

More particularly, planning takes the form of structuring temporal aspects of daily work. "Basically, that's time management," one Constellation succinctly summarized his planning approach. Again, for Constellations, daily work is set of tasks structured around time. Effective and efficient allocation of time to work activities is the main focus of their planning activities.

Essentially, Constellations like to plan ahead of time. They need to know when they will be doing what. “Never losing the sight” is a typical planning dictum for many Constellations. Keeping things in temporal perspective helps Constellations set and maintain the pace of work and avoid unexpected deadlines and interruptions.

I don't like to put myself in situations when I'm rushing, and I have to meet the deadline, got to finish this. Because, then, I tend to lose the creative juices, they don't seem to flow. So, I try to start early on things, so that they come out naturally and it goes easy and I do not put myself . . . back up to the wall. [I'm] trying to keep things ahead of me and trying to keep things organized. I'm pretty good in managing my time. So I can keep myself pretty straightened up.

Earlier I indicated that course syllabi and teaching schedules are the primary mechanisms that assist Constellations in keeping their work activities in sequential, temporal order. Calendars and daily planners are time management tools similar to syllabi and teaching schedules. “I usually try to look ahead and I keep my calendar nearby, try to keep up based on that.” Interestingly, during the interviews, several Constellations pulled out their daily planners to show me how detailed scheduling of activities helps them to function effectively during their busy work days.

Keeping work tasks in temporal perspective helps Constellations avoid multitasking. Clearly, “one thing at a time” is a preferred mode of operation for Constellations. Having not yet mastered the diverse skills required in faculty everyday work, it is taxing for Constellations to engage in several work activities simultaneously.

“It's hard for me to do things at the same time, many things at the same time, well. . . . One [task] after the other very quick within a restricted day or even an hour [is stressful],” shared one Assistant Professor. Another Assistant concurred,

It's a matter of things well organized. Most of the time I have enough lead time on most things that I can anticipate ... so I'm not rushed or stressed. There are

times I got multitasking, but pretty much I try to keep ducks in the row. And I got frustrated when things don't work out the way I have envisioned them.

Constellations prefer to structure their work days in a way that allows them to address work tasks in a sequential, well-organized way. To do this, they tend to establish relatively impermeable and inflexible temporal boundaries around individual work activities by assigning the activities and associated tasks to specific time slots. Extensive use of teaching schedules, syllabi, and calendars in structuring daily work helps Constellations maintain those boundaries and focus on one work task at a time.

Summary

Time has emerged as the main factor affecting the way Constellations structure their daily work. First, these faculty members construct their work as a set of relatively unrelated faculty role activities and associated tasks that are structured around time, especially the time scheduled for classroom instruction. Second, although the work activities and tasks are largely set up by tenure and promotion expectations, Constellations can choose when they enact the activities and address the tasks. Thus, they perceive that they are in charge of setting the pace of their daily work.

Third, Constellations spend long hours attending to and learning work activities associated with faculty roles. Constellations are often uncertain about performance criteria expected of them and tend to allocate significant amounts of time to work activities in pursuit of excellence. Finally, Constellations tend to establish relatively impermeable and inflexible boundaries around their work activities using syllabi, teaching schedules, and calendars as primary planning tools. This enables them to keep work tasks in sequential temporal order and to attend to them one task at a time, thus maintaining the set pace of daily work.

Solar Systems

Similar to Constellations, the second role-set gestalt, Solar System, characterizes the pattern of organization of everyday work for *ten* participants of my study. This group consists of nine Associate Professors and one recently promoted full Professor.

Five Associate Professors and one Professor represent the Rural/Divergent cluster of Becher's (1989) typology of academic fields. Two Associate Professors are members of Rural/Convergent disciplines. The Urban/Divergent cluster is represented by two Associate Professors. No faculty members represent the Urban/Convergent disciplines in the Solars group. Two representatives belong to urban disciplines, eight representatives to rural disciplines, two representatives to convergent disciplines, and eight representatives to divergent disciplines. Thus, the Solars group is dominated by the representatives from rural and divergent academic fields.

All the Solars have earned tenure. Nine Solars, eight Associate Professors and a Professor, have been employed by Striving Regional between eight and twelve years. One Associate Professor in this group is in his fourteenth year at SRU. All but three Solars joined SRU directly after receiving their doctoral degrees. Two Solars had brief faculty appointments at other universities and another Solar worked for several years in a state agency before seeking and accepting a faculty position at SRU.

Role-Set Configuration: Solar System

A solar system is described as a collection of planets rotating around the sun on inter-dependent orbits. To me, the main difference between a constellation and a solar system is that, essentially, constellations represent *structures*, whereas solar systems are similar to *systems*. The American Heritage Dictionary (online) defines organization as a

group of interacting, interrelated, or interdependent elements forming a *complex whole*. Structure is defined as something made up of a *number of parts* that are held or put together in a particular way.

The Constellations typically perceive the work day as a collection of relatively independent role activities and related tasks associated by tenure and promotion expectations and structured around classroom instruction time. In comparison, the manifest qualities of the Solars consist of centrality of teaching in daily work, varied degrees of importance associated with different role activities, and a more intensive integration between the role activities.

Teaching is a central element in daily work for all SRU faculty members. However, centrality of teaching takes a different form for the various groups of faculty members. For Constellations, centrality of teaching is epitomized by the influence of teaching schedules on the way they arrange their other role activities and associated tasks in a sequential temporal order.

For Solars, classroom teaching times are also very important in organizing their daily work. However, for these faculty members, other role activities and tasks are not only structured around classroom instruction time in temporal space, but non-teaching activities also tend to *accommodate* the behavioral demands of teaching. One Associate Professor shared,

For me, everything is geared around the class. So that's the first step. I need to be in class at these times. So, the actual time in class, for me, anyway, is at the absolute center of all the other things, so whatever else needs to be done really has to go around that.

Teaching activities for Solars affect not just *when* other role activities tasks are addressed, but also *how* those activities are enacted. In other words, teaching demands affect not

only the flexibility of the boundaries between teaching and other activities, but also increase the permeability of those boundaries.

The second difference between Constellations and Solars lies in the values they attach to the role activities and associated tasks beyond teaching. For Constellations, the majority of their daily activities are often pre-determined by tenure and promotion expectations. Further, they often do not understand what those activities involve. Thus, these faculty members do not yet have well-developed and defined values that they associate with their daily work activities. Constellations typically must engage in those activities and perform satisfactorily in all of them, notwithstanding the values or importance they assign to those activities.

In contrast, having earned tenure, Solars are largely free from the external constraints that structured their pre-tenure and pre-promotion years. Although still subject to annual evaluations, they can generally *choose* which activities they want to expend *more time* and effort on based on their knowledge of those activities on one hand and their own values and interests on the other hand. One Associate Professor captured well this common Solars' perspective, "Now I have a better appraisal of the value of current associations and, therefore, can afford to either take some risks or relegate some tasks to second tier. Most things are no longer of equal importance to me." In other words, if Constellations can only arrange role activities and associated tasks in sequential temporal order, Solars are able, in addition to arranging activities, to decide on the amount of time and energy to allocate to each role activity based on the centrality and salience of those activities for their self-concepts.

Finally, Constellations prefer to establish impermeable boundaries between their role activities and attend to work tasks “one at a time.” Solars, also often perceive their role activities as cognitively and behaviorally different. However, these faculty members tend to see the role activities as interrelated. “You switch your codes, you make your cognitive shifts but you still remain intrinsically connected to all your responsibilities.” For Solars, all their activities are interrelated because all of them are connected in one way or another to Solars’ most central and salient identity, that of facilitating student learning. In other words, for Solars, the boundaries between teaching and other role activities are characterized by relatively high permeability.

Metaphorically speaking, for Solars, teaching plays the role of the sun; teaching is a temporal, behavioral, and normative center of their daily work. Similar to the planets placed at different orbits in different distances from the sun, Solars developed differential appreciations and specific preferences for various role activities and associated tasks. Finally, as planets are interrelated through their connection to the sun, work activities of Solars tend to form a whole or a system through their connection to teaching activities.

Role-Set Schema: Choosing the Direction

Solars realize that they are free from external constraints that structured their pre-tenure and pre-promotion years. Thus, they increasingly recognize the extent of their own agency. For Constellations, the main challenge in organizing daily work is to find time to address work tasks largely determined by tenure and promotion expectations. For Solars, the challenge is to choose which tasks and activities they want to tackle and on which to expend their time and energy. In short, Constellations structure their work tasks around time, whereas Solars allocate time around tasks.

If we are to compare organizing one's daily work with a journey, for Constellations, daily work is about setting and maintaining the *pace* on the predetermined route. For Solars, organizing daily work is similar to choosing the *direction* at the midpoint of the journey when the traveler arrives at the intersection with several possible routes to take to continue the journey.

Three factors characterize the Solars' process of choosing the direction or identifying preferred work activities and tasks. First, high self-expectations often prevent Solars from making efficient choices. Second, external requests frequently affect the choices of Solars. Finally, Solars realize that by making choices or by deciding on the direction of their journey, they constrain their behaviors and limit their subsequent choices. The combination of these three factors makes it difficult for Solars to select a direction.

Similar to Constellations, Solars have high self-expectations. Both groups of faculty members tend to strive for excellence in their daily work. However, Constellations and Solars interpret striving for excellence somewhat differently. For Constellations, high self-expectations tend to be translated in significant amounts of *time* allocated to the work activities and tasks largely pre-determined by tenure and promotion expectations. High self-expectations of Solars lead them to increase the *number of activities* and tasks they tend to take on in daily work.

In other words, many Solars, being high achievers, are predisposed to engage and excel in as many faculty work activities as is physically and cognitively possible, rather than choosing a limited preferred set of activities. One Associate Professor captured this perspective.

So, it does seem to come back to this . . . that faculty members do it to themselves. They want to do it all; they try to do it all. If they do it successfully, of course, they have this high degree of satisfaction but at the same time, they went through a lot of stress to get to the high degree of satisfaction.

Such bifurcation of focus in daily work often leads Solars to overextend their time and energy. Complementary to high self-expectations, such Solars' behavior appears as psychological inertia. Solars seem to need to prove their effectiveness even after tenure and promotions decisions have been decided in their favor. On the other hand, a positive tenure and promotion decision seems to reenergize and reinvigorate faculty members and lead them to seek new challenges.

