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Leaders of Graduate Education at U.S. Doctoral Universities: Their Perceptions and Experiences Leading the Graduate Schools

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LEADERS OF GRADUATE EDUCATION AT U.S. DOCTORAL UNIVERSITIES:
THEIR PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES LEADING THE GRADUATE
SCHOOLS

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Doctor of Philosophy

By

Yi Hao (郝意)

March 2019
LEADERS OF GRADUATE EDUCATION AT U.S. DOCTORAL UNIVERSITIES: THEIR PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES LEADING THE GRADUATE SCHOOLS

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved grandma, 赵淑君 (1927-2018), who showed me the meaning of unconditional love, kindness, and the importance of character.

And my parents, 王喜晨、郝智强, who gave me life and have always been there to love and support me. I am forever indebted to you both.
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Abstract

The problem of interest for this study is to understand more about the leaders of graduate education in the United States, namely the graduate deans. After surveying the topic itself and the gaps in the relevant literature, I conducted a mixed-methods study through a sequential design to fill the gap in the literature on graduate deans as mid-level academic leaders in institutional contexts and to provide theoretical and empirical evidence in advancing the knowledge on academic leaders and leadership in U.S. graduate education. The study employs multiple data collection methods, including document analysis, a survey, and multiple case studies. Demographic information on the leaders of graduate education is reported. Additionally, the survey measured the perceptions of graduate deans regarding the importance of various responsibilities of a graduate school as well as their abilities to achieve those functions at the individual, unit, and institutional levels. The quantitative findings were further supported by eight participants’ in-depth case descriptions as well as cross-case examinations. The data integration drew both survey and case study analyses and affirmed graduate deans’ leadership experiences as mid-level leaders, in addition to how individuals’ development as leaders were shaped by the context of organizations and the culture of higher education. Implications for practice and research conclude the study and should be of interest for those who are interested in advancing the U.S. graduate education as practitioners and researchers.
LEADERS OF GRADUATE EDUCATION AT U.S. DOCTORAL UNIVERSITIES:
THEIR PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES LEADING THE GRADUATE SCHOOLS
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Graduate education in the United States plays a critical role in the success of the economy (Wendler et al., 2010), attracting and producing professionals, researchers, innovators, and leaders. A main function of graduate education is to educate and socialize the professional talent for the academy (Austin, 2002; Wulff & Austin, 2004). According to the Survey of Earned Doctorates (operated by the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics, 2018), in the last decade, 1997 to 2017, around half of the doctoral degree holders across all disciplinary fields went to work in academe (1997, 45.8% and 2017, 46.4%; the percentages were based on those with definite post-graduation commitments). Further, graduate schools provide the environment in which students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in the workforce (Council of Graduate Schools [CGS], 2009; Wendler et al., 2010). In 2017 alone, 34.7% of individuals with doctorates across all fields went into industry or business, followed by government (7.2%) and nonprofit organization (6.3%).

The world is changing at an incredible speed due to globalization, influencing the ways in which knowledge is created and used, and the links between education and national economies. A strong relationship between graduate education and national prosperity is noted not only in the U.S. but also within the global context (D. W. Stewart, Denecke, & Brown, 2009). Thus, the stakes are high for the stakeholders in higher education, and public demands for accountability of institutions of higher education accompany the heightened expectations for postsecondary degree holders (U.S.
Department of Education, 2016). External stakeholders, including state legislatures, governors, the U.S. Congress, and the Executive Office, leveraged power over funding of public institutions of higher education and increasingly demand accountability for outputs (D. W. Stewart et al., 2009; Zusman, 1999).

Higher education is facing profound financial challenges as declining state funding and uncertain federal research funding further lead to public institutions’ privatization, institutional retrenchment and reallocation, and various impact such financial shifts cast on students, faculty, and academic programs (Zusman, 1999). Often, public rhetoric centers on accountability in undergraduate education and two-year colleges with a focus on increasing graduation rates and making college more affordable. Yet, as an integral part of institutions of U.S. higher education since its inception, graduate education too experiences similar issues triggered by the increasing external scrutiny.

Pressures of public accountability, therefore, require institutions that espouse the value of graduate education to respond to these explicit demands from outside. Yet, scant study of leadership in graduate schools exists to know how graduate education leaders will meet these demands. Internally, graduate education units constantly reflect the vision and mission set by institutions, including presidents, provosts, other senior academic and financial administrative leaders, deans, the faculty, and students (May, 1972).

The important role graduate education, including graduate schools (or similar units), and graduate programs hold in society demands strong leadership to steer these university units to achieve success and to support the sustainability of knowledge
production and economy. U.S. institutions have historically been considered the top choice for international students who seek graduate education (Zong & Batalova, 2017) as they have been viewed as high quality relative to other nations. In addition, the internationalization of higher education creates many more opportunities, as well as competition from countries who are interested in developing strong graduate education. Leaders of graduate education must attend to the current trends affecting higher education (D. W. Stewart, 2009). Like other higher education leaders, those who are in direct charge of graduate education at an institution, namely, the graduate deans, are charged with a wide range of responsibilities (Pennings, 1990; Shabb, 2004; D. W. Stewart, 2000). Individuals in these mid-level positions are pivotal in establishing institutional practices and setting the tone of institutional effectiveness and reputation.

Yet, missing within the literature on mid-level academic leaders is a targeted focus on the deans of graduate schools. Traditionally many universities’ graduate education is managed by a graduate school and a graduate dean. With “dean” in the title for this group of leaders on campus, questions emerged regarding what is implied by the position concerning the leadership effectiveness of this group: Is it expected that graduate deans have similar demands like the academic deans? Is it assumed that graduate deans embark on their tasks in the same manner as the academic deans? Is it anticipated that graduate deans have enough knowledge and experience in managing graduate education, which requires no further information for either leaders themselves or the field to know?

Even though all sectors in higher education share the responsibilities and challenges facing postsecondary education, it remains unknown how leadership of graduate schools is similar or different from the leadership required in academic areas.
From the perspective of leadership studies, we also know little about leaders of graduate education understand their work. The next section reviews some of the challenges facing graduate education units today.

**Challenges Facing Today’s Graduate Education Units**

Graduate education today is facing substantial challenges regarding preparing a highly professionalized workforce and providing individuals with credentials needed for individual advancement. Individuals with advanced degrees (i.e., post-baccalaureate degrees) are often assumed to possess better interpersonal skills and are preferred in managerial positions after graduation (Gallagher, 2014a, 2014b). Master’s degrees in particular provide a vehicle for professionalization (Glazer-Raymo, 2005). Although graduate education traditionally conveys opportunities to individuals who wish to gain more human capital and social mobility, the 21st century highlights an era that praises knowledge production and its associated economic value to the bottom line for the country more than ever (Carnevale, 2009). Thus, graduate units increasingly serve as an economic driver for society as well as garnering individual benefits to graduate students.

Another challenge facing graduate schools is the growing concern of overeducation (Tsai, 2010). As more and more individuals have graduate degrees, the market is becoming more competitive (Marginson, 2006), especially considering the opportunity costs for those with higher degrees and credentials regarding the time, financial, and personal investment forgone for achieving higher degrees. The question becomes, is the time and expense invested in a graduate education worth it for all students?
The motives of individuals pursuing graduate degrees have become more nuanced: traditionally, graduate education stands for the pathway to academia; increasingly, it offers individuals credentials to go into highly skilled professions or continuing education. Added to these different motivations is an increased diversification of the graduate student population (Zusman, 1999). On the one hand, institutions increasingly find domestic students becoming more diverse not only demographically but due to differences emerging from significant changes in students’ readiness, proficiencies, attitudes, and experiences (Anderson & Swazey, 1998; May, 1972; Zusman, 1999). International students, on the other hand, come from a variety of cultural backgrounds and ranging experiences to seek academic advancement in the U.S. As a sizable student body in U.S. graduate education that contributes to the economy, innovation, and diversity (Chellaraj, Maskus, & Mattoo, 2008), international students place different requirements on institutions to attract and retain this population in rising global competition with other countries (Ren, Hagedorn, & McGill, 2011). In addition to these emerging challenges, some historically challenging issues still linger, such as: enrollment (Conrad, Haworth, & Millar 1993), persistence and completion rates (Ethington & Smart, 1986; Lovitts, 1996), and demands from students for better educational experiences and career outcomes (Aguinis, Nesler, Quigley, Lee, & Tedeschi, 1996; R. G. Green, Baskind, Mustian, Reed, & Taylor, 2007; Wendler, 2013).

Students entering graduate schools with different needs, motives, and goals, and graduate schools must address these demands to build and provide successful programs (Austin, 2002). True, colleges and universities have already grown in the past decades to accommodate deeper social and cultural changes embodied by the shifting demographics.
But, the range of challenges require graduate schools, and thereby their leaders (i.e., the graduate deans), to meet the task of serving the greater public good through research and intellectual inquiries experienced by higher education as an entity (McMahon, 2009).

A spotlight is therefore on leaders of colleges and universities given the high stakes of public accountability, which requires leaders to also act as the public image of their institutions. The shifted attention now required of presidents to an external focus (Fisher, 1984; Ross & Green, 2000) leaves those whose positions are under the presidents to be more internally focused (Gallos, 2002). The position that ties directly to the management and administration of graduate education is the dean of graduate school. Leaders of graduate education units as mid-level leaders must take on increased leadership roles within the institution (D. W. Stewart, 2000). D. W. Stewart et al. (2009) compared graduate deans to stewards, which encompasses being a warden, “an official responsible for enforcing certain regulations,” and a ranger, the “one who provides oversight of a constantly growing and changing community, always on the lookout for the random event that will bring harm to that community” (p. 1). At institutions offering graduate degrees and programs, the experiences of graduate students, the development of academic communities, and the quality and rigor of graduate education are all at the discretion of graduate deans. As stewards, graduate deans are dedicated to the pursuit of excellence and integrity of graduate education (D. W. Stewart et al., 2009). Compared to the rest of the leadership positions examined by the public and studied by researchers, graduate deans seem to receive an unmatched attention given their leadership roles on campuses. When this study was conducted in 2018, a central question was what do we know about the institutional leaders of graduate education?
Statement of the Problem

The work of mid-level leaders, such as graduate deans, supports and determines their institutions’ performance and reputation (Amey & Eddy, 2018). Thus, understanding the leadership aspects and leader perceptions of deans of graduate schools should be of particular interest to senior administrators, including the board of trustees, presidents, provosts, other mid-level leaders, such as deans, department chairs, and faculty, as well as students, who are directly influenced by leadership.

Research has shown that academic deans play a key role in connecting the administration at an institution to the academic activities, which affects institutional effectiveness (Wolverton, Gmelch, & Wolverton, 2000). Here, the term institutional effectiveness is used simply to imply the movement of performance and outcomes measurements to assess and monitor the effectiveness of colleges and universities to satisfy the desire for greater accountability. The goal of reaching greater accountability is to assess institutional objectives and evaluate progression institutions make toward these goals (Alexander, 2000; Layzell, 1999). The common functional work areas for academic deans include planning, budgets and resources, faculty development, curriculum and programs, working with students, and legal issues and other special challenges (Bright & Richards, 2001). According to Bright and Richards (2001):

Colleges and universities are typically bifurcated organizations (Blau, 1973) in that they have an academic structure to deliver education and an administrative structure that supports the academic structure. Indeed, over the past four decades the administrative structure has become quite expansive, with some institutions operating as cities within cities. … The academic core is where the essential
mission of a college or university is implemented and is typically overseen by a chief academic officer, known as a provost, a vice president for academic affairs, or an academic dean (at some smaller institutions). (p. 269)

Even though much is known about the roles and scope of work and influence of academic deans, few studies have looked specifically at graduate deans. The existing research examined the roles of graduate deans and how such roles have changed, largely out of the interest of what they do (Lynch & Bowker, 1984; Pennings, 1990; Shabb, 2004). But the leadership required to head graduate education units is rather conceptual, as the literature tends to come from professional organizations, anecdotal observations, and personal narratives.

Academic leadership is hardly a new topic (Leaming, 2006), but the approaches to studying leadership and leadership succession have changed over time (Kezar, 2008; Luna, 2012). Increasingly, research argues for systematic and relevant criterion-based methods to tap into a wider pool of leadership talents and intentionally promote aspiring leaders (Mccauley, 2008; Rothwell, 2010). Likewise, researchers argue that institutions should encourage and foster leadership at all levels (Gupta et al., 2008).

Even though institutions of higher education historically, and often still, rely on hierarchy and bureaucracy (Bess & Dee, 2008; Bolman & Deal, 2013), scholars in the field of higher education have been calling for more attention to middle management with a particular focus on mid-level leadership (Balogun, 2003; Balogun & Johnson, 2004; de Boer & Goedegebure, 2009; Eddy, Mitchell, & Amey, 2016). In fact, researchers have long encouraged additional research targeting academic deans as a
middle realm of leadership in colleges and universities (Roaden, 1970). Thus, a need exists too for the study of graduate deans as mid-level leaders.

Mid-level leadership is highly relative to institutional context and the size of institutions (Amey & Eddy, 2018); a position in one institution may be completely different from its counterpart at another institution. Within the hierarchy in postsecondary education, graduate deans have responsibilities that share the characteristics of mid-level leadership (de Boer & Goedegebuure, 2009). Graduate deans typically report to either the provost or the president, work with other department deans and directors, take part in external relations, as well as provide support to graduate students and faculty in different capacities (D. W. Stewart, 2000). These positions occupy central and connecting positions across various programs, departments, and their unit heads given the coordination of graduate programming across campus.

Since the 1980s, colleges and universities in general have experienced strong institutional expansion, in forms of enrolment increase, growth in graduate studies, and increases in faculty positions and administrative staff to adapt to such expansion (Conrad et al., 1993). The massive growth of graduate education and research specialization has made universities’ organizational structure and the leadership found within more complex (Conrad et al., 1993; Pennings, 1990; Shabb, 2004). New graduate programs and areas of study continue to grow as a result of workforce needs: master’s degrees (83.4%) made up the large majority of 2015-2016 graduate degrees conferred; doctoral degrees shared 11.1%; and 5.5% degrees granted were graduate certificates as this credentialing as well as other types of credentialing education continue to grow (Okahana & Zhou, 2018).
Over time, researchers argued that the academic deanship has become “more demanding, more senior, more strategic, more complex and more managerial in nature, though within the overall context of academe” (de Boer & Goedegebuure, 2009, p. 347). Yet, when it comes to the deans of graduate schools and graduate education leadership, little research can be readily applied to practice regarding how this group of leaders compares to other positions in academic administration (e.g., academic deans, department chairs). An untested assumption is that mid-level academic deans and graduate deans share leadership profiles, issues, and challenges.

Within the range of contexts and institutional characteristics across post-secondary institutions, there is little contemporary and national-level data on those individuals who work as the deans of graduate schools and how they understand leadership needed for graduate education. In general, research on educational leaders points to links between one’s leadership orientation, leader identities, and past experiences (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014; DeRue & Wellman, 2009). Such rationale thus supports the pressing need to update the leadership profiles in U.S. graduate education.

Simultaneously, understanding individual deans’ perceptions of their roles and function as well as how they are situated in institutional contexts may illuminate the challenges they face situated in the context of graduate schools, their immediate work space. The challenges identified by leaders of graduate education, collectively, may elucidate important issues in graduate education.

The problem of interest for this study was to understand more about the leaders of graduate education in the United States, namely the graduate deans. The intention of this
research was to build leader profiles of current graduate deans and to identify graduate deans’ perceptions of leadership functions within and the role of graduate school. Just who are the leaders of graduate education, and what professional experiences do they bring into their current positions? What perceptions do these graduate deans have about the function of their units and their institutions?

**Research Questions**

This research intends to provide an up-to-date profile of deans of graduate school and their perceptions on leadership in the context of U.S. graduate education. Several questions help to narrow the focus and guide this study.

1. What is the descriptive profile of graduate deans in U.S. Doctoral Universities, including demographic information and professional experiences?
2. How do graduate deans perceive the functions of graduate school as defined by Council of Graduate Schools (2004) at their institutions?
3. How much confidence do graduate deans have in their ability to influence the functions of the graduate school at their institution?
4. How do graduate deans perceive leadership in their institutional contexts?

**Conceptual Frameworks**

Given the focus on graduate deans and the fact that little was known about their profiles and perceptions, I proposed to apply three overarching conceptual frameworks to this study to enhance the overarching understanding. The three frameworks included mid-level leadership, academic leadership, and the need to examine both the leader and leadership. The intersections of the three frameworks would be further explained in later chapters.
**Mid-level leadership.** Mid-level leadership in this study is regarded as leadership exerted by those who are in middle rank positions at institutions and provide operations to support institutional plans. It is the mid-level leaders who are in daily contacts with senior, other mid-level leaders, and students who ultimately decide the effectiveness of senior leadership (Amey & Eddy, 2018).

**Academic leadership.** Academic leadership in higher education occurs within a particular cultural context, which imposes difficulties for the ones working outside of academe to understand (Spendlove, 2007). Academic leadership involves “being seen and respected as a member of the academic community” (Spendlove, 2007, p. 414), which values the experiences and knowledge members of the academia have accumulated through working at institutions.

**Leader and leadership.** The constructs of leader and leadership provide particular vantage points for understanding mid-level and academic leaders. Day et al. (2014) provide a template for these constructs rooted in a development perspective: (a) the development of leader is more intrapersonal, with a focus on individual leaders; (b) the development of leadership is rather interpersonal, focused on enhancing leadership capacity.

**Significance of the Study**

Because the bulk of the study of graduate education and academic leaders of graduate schools occurred in the 20th century (Conrad et al., 1993; Gumport, 1999), there is a need for more up-to-date information on the dilemmas and pitfalls of the position of graduate deans and their academic leadership. No recent or current data or comprehensive analyses exist nationally on graduate deans about their demographic
information and professional experiences in contemporary institutions. Further, it remains unknown how these graduate leaders perceive what roles they play in advancing graduate education in their individual, unit, and institutional capacities. Compared to other academic and senior leaders, a paucity of research attention regarding graduate deans exists. Yet, if one thinks of graduate deans in the U.S., many immediately attach significance to the sector without knowing this population and the contributions this unit to the institution and larger higher education sector.

This study strove to provide an in-depth analysis through inquiry of the leaders of graduate education themselves, to understand better the scope of their work as well as their perceptions of the roles of graduate schools. The study also sought to bridge the knowledge gap on an important group of institutional leaders that have not received much attention in leadership studies by using the available literature and previous studies on this topic as a basis. Additionally, this study would inform researchers and practitioners about the leadership profiles of graduate deans, including the experiences they have brought into their positions, their institutional context, and their perceptions of the functions of graduate education and in the 21st century.

The examination of perceptions of the leaders of graduate education provides understanding regarding the direction of graduate education, as well as helps those who work in the graduate education sector to understand what the leaders think are important and where lies potential challenges. Pointedly, the findings can aid current leaders holding graduate dean positions and prepare those who are passionate about graduate education to one day step into the position. The findings of this study are of potential to help understand the trends of what roles graduate education should play according to its
most visible leaders. The conceptualization of academic leadership through the mid-level lens too helps plan and develop tomorrow’s leaders who may eventually benefit graduate students, faculty, department heads, academic deans, and many others who work closely to push graduate education forward.

This study may be of interest to other stakeholders at institutions as well. For instance, senior leaders of colleges and universities need to understand their colleagues who are charged with graduate studies and programs to move forward, both to increase the knowledge on the mid-level leadership and graduate education, but also to see greater connections and contributions graduate education can make for institutions. For presidents and provosts who oversee the undergraduate, graduate, professional, and other forms of education and programs at their institutions, the work graduate deans carry provides evidence, vision, and rigor to ensure the success of the graduate education sector. Graduate deans can serve as advocates and the direct spokesperson for all students, faculty, and staff that are in the graduate division.

Literature Overview

The literature review section provides an overview of graduate education and the deans of graduate schools concerning both the history and development of these two areas. Additionally, since leadership is an important construct examined in this study, the literature presented in the next chapter extends the discussion to its concept, academic leadership, mid-level leadership, demographics of academic leaders, leader and leadership development, as well as leadership efficacy.

Methods Summary
The study employed a mixed-method design to fully address all research questions. To answer the first three research questions, I designed a survey and conducted statistical analysis. The fourth research question is addressed by a multiple case study approach based on content analysis and interview data.

**Defining Terms and Core Concepts**

Some of the terms used in this study come from historic research, and as such, the original terms can appear dated and often inappropriate. I opted to include these terms to provide a contextualization of the literature and to draw connections to modern understandings of graduate dean roles.

**Carnegie classification: Basic classification.** The Basic Classification is an ongoing initiative to update the traditional classification framework developed by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education in 1970 to support its research program (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education [CCIHE], n.d.). The Classification further provides information on institution’s research activity level.

**Council of Graduate Schools (CGS).** The Council of Graduate Schools has served as the national organization for the graduate deans for more than five decades (CGS, n.d.). CGS is dedicated to the advancement of graduate education and research through advocacy in policy, innovative research, and the development and disseminations of best practices.

**Doctoral universities.** Based on the basic classification of Carnegie Classification in 2015, Doctoral Universities are institutions that awarded at least 20 research/scholarship doctoral degrees during CCIHE’s data collection year (excluding professional practice doctoral-level degrees, such as the JD, MD, PharmD, DPT, etc.)
(CCIHE, 2017). This exclusion of professional studies also reinforces the population of interest of this study. Based on Carnegie Classification’s index on research activity (a scale created to include research and development expenditures, staff support, and doctoral conferrals), shorthand of R1, R2, and R3 are assigned to institutions which are engaged in research to different degrees:

- **R1**: Doctoral Universities – Highest research activity (115 institutions);
- **R2**: Doctoral Universities – Higher research activity (107 institutions);
- **R3**: Doctoral Universities – Moderate research activity (111 institutions).

**Efficacy.** The use of efficacy in this study relies primarily on the research of Bandura (1997) and Preffer (1977) and refers to the ability and confidence in undertaking actions in specific contexts. Due to the needs of the study, efficacy was further measured at three levels: individual or self-efficacy, unit efficacy, and institution efficacy, particularly in relation to the ability and confidence in fulfilling the roles of a graduate school according to CGS (2004).

**Graduate deans.** In the history and the historical development of the graduate dean as a leadership position, there is significant variation in the titles and reporting structures of the individuals charged with chief tasks for graduate education in the U.S. institutions (CGS, 2004). In its 2004 report, *Organization and Administration of Graduate Education*, the document provided several examples of how the variation in titles might look across institutions: Dean of the Graduate School, Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, Vice Chancellor or Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies, Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, Director of Graduate Studies, and others. These title differences to some degree not only reflected the differences in
administration (i.e., communication, reporting, administration), but also pointed to the various organizational structures across institutions. I hereto forth used either *dean of graduate school* or *graduate dean* interchangeably to refer to all individuals who were directly responsible for duties of graduate education in an institution with the highest title.

**Institutions.** Institutions in this study refer to all four-year colleges and universities. At times the phrase “colleges and universities” is used interchangeably with the term institutions. But the intention is to remove any confusion or historical connotation conveyed by either the word “college” or “university.”

**Institutional characteristics.** There are many ways to inspect institutions. For the interest of this study, institutional characteristics were examined through research activity based on Carnegie Classification, sector (public, not-for-profit; private, not-for-profit; or private, for-profit), and institutional size collected from Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

**IPEDS.** IPEDS stands for the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System and is the U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Education Statistics’ (NCES) core postsecondary education data collection program: IPEDS collects data annually from all providers of postsecondary education in fundamental areas such as enrollment, program measures, and institutional costs (IPEDS, 2015).

**Leader perceptions.** This study uses a list produced by CGS to collect graduate deans’ perceptions on the role of graduate school in their local contexts. The leadership dimension has an added emphasis on how graduate deans view themselves as leaders of graduate education.
**Leader profile.** The term leadership profile in this study was used to capture who the leader is and the leader’s perceptions of leadership. The study aimed to provide a demographic report on graduate deans with specific focus on aspects such as gender, race and ethnicity, disciplinary orientations, and professional experiences.

**Unit.** Given the fact that different organizational structures and typologies derive from institutional differences, I used a generic term to describe the structure that functions as the core entity of graduate affairs on campuses. In Chapter 2, there are more examples provided to discuss the complexity of the organization of graduate education at institutions. I used the term “unit” from this point on, unless otherwise specified, to refer to the structure where a graduate dean resides.

**Summary**

This chapter introduces the research study. The problem of interest is to understand more about the leaders of graduate education in the United States, namely the graduate deans. This study is significant to fill the gap in the literature on graduate deans as mid-level academic leaders as well as their leadership perceptions in relation to the role of graduate school. In Chapter 2, I review the literature used to support this study. The review covers the topics of U.S. graduate education (context), overview of leadership and academic leadership (theoretical framework), and the research on leaders of graduate education and their perceptions of leadership (study focus). Chapter 3 immediately follows the justification of the importance and the need to study this topic and presents the study design and supporting plans. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 feature the findings of the mixed-method design: Chapter 4 reports out the survey results including descriptive statistics and statistical analyses; Chapter 5 presents in-depth narratives from individual
case studies; Chapter 6 cross-compares eight participants’ experiences and offers themed patterns and results. Finally, Chapter 7 summarizes the findings, discusses the results referencing the extant literature, and offers implications for both research and practice.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to understand more about the leaders of graduate education in the United States, namely the graduate deans, and how their leadership experiences in the institutional context. The intention of this research is to build leader profiles of current graduate deans and to identify graduate deans’ perceptions of the roles of a graduate school and their ability to achieve these goals within their institution. The literature review presented in this chapter informs this study and serves as a basis for the research design that follows in chapter three. The central elements of academic leadership situated in the content of U.S. graduate education provide the foundation for this review. In this literature review, I categorized the relevant literature into four sections: history and current status of U.S. graduate education (context), overview of leadership and academic leadership (theoretical framework), the research on leaders of graduate education and their perceptions of leadership (study focus), and a summary of Chapter 2.

In collecting and selecting relevant literature for this chapter, I employed several approaches to be more inclusive and systematic, including keyword searches and snowballing. I relied on multiple sources of literature, including refereed and non-refereed articles, dissertations, and newsletter articles providing anecdotal evidence and professional personnel’s accounts, reports, books, and other writing. In the following sections, I present this evidence in various ways (e.g., by theme, by target population, by methodology) that are most pertinent to the section topic, with the aim of achieving
maximal clarity of the landscape of the study of leadership in graduate schools and how the previous research contributes to the framework for analysis.

**Overview of Graduate Education**

Graduate education has been part of the U.S. higher education landscape since the late 19th century. Initially, U.S. graduate education was modelled after other countries. Over time, however, the U.S. developed a graduate education sector contextually grounded in the U.S. higher education landscape. This review captures the historical and contemporary issues facing the U.S. graduate education units and their leaders.

The scant literature base on graduate education highlights that despite some language shift in word choices over time, most of the historic literature holds relevancy in understanding the origins of academia and its performance today. Given this important role of past research, I first present briefly the history of U.S. institutions from inception until modern times. To accomplish this review, I relied on Levine and Nidiffer’s (1997) seminal work with the hope that by honoring and understanding the traditional roots of institutions of higher education, enhanced understanding of modern issues facing current organizational structures will emerge.

**The history of U.S. graduate education.** I first provide a synopsis of the U.S. graduate education, and its organization and administration. The history of higher education in the U.S. established a foundation for current practices. As such, the historical roots and development of American four-year colleges and universities frames the context for today’s ongoing debates and challenges (Labaree, 2017). For example, research studies from the 1960s to 1980s relied on literature of college administrators written in the early 1900s (e.g., Edwards, 1968; Lynch & Bowker, 1984; Pennings,
1990). This trend of delays and updated research informing present understanding continues today as recent research on graduate education relies on literature from the late 20th century.

**The German influence.** The German model of higher education greatly influenced U.S. higher education (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002). The intellectual movement known as modernism burgeoned in Germany and spurred questions regarding perceptions of knowledge creation and resulted in the emergence of empiricism (Berdahl, Altbach, & Gumport, 1999; Levine & Nidiffer, 1997). Consequently, new fields of knowledge were widely brought into the university curriculum in a fast fashion, which further impacted the work of professors and required a shifting of faculty roles from teacher to researcher. Additionally, this change in priority for faculty roles depreciated the role of general education (Walberg, 1970). Within this context, Germany became a popular place for American students to pursue advanced studies in the 19th century and many with advanced degrees returned to the U.S. for faculty positions. Levine and Nidiffer (1997) hence concluded:

The major German contribution to American higher education thus involved accelerating the development of graduate education and cementing the role of research in the university. Other features of contemporary American higher education that originated from Germany are the organization of the faculty and the curriculum according to academic disciplines, the major or concentration, academic freedom, wide latitude for students in choosing courses, scholarly library collection, theses, laboratory courses, and seminar instruction. (pp. 55-56)
These practices that U.S. institutions of higher education adopted from Germany are still in place today and continue to shape and impact how academic affairs are organized within institutions.

Recognizing the influence of the German model of education on the role of research in graduate education requires viewing an historic timeline of the forms of graduate education in the U.S. (Levine & Nidiffer, 1997). Table 1 highlights the changes in graduate education over the years.
Table 1

Historic Review of Graduate Education in the U.S.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1662</td>
<td>Harvard … A master of arts degree is awarded after a student completes three years of further study beyond the bachelor’s degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Three American students – Edward Everett, Edwards Cogswell, and George Ticknor – seek further education in Germany – the first of some ten thousand over the next century.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1847</td>
<td>Yale takes the first tentative steps toward the creation of a graduate school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853</td>
<td>The University of Michigan offers the first earned master’s degree – that is, a degree based upon completing a particular program rather than simply putting in a specified number of years beyond the bachelor’s degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Yale University awards the first Ph.D. degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>The John Hopkins University, the first American research university, is established in Baltimore. The new school, emphasizing graduate education, is modelled after the German research university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>President Eliot merges the graduate and undergraduate faculties at Harvard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>With money from John D. Rockefeller and leadership from William Rainey Harper, the University of Chicago is created. Many of the curricular innovation of the waning century find a home at Chicago. The university develops high-quality graduate and research programs, a residential undergraduate college like those of Oxford and Cambridge, and programs of service to society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>City College of New York requires all new faculty to hold a Ph.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching establishes minimum institutional criteria to qualify institutions for a faculty pension program. These include having six full-time faculty, department chairmen with Ph.D.’s, a four-year liberal arts program, a secondary school completion requirement for admission, and a nondenominational orientation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>The President’s Commission on Higher Education for Democracy issues its report. The report calls for tuition-free education for all youth through the first two-years of college; financial assistance for needy but competent students in tenth through fourteenth grades; lower tuition charges in upper division, graduate, and professional schools; expansion of adult education; elimination of barriers to equal access in higher education; development of community colleges; and rededication of the curriculum to general education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>The National Defense Education Act provides for undergraduate loans, graduate fellowships, institutional aid for teacher education, and broad support for education in the sciences, mathematics, and foreign languages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Framingham Teachers College, the first normal school, becomes Framingham State College. It is authorized to offer a range of B.A. and B.S. degrees and within a year is permitted to award master’s degrees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Three institutions – University of North Dakota, North Dakota State University, and North Dakota State College of Science – offer complete undergraduate and graduate degree programs in business, nursing, and education via the video network.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Admittedly, the focus of Levine and Nidiffer (1997) was to record the key events that affected the U.S. curriculum. Still, within their review a clear lineage of the German model of graduate education on U.S. graduate education emerges. As noted in Table 1,
the creation of the first graduate school, the criteria of master’s degree, how faculty’s roles had changed to research-oriented, the beginning of research universities, and the convergence of undergraduate and graduate faculty point to the distinct role of graduate education in the modern university. What remains unknown is how these traditional roles and structures for graduation education continue to influence today’s graduate education.

**The development of land-grant institutions.** Besides the early influence of the German model, American colleges and universities continued to develop institutions responsive to local needs. Similar to the early colleges which later became instrumental in defining the U.S. higher education, land-grant universities were created with state gifts Morrill Acts (1862, 1890) and the rise of land-grant institutions or “state universities of agriculture and mechanic arts” (Carstensen, 1962, p. 30) provide evidence as of how the missions of institutions began to evolve with state support. Researchers documented how land-grant institutions shaped the U.S. higher education with a unique force, and even, made contribution to graduate education.

Derived from national policy, land-grant institutions served as “full-fledged universities” (E. L. Johnson, 1981, p. 333) and were established for mass education needed in that historical period to develop the state workforce with scientific and technologic education. In addition to the impressive capacity of educating more than one-seventh of all university students, the number of land-grants comprised of “eight of ten largest undergraduate campuses in the United States and enroll more than one-seventh of all university students” (E. L. Johnson, 1981, p. 333). In addition to the massive undergraduate education, land-grant institutions also contributed to graduate education: two of every three doctoral degrees were confirmed at land-grants, along with the state
universities. As a result, land-grant institutions benefitted from the Morrill Acts engaged themselves actively in two distinct arenas: the equal access mission and emphasis on research specialization in graduate training.

Thus, land-grant universities established a priority on graduate education from the early years and continue to embody such dedication through embracing the complex relationships between discovery, research, and graduate education. Statistics shows that 70% of the graduate students enrolled in Doctoral Universities today are educated by the land-grant institutions (Van Delinder & Tucker, 2014). In early 21st century, “a tripartite mission of learning, discovery, and engagement in the public interest” confirmed the role land-grant institutions played in graduate education and reemphasized the commitments of American public higher education (Kellogg Commission, 2000, p. 25). In listing the priorities for land-grant universities in this era, excellence of the graduate curriculum and using the latest scholarship to respond the pressing public needs came recommended to be the scope of graduate education at land-grant institutions.

In closing, graduate education witnessed a rapid expansion during the 1960s to 1980s to meet the expressed needs of students, such as continued intellectual growth, credentialing, and professional development (Conrad et al., 1993; Lynch & Bowker, 1984). Lynch and Bowker (1984) painted a comprehensive picture of graduate education in the early 1980s through surveying graduate deans nationally and recording their perceptions of graduate education. It is apparent that the quality of graduate education and the pursuit of excellence in both education and research have been a central issue for those working in graduate education and those who studied the topic. Given how
organization structure of universities influences functions (Bess & Dee, 2008), next I look at the organization and governance in U.S. graduate education.

**Organization and administration in U.S. graduate education.** Organized graduate study was almost non-existent in the U.S. before 1876. Attempts to establish graduate studies in American colleges and universities finally became successful in institutions such as Harvard University, Michigan University, Columbia University, Pennsylvania University, Western Reserve, University of the South, and the University of Virginia (Johns, 1978).

In 1876, Daniel C. Gilman was appointed to the presidency at Johns Hopkins with the goal to launch a venerable American graduate program. Recall, even though the German model facilitated the debut of graduate education, the increasing international competition drove the U.S. desire to have its own strong graduate studies. The societal needs for science development and keeping talents from going abroad to pursue further studies pushed the forging of formally organized graduate education (Hofstadter & Hardy, 1952). According to Berelson (1960), the popularity of graduate studies also benefited from several other factors in addition to societal needs and the patriotic competition with the German universities. For example, dissatisfaction with collegiate instruction, the pressure of science upon the classical curriculum, and the inherent attraction for advanced studies contributed to the emergence of graduate education in the U.S. all supported developing new programs.

The opening of graduate programs in the U.S. resulted in increased enrollment and as a result, the need for administrative support became pronounced. In 1890, the president of Harvard, Charles Eliot, introduced a plan to formally organize graduate
education by establishing a graduate department. The 1890 plan had two significant contributions to graduate education in the U.S.: to create the graduate college with a dean and an administrative board of its own: to place the control of curriculum policies and practices and the teaching procedures of the college in the hands of the graduate faculty (Haskins, 1972). Eliot seriously pressed on the achievements of graduate colleges, advocated for the concept of research, and thus reconditioned American institutions’ missions by emphasizing research and graduate education. Therefore, like teaching, research too grew to be part of the institutional responsibility.

The transitions foreseen by a few pioneering institutions and leaders to build graduate education programs would take a long time to be adopted, developed, and finalized to include more institutions. Scholars over time have discussed the challenges and opportunities facing graduate education, paying specific attention to its organization and administration (Albrecht, 1984; Carmichael, 1961; Pennings, 1990; M. A. Stewart, 1959). For example, Carmichael (1961) recognized the failure of graduate schools in meeting the expectations to help graduate education progress further. Carmichael believed that graduate education units were limited in their roles “to achieve basic changes in organizational procedure, curriculum, methods, and goals because of the nature of their organization and the dependent relationships between them and other divisions of the universities” (p. 25). Carmichael further offered:

[Graduate units] are victims of an organizational structure that stifles initiative, violates sound principles of administration and cripples them by failing to give proper status to administrative and teaching staffs, upon them rests the
responsibilities of conducting their program in the business-like manner that characterizes other divisions of the university.  (p. 25)

The bureaucratic structure of colleges and universities is related to the proliferation of rules and often requires employees to conform and obey traditionalism. Organizational structures and the institutional procedure within such structure incubated the inertia in graduate education and the avoidance of meeting contemporary challenges (Albrecht, 1984). To a large extent, these earlier authors pointed to a long-existing issue in institutions of higher education, namely the challenges presented by inflexible organizational structures and bureaucratically oriented administration.

Furthermore, less uniformity of organization exists among graduate schools compared to undergraduate universities (M. A. Stewart, 1959), which limits common solutions to general problems facing graduate education. Such inconsistency in graduate education is largely due to institutional differences and the degree of centralization within specific institutions (Borrego, Boden, & Newswander, 2014; Peterson, Chesak, Saunders, & Wiener, 2017).

**Institutional differences in graduate education.** Even at the inception of graduate education in the U.S., there were observable differences among institutions. Several types of institutions rapidly embraced the notion of graduate education, including: (a) new institutions such as John Hopkins and Clark University in Chicago that included from beginning an organized form of graduate education; (b) strong, private universities like Harvard, Columbia, Yale, and Cornell; (c) strong, public state universities such as California, Michigan, and Wisconsin (Berelson, 1960).
A number of studies pointed to how graduate education is highly oriented to institutional context (Borrego et al., 2014; Peterson et al., 2017). An earlier examination of U.S. graduate education across different types of institutions in the 1980s highlighted a severe skew in the size of American graduate schools and the lack of administrative centralization of graduate education in many universities (Lynch & Bowker, 1984). What remains unknown is if this portrait still applies 35 years later, or how these differences influence the ways in which graduate deans lead.

Institutional size is highly correlated (.70 to .91) to institutional complexity, as represented by the number of departments, colleges, and research institutes, the number of administrative titles in the catalogs, and the number of different degrees offered (Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker, & Riley, 1973). Given the general increase in complexity of institutions of higher education and the growth of graduate education options, an increase in the complexity of the role of the graduate school deans occurred.

In addition to institutional size, institutional differences exist in the various degrees of centralization of the graduate unit (Pennings, 1990). Such variation in centralization, again, is viewed as somewhat alarming, assuming that centralized management provides a means to ensure quality and standards of graduate education at universities. A lack of administrative support and guidance concerning what should and would be considered appropriate organizationally may lead to further variation in the educational results delivered. For example, M. A. Stewart (1959) raised concerns about large differences between graduate schools and the possibility that post-baccalaureate degrees eventually becoming meaningless. Such fragmentation could hurt an institution
concerning its academic standards and result in superiority and inferiority among its
degrees.

Pointedly, the identification of the degree of centralization in administration and
organization as a major variance among graduate schools is long time documented (CGS,
1981, 2004). In CGS’s past and current reports on the *Organization and Administration
of Graduate Schools in the U.S.*, a decentralized system is one in which “authority and
administrative controls are assigned to the deans of the various schools and colleges”
(CGS, 1981, p. 7) rather than a graduate dean. By comparison, a centralized system
would then be an institution with a structure in which the administration of graduate
education in centralized in a single unit. Lynch and Bowker (1984) found in their
national survey a lack of centralized administration in many universities. Likewise,
Pennings (1990) confirmed this discrepancy in administration, but also noted that from
1980 to 1990 graduate education nationwide leaned toward the centralized model of
administration.

In the debate of whether to have a centralized or decentralized model for graduate
education, some argued that graduate education requires a campus advocate who can
speak and work for all graduate faculty, students, and programs. Such advocacy is
viewed a way to combat the fragmentation of disciplines, departments, schools, or
colleges, which dilutes shared responsibilities for all graduate programs (Lloyd, 1972).
Thus, a different model of organizational structure defines the role of graduate dean
alternatively, making it important for those who care about graduate education to know as
it decrypts the organizational nature from one aspect.

**Deans of Graduate Schools**
The intricacy fostered by the history, structures, and institutional differences of graduate education calls for strong leaders. Within centralized systems, the position of the dean of graduate school emerged as the individual in charge of campus wide matters regarding graduate education. Despite this key leadership role, little research on graduate deans exists, particularly in the modern era. This section reviews the history of the position, the titles used for this position, roles and responsibilities, and desired qualifications and experiences assumed for those working in this position.

**History of graduate deans.** The general term dean emerged in the late 19th century, “when presidents began to feel the need for someone to relieve them of record- and housekeeping chores” (Gould, 1964, p. 6). Early on, the dean functioned as an administrative assistant for the president. The nature of these housekeeping duties has changed over time and expanded with respect to job functions.

As early as 1930, dean Herbert E. Hawkes of Columbia College remarked, “There is no such thing as a standardized dean. There is a dean of this and that college, but I have never seen any two deans who could exchange places and retain the same duties” (Gould, 1964, p. 9). Gould also noted a progression in the roles of the dean to include:

> From almost sole concern with students, through a phase when students and curriculum were his [sic] largest responsibilities, to a period when curriculum and faculty demanded the greatest part of his energies, and finally to a place where his major concern is the faculty alone. (p. 10)

The shift in role continued to transition from student-focused toward managing personnel, even as represented in the title. Historically, it was more common to see positions for the dean of men or the dean of women. Later these roles changed, and the
title became dean of the college, with greater focus on faculty. External measures such as institutional productivity and accountability put additional weight on the development of the dean’s position from outside accrediting stakeholders at the beginning of the 20th century (Robillard, 2000).

As highlighted in Chapter 1, graduate deans traditionally supervise the graduate school and an institution’s graduate education (Spurr, 1966) and this position is considered rather prestigious due to the proximity to the president and provost (Knowles, 1970). Administratively, the graduate dean is typically in a position directly under the Provost or the Vice President of Academic Affairs (CGS, 2004). Overall, the graduate dean maintains the position of an academic leader, responsible for setting and maintaining the standards of graduate education. Depending on the structural setup, in some larger institutions, the graduate dean oversees associate or assistant deans, with one of these associates usually concerned with the administration of research. In general, the dean presides at council meetings and meetings of the graduate faculty, if held, and serves as chairperson of the executive committee (Pennings, 1990).

At the end of 1950s, M. A. Stewart (1959) noted that nearly every graduate school in the U.S. had a graduate council or an equivalent faculty committee over which the graduate dean normally presided. It appears that the word choice of “graduate council” was originally used to refer to graduate schools as a unit that should be concerned with general policies, governance of the graduate schools, and the enforcement of rules and regulations enacted or approved by the university faculty (M. A. Stewart, 1959). The roles, responsibilities, desired qualifications, and experiences of early graduate deans changed over time, in addition to their titles.
**Titles.** The title of the graduate dean typically reflects the hierarchy of the organization structure of the institution. Various terms have applied to the title of graduate deans, such as those adapted from the chief academic officer (CAO). For example, changing the middle letter to G, which stands for graduate, or CGO to describe the position of graduate dean (M. A. Stewart, 1959). Other titles used to describe these leaders include Vice President, Provost, Dean, Director, and Coordinator of Graduate Studies and Research (CGS, 2004).

In a previous study involving graduate deans at 10 institutions, several different titles were noted for the leaders of graduate education and the variety typically emerged because of the assignment of dual roles (Shabb, 2004). Shabb (2004) noted that among the study’s 10 interviewees, only three participants had the exact title of Graduate Dean; others held titles such as Vice Chancellor or Vice Provost for Research, the Associate Provost or Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, the Associate Provost for Graduate Studies, Director of Graduate Education, and the Dean and Provost. The variability in graduate deans’ positional titles coincided with the lack of consistency of organizational structures and administration. However, one wonders how these titles reflect the expectations of individuals in these positions and their roles and responsibilities as administrators.