The University administration seems aware of this predisposition of Solars to take on numerous tasks and responsibilities and also to use it to the organization's benefit. Having high self expectations, many Solars believe that others also have high expectations of them. As a result of this perception, many Solars feel obligated to attend to external requests rather than address their own preferences. One Associate Professor explained:

I'm also the kind of person who finds it difficult to say "no", when a job is suggested. That's not so much because I feel pressured to do so, I suppose because of my character traits. And that, of course, leaves you with very little time to do other things that are more purely selfish.

Another Associate Professor concurred.

It is very easy for me to spend a lot of time doing work even when the work is not what I would choose if I step back from it. But in the midst of trying to take care of everything, I have a high guilt index. So it's hard for me to leave task undone. So when tasks come to my desk, I just keep doing them. And although it makes the University happy, it's not what I would choose to do.

Taking on additional work responsibilities, Solars often have to contract the boundaries of their existing activities or reduce the time and effort allocated to them.

Why do Solars often choose to set aside their preferences when taking on work responsibilities? Two potential explanations can be suggested. First, such behavior might be, indeed, reflective of Solars' "helping personalities." An alternative explanation is that Solars still feel more comfortable following the suggestions of others rather than making their own choices; this might be especially applicable for recently promoted Solars who by inertia might be inclined to look for direction from administrators.

Being conscientious individuals, Solars realize that, when having chosen a direction, they need to stay the course. In other words, they understand that the choices they make carry obligations and limit other choices. Indeed, One Associate Professor explained,

We have a lot of choice about what we teach, when we teach it, what rooms we teach it in. In our department, we have a lot of options because we have so many students and not enough full-time faculty members. So anything that I request I get to teach; any committee I want to serve on, I can serve on. My department's chair, my dean allowed me to follow my own interests pretty much. So, I have freedom to choose what I get involved in, but inevitably, I wound up heavily engaged and very busy and very preoccupied during the year. That's why I say it is an *illusion of freedom* – you quickly take on responsibilities and duties that eliminate your freedom because of these choices. But it's my choice. I love what I do. It does not feel like I am giving up my freedom. This is what I choose to do. On the other hand, it is still confining.

Solars organize their daily work by choosing which work activities and associated tasks to include in daily work and how much time and effort to allocate to those activities. However, the choice process is not easy for Solars. Often, they *choose to accept all activities*, tasks, and responsibilities suggested to them. Thus, the element of choice is both an indicator of Solars' accomplishments as well as a common cause of stress.

Strain and Stress: Streamlining Tasks

Many recently tenured and promoted Solars tend to exercise their newly acquired right to choose their focal activities by choosing to include as many activities in their daily work as they physically can afford. Two types of stress emerge as a consequence of such choices. First, Solars are stressed because they have to operate in a very dense work domain. In other words, they feel stress because they have to attend to *too many tasks* within a limited time period. Second, Solars are stressed because eventually they realize that they need to focus their daily work on a limited number of work activities and associated tasks. This involves setting aside one or more work activities and, sometimes, for Solars to *disengage* from activities they used to perform is difficult.

Many recently-promoted Associate Professors end up accepting more tasks and responsibilities than they physically and psychologically can accomplish without experiencing stress. For many Solars, just the sheer number of work activities to which they need to attend is a major source of stress. “Sometimes you have too many irons in the fire, too many things going on ... keeping up,” is a common complaint among Solars.

Interestingly, in contrast to Constellations who are stressed because there is not enough time to address their work activities, Solars complain that they have too many tasks to address in a limited period of time. Although these complaints are similar in essence, Constellations perceive that their stress is caused by too *little time*, which is related to their inadequate time management skills, whereas Solars perceive that their stress is caused by too *many tasks* that they themselves accepted, which is related to their inadequate task prioritization skills.

However, for Solars, stress lies not just in the number of activities and tasks they have to attend to, but, more significantly, in the interaction between those activities that creates *interruptions*. “A lot of interruptions... I just feel like I blur sometimes” is another very common complaint among Solars. Frequent interruptions result in stress and anxiety for these faculty members.

Interruptions are very stressful for Solars. Indeed, repeated interruptions require that the individual execute a series of cognitive, and often behavioral, shifts within a short period of time. One Associate Professor explained this familiar Solars’ problem,

I am not good in juggling tasks...interruptions. So, you end up kind of trying to figure out where should I focus my attention right now and then, when you get interrupted, coming back to the task exactly to the same spot.

In contrast to Constellations, Solars maintain very permeable and malleable boundaries between the work activities. “You are kinda grouping things together, chunking things together, chunking time together” is a common description of daily work among Solars. These porous boundaries often make the interruptions even more widespread. For example, a Professor shared, “I spend quite a lot of time in the office. My door is always, always open. Sometimes I think may be that’s a mistake, sometimes, I feel this way.” He is considering keeping the door closed or establishing a physical boundary to minimize interruptions. However, boundary modification is not a common method of dealing with interruptions among the Solars.

Usually, having reached a certain level of stress caused by the interaction among multiple work activities, that is by interruptions, Solars tend to minimize the number of activities in their daily work rather than to establish more impermeable boundaries between the activities. At some point in their career, typically several years after their

first promotion, Solars recognize that they do not have to do all the things they are doing. They realize that they have earned the right to choose focal work activities based on their own values interests rather than because of promotion expectations or institutional needs and priorities.

Promotion to full Professor is certainly important for Solars, but self-realization or an alignment of work activities with personal interests and values is more important for them, especially for senior Solars. For them, stress arises from their desire to be good university citizens on one hand and their desire to address their own interests on the other hand. One Associate Professor explained,

My biggest challenge ... the thing I'm still trying to fight is a balance question ... and trying to pace myself so that I can continue to do the work I want to do and continue to be an active scholar and not burn out ... and to have the sense of [institutional] priorities that would match with my values.

Although Solars often use the word “balance”, the challenge for them is not so much to balance role expectations, as is typical for Constellations, but to choose a way to *align* their internal values with institutional needs.

The choice process becomes even more stressful when institutional priorities are not aligned with individual's interests. Another Associate Professor, a recipient of the SRU Best Teacher Award, further elaborated on the challenge that many Solars face.

I'm worried that I'm at crossroads to some extent. Now I'm at the point when I need to move to the next step and the fear is that this schedule, the workload here, will make it difficult for me to gather [type of] research that I need to make a novel contribution to the literature. So, I want, I need to figure out how I'm going to negotiate this next phase of my career without giving up on that scholarly life, which I value. I literally have no idea – what now? How I'm going to manage this next step. I don't want to give up on research because I get so much enjoyment out of that. I'm not sure what I'm going to do from here.

Interestingly, along with stress, choice also brings relief and liberation to Solars. For example, for one Associate Professor, addressing personal values and interests, teaching is more important than meeting promotion expectations.¹⁸ And he enjoys that he is able make a choice that would reflect his preferences.

I'm at the point now where . . . I want to be promoted again, but it's not going to kill me if I'm not . . . and the thing that will get me promoted again would be more, more substantial research. And so, I can decide at some point, whether I care enough to do that.

Choosing direction appears to be a long, complex process for Solars. In the immediate time after their tenure decision and first review, Solars choose to take on numerous responsibilities and tasks. This period is characterized by stress resulting from the need to coordinate numerous, often unrelated, work activities. However, after several years of experimenting with various work activities, Solars reach the point when they decide to settle on direction for the next stage of their faculty careers. This period also causes stress, especially when Solars' own values and interests are not aligned with institutional priorities.

Role-Set Management Techniques: Task Prioritization

If Constellations manage their everyday work activities by arranging them in sequential temporal order and attending to one work task at a time, Solars prefer to focus on the task importance rather than on the place of the task in the time schedule. In other words, prioritization based on the relative task importance is the main mechanism that Solars use to organize and address their daily work activities.

¹⁸ Interestingly, this Associate Professor has a very different interpretation of promotion requirements than the previously quoted Solar. If the former is concerned that his research interests would negatively affect his teaching performance, the latter worries that, since he is focusing on teaching, he will not be able to produce sufficient evidence of his research productivity.

Interestingly, task importance can be either externally determined based on some exogenous factors or internally defined by the Solars based on their own criteria. Further, when discussing prioritization based on the external factors, Solars used the indicative mood. In contrast, when referring to prioritization based on their own preferences, they almost always used the subjunctive mood, especially using auxiliary verbs with normative connotations such as *should*. In other words, in reality, Solars tend to prioritize work tasks based on the endogenous factors, although they would like to set their agenda based on their own criteria.

When discussing work task prioritization based on external factors, Solars identified two common scenarios. In the first scenario, the external factors are known to Solars in advance. Usually, they take the form of deadlines. The importance of such tasks is often determined not by the value of the task itself for the faculty members, but by the degree of temporal expediency with which the task needs to be addressed.

I know exactly what I will be doing concerning teaching and then I prioritize based on the deadlines coming up. I structure other things based upon the deadlines coming up. I have deadline coming up for a paper, then I put a lot of things on the backburner trying to get that done and get it out of way. And, then, I look what is my next deadline – oh, the next deadline is curriculum committee deadline....

Most often, however, the importance of the task emerges directly from the situation at hand. Although similar to Constellations Solars use calendars to organize their work days, they end up dealing with tasks, not based on a plan, but as the tasks emerge and are presented to their attention. For many Solars, everyday faculty work, in fact, resembles firefighting where every emerging task is presented as a fire that needs to be put down immediately.

I have a calendar. And so, in my calendar, if I look at this week, I have my course schedule time planned, and then I have all those student meetings planned, and then I have a couple of appointments with non-students, with that political scientist. Then, beyond that it seems like my day is crisis management. I come in and I deal with the things I have to get done. The class time is one guaranteed thing. Because of the nature of this [interdisciplinary] program, things will come up that I have to deal with . . . in an unpredictable way that I have to just deal with immediately.

Interestingly, Solars talked at length about the ways work tasks *should* be prioritized. In other words, they suggested how the university should structure faculty work life. Personal interest, general disposition, subject expertise, and mastery of skills were most often mentioned as the preferred criteria for prioritizing work tasks. Although Solars associate different degrees of importance with different work activities, the crisis management mode of the daily work operation makes it difficult for them to reflect those differential values in their daily work.

In the ideal work place, Solars would like first to attend to the tasks in which they are interested. One Associate Professor, reminiscing about his pre-tenure and pre-promotion years, noted, “I think younger faculty are advised to get involved in things that they really don’t want to do but they feel like they have to.”

Similarly, another Associate Professor suggested that faculty members should focus on the work activities to which they are naturally predisposed and about which they feel excited and self-efficacious.

Someone said ‘Getting the right people in the right seats on a bus’. Like you have a bus full of teachers, but if they are not in the right seats, let’s say you have a teacher who is teaching history, but may be he should be teaching civilization – they are not in the right place – this may cause stress when you are not where you are supposed to be. As I am getting further into the teaching profession, I realize what my strengths are, what I am more passionate about and I am trying to move myself in those directions.

However, the most frequently mentioned criteria for work task prioritization were faculty subject expertise and, more specifically, subject-specific skills. One Professor in this group exemplified the sentiment typical for Solars' by arguing that "[m]ost of a faculty member's activities should be focused on or around that subject matter for which they have expertise. And then, from that position where they have some power, some validity, some credibility, they can extend." Solars suggest that, for the institution to function most effectively, faculty members need to focus their daily work on the activities in which they have interest and expertise.

Interestingly, Solars are puzzled as to why in academic institutions faculty members' expertise, skills, and interests are not used for task assignments. Many Solars feel that this is precisely the reason why their daily work is often reduced to chasing deadlines and managing emerging crises¹⁹.

The general set of operation when people are doing the things they are skilled in and things they are not skilled in. But we are not making the clear distinction between the two and that in itself is the beginning of the worthless frenzy that frames every other activity. You should try to limit a good portion of your activities to those that you are skilled in.

Summary

Tasks have emerged as the main factor affecting the way Solars structure their daily work. First, these faculty members construct their work as a set of tasks structured around teaching. Second, Solars are in the position to choose the direction of their work by focusing on a limited set of daily activities. However, they tend to choose to take on as many tasks as they possibly can.

¹⁹ Interestingly, these faculty members echo Bess' (1982) assertion that "many faculty are often required either formally or informally to perform tasks in which they have little interest. Their reluctant participation in many of their required roles often seriously impairs both institutional effectiveness and personal satisfaction" (p. 17).

Third, junior Solars are typically stressed by the necessity to attend to the numerous tasks and responsibilities they choose to accept. Further, their stress is reinforced by the interruptions caused by the permeable boundaries that Solars tend to maintain between their work activities. The main cause of stress for senior Solars is disengaging from some of their current work activities and finding a way to align their own interests with the needs of the institution.

Finally, task prioritization is a preferred method for Solars to organize their daily work. However, in reality, Solars often are not able to prioritize the tasks based on their own criteria and have to address them as they emerge in daily work.

Comets

The third role-set gestalt, Comet, characterizes the pattern of organization of everyday work for *sixteen* participants in my study. There are two very distinct groups within the Comets. I refer to them as *Junior* Comets and *Senior* Comets. Four first- and second-year Assistant Professors constitute the Junior Comets. The Senior Comets include eleven Professors and one veteran Assistant Professor.

Two junior Assistant Professors represent the Urban/Convergent cluster of Becher's (1989) typology of academic fields. Another two Junior Comets are members of Urban/Divergent disciplines. All junior Comets joined SRU directly after receiving their doctoral degrees. At the time of the interviews, two Junior Comets had begun their third semester at SRU, one Junior Comet had started teaching during the previous summer, and the fourth was in his first semester of teaching.

In the Senior Comets group, four Professors represent Urban/Convergent disciplines. Three Professors and an Assistant Professor are members of

Rural/Convergent disciplines. The Urban/Divergent cluster is represented by two Professors. Two Professors are members of Rural/Divergent disciplines.

Ten Senior Comets, nine of the Professors and the Assistant Professor, have been employed by Striving Regional University for more than fifteen years; the final Professor in this group is in his ninth year at SRU. All but four Senior Comets joined SRU directly after receiving their doctoral degrees. One Senior Comet had faculty appointments at two other universities, two Senior Comets had extensive teaching experiences in public schools, and another Senior Comet worked for several years in state legislature before seeking and accepting a faculty position at SRU.

Role-Set Configuration: Comet

Similar to Constellations and Solars, Comets put teaching at the center of their daily work. However, in contrast to Constellations and Solars who respectively structure their *time* allocated to other activities and their *tasks* associated with those activities around teaching, Comets – both senior and junior – tend to focus almost exclusively on their teaching role activities and relegate all other work activities and associated tasks outside their daily work domain.

The American Heritage Dictionary (online) defines a comet as a celestial body having a head consisting of a solid nucleus surrounded by a nebulous tail consisting of micro particles. In metaphorical terms, similar to comets, faculty members in this group focus their time and energy almost exclusively on one activity – teaching, representing the comet's head – and relegate all other role activities and associated tasks to the tail or outside the boundaries of their daily work domain. Although the general pattern of daily

work configuration is common for both Junior and Senior Comets, three significant differences distinguish the two sub-groups.

First, Junior Comets tend to construct their daily work as a relatively narrow set of activities exclusively associated with *classroom instruction*. A second-year Assistant Professor shared his experience, which is common for Junior Comets. “In [my first year at SRU], I placed teaching above everything, because that’s what I was doing primarily – teaching, teaching, teaching, too much teaching.” Another Assistant Professor concurred by emphasizing that preparing for classes and lecturing take all his work time and energy.

I think for everybody, who I know, who’s come here, the shock of teaching four courses is immense since they come here right out of grad school. You are in the middle of the week, your third week, and, all of the sudden, you, like, oh, my goodness, this is a lot of work to get those lectures ready and get ready for the class.

In comparison, Senior Comets tend to construct their daily work as a broad set of activities facilitating *student learning*. One Professor explained his work philosophy, which is typical for Senior Comets.

Everything comes off the basic principle. I think that in the institution like university, it really should come off as learning. So, the central core should be learning and everything else around then comes down to how can we make learning work better.

Second, the two groups tend to differ in the approaches they take in constructing their daily work. Junior Comets generally assume an inductive perspective; for them, classroom instruction is one, very important *structural element* of faculty work. For Junior Comets, mastering classroom instruction is the first step in understanding faculty work and building their faculty careers. Senior Comets follow deductive logic in defining their work; for them, student learning is, essentially, the *meaning* of faculty work. For

Seniors, student learning is the culmination or the main outcome of their work as faculty members.

Third, the temporal aspect of activities that both groups relegate to the metaphorical tail differ. For Junior Comets, the tail largely contains their *future* aspirations and anticipated faculty role expectations. Senior Comets disengage from their *past* work activities that are not aligned with their values and in which they are no longer interested.

Role-Set Schema

The role-set schema is a cognitive generalization about daily work organization that guide the processing of role-related information contained in the faculty member's daily work experiences with some degree of efficiency (see Markus, 1977). Earlier, I described the role-set schemata of Constellations and Solars using the metaphor of constructing faculty work as a journey.

I noted that the temporal element emerged as the most important characteristic of the way Constellations generalize about their daily work. Their most important concern in daily work is to find time to address their role activities. Therefore, I compared their main objective in organizing daily work to *setting the pace* of the journey. For Solars, the challenge is to choose which tasks and activities they want to tackle and on which they want to expend their time and energy. Therefore, I compared Solars' main objective in organizing daily work to *choosing the direction* of the journey.

Further, the element of agency or control emerged in the analysis of role-schemata. Constellations perceive that they control their time schedules and can order

work tasks in temporal sequence. Solars can generally choose work tasks on which they want to focus their time and energy. How do Comets construct their role-schemata?

Finding one's bearings.

For Junior Comets, the main objective in organizing daily work is understanding their initial position in the context of faculty work. What are the first steps they need to take on the journey to become good faculty members? Coming directly from doctoral programs at Research Universities with no pedagogical training, Junior Comets focus on learning what it means to be a junior faculty member in a comprehensive university with a strong focus on undergraduate teaching. Applying the metaphor of the journey, Juniors Comets must understand what they need to accomplish in order to start their faculty career journey at SRU.

In other words, since SRU faculty members are expected to be first and foremost teachers, Junior Comets ask themselves, how do I become a good teacher? They believe that in order to become good teachers they need to prepare good classroom instruction materials, become familiar with instructional pedagogies, and learn how to deal with students in the classroom.

Junior Comets identify good teaching, first and foremost, with good lecture materials. For them, lecture notes are not only a tool for the transmission of course material, but, more importantly, are a reflection of their subject expertise. During the interviews, three out of four Junior Comets proudly brought forth their lengthy lecture notes, elaborate power point presentations, and Blackboard course sites filled with supplemental information. The message that I received from their demonstrations was – look how well I know the material! Developing classroom presentation materials is a

time consuming process, but, for Junior Comets having lecture notes written is a very important element in viewing themselves as faculty members and they persistently invest significant amounts of time and effort in preparing instructional materials. “Writing my lectures can be real pain. But I got to do it...got to do it.”

Second, while primarily focusing on translating their subject expertise in lecture notes, Junior Comets begin to gradually realize that being a subject expert is not enough to be a good teacher. Although not directly mentioned in the interviews, SRU has a well-established faculty development program that especially focuses on helping new recruits to develop good pedagogical skills. Pedagogy is a new subject for Junior Comets and they enthusiastically learn new skills. “I am learning how to become an effective teacher, a more effective teacher, and that’s exciting.”

Finally, for Junior Comets, good teaching is also associated with the good working relationships they establish with students in the classroom. They come to understand that the classroom environment requires a different, more structured and formal, type of behavior than they use in dealing with students out-of-class. One Assistant Professor explained,

I am studying teaching right now, leadership in teaching and one part I kept seeing – classroom management. I was, like, I know how to manage my classroom. But when I started reading that stuff I realized I wasn’t managing my classes well. And this last year, I really studied the life of a teacher, classroom management, organization, leadership skills, teaching tips.

While discussing their teaching experiences, Junior Comets frequently mentioned that students assess their teaching effectiveness very favorably and they expect to receive high ratings on their course evaluations. In other words, Junior Comets tend to feel

confident in their teaching abilities. They are learning the art and science of teaching and, generally, they feel in control of their courses and classes.

Walking on the moon.

In metaphorical terms, Senior Comets tend to construct their daily work as “walking on the moon.” On one hand, based on their experiences, they have come to realize that they cannot control their work completely. They know that on their journey, craters, mountains, rivers or other obstacles or problems over which they do not have control will always present themselves and they will always have to deal with them. In other words, Senior Comets know that in daily faculty work many unpredictable things, problems and situations can emerge that they often cannot control.

On the other hand, as the moon has relatively insignificant gravitation effects, Senior Comets perceive that although *they cannot control their work, their work cannot control them either*. This understanding liberates Senior Comets and gives them the freedom of behavior similar to the freedom one has while walking on the moon.