**Roles and responsibilities.** Hodges and Hodges (1975) assessed the roles and responsibilities of graduate deans and supposed the origin of the graduate dean was to give one dean more authority and power than other deans since institutions were growing larger, and correspondingly more hierarchical. Thus, the roles and responsibilities were hard to define, numerous, and varied across institutions (Hodges & Hodges, 1975).
Challenges emerged in the actual roles and responsibilities associated with the position itself. Spurr (1966) maintained that the graduate deanship is a multifaceted position requiring individuals to have many qualities: typically they served the greater campus in a staff capacity under the provost or the vice president for academic affairs; administratively they were expected to work well with faculty and administrators tactfully, yet they did not have a faculty of their own. Spurr’s observation pointed to the multiple roles graduate deans take as administrators. Graduate deans support the provost or vice presidents and work with faculty but are not directly affiliated with these faculty disciplinarily.

Young (1984) regarded graduate deans to be at the center of an institution, and posited their role was charged with guarding the academic quality, protecting academic traditions, and being flexible to change. However, despite the theoretical importance of graduate deans and the linchpin role they hold at the center of the administration of different departments and disciplines, graduate deans may find it difficult to establish the necessary credibility and trust on campus to enable graduate deans to be effective leaders (Shabb, 2004).

Therefore, graduate deans possess a unique position in the administrative hierarchy of the university compared to other academic deans who typically oversee one academic unit or one general discipline. A feature of the graduate dean position represents intercollege and interdisciplinary nature as chief graduate officer and in turn, the affiliation with offices that oversee research and grants on campus. In the 1980s, graduate deans were rather active in promoting fundamental changes in higher education in calling for more interdisciplinary and intercollege initiatives (Borrego et al., 2014).
Thus, their position in the hierarchy determines that they maintain different relationships with deans, department heads, faculty, and graduate students. Their role hence is much more global as their decisions can directly affect departments throughout the university. What remains unknown is how the portrait of graduate deans aligns with changes in organizations, leadership, and expectations over time.

Desired qualifications and experiences. If the graduate dean is positioned centrally in the organization, what kind of individuals would be a good fit for such position? What experience would better equip them with the strong leadership required in the position? Mutchnick (1987) compiled postings from the Chronicle of Higher Education for recruitment of graduate deans from 23 institutions over a one-year period. In the study, the term CGO was used to avoid confusion in the use of various titles institutions used to recruit for a graduate dean. Mutchnick concluded with a list of ideal qualifications for a CGO; these specifications included holding a Ph.D. degree, adept with scholarly activities, experienced with both research and administration, and with desirable teaching experience. Among some other less mentioned standards were external agency experience, eligibility for faculty appointment, graduate program experience, and funding agency experience. It is unknown if these traits still hold true in today’s modern graduate schools.

Beyond setting high standards for potential candidates who aspired to be graduate deans, there also are expectations that graduate deans are well-versed in management theory to support their abilities to address academic issues (Crawford, 1983). Another expectation for graduate deans was demonstration of greater adaptability in reacting to ongoing and future challenges (Young, 1984). Yet, it is difficult to assess how relevant
these findings are due to the timing of the original studies. As well, it is not clear what type of leadership development occurred to result in the possession of these identified traits.

True, higher education has long recognized the need for the specific training for leaders within the profession (M. F. Green & McDade, 1991; Murphy, 2003). For example, Cyphert and Zimpher (1976) commented on the need to have special training for the deans of School of Education:

Historically this training has been organized around programs for the certification of teachers, principals, superintendents and other school personnel… Instead we have assumed that past experience, chiefly as a professor in higher education, could provide sufficient orientations for becoming an education dean.

Concurrently, the responsibilities of these leaders have increased, and the pressing problems of higher education have demanded an even higher level of expertise in virtually all facets of this leadership role, e.g., budgeting, collective bargaining, program improvement, and the ‘management of decline.’ It seems unreasonable to continue to assume that persons who come to these leadership positions will be able to respond to the demands of the role without the opportunity for job-specific training. (p. 3)

Despite the focus here on Schools of Education, similar reasoning concluded to the management of professional education applies to approaching leadership in graduate education. Understanding more about the roles of graduate deans require exploration of leadership theories in the literature.
Leadership

The literature on leadership encompasses years of scholarship and is difficult to cover in a few pages. Despite the volume of research and empirical studies on the topic, there is no universal understanding when one tries to define leadership. Yet, what is evident is an evolution in both research and practice about general conceptions of good leadership and theories to understand different approaches (Kezar, 2008). This review focuses on leadership in higher education with a concentration on academic leadership.

Bolman and Deal’s (2013) captured several hallmarks of leadership:

- Leadership is an activity, not a position.
- Leadership is different from management.
- Leadership is distributed rather than concentrated at the top.
- Leadership is multilateral, not unilateral.
- Leadership is contextual and situated not in the leader but in the exchange between leader and constituents. (pp. 344-347)

These listed principles reflect more recent scholarly understandings of leadership, which keeps the following review efforts and study design grounded.

Scholars have approached leadership as it relates to organizational theories, as an influence process, as a facilitation of desirable organizational outcomes, as fulfilment of leaders and followers’ psychological needs and development and as inherent characteristics of a person, and as an exchange process (Bess & Dee, 2008). Over time, specific theories have held prominence. Early leadership theories focused on traits (i.e., leader effectiveness depends on the personality characteristics; Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002; Nystedt, 1998). Next, transactional and transformational leadership (the
former emphasizes the exchange; the latter focuses on transcending followers’ self-interest in exchange for organizational goals and performances) emerged to understand leadership (Bass, 1990; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987). Path-goal, leader-member exchange, leader-match, social constructivist (importance of recognizing and interpreting organizational culture, images, and symbols) focused on the duality of leader-follower activities (Fiedler, 1996). More recently feminist theories (gendered norms in organizations and the glass ceiling) highlight structural constraints based on gender in leading (Blackmore, 1989).

More recent researchers categorized leadership theories by power and influence theories, social power theory, behavioral theories, managerial roles, contingency theories, cultural and symbolic theories, and cognitive theories (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989). Educational researchers also noted many of these theories originated from fields such as military and business sectors, thus previous researchers cautioned the adaptations into educational settings, especially in employing these theories into academia. Increasingly, research in education has called for the development of leadership within given contexts, such as K-12 education, higher education, and community-based education. To distinguish the literature on leadership from other educational contexts, I concentrate on academic leadership in postsecondary education, which involves “being seen and respected as a member of the academic community” (Spendlove, 2007, p. 414). Academic leadership is “a most particular type of leadership and one in which outsiders might struggles to understand” (Spendlove, 2007, p. 414). Focusing on the particular mid-level role of graduate deans requires alignment with
leadership theories targeting this type of position. The following section explicates academic leadership more fully.

**Academic leadership.** The growing literature on higher education leadership in specific disciplines and fields supports the importance of context (Bryman, 2007; Spendlove, 2007). For academic leaders in the higher education sector, there is an increasing amount of caution on the careless adoption of business- and/or military-oriented leadership theories and practices (Amey, 2010). Indeed, leaders in educational organizations often carry different missions than leaders in the corporate world and on the battlefield. Thus, this section builds on the established concepts and arguments above and provides more theoretical and empirical evidence to leadership in academia, and specifically, on graduate education.

The context-bound nature of academic leadership shifted the traditional leadership approach with its focus on the individual to a more system-oriented approach (Bissell, 1977). Using an intrapersonal lens, the literature shifted from a discussion of personality and leadership characteristics to a more holistic review of the intersection of one’s gender, race, disciplinary background, and cognitive complexity (Amey, 2006; Bensimon et al., 1989). The use of more constructivist and post-modern approaches to understanding leadership moves away from the dominant positivistic paradigm and its singular notion of leadership (Bess & Dee, 2008). Similarly, system-oriented approaches have shifted into an interpersonal lens. Over time, organizational theories developed a more organic view to value the process of management in addition to traditional focus on linear structures and the emphasis on efficiency (Bess & Dee, 2008; Pierce & Delbecq,
Aside from the need to discuss academic leadership in educational settings, there are increasing demands from both external and internal environments on today’s graduate education. Academic leadership today reflects the cumulative influences of socio-, economic-, cultural-, and historical factors that intertwine in many ways to affect the purposes and services of institutions of higher education (A. W. Astin & Astin, 2000; H. Bowen, 2018; Garrison & Kanula, 2004).

Recall, Chapter 1 and the first section of Chapter 2 presented a thorough review of the historic external and internal challenges faced by U.S. graduate education. The ever-growing external pressure and internal complexity of colleges and universities necessitates a need to understand the structures and administrative challenges facing leaders of graduate education. The debate continues whether graduate education units should be under central management or not as the organizational structures have financial implications (Hearn, Lewis, Kallsen, Holdsworth, & Jones, 2006). In terms of graduate education, the major internal stakeholders are students and faculty, thus understanding more about the programmatic structures in place to facilitate the interaction between faculty and students is important (Lynch & Bowker, 1984). Leaders of graduate education face challenges in leading their units, and ultimately seek to provide support to ensure the success of students, faculty, and programs at their institutions.

**Demographics of mid-level academic leaders.** Given the scarcity of demographic information on graduate deans, I used its peer group, the academic deans, to present relevant literature regarding mid-level academic leaders. Before 1980, most
deans were middle-aged, married, male, and White, and were in the position for about six years (Cyphert & Zimpher, 1976; Gould, 1964). By 2000, no significant change in the demographics occurred: deans on average were 54 years old and served for 5.6 years; men in the dean position were likely to be married; academic deans rose typically from the tenured faculty pathway with doctoral degrees, records of scholarship, and frequently served as department chairs or association deans, with little exception (Wolverton & Poch, 2000). In the same study, women who served as deans comprised about a quarter of the deans and more often in disciplines that had a higher participation rates for women, such as education and nursing. In some areas, such as business, women serving as deans were as rare as four percent (Wolverton, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 1999). As far as minority deans, only a small number of individuals of color moved into the dean position in predominantly White institutions during the 1970s and 1980s. In the meanwhile, most leaders of color remained at historically Black institutions (Abramson & Moss, 1977; Andersen & King, 1987; Griffiths & McCarty, 1980).

More recently, the gender composition of the dean position saw an increase in women leaders: The Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences ([CCAS], Behr & Schneider, 2015), with over 500 member institutions and over 700 academic deans, reported roughly one-third of deans were women in 2013. In CCAS’s 2013 survey (about a 30% response rate), around nice percent of respondents self-identified as ethnic or racial minorities. Among the respondents, men deans reported a much higher percentage of having a partner (94% compared to 78%) and having children under age 18 living at home (88% compared to 71%).
The average age of earning the highest degree in the study was similar for both men and women (respectively 30.4 and 30.9 years). Professionally, for both genders, the average time to get their first dean appointment after earning the highest degree was about 20 years. More than half of the survey respondents held degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields; among the deans this was more likely a case for men (56%) than for women (48%). Yet it took those with STEM backgrounds longer to become deans compared to other disciplines. Among the deans, men were also more likely to work at a doctoral institution than women (38% and 20%). Although at master-granting institutions a higher percentage of deans were women (68% of women and 52% of men).

A higher portion of women deans reported that they were not actively seeking out their first academic administrative position (73% versus 57% for men). The surveyed respondents indicated similar aspiration for either moving up to provosts or CAO or staying at their current positions. However, geographic relocation was more of a concern to women than to men; 59% of women were committed to their current location for further professional advancement. The intention of becoming a president also differed by gender: men indicated 30% of willingness yet only 13% of women said the same. What remains unknown is how the portrait of graduate deans compares.

**Leading in the middle.** Traditionally, leadership studies focused on those in the most visible positions and with the most positional power. In the higher education literature, scholarly attention on college and university presidents has long been a cornerstone of the research base (Bensimon, 1989; Bensimon & Neumann, 1994; Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001; Neumann, 1989). However, more and more researchers
concluded that leadership is not limited to only positional power; it exists regardless of
one’s position (Venderslice, 1988). This changing perspective provides more
opportunities in research to develop and examine those who lead in the middle. Amey
and Eddy (2018) defined mid-level leaders “as those in administrative positions of
department chair, director, associate/assistant dean, dean, and senior faculty members”
(p. 24). Recent research advocates for more focus on how leaders learn and how
leadership is shared throughout organizations, regardless of position (Amey, 2006).

In recent decades, the emergence of a distinction between leadership and
management further highlights the difficulty in defining and interpreting these constructs
(de Boer & Goedegebuure, 2009). Many would argue the documentation of the
ambiguity between leadership and management long exists (Bolden, 2004; Kotterman,
2006; Yelder & Codling, 2004); yet, de Boer and Goedegebuure (2009) continued to
claim that mid-level management is under-researched in higher education studies,
especially the need to view university middle managers as an emerging profession
(Etzioni, 1964). Research on deans (Bray, 2008, 2010; de Boer & Goedegebuure, 2009;
Del Favero, 2006a, 2006b; Gmelch, 2009; Montez, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 2003; Rosser,
Johnsrud, & Heck, 2003), department chairs (Wolverton, Ackerman, & Holt, 2005), and
others in charge of academic affairs as administrators (e.g., directors of graduate studies;
see Peterson et al., 2017) have received increasing attention in research as a result.

Ambiguity of leadership. Ambiguity often emerges for leaders and is embedded
in leadership roles (Preffer, 1977). Graduate deans fill leadership roles full of ambiguity
given their roles that span within the organization (Lynch & Bowker, 1984; Pennings,
1990; Shabb, 2004). Previous documentation of the ambiguity attests to a notion that
mid-level leaders as boundary spanners given that they must deal with both external and internal stakeholders, including staff, faculty, and top-level leaders (Amey & Eddy, 2018). What remains unknown is how sitting graduate deans perceive leadership and the responsibilities they undertake.

The success of graduate deans, for instance, depends upon the power formally vested by the university president. Take finance as an example. In some situations, graduate deans have little or no voice in the budget formulating process, leaving these individuals in a challenging position on budgetary control and systematic planning (Sims & Syverson, 2003; M. A. Stewart, 1959; D. W. Stewart, 2000). At other institutions, graduate deans control not only the graduate school and research efforts, but also continuing education and summer sessions. Ambiguity in the position emerges in dealing with the complexity of financial policies and the need to clearly define and effectively execute fiscal policies in different scenarios. Support for research, financial aid for students, and availability of teaching and learning assistantships for graduate students are concerns for which the graduate deans are responsible (Pelczar & Frances, 1984).

Administratively, graduate deans interact with the graduate council/senate, which is an academic unit operating under policies set by a committee of graduate faculty representing the entire university the governing body that can speak for the scholarly and academic standards of the graduate faculty (CGS, 2004). Typically, the graduate council/senate is charged with policy making (CGS, 2004). At many institutions, graduate deans serve as the chair of graduate council/senate and manage the operations (Spurr, 1966), but this may vary by institutions. In most cases, graduate deans work
closely with the graduate council on issues such as granting graduate faculty status, initiating new graduate program, and revise or changing policies (Spurr, 1966).

Graduate deans hypothetically would make decisions regarding academic personnel, including appointments, compensation, working conditions, promotion and tenure (CGS, 2004). And these assumed responsibilities can be problematic to graduate deans to achieve given that they have limited authority over faculty members because faculty are first obligated to their department chairs (Carmichael, 1961). However, graduate deans are still largely expected to play the role of ensuring quality of teaching, research, and developing research community at their institutions. A focus of this study is what graduate deans identify as important and their ability to achieve the important initiatives on personal, unit, and institutional levels is part of the focus of the current study.

**Leader and leadership.** Leader and leadership studies have been a research focus due to the need in all organizations and fields to develop effective leaders. Day et al. (2014) provided a helpful conceptualization regarding leader and leadership: leader development is more intrapersonal, with a focus on individual leaders; leadership development is rather interpersonal, focused on enhancing leadership capacity. Day and colleagues elaborated on the importance of framing leadership research in the perspective of leadership development rather than traditional approaches to a single leadership theory and how to train people to become adept in related behaviors.

Undeniably, leader and leadership are intertwined concepts and constantly reinforce the forming of each other. The intended outcomes of studying graduate deans are two-fold: to inform the field who the current leaders of graduate education are; to
provide a base line depiction of how these individuals perceive their own leadership. In thinking of helping those in position and who may be interested in these positions, the two outcomes too help situate the tightly coupled concepts in relation to each other.

From a social constructivist perspective, the mission of higher education and the goals and means to realize the mission are a collective decision between leaders, students, and other partners (Bess & Dee, 2008; Neumann, 1995). Leaders’ lived experiences contribute to the ways they interpret information, ways of knowing, and further filtering useful information to construct knowledge; who they are determine how they make decisions (Amey, 2006). The field needs leaders with different stories, ideas, philosophies, and realities to be able to value different perspectives and ideologies if higher education is determined to push the diversity agenda, as demonstrated by researchers who viewed diversity and leadership a critical concern in academic leadership succession (Gonzales, 2010; Kezar, 2008; Winston, 2001). Even though the current literature does not report a leadership shortage as an issue in graduate deanship, generally, mid-level leaders in higher education face the challenges of succession planning (Eddy et al., 2016).

Under such circumstances, the intrapersonal focus on who leaders are answers the question of how an individual’s identity and its influence on leadership skills and expertise as part of the leader development process (Day et al., 2014). One could write about the skills, traits, and personalities desired for the leadership in higher education without giving much consideration to the individuals. However, such an approach fails to address leadership development writ large, especially on the planning and succession piece, based on what the field knows about the increasingly diverse pool of both students
and employees. In addition to the urgency of reflecting the pool of increasingly diverse institutional demographics in relation to equity, an argument is made that the academic environment should learn from the private sector, since there is evidence that supporting diversity fosters overall organizational success (Winston, 2001). For example, there is a significant difference identified between the institutional ranking and diversity in the 2000 U.S. News rankings. Therefore, the demographics of leaders should be and need to be studied to inform institutions in leadership development and succession.

**Visibility, access, and leadership pipeline.** Institutions traditionally favor leaders from certain groups in terms of gender, race and ethnicity, socioeconomic background, and other individual factors (Chesler & Crowfoot, 2000; Nkomo, 1992). Hence, the pathway to leadership is not a levelled playing field for all members in the academia, starting from students, to faculty, to administrators, and finally senior, executive leaders (Wright & Horst, 2013). Thus, it is even more important to acknowledge how different groups progress in leadership positions over time, especially in thinking of the topic on leadership succession and sustainability.

Answering the question of who the leaders of graduate education are matters in several ways. First and foremost, institutions are expected and should reflect the societal changes, since they are “at the apex of educational systems…as purveyors of core values and standards. The public often expects organizations of higher education to embody and articulate traditional moral values and to prepare students for exemplary lives” (Chesler & Crowfoot, 2000, p. 437). Leaders in the higher education field thus should be diverse, and the image of who the leaders are can send a strong message to the internal
stakeholders, the greater community, and the public as it ideally should reflect the changing demographics of higher education.

**Gender.** In addition to what is noted in the findings around demographic backgrounds of academic deans, the glass ceiling phenomenon persists in organizations and academy (Eddy, Ward, & Khwaja, 2017). Gender, as a social constructed construct, is further shaped and reinforced by organizational climate, especially the interactions between employees that include perceived differences in salaries and the treatment (Lester, 2008). In academia, a great number of studies have already portrayed how experiences external to institutions and the socialization within the institution’s organization culture have played a part in the individual construction and negotiation of gender identity (Campbell, 2015; di Bartolo, 2015).

Researchers have noted the importance of considering how gender intersects with leadership, since both gender and leadership are complicated social phenomena under constant and dynamic construction and reconstruction (Rosser, 2003). Differences in leadership can be again grouped into leader (intrapersonal) and leadership (interpersonal) development aspects.

Focusing on leaders themselves, women leaders are often considered as more effective leaders in higher education (Russell, Rush, & Herd, 1988). Often, women illustrated leadership that is more non-hierarchical and collective (H. S. Astin & Leland, 1991). At the dean and director level, women leaders were also perceived to be more effective both within- (individual) and between- (group) unit levels in academic organizations (Rosser et al., 2003).
Regarding interpersonal relationship, however, some studies have made the argument that women leaders face greater relational challenges. For instance, women in positions of authority had more difficulty in achieving relational authenticity (Eagly, 2005). Feminist theorists may argue that the difficulty women leaders face in relationship is due to the paucity of women leaders in higher positions and that the systematic challenges imposed on women leaders are the reason for difference in leadership approaches based on gender. This research tradition suggests a need to look at gender as one of the demographic variables that may affect leadership experiences and perceptions.

**Race.** Race is an inevitably important factor in research on leadership as organizations are not race-neutral (Nkomo, 1992). Omi and Winant (1986) outlined how race could intersect with both micro- and macro-levels of social interactions:

At the micro level, race is a matter of individuality, of the formation of identity. The ways we understand ourselves, our experiences, our interactions with others, and our day-to-day activities are all shaped by racial meanings and racial awareness. At the macro level, race is a matter of collectivity, of the formation of social structures. (p. 66)

Like gender, race is part of a more complicated group of socially constructed elements of identity. Thus, race is an indispensable concept in understanding organizations and analyzing the core of individual, social, and institutional aspects (Nkomo, 1992).

**Professional experiences.** In the literature on academic leadership, many researchers (Gmelch, 2009; Moore, Salimbene, Marlier, & Bragg, 1983) have acknowledged the fact that faculty positions provide the most common starting point for
the career path of an academic trajectory. Academic leadership requires credibility, knowledge, and experience, which are typically gained by administrators who have been faculty and previous roles in academe (Spendlove, 2007). Such immersion in the academic organizations offers means to develop social capital and networked relationships (Day, 2000), which translates into academic qualifications and capital. In a way, academic leadership is understood through the practices of being an academic (Bourdieu, 1987).

Yet, despite the common pathway of faculty to administration, limitations emerge given faculty members’ lack of preparation in both individual characteristics and aptitudes to transition in administrative roles (Etzioni, 1964; Moore et al., 1983; Wolverton & Gonzales, 2000). Not only do academic leaders lack preparation, but also there is little formal training or intentionality in fostering their administrative capacity or executive experience (Gmelch, 2009). As Etzioni (1964) commented on such disparity:

The role of head of professional organizations requires two incompatible sets of orientations, personal characteristics, and aptitudes. In the role is performed by either a lay administrator or a typical professional, one set of considerations is likely to be emphasized to the neglect of the other. (p. 116)

The issue with career preparedness can potentially lead to individuals’ losing balance and experience burning out fatigues (Gmelch, Wolverton, Wolverton, & Sarros, 1999) and questioning of their abilities and their willingness of taking on administrative roles (Gmelch, 2009).