First, similar to Junior Comets, Seniors work hard to prepare good classroom presentation materials and structure class sessions well. Similar to Constellations, Seniors structure their daily work around teaching schedules and calendars and try to establish a reasonable pace of work to address multiple work activities and associated tasks. Similar to Solars, they choose activities and tasks on which they plan to focus their time and energy. What is different about Senior Comets is that they know and expect that a number of unpredictable intervening factors are likely to emerge and affect the implementation of their plans or enactment of their choices.

When their work activities do not go as planned, Senior Comets tend not to panic or get disappointed as, for example, Constellations do when their work schedules go awry. If a typical reaction for Constellations is exemplified by one Assistant Professor's emotional comment, "I got frustrated when things don't work out the way I have envisioned them," the Senior Comets' perspective is typified by one Professor's approach to planning, "I try to prioritize things, I do it every weekend . . . I do have lists, but I realize I am not going to get everything done on the list, and *that's all right*." Another Professor concurred. "But this is one of the things I learned with age is that some things are beyond my control, I can only set up things, plan things. So, I think, I am becoming more patient with that."

However, Senior Comets are comfortable with uncertainty in faculty daily work not simply because they have become patient with age. More importantly, they are at ease with unpredictability because their experiences have prepared them to deal with various emerging contingencies in daily work. One Professor explained,

My first sentence in my classes is 'Remember, nothing is perfect. Things will go off track, because nothing is a perfect system. Hence, be prepared to some uncertainties and then you should be able to deal with that.' I know that things will go off track. So my mental system is prepared for off-the-norm events. But what exactly will happen, I do not know.

Senior Comets know that they excel in what they do and that they will be able to deal successfully with problems as they emerge.

Second, Senior Comets perceive that work does not control them in the sense that taking care of the self becomes more important to them than meeting the expectations of others. This perspective is reflected in the ability of the Seniors to reject work tasks if they do not see value in those tasks or do not have time or energy to attend to them.

Again, taking care of the self “does not imply that subjects are autonomous beings free from social constraints and able to invent themselves as they please; rather, technologies of the self arise within struggles and resistance generated in social relationships”

(Felstead & Jewson, 2000, 171-172). Senior Comets have realized the importance of taking care of the self based on their analysis of their past and current social experiences rather than based on egoistical or selfish reasons. One Professor explained,

I find there are times during the year when I get a little more stressed than at others just because things happen at certain junctures ... I think after 31 years here, I've learned that, OK, some things will go away. Some of my younger colleagues haven't figured it out yet that there are times when it gets better, that sometimes you have to say no. You know, no, I am not going to be on that committee or I am not going to go to that meeting. There is always somebody in the department who is doing more than you are, so you tend to think 'I'd better work as hard as that person', otherwise ... It makes it difficult.

Further, for Senior Comets, taking care of the self means that work for them becomes a *self-reflexive* process. In other words, Senior Comets tend to reflect on their work behaviors not so much through the lens of the perceived expectations of the others, but, rather, through the *prism of their own identities*. Another Professor explained,

Because you have nothing else to pursue, you are a little bit more honest about what you do either in the classroom or in your interactions with students. ...It does not suggest that you were dishonest prior to that but essentially you may not have given all that you could because expediency comes in, you limit that . . . it's almost like a courtroom answer, you limit your answer to the question asked, no elaboration.

In other words, many Senior Comets begin to ask themselves: Am I successful in my career? How well are my own values reflected in my work? It appears that the main objective for Senior Comets in constructing their daily work is to reflect on whether their faculty work life journey brought them to the intended destination. As I discussed earlier, for the participants, being a faculty member essentially means to be an effective teacher,

a facilitator of student learning. In other words, Senior Comets are asking themselves – Am I a good teacher? How do I know that I am a good teacher? Answering these questions is not easy and often becomes a cause of stress for Senior Comets.

Strain and Stress: Learning

For both, Junior and Senior Comets, stress comes from the time, effort, and emotions they invest in the learning processes. However, their learning processes differ in purpose and focus. As I indicated earlier, Junior Comets' main objective is to learn how to become good teachers and how to prove this to others. For them, learning involves the primary mastery of the *content* of and development of presentation materials for the courses they teach. Senior Comets' main objective is to engage in self-reflexive learning to demonstrate to themselves that they are, in fact, good teachers. To do this, they tend to focus on the analyses of their course material *delivery* skills.

Mastery of content

As the Junior Comets begin their professional careers, they spend long hours mastering the content of the courses they teach. Although coming directly from graduate schools, they often find that they need to revisit basic, elementary subject matter on which their courses tend to focus. Further, Junior Comets realize that they need to re-learn the material from the perspective of their students so that they can anticipate students' questions and be prepared to answer them. One Assistant Professor explained,

You personally have to know the material inside out, so the work has to go in that you actually read the material and understand it, so you can present it to someone else and if they ask you a question, you actually can answer it.

This perspective of Junior Comets reflects Boice's (1991) observation that new faculty members equate good teaching with good content and do their best not to be accused of not knowing their material.

Revisiting and often re-learning course materials takes a significant amount of time and energy. However, the largest investment of Junior Comets' time and effort goes to preparing classroom instruction presentation materials; specifically, lecture notes and lecture power point slides. In fact, developing lecture notes is so time-consuming that Junior Comets typically do not have time to engage in other faculty role activities in which they might be interested.

One second-year Assistant Professor, based on his first-year experience, made a suggestion for prospective faculty members.

If you don't have anything prepared, like lecture and that, try and get rolling on that as soon as possible because if you can get a lot of that done early on, you can save you time and let you focus on *other things*.

A first-year Assistant Professor who started teaching in the summer session is, in fact, following this strategy.

Right now I'm starting from scratch. Next year... In the summer, I taught [prefix] 101, and this semester I have my lecture notes for [prefix] 101, so I don't have to spend my time writing them up again. And right now, I'm spending my time doing my [prefix] 102 lectures. So, next year, I will have [prefix] 101 and [prefix] 102 lectures all set and I can just revise them as I want. And I have more time to do *other things* as I move on in teaching.

Interestingly, this behavior of Junior Comets reflects another Boice's (1991) observation that new faculty members put off scholarly writing and other faculty role activities until feeling settled as teachers.

Constellations work to minimize their daily work stress by arranging work activities and associated tasks in a sequential temporal order. Solars try to limit the

number of activities and tasks by choosing a set of activities to focus their time and effort on. Junior Comets believe that they can minimize their anticipated stress by developing a portfolio of lecture notes that they plan to use and re-use in the future, thus creating time to attend to “other things” during the next stages of their faculty career.

In addition to preparing lecture notes, Junior Comets need to prepare themselves psychologically to assume the role of the teacher in the classroom. All four Junior Comets had had Teaching Assistant (TA) experience before they came to SRU. Interestingly, moving from the TA to the instructor of record role has been difficult for them. One Assistant Professor explained the difference.

Being a TA and being the head person in the class is certainly different. Being a TA was very easy for me as I was sort of a buddy for students. You are not the guy who is giving them the “F”, you are the guy who is trying to help them to get an “A”. So they look at you as you are an ally to them. It was very easy for me helping them...because I could sit there and just talk with them about the things and they won't resist me because they see me as someone who could potentially fail them.

As I noted in the previous Chapter, for participants of the study, a common challenge for all faculty is to balance the guiding and facilitative roles of the teacher. Having not developed a solid teaching identity, Junior Comets are especially inclined to take the extremes: either continuing to maintain the TA identity in the class or becoming strict disciplinarian lecturers.

Having to develop and prepare for three to four courses a semester, Junior Comets often find themselves pressed for time. One Assistant Professor shared, “It feels like you need more time, it feels like I am always needing more, if I had another hour to prepare or just another fifteen minutes sometimes.” As a result, Junior Comets often have to

operate in a rushed, chaotic mode that also contributes to their stress and anxiety in daily work.

Day-to-day challenge is to keep everything in order and making sure that I haven't forgotten something for the class, being prepared, being ready. So, when things get hectic, I realize, you forget to make handouts, forgot to copy the new slides you made, a number of different things can happen.

Junior Comets discover the teaching role by relearning materials for the courses they teach, preparing lecture notes, and developing new pedagogical and classroom management skills. These learning tasks take most of their time and effort and often leave Junior Comets exhausted at the end of the day.

Mastery of delivery

Senior Comets know that they are good teachers. They see their students grow and succeed. They exhibit high degrees of self-efficacy in their teaching roles. Teaching provides them a great deal of satisfaction. But, somewhat in the Popperian scientific inquiry tradition,²⁰ they continue to doubt assessments of their teaching effectiveness and repeatedly test their teaching skills again and again. The construction of their daily work as a self-reflexive process leads many Senior Comets to experiment with their teaching styles and to ask themselves how well their teaching reflects their main identity, that is, facilitating student learning and development. Such questions, in turn, lead Senior Comets to a (re)examination of their content delivery skills.

Having achieved senior status, these faculty members have opportunities to engage in self-reflection and experimentation. One Professor explained,

You are lucky as an academic in as much as you have this little theatre, and the comprehensive university is a fairly small one, in which to exercise these changes on a few thousand students who otherwise would go through the system which

²⁰ Essentially, Karl Popper (1992 [1959/1934]) argued that scientific theories need to be constantly tested and retested since no amount of evidence can prove a theory, but a single experiment can contradict it.

would not be as good. So, once you get beyond tenure and you've gone through that little...jumped through that little hurdle, then you start seeing other opportunities for improving things you can have some influence on.

Further, Senior Comets come to realize that teaching is not so much about the transfer of content knowledge, which is the typical preoccupation of Junior Comets, but about the development of thinking and reasoning skills in students. Senior Comets are free to self-evaluate their teaching effectiveness not based on student evaluations or feedback of peers or retention rates but based on their own teaching identities. Thus, they construct a self-assessment paradigm that focuses on their ability to facilitate learning rather than to simply transfer knowledge. One Professor captured well this shift of the teaching paradigm that is so characteristic of Senior Comets.

My first years ... I used to think that if students were asking questions, it reflected poorly on my teaching, because it meant that they were not understanding. On the contrary, now, I feel like if student are not asking questions, it reflects poorly on my teaching – I am not making them think.

This perspective shifts the focus of Senior Comets' self-analyses from mastery of content to the mastery of delivery or the teacher's ability to open students' minds. Senior Comets know that they have sufficient subject expertise and mastery of course content. However, they often worry if they can effectively deliver course materials to students. For example, one Professor captured a common concern among Senior Comets. "I cannot afford to let [my students] guess that I don't know my subject properly – that will be devastating."

Again, Senior Comets are not concerned about their knowledge of the content, they are anxious about designing effective strategies to actively engage students and facilitate intentional learning. One Professor explained. "I spend more time before the

class [now than in the beginning of my teaching career], it's not that I am worrying about it, but I have to design my thought process, also my delivery process.”

With focusing on facilitating student learning, for Senior Comets, teaching becomes a developmental process. One does not become a teacher when he develops a portfolio of lecture notes as Junior Comets tend to believe. Good teaching means continuous self-assessment and self-improvement. One Professor captured well this perspective.

There's never, there's never a class period that . . . there's more than I can do in terms of finding more information or in terms of modifying the presentations I give to students. There is never an end point [in teaching].

Thus, stress or, rather, positive restlessness or the challenge of continuous self-improvement is reflective and indicative of good teaching for Senior Comets. One Professor, a recipient of the Best Teacher award, who has been teaching at SRU for more than three decades, shared his positive restlessness in regard to improving his teaching.

It's almost a routine challenge, but, you know, I mean, I always have in the back of mind – I want to do a good job in the classroom. But that's almost just . . . I don't think about it anymore as a challenge, but I . . . I don't consciously think about it as a challenge, but it is a challenge because I always want to try to do well when I walk in the classroom.

For Senior Comets, stress essentially comes from the very high centrality and salience of the teaching identity in their faculty self-concepts. Simply stated, they *continuously* strive to improve their teaching and be excellent teachers. Having mastered the content of their courses, they now focus on ensuring that the strategies they use to deliver that content facilitate student learning and development.

Role-Set Management Techniques: Reductionism

Both Junior and Senior Comets manage their daily work by focusing almost exclusively on teaching role activities and associated tasks and relegating other faculty role activities beyond the daily work domain – in other words to their comet’s tail. I refer to this role-set management technique as *reductionism*.

Reduction by omission

Junior Comets reduce their role-set to teaching by *omission*. In other words, they focus on teaching because of contextual expediencies. Preparing for and teaching three to four courses a semester simply takes all their work time and exhausts their physical capabilities to attend to other work-related tasks and interests. Thus, to avoid extreme stress in daily work, Junior Comets typically focus on teaching role activities during their first years at SRU.

One second-year Assistant Professor observed that many new faculty members come to SRU from graduate schools with active research agendas and intend to continue to engage in research activities while teaching. However, based on his experience, he strongly recommends new faculty members to withhold their research interests and even not to think about activities other than teaching during their first couple of years at SRU.

Make peace with the fact that it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to do any significant research until the summer after the first year and so, not to carry any guilt about that, just to accept that’s the way it will be, so don’t even clutter your desk with it or your mind, put it aside.

Further, senior faculty members and administrators encourage new faculty recruits to focus exclusively on teaching activities. First and second year faculty members are typically not expected to demonstrate evidence of their research productivity or service accomplishments. Thus, new faculty members at SRU apparently do not have to

“hit the ground running” (Whitt, 1991) in all roles. An Assistant Professor in the middle of his first teaching semester shared his impression of his department.

Here...this is the reason why I really like this department. These guys are really focused on education and they don't really push on you that you have to be doing research all the time. Your first couple of years, they generally give you some leeway to get started and to get on your feet with your classes.

Another Assistant Professor indicated that beginning a career by honing teaching skills is less stressful than developing a research portfolio. Further, successes in teaching are more tangible and visible than research accomplishments thus boosting self-efficacy of new faculty members early in their careers. He explained,

I think here with the teaching, probably, it is a bit lower stress for me just because ... when I am trying to do better on my job it is just myself, I have to really improve and I can improve myself. It's easier for me, not easy, but I can make change in myself easier than if I am trying to make [subject] work that does not want to work. So, if you are writing a grant and you put it in there and [subject] does not want to work – you are screwed. So, I feel this is an easier environment to get started and to really feel successful.

Focusing almost exclusively on teaching helps Junior Comets develop relatively high levels of perceived personal control over their work thus helping them to better adjust to SRU (Perry et al., 1997). In fact, reducing the faculty role-set just to one role for new faculty members might be an effective socialization and identity development mechanism. On one hand, from the very beginning of their professional careers new faculty recruits receive a strong signal that they are expected to be, first and foremost, effective teachers. On the other hand, new faculty members will be inclined to associate their first professional successes with teaching, thus strengthening the centrality and salience of the teaching identity in their faculty self-concepts.

Reduction by commission

Senior Comets reduce their role-sets by *commission*. In other words, they choose to focus on teaching based on their own values and interests rather than because of situational expediencies or the expectations of others.

Having achieved the status of senior faculty members, Senior Comets can afford to disengage from various role activities. One Professor explained, “As a full professor, you can make those decisions. I don’t need to meet the same yearly benchmarks as someone who is beginning his career.”

Another Professor concurred. Tenure and promotion provided him, as well as many Senior Comets, with the freedom to attend to the work activities that are aligned with his values and interests rather than required by promotion criteria. “When you must be promoted, that provides the impetus, you must do this. And I recognize that. Now, it’s up to me. And for now, I’d rather spend time doing those other activities.”

A veteran Assistant Professor decided early in his career that his commitment to teaching and mentoring students is significantly more important to him than promotions and associated rewards. Further, he realized that his real strength lies in teaching rather than in research or service. He chose not to overextend himself trying to master the activities in which he had neither interest nor skill.

I haven’t been able to do it all. It was a conscious decision on my part. And I don’t regret making the decision. And I just choose not to jump through hoops like that for something as ambiguous as other stages in professorship.

Interestingly, although he is an outlier by rank among Senior Comets, many of the others of the group support his philosophy.

Junior and Senior Comets tend to reduce their daily work activities to teaching role activities.²¹ For Junior Comets, construction of this reduced, one role activity, work domain is the *first step* in building their faculty careers. In contrast, for Senior Comets, the focus on teaching is a *culmination* of their faculty careers and reflection of their faculty identities as, first and foremost, teachers.

Summary

For Comets, daily work is essentially about *learning*. They configure their daily work activities by focusing on teaching activities and relegating other activities and associated tasks outside the daily work domain. Junior Comets make sense of daily work by interpreting their focus on teaching as learning the essential knowledge and skills necessary to become effective faculty members at SRU. For Senior Comets, the focus on teaching is essentially a self-reflexive process. Senior Solars make sense of daily work by aligning their identity values with their work behaviors.

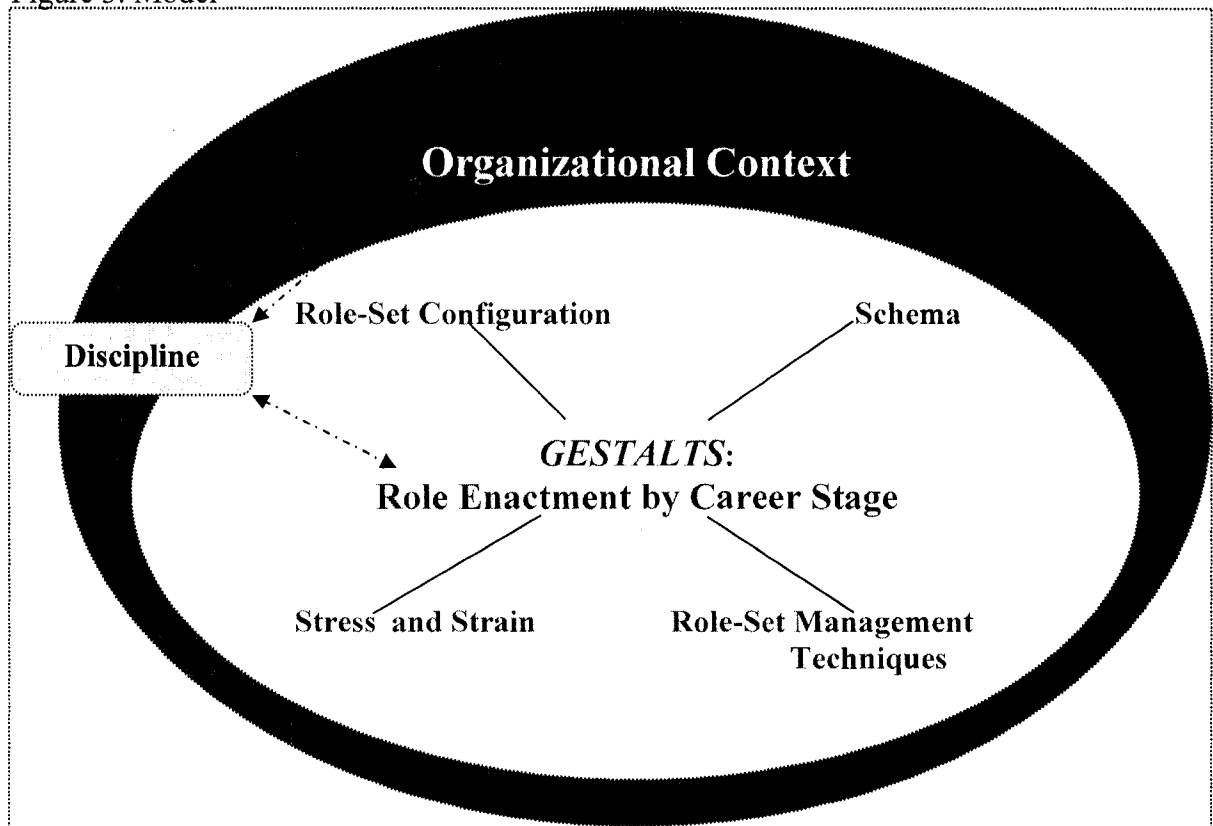
Learning processes are not easy. Junior Comets tend to spend long hours translating their subject expertise in lecture notes and other course materials. Senior Comets often develop high anxiety levels constantly testing and re-testing their skills in facilitating student learning. Comets facilitate their learning of teaching by reducing their daily work almost exclusively to teaching role activities.

²¹ Interestingly, Senior Comets apply reductionism not only to their role-sets to minimize stress in the daily work. One Professor talked about affective reductionism. "I've come to ... in my experience ... it's just not taking everything too much to heart, sometimes going with the flow, trying to do my best, but yet not letting it stress me out to the point that it's not fun anymore." Another Professor discussed at length interpersonal reductionism. "We are, they are all human beings to start with. And we are human beings performing different roles. So it allows the reduction of variations I have to cater to at a given time."

Faculty Enacting Their Daily Work-Life: A Model

The final step in grounded theory analysis is development of substantive theory or a conceptual model that facilitates understanding of the phenomenon under study. In this study, *substantive theory* is a set of categories related through propositions or statements of relationship, which taken together constitute an integrated framework that can be used to further explore, interpret, and, eventually, understand the ways that faculty members employ to manage their role-sets. Figure 3 represents an emerged model of role enactment in faculty daily work-life.