**Disciplinary orientations.** As mid-level leaders often start in faculty roles, researchers sought to understand whether disciplinary variation mattered in the
preparation of academic leadership (Del Favero, 2006a, 2006b). Prominent disciplinary
differences are well established in research at the individual, departmental, and
institutional levels (Braxton & Hargens, 1996). Research strongly suggested that faculty
rely much on the unique experiences they accumulated as faculty members (Austin,
1990; Del Favero, 2006a, 2006b). The experiences faculty beget later often serve as
vintage points for administrative decisions as many faculty members carry out some administer roles. The extent to which one is exposed to their disciplinary paradigms becomes more important than mere affiliation with a discipline; and the effects of discipline cannot be discounted in framing studies of administrators’ perceptions of their leadership context and the behavior which necessarily flows from those perceptions (Del Favero, 2006a, 2006b).

However, the aforementioned complexity and ambiguity of leadership demand leaders to think in complex ways, and such complexity in part points to the increasing need for interdisciplinary collaboration. Cross-unit relationships and multidisciplinary thinking are necessary in coping with contemporary and future issues and challenge the assumption that single disciplinary orientations and more narrow lenses could lend themselves to solutions to complex issues (Amey & Brown, 2000).

Faculty member’s disciplinary background in relation to potential paradigmatic differences could contribute to different cognitive approaches in their administrative behavior (Del Favero, 2006a). Previous research suggests that leaders from an applied field may have an advantage and a potential boost in the effectiveness of academic deans given inclinations to a multi-frame approach (Bensimon, 1989; Bolman & Deal, 2013; Tierney, 1989). Disciplinary backgrounds serve as a segue to understand leaders’
cognitive complexity as evidence points out that pure disciplines and high consensus fields, such as natural sciences, achieve more uniformity in decision making (Jones, 2011). Yet, research also cautions careful examination of the influence of academic discipline on administrative behavior since it may be more related to the disciplinary configuration of the administrative context and the degree to which academic leaders are immersed in their discipline as a scholar (Bray, 2008, 2010). Thus, the inculcation of disciplinary socialization in highest degrees obtained may provide insights into leadership.

**Leaders’ perceptions of efficacy and leadership.** Earlier research suggests that academic leadership is ambiguous, and leaders’ roles are highly institution-bound. Often, what leaders perceive for their organizations serves as an important facet to reflect the priorities, opportunities, challenges, and realities both leaders and organizations encounter. To capture leader perceptions, an attitudinal survey that inquires graduate deans’ reactions to CGS’s 12 statements can contribute to understandings in the field. Again, leaders’ perceptions are complex since they are influenced by different factors, influencers, and are embedded in layers of contexts. Accordingly, looking at the roles of graduate deans may be futile given a much smaller number of individuals who are in this position and the variation among institutions. Instead, to look at how leaders perceive the roles of graduate school seems more reasonable.

Today, many professional organizations represent institutions as collective third parties and conduct related policy and research work in the interest of their members. In higher education, organizations and associations, such as the American Council on Education and Association of American Colleges & Universities, work with institutions
closely to provide professional service and network on contemporary issues. The
Council of Graduate Schools, as mentioned before, is one of the professional
organizations that primarily focus on graduate education and has done so for more than
five decades.

Administrative and organizational realities ground and determine what types of
leaders would fit and what leadership is needed. Even though the literature has laid out a
picture fraught with challenges for graduate education, at an institutional level the
graduate school stands as a unit which defines and supports excellence of graduate
education, and the research and scholarly activities associated with it (CGS, 2004). CGS
in 2004 defined the roles of a graduate school in following statements:

- Articulate a vision of excellence for the graduate community
- Provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education
- Maintain equitable standards across all academic disciplines
- Define what graduate education is and what it is not
- Bring an institution-wide perspective to all post-baccalaureate endeavors
- Provide an interdisciplinary perspective
- Enhance the intellectual community of scholars among both graduate students
  and faculty
- Serve as an advocate for graduate education
- Emphasize the importance of adequately training future college and university
  teachers
- Develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance
  undergraduate education
• Support graduate student services
• Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success of graduate programs. (pp. 4-9)

The CGS 2004 report did not specifically address how the list was developed for the role of a graduate school at an institution. However, based on the literature, these statements are largely congruent with previous literature at a generic level. Therefore, I used this list to create survey items to understand better graduate deans’ perceptions on the practices of graduate schools and how these perceptions are situated in organizational contexts at their institutions.

Hence in the survey for my study, perceptions were gathered to reflect different levels of perception, namely, individual, unit, and institutional. At the individual level, the perceived importance of each statement should also be combined with self-efficacy. Self-efficacy, according to Bandura (1997), is “beliefs in one’s capacities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (p. 3). The level of self-efficacy can be both under control of an individual and outside of the leader due to external factors, especially in organizations (Preffer, 1977). As a result, leader perceptions are valuable insights when apprehended at multiple levels.

**Summary**

In this chapter, I reviewed literature pertaining the context (U.S. graduate education); the theoretical framework (leader and leadership), and the study focus (leaders of graduate education and their perceptions of leadership). Next, based on the research surveyed in Chapter 2, I present the study design through detailing the method
and participants, data sources, collection, and analysis, as well as describing ethical considerations, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, and researcher subjectivity.
CHAPTER 3: METHODS

This chapter outlines the research design used for this study. In the methods section, I provide details about the study’s participants, data sources, data collection, and data analysis. In addition, I discuss ethical considerations, how my method and underlying paradigms could influence the study’s delimitations and limitations, and how my assumptions as a researcher may have impacted the study.

Research Questions

Recall, the purpose of this study was to understand more about the leaders of graduate education in the U.S., namely the graduate deans, and how their leadership experiences in the institutional context. The intention of this research was to build leader profiles of current graduate deans and to identify graduate deans’ perceptions of leadership and the role of graduate school. A recap of the research questions provides a backdrop for the presentation of my methodological approach in this chapter.

1. What is the descriptive profile of graduate deans in U.S. Doctoral Universities, including demographic information and professional experiences?

2. How do graduate deans perceive the functions of graduate school as defined by Council of Graduate Schools (2004) at their institutions?

3. How much confidence do graduate deans have in their ability to influence the functions of the graduate school at their institution?

4. How do graduate deans perceive leadership in their institutional contexts?
Method

Like I. Newman and Benz (1998), I believe that research questions are more fundamental than paradigms in research designs. As a result, the questions that are central for this research dictate that to provide both the span and depth proposed in my study, a dual approach that integrates both quantitative and qualitative approaches best serves this purpose. The intention of this study is to fill a gap regarding the leader profile of graduate deans and their perceptions of their ability to fulfil the functions of leading graduate schools. Hence, I used an exploratory approach, which supports the use of a mixed-methods approach.

As highlighted in Chapter 2, previous research on graduate deans has largely relied on surveys and case study as the two most employed methodologies (see Appendix A). Thus, I utilized similar methods to help answer my research questions and fulfil the goals of my dissertation as both methods interact and enhance each other. On the one hand, a survey itself is limited to its design and length, the extent of its potential reach to participants, and my ability in interpreting data being collected. On the other hand, if only a case study approach was employed, I could deeply understand several participants’ individual experiences well situated in contexts; yet such understanding is restricted in its generalizability (Simons & Goes, 2013). Hence, I saw the value of combining quantitative and qualitative methods, especially knowing that previous researchers who studied the institutional leaders of graduate education have favored methodologies of survey and case study, respectively.

Mixed-methods research. There is no singular agreement about the scope or definition of mixed methods research (MMR). Like many other important constructs in
educational research, the construction of MMR continues to develop with researchers’ ongoing efforts. For example, R. B. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007) reviewed 15 definitions used in previous research and provided one general definition for MMR:

Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breath and depth of understanding and corroboration. (p. 123)

In general, the term mixed-methods uses both qualitative and quantitative methods. Mixed methods can also be seen as a methodology that broadly guides the inquiry logic and the selection of specific methods; such logic is informed by common conceptual stances of mixed methods researchers (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010). A central tenet of MMR is the rejection of “either-or” choices at all levels of the research process.

**The MMR approach.** An MMR approach contains several core characteristics beyond having the signature quantitative and qualitative components. Creswell (2014) provided a listing of items and order required using this methodology:

- An explicit explanation of the researcher’s philosophical approach;
- The collection of both qualitative (open-ended) and quantitative (close-ended) data in response to the research questions;
- Analysis of both forms of data;
- Rigorous procedures to ensure both forms of data collection and analysis in various stages of the design;
• Procedures should also capture the timing of the data collection and the emphasis of data;
• Finding an integrated approach to converge the data.  (p. 215)

This list provided a research map for me to cover the most important aspects of each method and to discuss both in an interactive way (I. Newman & Benz, 1998) and is revisited again in Chapter 6 to guide data integration. For my study, the quantitative portion of the study used a survey design and its associated collection of quantitative data. In the meantime, the qualitative methodology added depth to the survey data through interviews which helped make sense of the survey data by adding thick, rich descriptions that provide direct contexts for the survey results. Both survey and interview methods gathered data from common areas of general information, professional experience, institutional information, and perceptions. Additionally, the case study approach provided an opportunity to collect data regarding how the participants perceived themselves as leaders.

Therefore, the two methods helped answer the research questions in different, but complementary ways. For instance, the survey portion was directed to all graduate deans, which allowed for enough participation to generate a representative sample and to draw inferences from the survey to the graduate dean population. Because the survey was rather short, the questions regarding demographics were rather segmented and largely dependent on the participants’ interpretations and the survey’s ability to capture the participants’ experiences. Interviews, hence, were much more flexible in discussing many aspects of an individual’s life and allowing participants to provide much more detailed, integrated information. Together, different sources of data contributed to the
overall understanding of this topic from different perspectives, making the case more convincing especially after data triangulation. Consequently, the procedures occurring in my study were sequential rather than concurrent, since the survey took place first. Instead of relying on one type of data, my data collection shared more equal reliance on both types of data.

**Philosophical underpinnings of MMR.** It is typical for researchers to disclose research positionality in qualitative studies. As a practice, researchers write a researcher-as-instrument statement to record areas of researcher subjectivity. Given the increasingly frequent use of MMR in the social science realm, I would provide an overview of the MMR philosophy and my approach to MMR as a researcher in the following section.

Historically, the research community viewed positivism as the gold standard in knowledge building and testing (Mouly, 1970), despite other ways of knowing. Positivism, and its later development, post-positivism, rely heavily on quantitative approaches and have traditionally suppressed other paradigms (e.g., constructivism, interpretivism, and critical theory) that traditionally utilize more qualitative approaches (Creswell, 2014). The dichotomy between quantitative and qualitative research, as a result, is still prevalent within the debates over paradigms (R. B. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

However, researchers have come to realize the shortcomings of a singular epistemology or research method and recognize that no one method could be considered universally superior (I. Newman & Benz, 1998). As the general research community advocates for more inclusivity in epistemology, researchers need to reconceptualize their approaches to methodologies and move away from the false dichotomy of quantitative
and qualitative methods (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010). Thus, MMR emerged as a more holistic methodology that embodies the essence of different research paradigms which permits the researcher to approach their research questions more holistically by incorporating multiple approaches on a methodological continuum. As many MMR theorists have argued, the line between qualitative and quantitative research is blended rather than binary (I. Newman, Ridenour, Newman, & DeMarco, 2003; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010).

This blending became particularly salient to me as a researcher when I constantly found myself relying on both the statistical analysis of data for consistency, validity, and generalizability and the narratives and artifacts from multiple sources to construct mental maps as primary frameworks in designing the research process and analyzing data. The datedness and the paucity of research on graduate deans require a robust research design to expand and update study of this topic. Thus, my research on graduate deans benefited from an MMR design.

**Researcher’s philosophical orientations.** Stake (1995) and Yin (2009) both framed case study using a constructivist paradigm. Guba and Lincoln (1994) discussed the use of constructivism and how it espouses the aim of the inquiry and the nature of knowledge as a guiding paradigm in qualitative research. Guba and Lincoln argued:

The aim of inquiry is understanding and reconstruction of the constructions that people (including the inquirer) initially hold, aiming toward consensus but still open to new interpretations as information and sophistication improve. The criterion for progress is that over time, everyone formulates more informed and
sophisticated constructions and becomes more aware of the content and the meaning of competing constructions. (p. 113)

My aim to understand the experiences of graduate deans and their perceptions on graduate education of their institutions through survey and case study helped ensure that the narratives highlight the interpretations, interactions of different influencing agents on graduate education, and the contexts.

Along with participants’ accounts, I was actively bringing my own knowledge, experiences, and assumptions about this topic into the research design and selection on modes of inquiries as the inquirer. My interpretations of the data inserted me into the study. As an ongoing process of interacting with the literature, I went back and forth in adjusting the directions of my inquiry efforts based on the constant reflection and reconstruction of my own understanding of the topic. As predicted, my interactions with my participants and their perceptions and responses to my questions challenged me to construct more cultured interpretations based on the integration of different narratives, sources of information, and approaches. This dialectical nature was salient in the process since my goal was to record both similar and distinct constructions of realities from my participants and myself, as informed by existing literature. An intended outcome of this dissertation was to help inform and update the higher education research community.

As a researcher, I conceptualized ways of knowing and knowledge construction through critical self-reflection. I aligned with Guba and Lincoln’s (1994) notion of knowledge construction that recognizes a range of options for meaning creation:

Knowledge consists of those constructions about which there is relative consensus (or at least some movement toward consensus) among those competent (and, in
the case of more arcane material, trusted) to interpret the substance of the construction. Multiple “knowledges” can coexist when equally competent (or trusted) interpreters disagree, and/or depending on social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender factors that differentiate the interpreters. These constructions are subject to continuous revisions, with changes most likely to occur when relatively different constructions are brought into juxtaposition in a dialectical context. (p. 113)

This stance highlighted the interplay of participants, data, and the researcher as subjective to not only these sources, but also to multiple factors that affect knowledge construction in complicated manners. Their claims also reinforced my choice of looking at participants’ experiences and knowledge through the case study approach instead of solely interpreting survey data. This additional approach enhanced individuals’ responses to the survey to contextualize the individual cases.

The MMR process. Generally, the MMR research process is similar to a single-method approach as the same sequence occurs for both the quantitative and qualitative portions of the research in terms of research design, data collection, and data analysis (Creswell, 2014). A good command of each research design, understanding how timing affects the sequential design and how to take advantage of time is critical in a successful MMR study requires increased attention to draw connections between the methodologies.

Data integration is another commonly mentioned challenge to new mixed-methods researchers as the integration will not happen without intentional planning and execution. To better capture the sequence, I created a figure to help visualize the flow of my MMR design. Leading with quantitative data collection, the data analysis on the
survey instrument would further inform the sampling of the qualitative process. Since I relied on a case study approach, I decided to use maximum variation sampling in selecting participants and collected data. Once both quantitative and qualitative analyses were completed, I merged the data to create more meaningful interpretations.

Figure 1. The mixed-methods research sequence

Survey development. Surveys provide a common data collecting method in the social sciences. Survey instruments serve as an approach to collect data for a special purpose and provide the information needed (Fowler, 2014). In addition, Fowler (2014) pointed out that survey research employs multiple steps in the procedure to ensure this accuracy and measure its intended outcomes. Creswell (2014) asserted that an instrument is a tool for measuring, observing, or documenting quantitative data that contains specific questions and response possibilities researchers developed ahead of time. The intent is to be able to produce results that are generalizable to a larger population.
To ensure a homogenous group, this study focused only on the Doctoral Universities. Recall the discussion of how Doctoral Universities developed in Chapter 2 and the differences among each of the classifications. Such a concentration on Doctoral Universities eased some pressure on the survey design because the narrowing of the target population made the participants more homogeneous with respect to institutional backgrounds, structures, and missions. Using questions as measures, researchers are proactive in predicting and evaluating how participants may potentially understand the questions and if the answers provided are useful (Madans, Miller, Maitland, & Willis, 2011; Presser et al., 2004). Researchers increasingly rely on strategies, such as pre-testing the survey or using analyses of tape-recorded interviews to identify potential issues, to improve the survey with better wording in question design as well (Fowler, 2014). The following sections highlight the mechanisms I employed to assure the administration of the best survey possible (see Appendix B for the survey instrument).

**Designing questions as measures.** As the researcher, I interweaved knowledge, information, and experiences into the survey, which was constructed based on the literature on graduate schools, graduate deans, and leadership. Therefore, the survey I designed may have been easier or harder for my participants to react to depending on the survey’s capacity in recording responses and accommodations to a range of experiences among the survey respondents. Thus, to produce quality responses and useful information, I spent time designing questions, doing critical systematic review, and seeking feedback from experts to ensure validity and reliability beyond the researcher’s own thinking and practice.
Levels of measurement and types of questions. Researchers can use surveys to collect different types of data. In the first two sections of the survey, I collected close-ended data on the demographic, professional experiences, and institutional information of the graduate dean participants. Most of the data were categorical, but duration or experiences related data were numerical. The third section of the survey focused on participants’ perceptions of their perceived importance of the functions of graduate school, self-efficacy, and perceptions on the practices of their units and institutions. This section used attitude scales since it is trying to measure values and opinions (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1996). Thus, a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 being the lowest score and 5 being the highest in importance and efficacy-level, was used to assess a more nuanced level of agreement to a set of statements that describe the role of graduate school (adapted from a 2004 CGS report). The Likert scale helped to assess attitudes toward a topic by presenting a set of statements to ask participants to register opinions.

As a researcher, I was aware that the survey would be biased based on assumptions I made from my understanding of the surveyed literature and other ways of knowing (anecdotal evidence, conversations, and observations). Thus, I provided an “other” option to allow participants to note when their experience does not fit into the provided options in most items. These open-ended questions generated some nominal data, which, depending on their fitness of the existing options, could be recorded or inform the coding process.

Increasing the reliability and validity. Validity and reliability are hard to establish in survey designs, especially with attitudinal scales (Ary et al., 1996). I employed a variety of strategies to ensure a greater reliability and validity in the survey
design. First and foremost, the survey items emerged from the literature, thus the questions are backed up by previous researchers’ conclusions of their literature review and/or studies. As far as content validity, the third section in the survey consisted of 12 statements from a professional organization, the Council of Graduate Schools, which has been working with institutions and graduate deans since 1961 (CGS, n.d.). To collect demographic information, I created more encompassing questions with options in the survey to reflect a more inclusive research orientation that hopefully welcomes the participants to answer and makes them feel safe to be honest with the survey and the research. Finally, I tried to convey an inclusive manner through my recruiting efforts and interactions with study participants and use a welcoming language in my study design and instruments.

**Evaluating survey questions and the instrument.** Typically, in survey design, survey researchers need to make sure the questions can be understood with ease and minimum misunderstanding in its respondents. Fowler (2014) has offered a sequence of processes that can help evaluate the survey questions and the instrument. Consequently, I chose the following three steps suggested by Fowler, which include critical systematic review; design, format, and layout of survey instrument; and running pre-tests with a panel of experts (specific reasons of choosing these steps to follow). I first evaluated the survey instructions for clarity and then had a panel of experts review the survey instrument. I sought individuals who have had knowledge about U.S. graduate education and its administration to make sure the survey presents itself as a clear and concise way to the actual participants.
Critical systematic review, according to Fowler (2014), is a process to subject the survey questions to flag potential issues. The review can be achieved in several ways. In this study I utilized peer reviewers, mainly relying on my dissertation committee members for feedback, in addition to having a panel of experts who are knowledgeable in survey design. When the review was completed, I formatted the survey into Qualtrics. Qualtrics is Web-based and allows the distribution of self-administered surveys.

**Case study.** As mentioned above, the second stage of the MMR approach in my proposed study is to conduct qualitative research. I decided to use case study as my qualitative approach to gain understanding and insight of graduate dean’s work alongside the survey instrument to capture the nuances of institutional contexts. Data collection for the case study relied primarily on interviews and artifacts as data sources.
**Definition and characteristics.** A case study approach provided the best qualitative option for this study as it focuses on questions regarding when, how, or why, when the researcher has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon; as Yin (2009) elaborated:

> A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates as a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between a phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. (p. 18)

One salient feature of case study is its view of a case as “a bounded system” (for one case, Smith, 1978) or “multiple bounded systems” (for more than one case, Creswell, 2007, p. 73) through explicit connection between the research objectives and the extent of research. To establish boundaries for case studies that helps maintain a reasonable scope (Baxter & Jack, 2008), previous researchers suggested to bind a case by time and place (Creswell, 2014), by time and activity (Stake, 1995), and by definition and context (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For my study, I used title (i.e., graduate deans) and context (i.e., Doctoral Universities) in helping me to bind the case. I used definitions mentioned in Chapter 1 and survey data to help solidify the list of interviewees, who were the center of the cases. Different institutional characteristics and backgrounds were taken into considerations for context in case selection.

**Unit of analysis.** A core challenge of case study is to determine the unit of analysis based on the research questions (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Given the purpose of understanding graduate deans’ perceptions contingent to their situated organizational context, the definition for what constitutes a case in my study is each individual dean. Baxter and Jack (2008) further distinguished a multiple case study from a holistic case...
study based on case context. Typically, one graduate dean is associated with one institution; thus, each graduate dean represents a case given their different institutional context that forms multiple cases instead of one. For this study, the case studies built on the exploration and building of theoretical explanations emerged from the survey instrument. A multiple case study maximizes the variation of narratives based on a variety of institutional characteristics and experiences of the participating leaders of graduate education.

(Positioned subjects as an approach to research. In positioning myself and the study participants in the study and conceiving of our relationship, I turned to Conrad et al. (1993) who conducted a study to describe master education in the U.S. Conrad et al. employed a positioned subjects approach. The approach worked well for their study as the researchers were interviewing stakeholders and offered the inquirers a strategy to focus research and analysis on how interviewees understood and interpreted master students’ experiences based on what subjects valued and how the subjects made sense of those experiences. Conrad et al. defined the positioned subjects approach as:

One that assumes, people, as positioned subjects (where subjects refer to people with particular needs, perceptions, and capabilities for action, and position refers to the environment in which they are located), actively interpret and make sense of their everyday worlds. (p. 29)

I noted similarities in the research topics between my own and Conrad et al.’s, and where we stood as researchers in the social constructivism paradigm: we were researchers who care about this topic and were reaching out to participants who are likewise invested in graduate education. To view the participants in this study as positioned subjects is
appropriate considering their situated understanding as well as the ongoing experiences in graduate education.

**Trustworthiness.** To ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research projects, Guba (1981) developed four criteria, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability that help warrant rigor in qualitative studies. Shenton (2004) established specific strategies for researchers to apply these criteria to studies. Shenton aligned the provisions suggested by previous researchers in aligning qualitative practices with Guba’s four criteria in a table (see Table 2).
### Table 2

**Possible Provision with Quality Criterion in Qualitative Research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Criterion</th>
<th>Possible Provision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Credibility       | • Adoption of appropriate, well recognized research methods  
|                   | • Development of early familiarity with culture of participating organizations  
|                   | • Random sampling of individuals serving as informants  
|                   | • Triangulation via use of different methods, different types of informants and different sites  
|                   | • Tactics to help ensure honesty in informants  
|                   | • Iterative questioning in data collection dialogues  
|                   | • Negative case analysis  
|                   | • Debriefing sessions between researcher and superiors  
|                   | • Peer scrutiny of project  
|                   | • Use of “reflective commentary”  
|                   | • Description of background, qualifications and experience of the researcher  
|                   | • Member checks of data collected and interpretations/theories formed  
|                   | • Thick description of phenomenon under scrutiny  
|                   | • Examination of previous research to frame findings  
| Transferability    | • Provision of background data to establish context of study and detailed description of phenomenon in question to allow comparisons to be made  
| Dependability      | • Employment of “overlapping methods”  
|                   | • In-depth methodological description to allow study to be repeated  
| Confirmability     | • Triangulation to reduce effect of investigator bias  
|                   | • Admission of researcher’s beliefs and assumptions  
|                   | • Recognition of shortcomings in study’s methods and their potential effects  
|                   | • In-depth methodological description to allow integrity of research results to be scrutinized  
|                   | • Use of diagrams to demonstrate “audit trail”  

Below, I grouped certain requirements together and discuss how I met these criteria accordingly.

_Credibility._ To ensure credibility, I chose case study method as my approach. Case study is one of the most commonly used qualitative methodologies on this topic based on my literature review. I outlined below the precise steps used to assure representative experiences for the qualitative research design. My goal was to ensure a good coverage of different kinds of experiences as well as include any participant who has an outlier experience, which is known as a negative case.

Next, several provisions point to the researcher’s familiarity with the culture of participants and their organizations. My background, qualifications, and experiences went hand-in-hand in enhancing my understanding of graduate deans through multiple means. Such researcher familiarity helps to achieve credibility by building relationships between researcher and participants. I will discuss this further in “Researcher Subjectivity.”

Under the umbrella of credibility, tactics to help participants be honest and inclusive with their answers involve member checks, getting thick descriptions, and triangulating different types of informants and sites. These strategies enhance the integrity of the data collection process. Additionally, I tried my best to create a safe environment for my participants in all communications and during the interview. Member checking was carried about both during the interview process and by sending participants’ summaries of the interviews and encouraging them to send feedback prior to data analysis.
The last area of credibility focuses on my understanding of the iterative process of conducting qualitative research and maintaining a high engagement of reflectivity through multiple methods. I adopted several practices recommended by experienced qualitative researchers: keeping a research journal to record decisions, observations, and questions, debriefing with peers and advisors and methodologists who are more knowledgeable, and using commentary or writing memos in the process (Shenton, 2004).

**Transferability.** Transferability mainly requires that the researcher provides detailed description of the cases and other background information researchers use to establish the context of the study. I kept a research journal as well as report in specific details on what I planned to do and what happened during the study to allow other researchers to examine and compare the findings of this study with others.

**Dependability.** Dependability, though similar to credibility, focuses more on the researcher’s ability to be transparent in describing the design, planning, implementing, and assessing the study afterwards. Again, I maintained a reflexive journal to keep track of design, decisions made, implementation, and evaluation and incorporated the content when reporting my results.

**Confirmability.** Confirmability in qualitative research is comparable to the effort to achieve objectivity in quantitative efforts. The concern transmits to researcher’s beliefs, predispositions, and the ability to recognize the short comings and limitations. I would touch upon these important topics in later sections on discussing the limitations, delimitations, and researcher subjectivity.
Participants

The participants in this study included survey respondents and interviewees for the case study. The selection of participants is further described based on each methodology.

Participants for the survey. The survey was sent to the deans of graduate school at Doctoral Universities. Determining this sample was complicated due to the range of titles employed in different organizational structures and due to the previously mentioned institutional characteristics. To help the participant selection process, I looked to how other researchers approached their sampling. For instance, Del Favero (2006a, 2006b) conducted a study to look at the relationship between academic disciplines and cognitive complexity in academic deans’ administrative behavior. The sample Del Favero used included research and doctoral institutions. The purpose of limiting the sample to those institutions acknowledged the similar environments these institutions face and at the same time minimized the variation by institution type. Thus, I returned to my operational definition in Chapter 1 to identify participants. Namely the dean of the graduate school or graduate dean refers to all individuals who are directly responsible for duties of graduate education in an institution with the highest titles.

During the process of collecting participants’ information, I began to realize the initial conceptualization was rather narrow and the “dean” as the sole standard could not capture all the titles for institutional leadership of graduate education. Increasingly, such titles have become more complex since it is not uncommon for individuals in this position to wear other hats, such as the Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs or Assistant Vice President of Research. The lack of consistency in either the functional areas or title
levels made me rethink about how I described my participants. Instead of the general terms, “deans of graduate schools” or “graduate deans,” as I had previously considered in referring to my study participants, I realized the limitations of both terms. As a result, I turned to “institutional leaders of graduate education,” a more encompassing term in both the communications with my participants and made subsequent changes to my communications with the participants and the survey.

I decided to survey graduate deans currently employed by U.S. Doctoral Universities. This specific criterion helped increase homogeneity considering how graduate education and graduate leadership may be influenced by context and ideologies prevalent to the geographical location. For example, in the U.S., graduate education tends to focus more on the connections between knowledge, research, and development, as well as supporting workforce development for a global economy (Wendler et al., 2010). I did not limit the sample strictly by titles, considering how titles may vary depending on the internal institutional organization. To fully capture the overall variation, a chart of the titles with researcher notes is provided in Appendix C.

To compile a list of all the institutional leaders from Doctoral Universities, I first downloaded the institutional list from the CCIHE. I then went through each institution’s website to look at following locations: (a) the web page of the Graduate School (or “the Office of Graduate Studies,” “Graduate Education,” etc.); (b) directory (or “staff,” “personnel”); (c) university leadership page. From these places, I was able to retrieve most institutions’ leaders and their contact information, including email, phone number, and exact title. All relevant information for potential participants was recorded in a spreadsheet. With institutions that do not provide emails but rather a unit email or an
assistant’s email, such indirect contact information too was retrieved and saved in the master contact list as well.

The majority of Doctoral Universities had accessible information, but not all of them. If I could not locate the information regarding the name and contact information for the institutional leaders, or an institution did not seem to have a designated leader for graduate education, I marked these institutions and decided not to invite these institutions to participate in the survey. My decision was based on two reasons: if an institutional leader’s title did not explicitly associate with graduate education, nor did the bio page mention graduate education, I felt less confident with my identification of the individual as a participant; if I chose someone who seemingly had a higher title, such as the Provost or a Vice President of Academic Affairs, I could not be sure if my selection of institutional leaders would be consistent with those who had clear titles.

In addition, some institutions provided by CCIHE placed some difficulty in retrieving information. The most recent list of Doctoral Universities from CCIHE was last updated in 2015. As of August and September, 2018, I noticed a couple of institutions that are no longer accepting applications. Such institutional changes were noted, and the institutions removed from survey invitations. Furthermore, CCIHE did not explicitly share its criteria on categorization of research intensity, which to some extent limits other researchers’ ability to use CCIHE’s information for research on institutional organization and administration. Some institutions had specific focus, such as graduate education, or certain disciplines and areas of studies. In these circumstances, certain institutional leaders, even though their titles might seem different, were included in the participants.
CCIHE’s list of Doctoral Universities contained 334 institutions. However, as a result of information availability and further examination of institutions and participants, I identified 266 survey participants. Table 3 details the rationale for exclusion of institutions.

Table 3.

*Information Availability (Doctoral Universities)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Intensity (Number)</th>
<th>No public information</th>
<th>No graduate education unit or no leader of institution</th>
<th>Institutions no longer enroll students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1 (115)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2 (107)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3 (112)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 illustrated that 67 R3 institutions did not meet the selecting criteria for several reasons: institutional change; no administrative unit dedicated to graduate education; or such information was not made public on its website.

**Participants for the interview.** As outlined in the review of MMR, I used a sequence of quantitative methods and then qualitative methods. As part of the survey instrument, I invited survey participants who indicated their willingness for follow-up interviews.

The selection of the interview participants depends on both practical and theoretical considerations. Graduate deans as professionals have very demanding schedules and travel frequently. Based on the survey results, there were 42 participants out of 100 indicating the willingness to be interviewed. The selection criteria emerged first from the following considerations:
• Interviewees must have already completed the survey to provide multiple data points for data triangulation;

• Proportionate selection based on the original sample of institutions, namely, more R1s and R2s, and fewer R3s (among the 42 willing respondents, 15 of them worked at R1s, 17 worked at R2s, and 10 were from R3s). Comparing the interview candidates to overall survey respondents, those who worked at R3s seemed to be more willing to participate in a follow-up interview.

• Maximum variation applied to the consideration of gender, race and ethnicity, professional experiences, and perceptions of graduate education.

The final sampling approach was a combination of maximum variation sampling and purposeful sampling, for two main reasons: I wanted to make sure that both institutional characteristics and individual variables were put into consideration; it was harder to solely rely on maximum variation sampling due to a smaller group of interview candidates. As such, my decisions on selecting participants were based on a matrix, and different variables came into play in the decision-making process. After cleaning the survey data and looking at the demographic information, I came up with a list of participants based on both institutional and individual characteristics. Another layer of consideration resulted in who constituted the final participants based on participants’ responsiveness. Even though three individuals matched my criteria and had indicated willingness to be interviewed, they did not respond to my outreach emails or follow-up emails. Given the challenges and the strict timeframe I had, I had to replace the three individuals with another three who had the closest experiences and qualifications to the
initial three. In terms of institutional characteristics, my final group consisted of participants from

- Three R1s, three R2s, and two R3s;
- Seven public institutions and one private institutions;
- Two land-grant institutions.

Combining with the individual variables, I looked at information provided by the survey, specifically:

- The longevity of career in higher education: ranging from 15 years to 47 years;
- Gender: five women and three men;
- LGBTQ: one participant who self-identified as LGBTQ;
- Ethnicity and race: three minorities;
- Having experiences in sectors other than education: five individuals;
- Academic leadership trajectory: one non-traditional (with no tenure but program director experience), two minimal (tenured-faculty experience), two with some administrative experiences (faculty and program director), three had been faculty, program director, and department chair, and one individual had been all three mentioned and an academic dean;
- Three of eight had never been an institutional leader of grad education, including positions in a graduate school or a similar unit;
- Most with one exception had experiences only in academic affairs, the exception had experiences in student affairs
• Number of institutions worked at: one institution (two participants), two institutions (one participant), three institutions (two participants), four institutions (one participant), five institutions (one participant), and eight institutions (one participant);
• Number of years in their current position: ranging from one to 22 years;
• Fields of highest degree: STEM (4), social sciences (2), Education (1), and Humanities (1).

Data Sources

Grounded in the MMR approach, I collected both qualitative (open-ended) and quantitative (close-ended) data to help answer my research questions. To ensure my capacity in collecting both forms of data, data triangulation, “the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon” (Denzin, 1978, p. 291), guided my decisions on identifying different sources of data. Further details on these data collection techniques are presented as part of my data collection section below. Document analysis throughout the study enhanced the complexity and trustworthiness in achieving data triangulation throughout the design (Jick, 1979).

I used primarily IPEDS data and documents from professional organization (such as CGS), artifacts provided by participants, such as their curriculum vitae (CV), organizational charts, survey, and interview data. The professional organization documents related to graduate deans and the administration of graduate education (e.g., IPEDS and CGS) and institutional documents and websites that contain discourse on the titles, roles and functions of graduate deans are to help identify participants. The purpose of collecting and analyzing these documents were two-fold: to learn more about my
population from existing professional networks, which further informed the language used in the survey instrument and interview questions; to help me generate the list of survey participants based on institutional documents for their names, email addresses, and so on.

**Survey instrument.** The development of the survey instrument relied on the literature and the research questions driving the study. The survey consisted of three major sections, namely, general demographics, professional experience, and professional perceptions (see Appendix B for the full survey; and Appendix D for the interview protocol).

**Interviews.** Interviews are one of the most popular means to collect data in qualitative research design (Sutton & Austin, 2015). They provide in-depth information on participants’ experiences and capture their perspectives on the chosen topic (Turner, 2010). The flexibility in the interview structure (how structured it is) and format (how formal it is) provide a range of freedom to include relevant questions to address the study. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003) summarized three formats for interview design, namely informal conversational interview, general interview guide approach, and standardized open-ended interview. The last format, standardized open-ended interviews seemed most appropriate for my study for following reasons: the conversational nature and general interview guide seemed less relevant to my study in getting answers from a highly professionalized group given the specific research questions I wanted to answer; whereas the standardized method reinforced consistency in data collection for case study, which allowed for flexibility.
Because I intended to interview self-nominated participants from the survey, I used survey information on each of the participants’ background and institutional data from IPEDS and web-analysis to inform the interviews. In this study, I relied primarily on semi-structured, open-ended interviews (see Appendix D for the list of interview questions). The interview questions were designed primarily based on the research questions, the literature, and in congruent areas to mirror the questions asked in the survey, namely general demographics, professional experiences, and perceptions of leadership. An added portion of the interview protocol was to ask the participants to directly talk about their leadership experiences. To improve the clarity of the interview questions, I relied on feedback from both the dissertation committee and the panel of experts who helped me with the survey development.

The higher degree of uniformity in the wording of the survey items and interview questions comes from the MMR design as I sought to answer my research questions through both the quantitative and qualitative mythologies. The higher level of structure in language also helped with the consistency in my research objectives and efforts to answer the same questions through interviewing different individuals. The semi-structured interviews allowed me to generate data in a consistent approach yet with a certain degree of freedom to ask follow-up questions, afforded by the open-ended nature which enables the participants to contribute in their own ways to the questions.

**Data Collection**

Data collection included documents, survey data, and interview data. The collection of documents started with the literature review and includes reports,
guidelines, and other public documents from professional organizations (G. Bowen, 2009).

**Pre-survey announcements.** The participants’ institutions (including public or private and size), titles, and contact information (email, mail, and office number) were finalized in a master list at the end of August 2018. I built the survey in Qualtrics, which is an online platform that affords a complete and comprehensive survey design solution. The survey distribution consisted of three stages. On September 5, 2018, I sent out the pre-survey announcement to 266 participants to introduce what the study was, notifying them in the following week (September 11-13, 2018) they were expected to receive an email from me (see Appendix E). Using the pre-survey announcement, I attempted to help my participants understand the importance of my study; to check the accuracy of email addresses and if there were any recent position changes which had not been reflected out on the institutions’ websites.

As a result, I received several confirmations. One participant emailed back declining to participate in the study. I took this individual out from my survey contact list. A number of participants emailed me with updated email addresses and other individuals reached out to note position changes. I used these notes and further refined my contact list.

Given the fact that my study participants were highly professional-oriented and typically have demanding schedules, I distributed my survey in three stages. During stage one I sent out an email to the 265 participants on September 14, 2018. I received 53 responses. One individual emailed me indicating the wish to drop out of survey, and I removed this individual. I sent out my first email reminder on September 24, 2018 to
follow up with those on my contact list (211 participants) who had not responded to my initial survey. An additional 26 participants responded, with one asking to be removed from the survey list. To reach to more participants, I submitted a request to CGS’s communication team in charge of the CGS newsletter, and this office reached out to all its member institutions. The content featured in the newsletter was a short description about the nature of the study and my contact information. The final email reminder went out on October 8, 2018 and another 21 participants filled out the survey. The survey data collection concluded on October 19 with a total of 100 valid responses, for a response rate of 38%. The advantages and disadvantages of distributing survey via internet are presented in Table 4.

After spending around two weeks on cleaning the survey data and running descriptive statistics, I identified eight participants to interview and sent out scheduling emails on October 30, 2018. The scheduling and interviews took a month and a half to conduct. My first interview took place on November 6, 2018, and my last interview was on December 17, 2018. All interviews were recorded.
At the end of the three-stage survey collection, I sent a thank-you note to all survey and interview participants in the early spring of 2019 that included tea bags as a note of appreciation for their courtesy in responding to the survey. Other beneficiaries the study participants received will be further addressed in “Ethical Consideration” section.

**Interview process.** I spent around two weeks after the conclusion of the survey examining the survey data, especially the variables related to leaders’ demographic information, professional experiences, and leadership experiences. Seven interviews were conducted over phone while one was conducted in person. Once the appointment was made, I encouraged the participants to send back their consent forms to me prior to our conversations (see Appendix F). All consent forms were retrieved, and I shared back with the participants once I added my signature. Before each interview took place, I sent...
the list of roles of a graduate school from CGS to my participants in preparation of the interview.

I did member-checking throughout the interviews and after the interview with my participants. I started my every interview with introducing the concept and procedure of member-checking to my interviewees regardless of their familiarity with qualitative approaches, noting that I would be paraphrasing their responses to make sure I understood their experiences on the spot. Once the interview was conducted, I transcribed the most audios using a web-based transcription service, Temi (temi.com), which provided advanced speech recognition for speech-to-text transcription. I transcribed my two interviews by hand: the first interview to reflect on my interview techniques and the flow of the interview questions; and the one conducted in person given there was significant noise in the recording. For all Temi-assisted transcriptions, I re-listened to the audio files and edited the final files for accuracy. In the meanwhile, I also took notes of connections I made, questions I wanted to ask about for clarity, as well as the observations I had over my own interviewing techniques, the wording of the questions, and the flow of the conversations. I made tweaks on the sequence of the questions slightly as a result of my ongoing reflection.

I then summarized every conversation into a one to two-and-a-half-page summary and sent to all participants for general feedback, including their comfort level with the content being shared, the accuracy of their experiences, as well as some questions came to me during transcribing that I did not get a chance to ask during the actual interviews. Seven participants responded to my emails and approved the summaries with answers to my plugged-in questions and different levels of feedback on the content. I also took the
opportunity to ask participants to email their curriculum vitae to me. All but one
participant shared their CVs with me.

Data Analysis

I concluded my survey collection in late October and analyzed in January 2019. After doing some initial data cleaning and analysis I started the interview process by the end of October. All interviews were analyzed during January and February. Recall that an MMR requires data integration as part of its distinctiveness from a single-method study. Once both analyses were completed, I integrated the data from the two methodologies employed.

Constant comparative analysis. Document analysis is an increasingly common practice in qualitative research (G. Bowen, 2009; Stemler, 2001). It is often paired with other qualitative research method to realize data triangulation as a systematic procedure of reviewing and assessing documents, whether the materials are in print or electronic (G. Bowen, 2009). Researchers can employ many forms of documents for systematic evaluation as part of a study.

Typical analytic procedures of document analysis consist of “finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesizing data contained in documents” (G. Bowen, 2009, p. 28). During the process of reviewing the literature as well as solidifying the research design, I relied on document analysis to yield excerpts, quotations, or other forms of evidence that will allow me to adjust and assimilate similar themes and categories through content analysis (G. Bowen, 2009; Labuschagne, 2003).

Survey data analysis. Once the data are collected, the first step is to prepare the survey data for analysis. Fowler (2014) stated data formatting, code developing, coding
management, data entry, and data checking are the fundamental procedures during the data preparation stage. As far as formatting, Qualtrics compiles data into certain file formats for users to download, such as Excel sheet, statistical file (e.g., Software Package for Social Sciences [SPSS], Version 21), and others. I used SPSS file for my analysis. Since Qualtrics automatically categorizes participants’ answers, I analyzed the quantitative data directly in SPSS. For the thematic analysis, I used Excel to mine the open-ended data for certain questions.

The statistical analyses are presented in Chapter 3, including the response rates. The descriptive statistics helped build the profiles of graduate deans, mainly answered my first two research questions. For the third research question, I ran tests between groups and using repeated measures to discover if any significance or differences existed between demographic variables and leadership perceptions.

**Interview data analysis.** After collecting interview data, the first step before data analysis is to devise a thoughtful management plan, especially considering the amount of data I was to gather for the case study. Since my participants came from different institutions, I used an Excel sheet as an inventory list to ensure the overall organization and accessibility of each unit of data for analysis. To organize the documents, artifacts, interview transcripts, and memos which I saved to Box, an IRB-approved web storage space, I used Microsoft Word and Excel as analytic tools (Ose, 2016).

Despite the increasing use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), researchers spend much time looking for software that at best helps manage data and adapt the ones that are more intuitive. Given the wide use of Microsoft Word
and Excel, Ose (2016) developed a much simpler way of coding qualitative data and to sort all the text in proper levels using chapters and subchapters, “rather than trying to analyze the data using complex, very powerful, and sophisticated software” (p. 2). Ose laid out 10 basic steps using only Word and Excel, including:

- collect the data, transcribe the audio files, transfer the text from Word to Excel,
- prepare the Excel document for coding, code in Excel, prepare the coded interviews for sorting, sort the data, transfer quotes and references from Excel to Word, sort the text into a logical structure based on the coding, and analyze the data. (p. 3)

The steps essentially replace the need to use any CAQDAS but still allow researchers to use either a priori codes or codes developed, which can be kept in a separate Excel sheet (Ose, 2016). It also suits the purpose of coding and structuring answers to open-ended questions in Web-based surveys. For these very reasons, I used Word and Excel to organize and organize all the qualitative data.