Figure 3. Model



The model presents categories influencing as well as describing role enactment.

Three propositions establish the relationships between the categories.

Proposition One: Organizational context defines role behavioral expectations and influences the meanings that the individuals assign to their roles and the ways that the individuals relate roles to each other. The influence of a faculty member's discipline is mediated by the definition of organizational context.

Proposition Two: Roles are enacted through four dimensions: configuration, schema, stress and strain, and management technique. Role enactment dimensions form gestalts or role enactment patterns.

Proposition Three: Variability in role enactment patterns is reflective and indicative of career stage.

Implications

The purpose of this study was to develop a framework for understanding the ways faculty members organize their professional roles in daily work. This research is not an attempt to describe the numerous tasks and activities that faculty members are required to carry out in their daily work. It also is not a study of the allocation of time and effort to multiple faculty roles. Rather, I am arguing the merits of a conceptual framework to describe the principles underlying the organizational pattern of the role-set.

Implications of this study can be grouped into three general areas. First, I discuss implications based on the analysis of the conceptual framework. Second, I discuss implications based on the methodology I employed for this study. Finally, I address implications related to the comprehensive universities sector that is the organizational context in which this study was embedded.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was designed to explore the ways faculty members enact their professional roles in daily work in the context of the interplay of organizational and cultural variables. Thus, the conceptual framework was based on two main components: the concept of the role and its specifications on one hand and intervening factors or variables that would affect the enactment of roles in a given context.

Concept of role

The notion of the role was utilized as a conceptual anchor of this study. I defined role as a stable set of expectations of others associated with the faculty position in the institutional context *as well as* the meanings faculty members themselves attach to the position itself and to the expectations of role-senders *as well as* recurring social behaviors to enact these meanings in daily work. To delineate the dimensions of this definition I identified and described different role properties from three theories: role theory, identity theory, and role boundary theory.

The concept of the role and role specifications extracted from the three theories proved to be useful as it provided a conceptual lens to explore a complex phenomenon of faculty daily work. Indeed, the work behaviors of participants reflected expectations of others or role senders, interpretations of these expectations by the participants, participants' own meanings attached to a given social position and associated roles, and the types of boundaries participants establish between different role domains.

However, an important limitation of the concept of role emerged. It appears that the concept of role is best suited for the meso-level analysis of faculty work, that is, the intersection or interface between organizational factors and faculty *role performance*. As

such, the concept of the role has been fruitfully used in the studies of faculty productivity and institution-individual fit.

Faculty *daily work* emerged as too complex and messy or, rather, too nuanced to be fully understood through the analytical prism of the role concept. The crux of daily work dynamics appears to lie not in the interplay between *roles*, but in the interactions, spillovers, and the boundaries between and among individual *activities* and tasks associated with different roles, but more often, with the same role. In this study, it became evident that the activities that faculty members associate with the same role might require very different behavioral, cognitive, and affective processes. Thus, the systematic exploration of faculty daily work requires clear analytical differentiation between and conceptual and operational definition of the notions of role, role activities, and role tasks. In other words, it is necessary to clearly delineate the level of analysis in the studies exploring the ways faculty members structure and manage everyday work.

This problem, in part, is connected to the definition of “daily work” or “everyday work.” The participants of this study somewhat narrowly constructed “daily work” as professional activities in which they are engaged during “normal business hours” while being present on campus. This raises several questions. What is faculty work? Do faculty members differentiate between different types of work, e.g., everyday work, summer work, evening work, off-campus work? In other words, studies of faculty work must clearly and unambiguously specify the temporal and spatial dimensions of faculty work domain they plan to explore.

Contextual variables

Based on the review of literature, I suggested when designing the conceptual framework for this study that the enactment of roles in daily work is likely to be moderated by the interplay of organizational and cultural variables. I discuss the organizational context in the last subsection of this section. The primary cultural variable in this study was faculty members' discipline or academic field affiliation work (Becher, 1989; Clark, 1987; Finnegan & Gamson, 1996). Later, developing the methods, I included a demographic variable of rank. Further, at the proposal defense, the committee suggested that I focus on male faculty members in order to minimize spillovers or the effects of non-work life to daily work in the analysis.

I was not able to identify any discipline or academic field-based patterns of organization of faculty daily work at Striving Regional University. One possible explanation might be that I used clusters of disciplines and academic fields rather than specific disciplines to construct my sample. Another potential explanation is the limited utility of Becher's (1989) typology for the study of disciplinary variations in faculty daily work. The utility of other typologies needs to be explored. Interestingly, recently Trowler (in press) keenly noted the problematic nature of typologies categorizing different disciplines when conducting micro-level analyses of faculty work life

The problem with this kind of categorization is that while it seems to make sense when disciplines are viewed through the wrong end of a telescope, from a great distance, the distinctions begin to fall apart in the analytical hand when one looks at disciplines close up. The fractures within them become very apparent when the analyst steps out of the helicopter, as do the similarities between them – from a great height – seemed very different subdisciplinary areas.

Finally, the fact that discipline affiliation did not emerge in this study as a factor affecting the ways faculty members organize their daily work might reflect Leslie's (2002) suggestion that discipline effects "are more powerful at the more research-

oriented universities and may be muted in favor of campus communality at the more teaching-oriented institutions”, such at SRU.

Interestingly, contrary to my assumptions, several male participants of the study indicated that their non-work life had significantly affected they way they organize their daily work. Recently, applying the role boundary theory, Colbeck (2006) found that boundaries of work roles were less flexible and permeable to non-work responsibilities for female faculty than for men. In light of these findings, focusing on the female faculty population would be more appropriate for the study of the management of work roles since the spillovers from the non-work environment would be less pronounced for women than for men.

Faculty career stage emerged in this study as an important intervening variable affecting the way faculty members enact their work roles in daily work. Faculty across different stages differed in the ways they configure their daily work, in the ways they make sense of daily work, in the type of work-related stress they experience, and in the strategies they used to minimize the stress.

These findings support Baldwin’s line of research on developmental stages in faculty careers (Baldwin, 1990; Baldwin & Blackburn, 1981; Baldwin, Lunceford, & Vanderlinden, 2005). Further, the findings of this study show that faculty at different career stages focus on different aspects of faculty work roles thus lending support to Rice’s recent suggestion “[t]he idea of the ‘complete scholar’ that I have contended for will be a possibility only over the length of one’s professional career as one develops different aspects of one’s scholarly self at different times” (p. 14). These findings also support Sorcinelli’s assertion that balancing multiple roles is a challenge that resonates

across career stages (Sorcinelli et al., 2006) and Austin's (2006) conclusion that "making choices about how to organize one's work and, more broadly, one's life, continues throughout the career" (p. 149).

Methodology

The exploratory qualitative research design proved to be an appropriate approach to studying faculty daily work. Through in-depth, semi-structured interviews I was able to capture the meanings, emotions and interpretations participants attach to their everyday work activities.

Further, a modified grounded-theory approach guided me in identifying the four dimensions of faculty role enactment: role-set configuration, role-set schema, stress, and stress management techniques. This might be an important contribution to developing a substantive theory of faculty everyday work, or the theory that "has its referent specific, everyday-world situations...has specificity and hence usefulness to practice often lacking in theories that cover more global concerns" (Merriam, 1997, p. 17).

However, even the cognitive interviewing technique proved to be limited in enabling me to capture important details of different work role domains, and especially, to capture transition scripts or structures that organize role transition tasks "in a *temporal* flow, thereby guiding the individual and providing a sense of predictability and control" (Ashforth et al., 2000, p. 485). My reliance on interviews as my primary data collection method somewhat limited my ability to capture and describe the properties of the role and role activities boundaries in greater detail.

Adding direct observations of the faculty members' daily work to interviews might prove to be more useful in enabling researchers to capture the details of various

faculty work domains as well as transition scripts, thus facilitating the analysis of the properties of the boundaries between different roles and role activities. Further, the conceptual and operational integration of the role boundary theory with Goffman's (1974) frame analysis, and especially the frame keying and re-keying concept, might prove useful in capturing and analyzing transition scripts.

Comprehensive Sector

Based on the literature review, I assumed comprehensive universities to be places where faculty members are faced with the problem of managing multiple and often contradictory or unclear role expectations in daily work. Therefore, I believed that comprehensive university settings provided a rich context for this study.

Indeed, Striving Regional University proved to be a good site for studying faculty daily work, although it turned out to be very different from comprehensive universities often described in the higher education literature as the institutions with weak cultures, unfocused missions and poorly defined priorities (Clark, 1987; Henderson & Kane, 1991; Kerr, 1993). In fact, SRU is characterized by strong teaching tradition and organizational culture focused on undergraduate education.

Although earlier I concluded that, at this point in time, SRU appears to be outside of a general trend of adopting the research culture in comprehensive institutions (Finnegan & Gamson, 1996), the hiring of a significant number of faculty members in the last several years as well as the retirement of senior faculty might move SRU toward developing a more research-oriented campus culture. However, high quality undergraduate education remains the strategic focus of SRU as it strives to develop national recognition. In fact, recently many comprehensive institutions have reaffirmed

their commitment to their teaching missions. Based on the analysis of current trends, Henderson (2007) forecasts that,

At state comprehensive universities, conducting traditional research will be a less important role for faculty members than the ability to effectively teach students with diverse degrees of preparation and, at most comprehensive universities, less important than the ability to provide meaningful educational services to local regions (p. x).

Further, SRU faculty members, both senior and junior, primarily and very strongly identify themselves in terms of the teaching role. Indeed, teaching emerged as a highly central and salient role identity for the participants. This finding reflects Finnegan's (1993) conclusion that faculty members deliberately choose comprehensive institutions as their place of academic employment.

The fact that teaching emerged as a meta-role for the participants of the study limited my ability to study the way faculty members organize and manage multiple roles in their daily work. Doctoral institutions, especially private, might provide better sites for the study of the ways faculty manage multiple role responsibilities in daily work. Faculty members in those institutions appear to have more challenges in managing multiple roles. For example, faculty in private doctoral institutions spend 49 percent of their time on teaching activities, 28 percent on research, and 23 percent on administration and other activities, whereas faculty in public master's institutions allocate more than two-thirds of their work time to teaching (Cataldi et al., 2005).