Even though case study is known as a data collection method, how to analyze the data is probably the most challenging and the least codified part of this method (Eisenhardt, 1989). Different from the quantitative process which aims at producing statistical generalization, qualitative research shoots for analytical generalization (Baskarada, 2014). Yin (2013) considered analytical generalization as the extraction of abstract concepts from each unit of analysis; theoretically these abstract concepts relate to developed theories and can be used to other cases.

At the beginning of the coding process I read interview transcripts, notes, and/or other artifacts while jotted down any initial thoughts in memos. Memos, as research
notes that capture the development and interpretations of data patterns, accompanied the entire qualitative process. As many researchers have characterized the coding process as highly iterative and incremental, I paid extra attention to its evolving nature by dedicating time to journaling and memoing.

I used sentence as a unit for coding. Constant comparative method is at core of qualitative analysis (Boeje, 2002). Some researchers use the term constant comparison analysis ([CCA], Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008), which includes three main stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding comes first after reading through transcripts to identify concepts, related properties, and dimensions through immersing the researcher in data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Next comes axial coding, which starts with conceptualizing, identifying potential categories, and developing categories and subcategories in terms of properties and dimensions. Finally, selective coding is the “process of integrating and refining the theory” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 143). CCA allowed me to revisit the patterns or themes identified over and over throughout the data mining process. I used all the CCA methods in my individual case analysis.

The CCA tactic affords an approach to data analysis within the same case and across multiple cases while maintaining some intra-consistency (Yin, 1981). Case-comparison approach is commonly used for the purpose of cross-case analysis and suitable for studies with smaller case numbers. Case-comparison approach aims to compare lessons learned from each case study as well as to emerge a possible explanation in common across cases (Yin, 1981). Once all interviews were coded, I followed Ose’s instruction and transferred both codes and excerpts to one Word document and grouped
the codes into patterns and themes based on the theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter 2, namely, leader and leadership, academic leadership, and mid-level leadership.

**Ethical Considerations**

My study involved human subjects; hence I obtained IRB approval prior to collecting any data. I designed the study to avoid imposing risks to survey respondents and interview participants (see Appendix F). Informed consents were included at the beginning of the survey sent to participants and an additional consent form was completed by interview participants to assure their understanding of voluntary participation and to emphasize their rights to end their participation at any stage of the study.

In the presentation of finding, I maintained cautious regarding how I presented the data. For instance, I presented survey data in aggregated ways to ensure confidentiality. For interviews, I assigned pseudonyms for individuals and institutions in interviews for the purpose of case analysis and to protect my participants’ identity. Given the use of an email list and the possibility of recruiting participants for follow-up interviews, it is unlikely to achieve anonymity. However, I strove to use procedures to ensure confidentiality, such as the use of pseudonyms at the very beginning of the study and securing research data on a password protected laptop which only I could access. In the “Participant” section, I discussed reaching out to CGS for endorsement. Since I did not distribute the survey through its newsletter, I did not risk any potential identity leak.

For social science researchers, scientifically informed protect of human subjects comes first in research interactions (E. Newman, Willard, Sinclair, & Kaloupek, 2001). Furthermore, researchers need to consider how to provide benefits and maximize such
benefits for study participants. For surveys, the main benefits to respondents are largely intrinsic; participants often share enjoying the process of a bigger project or feeling that they have contributed to a worthwhile effort (Fowler, 2014). Similarly, study shows that member checking in interviews allows interviewees to acquire therapeutic benefits (Harper & Cole, 2012). From my past research experiences both as an interviewer for other studies and a participant in others’ studies, I found interview participants often appreciated the opportunity to reflect upon their life and professional events and obtained a sense of relief and some validation. And several participants did express an appreciation of being interviewed and the opportunity to review their interview summary despite their busy schedules.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

This section takes stock of the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations undergirding this dissertation study. As a learning process, I hope to help my readers and future researchers and those who are interested in using the findings gain more awareness of design defaults.

Assumptions. There were several assumptions I made at the proposal stage, which are important for me to note here. First and foremost, I assumed that my participants understood my survey and interview questions. In relation to my paradigm, the methods, and methodological approaches, I projected positive results for the study. For instance, in terms of the use of survey, I assumed participants would willing to participate and provide honest and accurate responses. Concerning the interviews, I assumed that I would be able to maximize participant variation, getting rich and thick
data, while being able to make sense of the data. I also assumed that my participants would tell the truth in their responses

**Limitations.** The study has its limitations. Since there were multiple layers and components of the study, it is necessary to address these concerns here before sharing the results.

**Limitations of IPEDS and Carnegie Classification data.** IPEDS houses institutional data that are most current. Therefore, the advantage of using IPEDS data is the collecting process is systematic and covers many institutions. The down side for using data from an agency is a time lag that exists in these datasets. Similarly, the Carnegie Classification updates every three to five years. The most recent version accessible at the proposal stage of this study was the 2015 results. According to the website, the CCIHE released the latest classification by the end of 2018. Since this study was time bound for dissertation completion as part of my degree requirement, I used the 2015 classification, which might lead to some sampling differences if other researchers were to use the 2018 classification.

**Limitations of methods.** Even though MMR’s intention is to use complementary methods to achieve greater rigor in research, the overall quality of the study depends on the survey instrument and the interview protocol, and how different methods and data are integrated into analysis. Both the survey and interview data might not be sufficient to cover all possible experiences the population of interest would have. For a case study, the sample examined in this study did not rule out alternative explanations despite the findings can be suggestive.
Time constraint (Delva, Kirby, Knapper, & Birtwhistle, 2002) is an often mentioned factor in research, especially in survey research, on two ends: the respondents may experience overload of work and do not have the time to complete the survey; and doctoral student researchers face the time constraint to complete the study and finish it on time for graduation. As a result, the time that I could afford for this study to unfold might affect the response rates and limiting to study participants.

**Limitation of the survey instrument.** One of the concerns for the study I had as a researcher was the reliance on the use of *Organization and Administration of Graduate Education* published by the Council of Graduate Schools in 2004. There was not enough information from the document itself for me to know how those statements were determined. Even though the literature highly corroborated these statements, it had been more than a decade since the document was published. The lack of empirical studies, systematic reviews of graduate education, and the records of methodology together made it challenging to judge the relevance of these statements as of 2018. The role of the graduate school suggested by CGS could be too general for individual institutions, as well as too broad or far-reaching for the deans of graduate schools to relate, follow, or adapt. The use of the document could be to some extent constraining too, as it offered a set of parameters for graduate schools, which could further limit participants in naming other functions they observed.

To counterbalance this shortcoming, I plotted several measures in the survey in gathering perceptions of individual, unit, and institution to confirm how graduate deans attest these tenets in institutional contexts and the current era, as well as getting to more nuanced understandings in perceptions over importance and self-efficacy. The responses
of the participants served as one source of evidence in checking how these statements were aligned with the graduate deans currently in the position. Another source of evidence came from the interviews since I had an opportunity to discuss with selected participants about to what extent these statements align with their perceptions as well as the reasons why certain roles might be easier or more difficult to pursue at their institutions.

**The main use of self-reported data.** Since survey and interviews were the primary methods of data collection in this study, I acknowledged the limitation of using self-reported data. This type of data was assumed to be accurate. However, careful examination should take place in corroboration of other evidences, such as individual artifacts and institutional documents.

**Delimitations.** The choice of research focus derived from my analysis of current literature and my judgment on how developed this research area is. Hence, at the dissertation stage, I intended only to collect data from graduate deans and particularly those who work at Doctoral Universities. It was apparent that graduate deans are only one of several influences on graduate education. Future research could take provost, staff working in the graduate unit, faculty, and students as study focus to compare with graduate deans’ responses.

Recall the problem of interest for this study was to understand more about the leaders of graduate education in the U.S., namely the graduate deans. The intention of this research was to build leader profiles of current graduate deans and to identify graduate deans’ perceptions of leadership and the role of graduate school. As such, some related research topics, like the organizational structure and administration of graduate
education and the role of graduate deans, are important and interesting, and addressed to some extent by the findings of this study; yet the efforts to study those questions exceeded the scope of the current one.

Finally, in studying graduate deans’ perceptions of the role of graduate school, I examined a couple of institutional characteristics, such as size, public or private status, and research intensity based on Carnegie Classification. By no means were these variables intended to be inclusive. Future research with greater sample sizes may be able to investigate more variables of interest.

**Researcher Subjectivity**

Many researchers discuss their roles in the research process. For example, England (1994) regarded research as a process, more than a product; hence, research also creates a shared space shaped by both the researcher and participants. Typically, qualitative research has the tradition and practice of requiring researchers to disclose their subjectivity as researchers serve as the primary “instruments” in research process compared the quantitative approach. Since part of the MMR approach of this study includes the qualitative process, I found it necessary to address my personal assumptions, beliefs, and relevant experiences as well as what drew me to this study as a researcher. This activity allowed me to better connect with the MMR approach through verbalizing my research paradigms.

Discussing paradigms would be a good place to start. Tying back to the earlier section on constructionism, I saw myself in this paradigm as I continued to deepen my understanding of this topic through multiple ways of knowing: I examined artifacts, documents, narratives, and anecdotal evidence generated by others, which impacted how
I made sense of my topic and the decisions in the research design; I searched for empirical and scholarly endeavors as well as referred to initiatives from government, institutions, professional associations, and other constituents as all constitutes what informed me to make research judgments; I relied on historical narratives on U.S. higher education, institutions, organizational structures, and the graduate education in belief that the dimension of time added much depth to academic culture, traditions, and grounded my thinking in context; I immersed myself wholeheartedly in the study as well as discussed with peers, colleagues, mentors, faculty, and administrators who had direct experiences with graduate education for their feedback and perspectives on the direction I took on this study; I built my arguments and methodological approaches based on previous researchers’ philosophical beliefs and paradigmatic approaches which reinforced their own works and my work; I connected a variety of leadership theories and organizational theories from psychology, management, business, history, philosophy, and other disciplines. It was rather difficult for me to parse out how each one of these elements influenced my conceptualizing and my perception of my own ability in conveying a study on such a topic. But I would like to acknowledge the complexity of my thinking as both a human behavior and in a constrained manner due to the scope of a dissertation and the time and space allowed by degree completion.

Apart from these influences, my personal and professional experiences had likely influenced how I conceptualized the research topic, process, and made meaning of the design and the data. I reveal some of my relevant experiences and professional aspirations in hope that these would help my readers understand why I believed this to be a needed, important, and interesting study. My professional goal is to become a faculty
in a higher education program in the U.S. with a focus on graduate education and academic leadership. Prior to my doctoral training, I received training in language teaching and worked as a Chinese teacher for two years. During my doctoral training, I worked with the Council of Graduate Schools as a Graduate Student Researcher in 2017 and 2018 summer. I came to the U.S. as an international student for my doctoral program; in a sense I am a beneficiary of globalization and knowledge economy. I came to the U.S. for better educational experiences to improve my own human and social capital.

My earlier training prior to my doctoral program was a combination of natural sciences, humanities, and teacher education. During the course of my Ph.D. program, I grew interests in identity and professional development of faculty through the lens of disciplinary backgrounds, gender, and career development. Therefore, I have a strong belief in both teacher/faculty continuous development and higher education for public good endorsed by life-long learning, self-directed learning, and human development. I hope this section on researcher subjectivity provides more information to my readers as well as future researchers to see both the strengths and limitations of me as the principal investigator of this study.
Summary

This study utilized a sequential MMR design to answer the research questions, with the aim to depict the descriptive profile of graduate deans and the role of graduate school in their perceptions. The first phase deployed a survey instrument to gather demographic and professional information of graduate deans. The second phase involved selection of eight participants for individual case studies based on a set of criteria. In this chapter, I laid out the details for the research plan and execution supported by the previous two chapters. The data collected in this chapter informs the analysis, findings, and implications presented in the next four chapters: survey findings (Chapter 4), qualitative findings (Chapters 5 and 6), data integration by MMR and the discussion featuring a summary, limitations, future research directions, and implications (Chapter 7).
CHAPTER 4: SURVEY FINDINGS

A total of 334 institutions were classified as Doctoral Universities based on the Carnegie Classification 2015. A final sample of 264 institutions was solidified after I performed a thorough web search of all the Doctoral Universities. Reasons for the missing representation from the 334 to 264 are mainly due to information accessibility. For example, military institutions did not share contact information for designated personnel on the website. Other institutions were excluded for similar reasons. Some did not have a graduate school or equivalent unit and some too did not have the position of the graduate dean or equivalent titles. To avoid forced comparisons, such as including a provost from an institution into the sample, I excluded the individuals whose job titles or descriptions did not specifically address graduate education or graduate studies. The response rates based on different institutional characteristics are presented in Tables 5, 6, and 7.

Table 5

*Pool of Institutions Based on Carnegie Classification (2015)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carnegie Classification (2015)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Final Sample</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>34.43%</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>43.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>32.04%</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>39.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>33.53%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>17.05%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6

*Pool of Institutions Based on Sectors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Final Sample</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>58.68%</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>71.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>36.63%</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>28.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For-profit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.99%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7

*Pool of Institutions Based on Carnegie Classification*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Mission</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Final Sample</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Grant</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>17.07%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>82.93%</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>90.15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In sum, 101 participants from 101 institutions out of 264 completed their responses in the survey, yielding a 37.88% response rate. One respondent did not consent to participate hence was not included in the response rate (N=100). I further examined the response patterns based on the intensity of research activity, sector (public, private, or for-profit), and special missions of the institutions (mainly institutions’ land grant status).

In terms of response behavior, R2 institutions had the highest response rate of 41.90%, followed by R3 institutions with 37.78% and finally R1 institutions, 34.21%. Table 8 and Table 9 show the makeup of institutions among the pool for sampling as well as the respondents.
Table 8

Response Rates Based on Carnegie Classification (2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Final Sample</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39.00%</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>34.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44.00%</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>41.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17.00%</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>37.78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The final sample of this study did not have a respondent from the for-profit sector.

The makeup of the respondents’ sector (76% public and 24% private) is similar to the makeup of the pool. Ultimately, the public institutions had a higher response rate than the private sector.

Table 9

Response Rates Based on Sectors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Final Sample</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>76.00%</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>40.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24.00%</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>32.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For-profit</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Descriptive Profile of the Graduate Deans at U.S. Doctoral Universities

This section mainly addresses the first research question by providing a descriptive profile of the graduate deans currently in positions at Doctoral Universities. The profile consists of both demographic information as well as professional experiences provided by the 100 respondents.

Demographic information. Demographic information presents individuals’ characteristics regarding race and ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, and educational background. With enough participants in the subcategories, chi-squares were
run to determine if gender affected the types of institutions at which the participants worked.

**Race and ethnicity.** Out of 100 respondents, two self-identified as Hispanic. In terms of race, the majority self-identified as White with a sum of 88 individuals (88%). The sample’s minority respondents consisted of five Asian (5%) and seven Black individuals (7%), leading to a total of 14% of minorities.

**Gender identity and sexual orientation.** The respondents’ gender composition is made up by 45 female (45%) and 54 male (54%) participants, with one respondent chose “prefer not to say” in the answer (N=100). Regarding sexual orientation, 12 respondents self-identified as members of the LGBTQ community; 86 did not identify as a member of the LGBTQ community. Two respondents put “prefer not to answer” such information.

In determining if gender had any association with the sector or research intensity of the institution, I ran chi-square tests for both relationships given that both variables are categorical. The assumptions of chi-square have been met given there are enough participants in each of the subgroups. The chi-square results pertaining to gender would showcase if there were more women or men working at a specific type of institutions.

**Gender and sector.** No significant association between gender and sector was detected (p > 0.05). The chi-square test shows that for this sample, an individual’s gender did not correlate with the type of institution one worked at.
Table 10

*Cross Tabulation of Gender by Institution Sector*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Characteristics</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public or private status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Public or private status</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within gender</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Public or private status</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within gender</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Public or private status</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within gender</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11

*Chi-Square Results of Gender by Institution Sector*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (1-sided)</th>
<th>Point Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>.002(^a)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.966</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.575</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction(^b)</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.966</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.575</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>.002(^c)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.966</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.575</td>
<td>.186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.91. 
\(^b\)Computed only for a 2x2 table. \(^c\)The standardized statistic is -.043.

*Gender and research intensity.* No significant association between gender and research intensity was detected \((p > 0.05)\). The chi-square test shows that for this sample an individual’s gender did not correlate with the research intensity of institution one worked at.
**Table 12**

*Cross Tabulation of Gender by Institution’s Research Intensity*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Intensity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within research intensity</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within gender</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within research intensity</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>51.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within gender</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>40.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within research intensity</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within gender</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Count</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected Count</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within research intensity</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within gender</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13

**Chi-Square Results of Gender by Institution’s Research Intensity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (1-sided)</th>
<th>Point Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square Test</td>
<td>.525(^a)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.769</td>
<td>.772</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>.526</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.769</td>
<td>.772</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>.564</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>.312(^b)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.576</td>
<td>.676</td>
<td>.337</td>
<td>.095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.73. \(^b\)The standardized statistic is -.559.

**Educational background.** Out of 100 respondents, 98 individuals had doctoral degrees, which included both Ph.D. and Ed.D. degrees. The other two respondents had either a master’s or a bachelor’s degree, leaving this respondent sample highly educated. One participant reported having a J.D. degree in addition to a Ph.D. degree. Thus, individuals with terminal academic degrees, instead of the professional degrees (per survey the professional degrees consist of M.D., J.D., DDS, DVM), seemed to arrive to the position of graduate dean.

Roughly dividing disciplinary backgrounds into humanities, social sciences, STEM, education, law, business, and other, 50 of the institutional leaders of graduate education had degrees in STEM. See a more detailed disciplinary background representation in the table below (since one participant reported having two highest degrees, here the sum is 101 instead of 100).
Table 14

*Descriptive Statistics of Participants’ Educational Backgrounds*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fields</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Language studies, musicology, English, history, religion, art</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social sciences</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Psychology, sociology, economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEM</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Biology, kinesiology, marine science, chemistry, physics, computer science, pharmaceutics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Higher education administration, science education,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>International law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Marketing, management, administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Health studies, communication, food systems management, bioethicist, public administration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Professional experiences.** Often, leaders are expected to have extensive professional experiences. This section specifically looks at the professional experiences the graduate deans had in terms of sector, functional areas worked in higher education, and if they had experiences specific to graduate education before.

**Cross-sector experience.** The survey collected individuals’ professional experiences in different sectors: the private sector, government, military, non-government, education, and other. A sizable number of individuals indicated they had worked in the private sector, followed by around a dozen who have worked in government, non-government, and other sectors respectively. Only two respondents suggested having worked in the military.
Table 15

Participants’ Experiences by Sector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Government</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (such as museum, non-profit</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>organizations)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additionally, slightly over half of the respondents (n=53) had experiences of working outside of education, meaning that they had professional experiences in one or more sectors other than education. Among those who worked in more than one sector, 15 individuals worked in multiple sectors.

Table 16

Number of Participants with Cross-Sector Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cross-Sectors</th>
<th>Sectors</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two and education</td>
<td>Government and NGO</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private and Government</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private and NGO</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private and Military</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three and education</td>
<td>Private, Government, and Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government, NGO, and Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Experiences in higher education.* The respondents reported lengthy careers working in higher education. A few individuals, six, had worked in higher education for less than 15 years. More than 30 individuals spent 16 to 25 years in higher education, and 44 worked in higher education for 26 to 35 years. Fewer than 20 respondents spent
more than 36 years in higher education, and the longest career one reported in 47 years of experiences in the postsecondary setting.

Table 17

*Years of Experiences in Higher Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years Working</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; or =15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-25</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-47</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although all graduate deans currently in position had experiences in academic affairs, more than one-third of this group \((n=37)\) had experiences in one or more other functional areas within the university (see Tables 18, 19, and 20).

Table 18

*Participants’ Experiences by Functional Areas within Higher Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Higher Education Function</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Affairs</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advancement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Support</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports and Athletics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (e.g., economic development, board of trustee)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Affairs</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19

*Number of Participants with Cross-Area Experiences within Higher Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cross Function</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Affairs + Institutional Support</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Affairs + Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In terms of the number of institutions the respondents have worked at, the number ranges from one to eight ($n=92$): 26 held full-time employment at one institution solely; 32 had experiences working full-time for two institutions; two individuals worked for three institutions. Individuals with full-time employment experiences based on the number of institutions they worked are listed in the table below.

Table 20

*Number of Institutions the Participants Worked at as Full-Time Employees*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Institutions</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of the number of years the graduate deans have worked at their current institutions, the range spans from zero to 40. Using 10 years as a divider, 26% of respondents have been at their current institutions for fewer than 10 years, 25% have worked at their current institution between 10 to 19 years, 30% have more than 20 and fewer than 30 years of experiences, and 19% have more than 30 but under 40 years of experiences.

Table 21

*Demographic Information of the Years of Experiences at Current Institutions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Leadership experience in graduate education. Close to half of the respondents had worked in graduate education prior to their current position \((n=46)\). The majority \((n=24)\) of those who have had experiences serving in graduate education units occurred at the current institution. The next group of participants \((n=19)\) have served the function of graduate education at two institutions. The other three participants each had worked at three, four, and five institutions respectively.

Table 22

Experiences in Graduate Education and Number of Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worked as an institutional leader of graduate education</th>
<th>Number of institutions worked at</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When specifically asked about the number of years of experiences leading graduate education, the experiences again vary from beginning to extensive time in the field. For those who did not have experiences working in graduate education prior to their current position, the number of years they spent in the current position would equal to their tenure working in graduate education \((n=54)\).

Previous positions in graduate education. The survey asked individuals to provide their previous positions related to graduate education. Out of a sum of 42 previous positions, I grouped them first by the specificity of the titles. I put the ones with complete titles into one group, and the others that only put “associate deans” or “assistant deans” in another due to the possibility that these positions could be at an academic unit.
I further coded the first group by functional areas and rank, and the second group only by their ranks.

Table 23

*Complete Titles Reported for Previous Positions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functional Areas</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate school (graduate studies, graduate college, and graduate education)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Provost Director</td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Senior Associate</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vice</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and graduate studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Council</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic units (colleges and schools)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic affairs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Provost Director</td>
<td>Vice</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Complete Title Group (*n=24*)

Table 24

*General Titles Reported for Previous Positions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Senior Associate</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provost</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Senior Vice</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vice</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Associate Vice</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinator</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Director</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate advisor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* General title group (*n=26*)

**Current positions.** Half of the respondents (*n=50*) in this sample have three years or fewer in their current position. Respondents with four to nine years of experience as
dean made up 37% and the remaining 13% of survey participants have 10 or more years of experiences in their current position as a graduate dean. The participant with the most experience in the current position has been a graduate dean at the institution for 28 years.

A more detailed table is provided below.

Table 25

*Years in Current Positions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Cumulative %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Leadership trajectory.* Graduate deans go through different positions with a number of different starting positions. Similar to other academic administrators, the most common starting point is a tenure-track faculty position. This study finds this true based on the fact that 94 out of 100 respondents have been a tenured faculty at a four-year university. For other common academic administrative positions held, 79 had experiences in the role of program director, 52 served as department chairs, whereas 22 had been academic deans prior to becoming a dean of the graduate school. The table below marks the number of ranks graduate deans in the sample went through before becoming a graduate dean.
Table 26

*Leadership Trajectory by Position Titles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Program Director</th>
<th>Department Chair</th>
<th>Academic Dean</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although 46 individuals indicated they had worked in graduate education, one did not provide the information on how long this individual worked in graduate education.

Close to half of the participants \( n=45 \) had fewer than three years of experiences in graduate education; close to one-third of the participants \( n=32 \) had experiences in leadership with graduate education somewhere between 3-10 years, leaving 22 participants with more than 10 years of experiences in leading graduate education. See the table below for detailed information \( N=99 \).

Table 27

*Demographic Information of the Years of Experiences in Graduate Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;3</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-10</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding leadership trajectory, it is evident that the most common route to the graduate dean position according to the sample is faculty—program director—
department chair—graduate dean (n=32). The second most frequent pathway is faculty—program director—graduate dean (n=28). However, looking at the number of ranks individuals went through to get to the position of the dean of graduate school highlights that individuals went through two or three ranks in 82% of the experiences.

Out of the six participants who did not have tenure, two did not go through any traditional faculty-administrator ranks at all. One participant indicated rising from the position of Associate Dean for Student Affairs to the position as a graduate dean. The other had an affiliate professor position (non-tenure track) and established the trajectory through working in the graduate school unit.

*Reporting lines.* When asked about whom they reported to on campus, the results showed that the most common supervisor of the deans of graduate school is the provost (88%). However, the provost may be titled differently at different institutions. Given that supervisor’s leadership titles are not the focus of this study, I categorized the supervisor into the following categories.
Table 28

*Reporting Lines by Supervisor Titles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisor</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Title Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Chancellor, or the Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provost</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>Provost and Executive Vice President/Chancellor (of Academic Affairs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provost and …</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>Provost and President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report to more than one position</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Provost and Vice President of Research and Technology Transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Economic Development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate or Vice leaders</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Associate Academic Vice President Associate Vice President of Academic Programs Vice Provost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean of Graduate School</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary.** From the descriptive statistics, we now know several things about the graduate deans. Demographically, the sample had slightly over half deans who were men. According to Chi-Square results, there were not gendered differences between one’s gender and what types of institution one worked at. Those who identified as LGBTQ community consisted of 12% of the sample; racial and ethnic minorities also took up 12% of the sample. Most of them had advanced degrees among which half of the graduate deans had degrees from STEM fields. More than half of them had experiences working in sectors other than education. And about one thirds of them had functional areas experiences in addition to academic affairs. Of all the graduate deans, slightly under half had worked previously in a graduate unit; for the other half, their current position was their first time being in the dean position. Tenured faculty position was the most common starting point for individuals to begin their academic leadership.
Perceptions of the Roles of Graduate Schools

This section presents the descriptive statistics of the graduate deans’ perceptions on the roles of graduate schools. Accordingly, group comparisons were run to detect if there was any difference in the deans’ opinions regarding their institutional and individual characteristics.

**Descriptive statistics of perceptions.** Recall, the survey utilized a set of statements from *Organization and Administration of Graduate Education* (2004) espoused by the Council of Graduate Schools to which the respondents indicated their perceptions. The graduate deans’ perceptions were recorded by four measures, namely their perceived importance of these statements and their ability and confidence (i.e., self-efficacy) at the individual, unit, and institution levels. Descriptive statistics for all statements by each measure is presented in separate tables including the minimum and maximum statistics, means, and standard deviation. This process ensured the data collection for the second and third research questions.

To test whether the scores made up normal distributions or not, I ran Kolmor Gorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests (Shapiro & Wilk, 1965). These two tests are commonly used to compare the scores in the sample to a normally distributed set of scores. If the test is non-significant, it means that the sample is not significantly different from a normal distribution. On the contrary, if the test is significant, it suggests the distribution is non-normal. The tests of normality were run for all the statements by each measure as well and presented after the tables of descriptive statistics for each measure.
Table 29

*Descriptions Statistics of Perceived Importance of the Statements*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived importance</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for graduate education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>0.307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulate a vision of excellence for the graduate community</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>0.426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success of graduate programs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0.577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>0.581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support graduate student services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>0.687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the intellectual community of scholars among both graduate students and faculty</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>0.703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain equitable standards across all academic disciplines</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>0.702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring an institution-wide perspective to all post-baccalaureate endeavors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide an interdisciplinary perspective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>0.808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define what graduate education is and what it is not</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>1.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize the importance of adequately training future college and university teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>0.956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance undergraduate education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>0.907</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N=100*
Table 30

*Descriptions Statistics of the Statements: Self-Efficacy on the Individual Level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Efficacy on the Individual Level</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for graduate education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>.548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success of graduate programs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>.674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulate a vision of excellence for the graduate community</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>.656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support graduate student services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>.734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide an interdisciplinary perspective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>.739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define what graduate education is and what it is not</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>.880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring an institution-wide perspective to all post-baccalaureate endeavors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>.849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>.790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the intellectual community of scholars among both graduate students and faculty</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>.796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain equitable standards across all academic disciplines</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>.903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize the importance of adequately training future college and university teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>.918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance undergraduate education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>.952</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N=100*
Table 31

**Descriptions Statistics of the Statements: Unit Efficacy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Efficacy</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for graduate education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>.539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulate a vision of excellence for the graduate community</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>.575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>.717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of graduate programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support graduate student services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>.717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>.744</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the intellectual community of scholars among both graduate students and faculty</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>.756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define what graduate education is and what it is not</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>.829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain equitable standards across all academic disciplines</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>.825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide an interdisciplinary perspective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>.872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring an institution-wide perspective to all post-baccalaureate endeavors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>.891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize the importance of adequately training future college and university teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>.963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance undergraduate education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>.922</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N=100*
Table 32

*Descriptions Statistics of the Statements: Institution Efficacy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Efficacy on the Institution Level</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the intellectual community of scholars among both graduate students and faculty</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>.816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulate a vision of excellence for the graduate community</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>.880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for graduate education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>1.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>.873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide an interdisciplinary perspective</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define what graduate education is and what it is not</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support graduate student services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>.929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain equitable standards across all academic disciplines</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>.953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success of graduate programs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring an institution-wide perspective to all post-baccalaureate endeavors</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize the importance of adequately training future college and university teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>.934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance undergraduate education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>.892</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. N=100*
All the tests of normality results are significant (see Appendix G). Significant values indicate deviations from normality. I also used histograms as a complimentary approach to confirm the non-normality results. The normality tests illustrate a high skewedness toward higher scores, further proving the survey respondents were in agreement with most statements.

**Group comparisons.** Recall research question 2 is “how do graduate deans perceive the functions of graduate school as defined by CGS (2004) at their institutions?” I further examined if there were differences in their perceptions determined by institutional factors, such as research intensity, sector, or individual characteristics.

**Research intensity.** If research intensity as an institutional characteristic affected the deans’ perceptions, the results of group comparisons through Kruskal-Wallis test (1952) would be significant. The null hypothesis for this test is that the graduate deans at three groups of RUs based on the research intensity rated the statements the same.

Table 33

*Test Summary of Kruskal-Wallis Tests*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Sig.(2-sided)</th>
<th>Test Statistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceived importance: Serve as an advocate for graduate education</td>
<td>0.009*</td>
<td>9.478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived importance: Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies</td>
<td>0.039*</td>
<td>6.504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived importance: critical to the success of graduate programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual efficacy: Provide quality control</td>
<td>0.028*</td>
<td>7.185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit efficacy: Maintain equitable standards</td>
<td>0.042*</td>
<td>6.351</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 34

*Mann-Whitney Post Hoc Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>R1 and R2</th>
<th>R2 and R3</th>
<th>R1 and R3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Asymp. Sig</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Asymp. Sig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>Serve as an advocate for graduate education</td>
<td>0.010*</td>
<td>-2.586</td>
<td>0.083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success of graduate programs</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>-2.363</td>
<td>0.876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Provide an interdisciplinary perspective</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>-0.189</td>
<td>0.013*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit</td>
<td>Maintain equitable standards</td>
<td>0.027</td>
<td>-2.205</td>
<td>0.048</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*There are three comparisons between group (R1 and R2, R2 and R3, R1 and R3). Thus, the corrected alpha level suggested by Bonferroni is: 0.05/3=0.0167*
From Table 33, the null hypothesis regarding similarity among the graduate deans at R1, R2, and R3 regarding the statement, "Serve as an advocate for graduate education," was rejected. Post hoc analysis demonstrated that graduate deans at R1 institutions rated the importance of the statement higher than the deans at R2 institutions, however, there was no significant difference between either R1 and R3 or R2 and R3. The differences noted regarding the importance of advocacy could be due to several reasons: the graduate units were expected to do graduate education within functional areas, thus they had a higher urgency and need to advocate on campus; R1 institutions could also be larger in size, which often leads to a greater complexity in the organizational structure and the necessity to combat bureaucracy. Chapter 6 will further investigate the reasons for differences among the deans’ ratings with the integration of the qualitative data.

The null hypothesis of graduate deans at R1, R2, and R3 for the statement, “Provide an interdisciplinary perspective,” was rejected. Post hoc analysis demonstrated that deans at R2 institutions rated the importance of the statement higher than those at R3; R1 deans rated the statement more important than R3 deans; there was no significant difference between the R1 and R2 graduate deans. Interdisciplinary studies are a direction many research universities are moving toward. Given that research intensity is a measure of how much expenditure and efforts institutions are devoting for research, and STEM education, in particular, this finding makes sense considering the hierarchy of research activities among the Doctoral Universities. Even though interdisciplinary studies and education is gaining sufficient attention and becoming more popular on campuses, it requires sufficient resources, including faculty, departments, facilities, and others to guarantee the maintenance and success of these programs (more details in
Chapter 6). R1 institutions with more resources and a greater focus on research, more prominent STEM education and more departments are likelier to provide graduate deans the resources and capacity to realize this statement in their individual leadership capacity compared to the deans at R3s. Similarly, R2s would be presumably better equipped than the R3s; or differences may be due to the STEM-focus of the institution, which typically would be associated with higher levels of research activity. However, there was no difference in the deans' efficacy levels between R1 and R2 institutions, which could mean that providing an interdisciplinary perspective is readily adopted by R1 and R2’s graduate education. Possibly, given the research in higher education on institutional isomorphism (see DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), R1s and R2s have similar expectations of who to hire as graduate dean. Considering that institutions are often trying to obtain better rankings and more recognized status, it would not be surprising if some institutions currently characterized as R2 act similarly to their aspiring R1 peer group.

For Statement 12 (“serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success of graduate programs”) on the perceived importance measure and Statement 3 (“maintain equitable standards across all academic disciplines”) at the unit efficacy, both statements were significant supported by Friedman's ANOVA test (1937). Given the use of paired-wise comparisons, I used a corrected alpha level suggested by Bonferroni to correct family-wise error. Thus, the post hoc analyses were not able to detect the differences between groups. One limitation to note about Bonferroni is its over-conservative nature. That explains why the general statistical tests were significant whereas the post-hoc tests were not.
**Sector.** A Mann-Whitney test (Mann & Whitney, 1947) was run between the public and private institutions on all scores and the null hypotheses of two statements “emphasize the importance of adequately training future college and university teachers” as well as “develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance undergraduate education” were rejected in terms of the graduate deans’ individual efficacy in achieving them (\(p < .05\)). The graduate deans at the public institutions rated their individual efficacy in achieving both statements higher than their counterparts at the private institutions. The rest of the scores showed no difference in individual efficacy regarding the other 10 statements. Similarly, all the statements showed no significant difference in perceived importance, unit efficacy, and institution’s efficacy caused by the institution’s funding status.

Table 35

*Mann-Whitney Post Hoc Analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Efficacy</th>
<th>Null Hypothesis</th>
<th>Sig.(2-sided)</th>
<th>Standardized Test Statistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize the importance of adequately training future college and university teachers</td>
<td>(Statement) is the same for the graduate deans at public and private institutions.</td>
<td>0.014</td>
<td>-2.452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance undergraduate education</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>-2.028</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The few significant differences based on institutions' research intensity and public or private status proved to a certain extent that isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) largely exists in graduate education at Doctoral Universities. For most of these statements, graduate deans at all R1, R2, and R3 institutions rated them very similarly across levels.

**Gender.** Due to the non-normality of the variables, a Mann Whitney test (Mann & Whitney, 1947) was carried out. Women in the graduate dean position had larger mean ranks in the following statements and levels of measures listed below. The results indicated that women in the position of graduate dean tended to perceive the following statements (e.g., provide quality control, maintain equitable standards, define what graduate education is and what it is not, and support graduate student services) more important than men. On the individual efficacy level, women felt more confident in their ability to “enhance the intellectual community.” At the unit level, women deans considered their units more capable to “maintain equitable standards” as well as “provide graduate student services.” Finally, at the institutional level, women had higher perceptions of their institution’s ability in achieving four statements, namely, maintain equitable standards, define what graduate education and what it is not, enhance the intellectual community, and support graduate student services. Since all the comparison results were one-way, women’s being higher than men’s, I used Table 36 to mark the statements in which women’s opinions differed from men’s.
Table 36

*Mann-Whitney Post Hoc Analysis (Gender Differences)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Perceived importance</th>
<th>Individual Efficacy</th>
<th>Unit Efficacy</th>
<th>Institution Efficacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide quality control</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain equitable standards</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define what graduate education and what it is not</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the intellectual community</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support graduate student services</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Such gendered differences point to several interesting observations. In terms of opinions, women deans had given higher importance on four statements. Similarly, women deans felt their institutions were more capable of supporting graduate education on four of the statements. On the other hand, individually speaking women and men deans rated themselves equally efficacious on 11 statements, but for the remaining statement, women deans regarded themselves as more confident in enhancing an intellectual community on campus. With their units, women deans felt they could better maintain equitable standards as well as support graduate student services.

**Leadership Efficacy**

One of the goals of this study is to find out if graduate deans can influence the functions of the graduate schools at their institutions and how much confidence they have in their ability to do so. Ideally, if a statement is perceived as important it is more likely to be translated into individual willingness and action in achieving the espoused statement. Such willingness and action can be measured by one’s self-efficacy, which refers to the ability and confidence one has in taking the action. Confidence depends on
many variables, such as the amount of support and resources available to an individual, the effectiveness of a leader, staff, or the unit, and so on. A leader’s individual efficacy can differ from the unit’s efficacy, or the unit’s ability to produce a desired or intended result. Similarly, a graduate education unit’s (such as a graduate school or a graduate division) efficacy could be different from what the institution is attempting to achieve.

Thus, I conducted related-sample comparisons with the goal to detect if the efficacy measures may deviate from the graduate deans’ perceived importance. Since all the statements were scored by the graduate deans, I used related-sample tests, specifically, the Friedman’s ANOVA (Friedman, 1937) for comparative analysis. Wilcoxon signed-rank test is utilized as post hoc test for significant results from the Friedman’s ANOVA to understand which comparisons specifically were significant and the directions and magnitude of the comparisons (i.e., whether the perceived importance is higher than the individual efficacy or the unit efficacy is greater than the institution efficacy).

Based on the descriptive statistics presented earlier on the perceived importance, the statements can be regrouped into four categories. Recall that all the scores of the statements are highly skewed with the participants scoring toward the higher end; thus, I used both the medians and the means to help compare the scores of the statements. Therefore, the assigned importance here is used in relative terms within groups. As Table 37 suggests, the 12 statements are grouped into four categories based on perceived importance: very important (>4.60), important (4.30-4.59), somewhat important (4.00-4.29), and less important (<4.00). Similarly, the levels of efficacy are grouped into very
confident (4.60-5), confident (4.40-4.59), somewhat confident (4.00-4.39), and less confident (<4.00)
### Grouped Perceived Importance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived importance</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for graduate education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulate a vision of excellence for the graduate community</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success of graduate programs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Very important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support graduate student services</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the intellectual community of scholars among both graduate students and faculty</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain equitable standards across all academic disciplines</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring an institution-wide perspective to all post-baccalaureate endeavors</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide an interdisciplinary perspective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define what graduate education is and what it is not</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize the importance of adequately training future college and university teachers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>Less important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance undergraduate education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 38

*Grouped Individual Efficacy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Efficacy</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Efficacy Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for graduate education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success of graduate programs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>Very confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulate a vision of excellence for the graduate community</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support graduate student services</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide an interdisciplinary perspective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define what graduate education is and what it is not</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring an institution-wide perspective to all post-baccalaureate endeavors</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain equitable standards across all academic disciplines</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the intellectual community of scholars among both graduate students and faculty</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>Somewhat confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize the importance of adequately training future college and university teachers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance undergraduate education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>Less confident</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 39

**Grouped Unit Efficacy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Efficacy</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Efficacy Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for graduate education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulate a vision of excellence for the graduate community</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success of graduate programs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>Very confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support graduate student services</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the intellectual community of scholars among both graduate students and faculty</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define what graduate education is and what it is not</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain equitable standards across all academic disciplines</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide an interdisciplinary perspective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring an institution-wide perspective to all post-baccalaureate endeavors</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize the importance of adequately training future college and university teachers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>Somewhat confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance undergraduate education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>Less confident</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 40

*Grouped Institution Efficacy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution Efficacy</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Descriptive Statistics</th>
<th>Efficacy Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the intellectual community of scholars among both graduate students and faculty</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulate a vision of excellence for the graduate community</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for graduate education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>Somewhat confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide an interdisciplinary perspective</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define what graduate education is and what it is not</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support graduate student services</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain equitable standards across all academic disciplines</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success of graduate programs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring an institution-wide perspective to all post-baccalaureate endeavors</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>Less confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize the importance of adequately training future college and university teachers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance undergraduate education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In looking at what was being considered as the most important functional areas for deans based on the CSG listing, the four statements ranked at the top were: (a) serve as an advocate for graduate education, (b) articulate a vision, (c) serve as an advocate for graduate programs, as well as (d) provide quality control. In comparison, three of these four statements (except for provide quality control) were rated highest and the deans felt very confident in both their individual and unit efficacies in realizing these comments. Three statements shared a synergy in speaking for and leading the direction of graduate education on campus.

It is helpful to think about what comparisons are most relevant and how to make meaningful interpretations of these scores and comparisons between repeated measures. I used two approaches (see Table 41 and Table 42) for the detailed results: the first one is to compare self-, unit, and institution’s efficacy respectively to graduate dean’s perceived importance; the second is to compare the efficacy levels between an individual and one’s unit in addition to the unit-institution comparison.

First, to compare all three efficacy scores to the perceived importance provides good information on whether the perceived priorities are met by the ability and confidence to achieve. For example, if the graduate deans’ self-efficacy level is matched with their unit efficacy then at the individual level, the priorities and capacities are matched. If the unit’s efficacy is lower than the perceived importance, the interrelation is that for some reason the deans’ perceived important claims were not fully supported by the unit’s ability. Here it is important to note that ideally having the unit and institution’s efficacy comparable to the perceived importance would highlight how the deans do not lead in a silo but exert influences with the support of graduate schools or institutional resources. It is also intuitive to understand how the unit and institution
should align in their priorities and abilities in supporting areas in order to support the organization together.

To pair with the importance levels learned from the descriptive statistics, the following chart is more telling. According to the statistical results, there are four statements in which the unit’s efficacy did not differ significantly from the perceived importance; three of these statements are either “somewhat important” or “less important.” One statement that was perceived as “important” matched the unit efficacy is “support graduate student services.” In the other six statements that are either “very important” or “important,” the lower unit efficacy compared to the perceived importance suggests that the units for graduate education lack some type of support for the graduate school or office to fully realize the statements that were important to the graduate deans.

When it comes to levels of institutional efficacy, all but one statement differed significantly from the perceived importance. Interpreting this result highlights that to achieve greater efficacy at the institutional level, almost all areas need additional support. The one exception is “define what graduate education is and what it is not.” However, this statement was considered as “less important” by the graduate deans.
Table 41

Repeated-Sample Test Results between Perceived Importance and Measures of Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Perceived Importance</th>
<th>Compared to Perceived Importance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulate a vision of excellence for the graduate community</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for graduate education</td>
<td><strong>Very important</strong></td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success of graduate programs</td>
<td></td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain equitable standards across all academic disciplines</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the intellectual community of scholars among both graduate students and faculty</td>
<td><strong>Important</strong></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support graduate student services</td>
<td></td>
<td>.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring an institution-wide perspective to all post-baccalaureate endeavors</td>
<td><strong>Somewhat important</strong></td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide an interdisciplinary perspective</td>
<td></td>
<td>.620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define what graduate education is and what it is not</td>
<td></td>
<td>.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize the importance of adequately training future college and university teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td>.825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance undergraduate education</td>
<td><strong>Less important</strong></td>
<td>.208</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Revised alpha: 0.05/3=0.0167. All the significant comparisons are in one direction (efficacy < importance) Statements; the underlined number means otherwise.*
Table 42

Revised-Sample Tests results between Efficacy Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Perceived Importance</th>
<th>Efficacy Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulate a vision of excellence for the graduate community</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>* .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for graduate education</td>
<td>.783</td>
<td>* .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success of graduate programs</td>
<td>.435</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain equitable standards across all academic disciplines</td>
<td>.186</td>
<td>* .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the intellectual community of scholars among both graduate students and faculty</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>* .002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support graduate student services</td>
<td>.130</td>
<td>* .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring an institution-wide perspective to all post-baccalaureate endeavors</td>
<td>.868</td>
<td>* .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide an interdisciplinary perspective</td>
<td>.581</td>
<td>* .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define what graduate education is and what it is not</td>
<td>.556</td>
<td>* .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize the importance of adequately training future college and university teachers</td>
<td>.747</td>
<td>* .009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance undergraduate education</td>
<td>.503</td>
<td>* .018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Revised alpha: 0.05/2=0.025. All the significant comparisons are in one direction (efficacy < importance); the underlined number means otherwise.
On the efficacy level, on all but one statement the graduate deans’ self-perceived individual efficacy did not differ significantly from the unit efficacy. This suggests no or very little discrepancies in individual leadership capacity and the units that they were leading. Potentially, graduate deans were able to lead their units effectively and their vision aligned with the rest of the staff members. The exception, where the deans perceived their units had higher capacity than themselves is to “provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education,” as this shows that the units not only aligned with the deans’ personal abilities but also elevated their abilities at the unit level.