However, the fact that SRU faculty construct their role-sets as "teaching and all other activities" allowed me to analyze the properties of the teaching role identity and teaching role boundaries in greater detail as well as to explore different configurations in which teaching anchors and structures the daily work of SRU faculty. Further, my

analysis highlighted the fact that teaching is a complex role integrating many, often behaviorally and cognitively different, role activities and tasks (Bess, 2000). Thus, again, it is necessary to study the ways in which faculty members organize and manage not just various roles, but, also, various role activities associated with the same role.

Recommendations

Based on the salient issues that have arisen in this study, I offer selected recommendations for research and recommendations for practice.

Recommendations for Research

In the *Introduction*, I noted that a common complaint among faculty members is that they have to *juggle* multiple roles and associated tasks. However, often, the meaning of what “juggling” involves is not specified. In this study, for example, “juggling” for Constellations reflects their challenge of *transitioning* between and among cognitively and behaviorally different role activities. For Solars, on the other hand, juggling reflects their struggle to keep different role activities *separate* in everyday work. The concept of role boundary and its properties of permeability and flexibility might provide a conceptual lens to defining and studying juggling as well as developing strategies to minimize it in daily work.

I also pointed out in the *Introduction* the inconclusiveness of numerous research studies exploring the correlations between *research and teaching*. Based on the findings of this study, the application of identity theory might shed some light on the relationships between research and teaching. The salience and centrality of the role appear to be important factors affecting the way faculty members tend to integrate or segment their roles. For example, high salience and centrality of the teaching role lead many

participants of this study to *adapt* their research projects to teaching purposes or *design* research projects to facilitate learning. Thus, the studies investigating the relationships between teaching and research need to include variables that would reflect faculty values and dispositions towards both research and teaching.

Further, the studies of correlations between roles need to take into account the frequent asymmetry of relationships between the roles or one-way permeability and the flexibility of boundaries between the roles. For example, in this study, I noted the one-way flexibility of the boundary between the administrative assignments and prep time. In other words, administrative assignments tend to reduce time allocated to course preparation activities; however, course prep activities appear to have no influence on the time and effort allocated to administrative work.

Although almost uniformly faculty members nationally indicate that they highly value teaching, often these values are not translated into action in everyday work. In other words, high centrality of the teaching identity does not necessarily imply a high salience of teaching in daily work. It is important to *specify faculty values* in terms of both identity centrality and salience as well as to study the role that identity commitment plays in determining and reflecting identity centrality and salience, thus affecting behavior.

Faculty *work at home* emerged as an important correlate of work done on campus. Colbeck (2006) recently utilized the boundary theory to explore the boundaries that male and female faculty members establish between home and work. It would be interesting to expand and detail this type of research by replicating Nippert-Eng's (1996) fascinating study of boundaries between home and work for faculty. Further, it would be fruitful to

explore the types of work faculty take home, the ways faculty organize work at home, and seasonal or semester-based variations of intensity and type of work at home.

Another interesting problem warrants further research. Baldwin, Lunceford, and Vanderlinden (2005) assert that mid-career is an overlooked phase of faculty career. In this study, the Solars appear to include two distinct groups of Associate Professors. One group includes Associates who are working to be promoted to the rank of full Professor. Another group includes Associates who have made a choice not to seek promotion and who primarily focus on the work activities that are more closely aligned with their values and interests. What differentiates these two groups? When do these faculty members make the choice to seek promotion or not? What determines this choice? How does the choice affect the organization of daily work as well as the productivity of those faculty members?

Finally, more research on a diverse group of institutions comprising the comprehensive sector is needed. How do comprehensive universities define scholarship? Are these institutions moving toward including scholarship? Or if they did, are they backing away given the new emphasis on teaching and learning (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006)?

Recommendations for Practice

Findings of this study have important implications for the SRU faculty and administration. They also raise issues that might benefit faculty members in other higher education institutions. I offer selected recommendations for practice in three broad areas: policy issues, the SRU course-based curriculum proposal, and faculty (self) development.

I offer two policy recommendations. First, many institutions across the nation are establishing work policies that provide enhanced *flexibility* for female faculty members to deal with family and other home issues (Bracken, Allen, & Dean, 2006). Interestingly and somewhat unexpectedly, several participants of this study strongly indicated that they are, in fact, “stay at home Dads”. In other words, some male participants of this study are primary caregivers to their children. Thus, institutions should provide male faculty members with the opportunities to effectively balance work and home similar to female faculty.

My second policy recommendation relates to the SRU practice of not requiring *first-year faculty* members to produce evidence of research productivity or service accomplishments. This practice significantly reduces stress and anxiety among young faculty members and helps them to learn teaching skills, in which they were not trained during their graduate studies. Codifying this practice in policy terms will help the University communicate the importance of good teaching to new recruits and serve as an effective socialization and teaching identity development mechanism.

In addition, institutions should consider instituting a mentoring program, specifically addressing pedagogical knowledge and skills, to assist the neophyte faculty during their first year or two. Further, doctoral programs need to offer graduate seminars introducing future faculty members to the pedagogical theories as well as best teaching practices and techniques in the field. Based on the findings of this study, I fully support Adams' (2002) call that “graduate programs should provide a variety of teaching experiences for doctoral students beginning with the first semester and extending

throughout students' training" as well as that "graduate programs have a responsibility to educate students about the reality of expectations at a variety of institutions" (p. 13).

Further, I offer three recommendations related to the course-based curriculum proposal at SRU. Although the proposal was declined by the University-wide faculty referendum, the SRU President is committed to continue exploring the feasibility of the proposal implementation. In addition, recently, the School of Liberal Arts, the largest school at SRU, has begun implementing a course-based curriculum model for its programs.

My first recommendation is related to clarifying the *purpose* of the proposed model. The articulated purpose is enhancing educational experiences for undergraduate students by providing faculty members with time to develop more rigorous courses and engage students in co-curricular activities. However, the majority of faculty members believe that the proposal is designed to provide them with more time for non-teaching professional activities, more specifically, for research. Until the true purpose of the proposal is clarified, meaningful discussion of the merits of the proposal is impeded.

In this study, course preparation time emerged as the most available and expendable resource with very flexible and permeable boundaries. In other words, faculty members tend to reduce the time they allocate to course preparation when they need to address other work responsibilities or meet their own interests. Thus, the University *accountability and reward systems* need to be aligned with the stated purposes of the proposal. If faculty members are not held accountable and rewarded for the enhanced courses, they will spend the time made available by the reduction of the teaching load on

other activities, such as research, rather than on designing enhanced classroom and co-curricular experiences for students.

Third, the proposal needs to be revised to resolve the fairness issue related to the measure of teaching productivity used in the proposal, that is, the number of courses taught. The faculty in different schools use different metrics of measuring teaching productivity as the most appropriate for their circumstances. A *system of coefficients* needs to be developed to bring different metrics – number of courses, number of contact hours, and number of students served – to a common denominator in order to ensure faculty buy-in of the model across schools.

Different role-set gestalts or different role-set enactment patterns reflect the different needs and perspectives of faculty members at different stages in their faculty career. Understanding these different needs and perspectives is important not just for faculty developers and administrators, but, first and foremost, for faculty members themselves.

It is important that faculty members recognize the needs and perspectives of *each other*. It is impossible to develop collegial mutually respectful and helpful relationships in the department or program without understanding how colleagues at different career stages structure and interpret their work, what stresses them in daily work, and how they manage work-related stress.

However, it is more important that a faculty member understands and is able to articulate the way or pattern in which he organizes his daily work to *himself*. Faculty members work long hours, often averaging more than fifty hours a week. Understanding

of one's daily work is critical for developing one's global self-awareness and, thus, taking care of the self.

I conceive of the framework developed in this study as a tool or, rather, a *heuristic* method that faculty members can utilize to facilitate their own understanding of the pattern of their daily work. Using this heuristic method as a tool for self-reflection might assist faculty members to interpret and clarify their role expectations, role identities and related work activities, identify challenges and self-management techniques to address these challenges, and provide oneself with immediate feedback, thus developing pre-conditions of the "flow" experience in daily work (Csikszentmihaly, 1996). Only when one understands the pattern of his daily work can he achieve three major characteristics of flow in everyday work experiences: the merging of awareness and action, a sense of control, and an altered sense of time. This exhibiting behavior is typified by the comments of one SRU Associate Professor: "If you like what you do, it's infectious, it's just like an illness. I love where I am, I spend more time here than what it is necessary because I like it and as a result, it's very satisfying." Understanding the pattern of one's daily work enables individuals to become completely involved in work to the point of forgetting time, fatigue, and everything else but the work itself (Csikszentmihaly, 1996).

Appendices

Appendix 1: Letter to the Chief Academic Officer

Return Address
Date

Address

Dear Dr. [Last Name]:

My name is Alex Matveev. I am a doctoral candidate in the Higher Education Administration Program at the College of William and Mary. This letter requests your permission to solicit the participation of [Target Institution's name] full-time faculty members to be interviewed for my dissertation research about the ways faculty members organize their professional roles in everyday work. In particular, I am interested in exploring the experiences of full-time faculty members in comprehensive colleges and universities.

In a recent report, Chief Academic Officers across the nation reported that their faculty members are stressed by expectations that they must excel at all areas of their work simultaneously (Sorcinelli, & Austin, 2000). Investigation of how faculty members structure and live their daily role responsibilities can identify the nature and sources of stresses associated with the role overload and conflict. This will, then, facilitate development of effective faculty work and faculty socialization models to reduce faculty stress and, consequently, improve faculty productivity and satisfaction with their professional lives.

Further, by and large, higher education community continues to treat comprehensive or Master's institutions as "ugly ducklings" in higher education (Wong, 1979) or institutions with "unsettled quality" (Kerr, 1969) exhibiting "general dilution" (Clark, 1987) and, thus, imply that they are unworthy of study. Consequently, there is paucity of research on the comprehensive universities in general and on faculty work in the comprehensives in particular. By participating in this study, [Target Institution's Name] faculty will provide valuable insights in the ways faculty members define their professional roles, organize them, and live them in everyday work. I hope this will bring them a feeling of satisfaction and pride of being a faculty member in a comprehensive university.

I would like to conduct two rounds of interviews with selected full-time faculty in four departments: [], [], [], and []. I would like to interview at least three faculty members in each rank (Assistant, Associate, and Full Professor) in each department. Faculty participation will be voluntary and participants may withdraw consent and terminate participation at any time. All responses provided by faculty will be confidential and all identifying names as well as [Target Institution's Name] will be assigned pseudonyms.

I have enclosed a copy of the letter of approval from The College of William and Mary's Protection of Human Subjects Committee, a copy of the letter to prospective participants, and the consent form. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me at (757) 823-8611 (office) / (757) 876-1777 (cell) or e-mail me at agmatveev@nsu.edu . You may also contact the Chair of my Dissertation Committee, Dr. Dorothy E. Finnegan at definn@wm.edu .

If you grant your permission to solicit [Target Institution' Name] participants to be interviewed for my study, please sign this form and return it to me in the enclosed self-addressed stamped

envelope by [**date**, two weeks after the letter has been sent]. Should you wish further explanation of my research project, I would be happy to visit with you in person.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Respectfully,

Alexei G. Matveev, M.A., M.Ed.

Approval:

Provost

Date

Appendix 2: Letter to Department Chairs

Dear Dr. [Last Name]:

My name is Alex Matveev. I am a doctoral candidate in the Higher Education Administration Program at the College of William and Mary. Dr. [CAO's last name] has granted me permission to use [Target Institution] as my site for my dissertation study about the ways faculty members in comprehensive universities organize their professional roles in everyday work.

I write to inform you about the study and seek your support in the administration of interviews during Summer and Fall 2006. I am asking you to communicate with your faculty and inform them that they may be contacted for the interview. I plan to interview at least three faculty members in each rank (Assistant, Associate, and Full Professor). The faculty members will be selected by the criteria I established based on the conceptual framework for this study.

I will work directly with selected faculty members to schedule times and locations convenient to them. I will conduct two rounds of interviews with full time faculty in your department as well as in the departments of [], [], and []. The disciplinary culture appears to be an important factor influencing the ways faculty structure their everyday work. Thus, conducting this study in four different departments will provide data for comparative analysis.

All responses provided by faculty will be confidential and all identifying names as well as [Target Institution's Name] will be assigned pseudonyms. Faculty participation is voluntary and participants may withdraw consent and terminate participation at any time. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me at (757) 823-8611 (office) / (757) 876-1777 (cell) or e-mail me at agmatveev@nsu.edu . You may also contact the Chair of my Dissertation Committee, Dr. Dorothy E. Finnegan at definn@wm.edu . Should you wish further explanation of my research project, I would be happy to answer your questions by telephone as your convenience.

Thank you in advance for your support,

Alexei G. Matveev

Appendix 3: Invitation Letter to Faculty Members

Dear [Title] [Last Name]:

My name is Alex Matveev. I am a doctoral candidate in the Higher Education Administration Program at the College of William and Mary. I would like to invite you to participate in my dissertation research about the ways faculty members organize professional roles in everyday work. In particular, I am interested in exploring the experiences of full-time faculty members in comprehensive or Master's colleges and universities.

Faculty work long hours, often far exceeding 50 hours a week. Results of a recent national survey indicate that self-imposed high role expectations and lack of time to address all faculty role responsibilities are two most common sources of stress for faculty members (Lindholm et al. 2005). Faculty work arrangements are, however, increasingly questioned and attacked by critics from inside as well as outside academia. Faculty roles are a frequent subject for heated discussions between administrators and faculty members, for scrutiny by legislators, for criticism and ridicule by mass media, and for envy by general public. Further, by and large, many inside and outside higher education community continue to believe that faculty in comprehensives "act as though they inhabit a graveyard of disappointed expectations" (Kerr, 1993). By participating in this study, you will provide valuable insights in the ways faculty members define their professional roles, organize them, and live them in everyday work.

Dr. [CAO] has given me permission to conduct my research at your institution. I will interview selected faculty within four departments: [], [], [], and []. I have informed Dr. [department chair's last name] about this study and received [his/her] support. Your participation will include being interviewed one-on-one twice for an hour to an hour and half each time. A third interview may be added if it seems necessary after the first two interviews. The interviews will be digitally recorded. I will be conducting interviews at your institution in the Fall 2006 semester. However, if you are available for the interview in the summer 2006, we can arrange the interview at an earlier date. If you consent to participate, the interviews will be scheduled at your convenience.

If you are willing to participate in this study, please reply to this e-mail (agmatveev@nsu.edu) by [date, one week after the e-mail has been sent]. If you are selected to participate in this study, I will telephone you to schedule a date, time, and location of the first interview within one week after receiving your reply.

Please note that participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time. Information about individuals gathered as a result of the study will be kept strictly confidential. Under no circumstances will the names of individual faculty members be identified within my dissertation or in any subsequent publications. All identifying names as well as [Target Institution's Name] will be assigned pseudonyms.

I appreciate your giving time to this study, which will help me learn how faculty in comprehensive universities organize their professional roles in everyday work. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at (757) 823-8611 (office) / (757) 876-1777 or e-mail me at agmatveev@nsu.edu . You may also contact the Chair of my Dissertation Committee, Dr. Dorothy E. Finnegan at definn@wm.edu . I hope that you consent to be a part of my dissertation research.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Alex Matveev.

Appendix 4: Letter of Consent to Participate

Letter of Consent to Participate

The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present dissertation research. You should be aware that you are free to decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time. Do not hesitate to ask any questions about the study before, during or after the interviews.

The purpose of this study is to explore the ways faculty members define their professional roles, organize them, and enact them in everyday work. In particular, I am interested in exploring the daily work experiences of full-time faculty members in comprehensive or Master's colleges and universities.

The College of William and Mary's Protection of Human Subjects Committee (Phone: 757-221-3901) has approved this dissertation research. Your participation will include being interviewed one-on-one twice for an hour to an hour and half each time. A third interview may be added if it seems necessary after the first two interviews. The interviews will be digitally recorded. Your name will not be associated with the research findings in any way, and your identity as a participant will be known only to me, the researcher. After the interviews, consent forms, recordings of the interviews, and transcripts will be kept in a password protected computer in the researcher's office. In my dissertation, I may quote you, but I will not use your name nor any descriptors or attributes that will make it possible to identify you. All identifying names as well as [Salisbury University] will be assigned pseudonyms.

There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with this study. There is no compensation for participation in this study.

The general nature and procedures of this study conducted by Alexei G. Matveev has been explained to me. I understand that I will be asked to participate in an interview. I further understand that my responses will be confidential and that my name will not be associated with any results of this study. I know that I may refuse to answer any question asked and that I may discontinue participation at any time. I am aware that I may report dissatisfactions with any aspect of this study to the Chair of the College of William and Mary's Protection of Human Subjects Committee, Dr. Michael Deschenes (757-221-2778 or mrdesc@wm.edu). My signature below signifies my voluntary participation in this project.

Name of Participant (please print)

Signature of Participant

Date

Alexei G. Matveev, Researcher / (757) 823-8611 / agmatveev@nsu.edu
Dorothy E. Finnegan, Chair, Dissertation Committee / definn@wm.edu

Appendix 5. Interview Guide 1

Interview Guide No. 1

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewee:

Position of interviewee:

[Briefly describe the project]

[Obtain signed letter of consent]

Questions:

1. Could you briefly tell me about your career in higher education?
 - i. Education
 - ii. Previous positions (type of institutions, length of service, responsibilities)
 - iii. What led you seek and accept your current position?

2. Could you step me through your last workweek?
 - i. Could you tell me what specifically did you do on Monday [different days for different interviewees] last week?
 - ii. Do your work activities vary from day to day? In what ways? What causes the variations?

3. If I were you, with what groups of individuals [role senders] would I interact in my everyday work?
 - i. Would you describe a typical interactional situation with a [role-sender] / [repeat the question about 2-3 groups of role senders]
 - a. Time
 - b. Space
 - c. Topics/themes of communication
 - d. Methods of communication.
 - ii. Suppose I were a [role sender], what expectations, do you think, I would have of you? [repeat the question about 2-3 groups of role senders].
 - iii. How are the expectations of you that [a group of role senders] have the same or different from expectations of [another group of role senders]? Do the expectations placed on you by [a group of role senders] differ from the expectations of [a group of role senders]? How?

4. Would you describe your work values, beliefs, attitudes?
 - i. What do you see as primary purposes of your work as a faculty member?
 - ii. What or who shaped your faculty work values?
 - iii. How do you feel that your values are aligned with those of your departmental colleagues, university administrators, your peers in other institutions?
 - iv. Suppose I am a [role sender, e.g., student], how would I characterize you in the role of [indicate corresponding role, e.g., teacher]? [repeat the question about 2-3 groups of role senders]
 - v. Would you say that your values, attitudes, beliefs have changed since you joined this department? How?

5. Could you tell me about how you *plan* your daily work so that you address your work tasks and responsibilities? As you think about your daily work, what drives your decisions to engage in or disengage from particular activities?
 - i. Schedules/calendars
 - ii. Routines
 - iii. Deadlines
 - iv. Trade-offs
 - v. Priorities
 - vi. Exploration/experimentation

[Thank informant for participating in this interview. Assure him or her of confidentiality of responses. Set up preliminary date and time for the second interview].

Appendix 6. Interview Guide 2

Interview Guide No. 2

Time of interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewee:

Position of interviewee:

[Briefly remind the purpose of the study]

Questions:

1. How do you go about *organizing* your daily work so that you address your multiple work tasks and responsibilities?
 - i. Could you tell me how you define “multi-tasking”?
 - ii. How frequently do you engage in multi-tasking in your daily work? Please give a few examples.
 - a. What activities take precedence and when?

2. Based on our conversations [#] of weeks ago and follow-up e-mails, I have developed a chronology of your work day for [day of week]. I have a few follow-up questions:
 - i. [Stage/chronology questions with cognitive interview probing based on data from Interview 1, e.g.,]
 - a. What happened after your afternoon class ended? Is that typical?
 - b. Could you tell me about what happened when you arrived to your consulting site? Is that typical?
 - ii. [Stage/interruption questions with cognitive interview probing based on data from Interview 1, e.g.,]
 - a. What prompted you to begin writing an e-mail to your advisees? Is that typical?
 - b. What prompted you to stop/interrupt reading the journal? Is that it typical?
 - c. Suppose, when you were writing a grant report your colleague walks in your office, what would you do? Is that typical?

3. Could you tell me what the highlights of your everyday work are? What do you see as important in your daily work? What do you see as mundane in your everyday work? What makes you think so?

4. If you were to tell a newly-hired faculty member in your department [prospective students; your peer at the professional meeting; your non-work friend at a barbecue party] about your everyday work, what specifically would you tell him/her?
5. Overall, what has been your everyday experience of being a faculty member in the department of [name of department]? How satisfied are you with your everyday work?

[Thank informant for participating in this interview. Assure him or her of confidentiality of responses. Indicate that you might contact the informant later for additional details and clarifications.]

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