When the unit efficacy was compared to the institution's efficacy, however, the results showed a different picture. On all 12 statements, the deans perceived their units to be significantly more capable than their institutions to support these claims. Granted, graduate schools and graduate deans are expected to act upon these statements, and it is intuitive that graduate units were perceived to be more capable than the institutions. These finding showcases that what graduate deans expected in institutions were higher than the support they currently received.

**Open-ended questions.** Two open-ended questions were optional for the respondents to fill out on two areas: what was missing from the CGS statements and what emerging issues the graduate deans saw in their work that they wanted to share. Even though the findings for the two questions showed synergies, the perceived magnitude of the question still differed: missing from the list can be interpreted as something that needed to be added to the current list, whereas the emerging issues would point to some new areas that are worthy of discussions.
**Missing from the list.** This question received 57 responses in total, thus, just over half of the respondents shared something they thought should be added to the list. I then took out six responses that had ideas highly similar to the existent statements or when the participant put “none” or an attitudinal comment as a response (such as “Provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education,” “None,” “Monitor program quality,” and “a good list”). After going through all the responses, I separated some responses into separate entries based on overarching ideas. This process was rather intuitive since participants provided their answers in a bulleted fashion—similar to how the 12 statements were provided in the survey. For instance, one participant might have suggested four ideas whereas another one might have one. The deletion and separation yielded 53 valid responses with 94 separate ideas for coding. I did a thematic coding in Excel based on the responses and grouped all but one response into seven categories: career, program development and innovation, graduate student success, funding and resources, diversity, collaboration and community building, and effectiveness and evaluation.

Table 43

*Themes Missing from the CGS List and Frequency Counts*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program development and innovation</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student success</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding and resources</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration and community building</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. CGS = Council of Graduate Schools*
Career. A total of 23 responses from 20 respondents focused on career aspects. Specifically, eight comments were about providing professional development opportunities to graduate students and five about preparing students for jobs outside of academia. Other less frequently mentioned ideas were training postdocs, aligning education with the market, preparing students for careers with multiple transitions, and meaningful and personal career goals.

Program development and innovation. These two areas are combined into a theme since many comments mention both or are targeted at the programmatic level. This category contains 19 ideas from 15 respondents. Among the 10 comments on developing programs, six targeted recruitment. Other areas were mentioned somewhat sporadically, such as creating programs with an interdisciplinary focus, providing continuing education and professional learning for bachelor’s degree holders, as well as meeting stakeholders’ needs (e.g., the market, the institution, the region, and the state).

The idea of innovation was espoused seven times, yet no specific focus could be determined. Both general and specific comments were entered. Some areas proposed for innovation were micro-credentials, delivery methods, and creating models and units for graduate education.

Student success. This category consists of a range of areas and services the 11 participants deemed missing from the current set of roles of graduate schools with a total of 13 comments. The most mentioned area (five comments) was to monitor the students’ life cycle, including enrollment, matriculation, and graduation. Mentoring and advising came next with three comments. Other one-time comments were about time to degree, ethics, wellbeing, and online student engagement.
Funding and resources. These two areas were comprised of 12 comments from 12 participants, who saw the importance of financial support and bringing resources on campus together to support graduate education. Ideas pointed to supporting students through scholarships, assistantships, and fellowships, setting budgetary priorities to achieve institution’s mission as well as departmental needs, identifying sources of funding, developing funding mechanisms, and support both academic and student affairs in graduate education.

Diversity. There were 10 comments on diversity from 9 participants with a focus on recruiting and access (two comments each) and a general push on increasing diversity among the graduate student body and supporting a more inclusive graduate education community. Groups of students mentioned as examples were minority students, adult learners, and international students.

Collaboration and community building. These two themes are grouped since both appeared to be supported by rather separate ideas on with whom to collaborate (six comments) and with whom to partner (two comments) and were based on seven participants’ contribution. Campus partners mentioned were the institutional research office, accrediting bodies for all disciplines, labor relations (to create unionization), departments and programs, student affairs, and local universities as well as area employers. Community building specified the need to serve the local communities by providing professionals in addition to an alumni network for graduate education.

Evaluation and effectiveness. The last category with seven comments from seven participants is about measures and effectiveness unique to graduate education, with an intention to support the institution’s research mission, contribute to the greater good, and
balancing priorities between the institution and departments. Thus, knowing how to track, define, and improve graduate education came forward in the evaluation piece. However, given the low number of ideas, each comment was made rather succinctly and challenging to generate a frequency count.

*Emerging issues.* When asked about emerging issues for graduate schools to focus on, 37 participants responded. I went through a similar process of deleting responses that are not useful (e.g., two of respondents put “as above” or “see list in the previous box”) and separating ideas into unique units. The final set consisted of 35 respondents and 40 ideas for coding.

I approached this question with thematic coding as well. The common themes to some degree mirrored those discussed in the previous section when I asked the participants about what was missing from the list. The table below shows each theme and the frequency counts.

Table 44

*Themes of Emerging Issues and Frequency Counts*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online and professional education</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellbeing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money-related</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student success</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For career-related comments, the focus was too on preparing students for non-academic jobs and providing non-academic career professional development. In terms of
diversity, different student bodies were mentioned, such as non-traditional students, working adults, women with children, veterans, refugees, historically underserved populations, as well as international students. There was a call for paying more attention to online education, online programs, and proving professional education online. Students’ wellbeing was gaining some attention too on areas of mental health, harassment, and working with health and counseling services. Other rather infrequently mentioned ideas were about funding, fundraising, and student debt; articulating the value of graduate education, including to sectors outside of education; student success; internationalization; the role of faculty teaching; sharing best practices; solving issues in the regional communities; and enrollment management.

**Summary.** This section primarily reviewed how much confidence the graduate deans had in their ability to influence the functions on the graduate school at their institutions. Among all the roles prescribed in the CGS (2004) document, graduate deans considered serving as an advocate for graduate education as well as articulating a vision the most important and regarded themselves most capable of doing these activities, with or without their units’ capacity. In addition to the prescriptions provided by CGS, graduate deans also recognized several important aspects that are currently not emphasized by the list. Areas such as career, student success, and funding were the most mentioned ones that should be promoted to be on graduate deans’ purview.

**Conclusion**

This chapter presents the analysis of the survey and presented findings to answer the first three research questions. The profile of graduate deans was highly diverse in terms of experiences individuals brought with them into their positions. Even though
almost all of the survey participants had worked as a faculty previously, they did not share exact the same leadership pathway to their current roles. The most common route to the position of graduate dean, however, was still faculty-program director-department chair. The graduate deans agreed to most of the statements provided by the Council of Graduate Schools on the statements’ importance and felt reasonably confident in their individual and unit efficacies in fulfilling the roles. When it comes to the institution’s efficacy, graduate deans did not score the statements the same way they did for themselves and their units, pointing to some differences in unit and institutional priorities. Overall, the deans’ opinions did not differ much by their institutions’ Carnegie status or the sector they were in. On the individual level, women deans felt more competent on several statements compared to their men counterparts.
CHAPTER 5: CASE PROFILES AND THEMES

The findings in this chapter help respond to the research question: “How do graduate deans perceive leadership in their institutional contexts?” The findings originated from a comprehensive analysis of the participants’ interviews, participants’ curriculum vitae, and the public online information about their respective institutions as well as graduate units. The content begins with an overview presentation of the eight participants, including their individual and institutional backgrounds. I then present the participants’ experiences in a portrait manner.

Participant Overview

The eight individuals featured in this chapter are Tully, AZ, Joseph, Taylor, Michelle, Beth, Leslie, and Valeria (all pseudonyms). All the participants received a Ph.D. and once served as faculty members at Doctoral Universities, including three R1s, three R2s, and two R3s. One participant worked at a private, not-for-profit university. The rest were working at public universities. The selection of the participants mirrored the survey participants to a certain extent. Among these eight, five self-identified as women and three as men. Three individuals identified themselves as non-White: AZ (Asian), Michelle (Black/African-American), and Valeria (Black). One individual, Tully, self-identified as non-heterosexual. One individual was a first-generation student (Leslie). Their experiences working in graduate education as well as in their current positions varied from someone in their first year to individuals having more than two decades of experiences.
Table 45

An Overview of Participants' Backgrounds and Their Institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Sexual Orientation</th>
<th>Race /Ethnicity</th>
<th>Degree Field</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Institution Pseudonym</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Grad Ed</th>
<th>Current Position</th>
<th>Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tully</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Non-heterosexual</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Health Development</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Public R1</td>
<td>&gt;20 years</td>
<td>16 years</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Black/African Asian</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Public R2</td>
<td>&gt;10 years</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>College of Graduate Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AZ</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Public R2</td>
<td>&gt;20 years</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Private R1</td>
<td>&gt;5 years</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Office of Graduate Affairs</td>
<td>College of Graduate Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Public R1</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Graduate School</td>
<td>College of Graduate Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valeria</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>Higher Education</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Public R2</td>
<td>&gt;20 years</td>
<td>22 years</td>
<td>Division of Graduate Studies</td>
<td>Division of Research and Graduate Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Science Education</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>Public R3</td>
<td>&lt;5 years</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Division of Graduate Studies</td>
<td>Office of Graduate Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslie</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Community Health</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Public R3</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Office of Graduate Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Individual Case Analysis

The eight participants were interviewed using the same set of semi-structured interview protocol. For each participant, I honor their experiences by first presenting their journeys and creating portraits for each to present their backgrounds. The individual cases consist of three sub-sections: individual background and career trajectory, institutional context, and leadership experience. Immediately following the leadership portrait, I provide a single case analysis for each participant.

Tully. Tully had been with University D for almost two decades. She has spent close to four decades in higher education, working at three different institutions of higher education, and of this time. She has spent close to 20 years in graduate education alone. Her current institution, University D, was a nationally and internationally renowned public university with the highest research activity; more than 6,000 graduate students enrolled at the university.

Individual background and career trajectory. Tully was born into an educator’s family. Growing up, she did not want to become an educator, yet, she always valued education. With undergraduate and master’s degrees in sociology and special education, Tully started working for the public schools and then a state university in a metropolitan area. Realizing a terminal degree was the entry card for a career in higher education, Tully pursued her Ph.D. in health development. Tully also self-identified as a White, non-heterosexual woman.

Once she completed her terminal degree, Tully embarked on her long and distinguished career in academia, beginning as a tenure-track faculty member. While on her path to obtain tenure, Tully encountered and applied for a half-time research position
at the graduate school of her last employer. She actively observed and learned from others around her, took on opportunities to test her capacity, and the half-time appointment turned into an associate dean, and finally, the dean. She never intentionally sought an administrator role, rather Tully described her career pathway as “not linear.”

Tully was actively recruited to her current position and institution because of her reputation and her access to the president, other vice presidents, and all other academic deans. Tully was attracted to her new institution’s strategic plan, which highlighted a vision of growth and the possibilities of graduate education. Despite her strong credentials and fitness to the position, there was initially some campus resistance to the hiring decision due to her sexual orientation. Even though Tully identified as White, the intersectionality of her social identities as a non-heterosexual woman with a partner was not well-received by some members of the Board. As a result, her partner’s spousal hire was revoked. The incident once made Tully question her desire to stay in administration, yet ultimately, she decided to remain “because there were so few of us.” This personal experience gave Tully different perspectives about diversity and encouraged her to undertake the creation of an inclusive graduate education as one of her priorities. Her past experiences and the biases she encountered served as a constant reminder for her to think about what diversity and inclusion truly meant. Tully brought a heightened sense of intersectionality to her work as a graduate school leader.

**Institutional context.** Although University D had a significant number of graduate students and Tully had a title at the Vice President level, she felt there was still not enough emphasis of graduate education. One example Tully noted regarding this was when leaders
talked about students and often referred singularly to the undergraduate students, regularly failing to take graduate students into consideration.

Tully supervised over 50 staff members, most of whom worked full-time in the graduate school. A few part-time positions were intentionally set up to include a couple of associate deans. After Tully accepted her position, she lobbied for the additional part-time associate deans as this type of organizational structure mirrored her earlier personal experiences and pathway that was for her a positive introduction into administration. She saw the dual appointment as an approach to keep the faculty serving as associate deans abreast of the issues in administration while at the same time maintaining their academic credentials. Tully viewed this type of academic currency as critical to one’s social capital in academic affairs.

Tully relied heavily on her colleagues operating in specialized areas, who she described as “very capable individuals.” Decisions made in the graduate school were made collaboratively regarding the directions of the graduate school and graduate education.

The graduate division operated under a centralized model in which the graduate school, through the leadership of the dean of the graduate school, had the authority and supervision of over 150 graduate degree programs, in addition to providing a comprehensive array of functions and services to graduate students. The unit had its own facilities on the main campus, which housed the graduate education leadership team and graduate student services. The functional areas of the graduate school spanned from recruitment to diversity and inclusion, immigration, student services and so on.
Leadership experience. Given University D’s long-standing reputation of graduate education and the strong initiatives implemented by Tully, the graduate school was often perceived as an exemplar and model for others in the nation for programming, inspirations, and directions. Tully remarked despite her intentions, she became an influential figure nationally to share the practices and lessons learned at University D. Having opportunities to chair and lead some national and regional professional organizations and the boards for those agencies, Tully was extremely well-connected compared to her colleagues in similar positions, regardless of their geographical locations.

However, the success Tully had did not come without difficulty or ongoing challenges. Tully criticized the academic culture and the fact that change was slow and the resistance strong to any new initiatives. Tully combatted such inertia, particularly on her campus, with her passion and commitment to graduate students and graduate education by engaging faculty and staff. Her strategies included showing them what she saw by providing data to showcase evidence of satisfaction of graduate students as well as the outcomes graduate students produced while she talked to the faculty. Additionally, Tully recounted how she immersed herself in big-picture thinking and carefully followed the greater trends in higher education. She used these practices and cultivated institutional perspectives on how to advocate for graduate education by demonstrating why it was important for University D. Tully emphasized the criticalness of training graduates to be global citizens, and of helping them transition to their next stops, within “a welcoming, affirming, and inclusive environment.” By showing her values and commitment, Tully always made sure that she was present at institutional meetings where
decision-making occurred regarding university direction, and she served as the primary spokesperson of graduate education whenever decisions related to graduate education were made.

*Diversity-inspired leadership for a centralized exemplar unit.* A common thread emerged regarding her disciplinary training and her research areas: all three areas were highly interdisciplinary. Tully built her expertise in disability, which trained her differently in seeing diverging perspectives. She regarded this background as a critical skill in university administration. The ability to see different perspectives was put to good use when she talked to those whom she needed to convince. Tully retained a strong connection to her faculty identity over her work in administration; she continues to still teach at least one course per semester. To her, being a faculty helped her understand the setting and nature of academic affairs and oversight of graduate education.

Having a highly centralized, well-staffed unit, Tully was able to put her vision into institutional plans through many years of effort. As an outspoken leader, she was visible not only on her campus but also in the graduate education community. Tully’s unit too was frequently recognized as an exemplar prototype from which other graduate schools drew ideas. Tully encouraged her graduate dean peers across the country to ponder the responsibility of the position:

A grad dean absolutely has to have the fingers on the pulse on what’s happening around the world and the trends in higher ed., not just the policies, procedures, and the rules per say. We have to be ahead of it because we are educating and training people for jobs that don’t exist yet at the undergraduate and the graduate level. We have to be out there and be ahead of it and knowing it.
Tully’s non-linear journey to leadership and her personal encounter as a non-heterosexual individual in academia motivated her to pursue diversity and inclusion at her institution: first teaching in public schools, then going into higher education for a Ph.D., tenure, promotion, almost left the administration due to her social identities, persisted, and acted upon her understanding of diversity to become a national leader. Tully did not quit when she encountered challenges in her career. Instead, she utilized what she experienced to promote diversity using her research expertise in her leadership to undertake difficult issues on a greater scale.

**Joseph.** Joseph recently joined P University, a highly selective private institution at the highest research activity designation and with an international reputation. Having more than 25 years of experiences in higher education, Joseph gained insights as a faculty and administrator from four different institutions. He has been at P University for over a year. The university has more than 10,000 graduate students over 300 programs and areas of studies. Joseph and his office provided leadership for the university’s graduate education initiatives.

**Individual background and career trajectory.** Joseph was trained as a sociologist. Having worked in the non-profit sector right after college, he became more interested in understanding the effects of the social world on individuals and ultimately decided to go to graduate school. Joseph began his appointment at his current institution after working at two other institutions: he obtained his tenure at the first institution; progressed in ranks and became a full professor at his second institution, served as a director, chair, and associate deans for his unit as well as the graduate school. Next, Joseph went through his tenure promotion process at his second institution. Ultimately,
Joseph switched to his third institution in which he followed a typical progression: from associate professor to director of a research center to full professor and then chair of a department. Before making his fourth move to P University to become graduate dean, he held the position of senior associate dean of the graduate school.

At the time of our interview, Joseph was in his third year at P University. He recounted that he saw his career trajectory similar to many others: “People get progressive experience: you start out, you're a regular faculty member, maybe you sit on a particular university wide committee. In fact, I think that that [work in previous positions] all created important foundations for me.” Those experiences were instrumental for Joseph to learn about the university and what academic leaders’ responsibilities would entail. He reflected: “I learned both about the university and what leaders do. I don't think I really had an idea what a dean or an associate provost or provost did before I was a department chair.” Once Joseph was involved in the graduate school as an associate dean at his previous institution, he was mentored by others in the graduate school, from staff to the graduate dean, and anyone in between with specialty areas, such as graduate student professional development, diversity and inclusion, budgeting, and program development.

As a sociologist, Joseph actively approached issues from his disciplinary background and was familiar with topics such as the structure of social relations, issues of inequality and access, and institutional barriers. Joseph had studied sciences in the university setting extensively for years and established his scholarship in knowledge production and the commercial pressures faced by higher education. He felt his research
provided him with a decent understanding of graduate education and this background influenced his leadership experiences to a great extent.

Joseph fully acknowledged his identity as a White heterosexual man. He realized the importance of understanding the marginalized experiences and the significance of such understanding to the success for his position. He offered the following perspective:

One is that I think being a white man means that by definition I don't have personal experience with being an underrepresented person. In a role like this [graduate dean], to succeed I've had to learn about and listened to, for example, women in the sciences, underrepresented students across graduate programs to understand, even though I can't understand it directly, but to get a better sense of their experience and the barriers and impediments and challenges they faced.

Joseph’s dedication to developing a diverse and inclusive student body and serving students by providing interdisciplinary, co-curricular, and professional development was the primary reason he applied for the position at P University. Joseph saw an alignment between his values and the job description, which suggested to him a good matching of personal and institutional priorities. The continued congruence of these priorities kept him inspired to work with his office to concentrate on the areas he, his unit, and the institution deemed crucial.

**Institutional context.** As an associate provost of graduate affairs, Joseph oversaw the office of graduate affairs at P University and reported directly to the provost. Organizationally, the associate provost position made Joseph a member of the provost’s cabinet, separate from the council of deans in which all the academic deans met. In some instances, Joseph and the office of graduate affairs technically had the authority to
determine policies related to grievances and student work authorization, yet he noted: “There are things where in theory I could dictate, but it's generally not a good idea.” Instead, Joseph strove to gain support from the academic deans by working collaboratively with them. Whenever there was a new initiative, Joseph would present the idea to the dean’s council to get feedback and buy-in instead of dictating the process.

Joseph’s office consisted of a total of 16 people, and half of them were full-time employees. To Joseph, the office was “radically understaffed” given the areas of responsibility for his unit. The various areas included Ph.D. student professional development, diversity and inclusion strategy and programming, coordinating and facilitating master’s and professional degree admissions and recruitment, data and decision support, graduate student-related policies, academic assessment, scholarships, and responsible conduct of research. These activities were carried out with close coordination and collaboration with the colleges on campus.

**Leadership experience.** Joseph felt well-prepared for his current role given his experiences with managing people over time and his substantive understanding of graduate education due to his research. Given the number and diversity of the institutions at which he held positions in his career, he understood the nuances of differences in institutions, such as post-baccalaureate education, master’s education, online education, and non-doctoral education. The transitions between different institutions made it clear to Joseph that institutional context and a university’s approach to decision making were highly associated. He recounted examples about the differences between public and private institutions as at his previous institution, shared governance was an active and powerful practice, and key to its public nature. Joseph’s current institution is a private
university and as such, he found it was “simultaneously very centralized because the 
budget is centralized and decentralized where the schools and colleges have a lot of 
discretion” with the addition of faculty governance. Being able to compare his leadership 
experiences across different types of institutions, Joseph concluded that every university 
is different, and these differences emerge based on contexts.

Joseph considered himself a collaborative leader who had less intention to dictate 
decision-making, but rather sought to build support for decisions. By meeting with his 
staff and seeking input regarding graduate affairs, Joseph reported he worked hard to 
provide individuals with autonomy and a feeling of ownership in order to find a 
connection to the broader mission of the unit. He attributed his approach to the support 
he received for his own leadership development and sought to work with “good and 
thoughtful people” both in- and outside of the office.

Like many other leaders in higher education, Joseph stayed in tune with the 
changing landscape of higher education today. Attending professional conferences 
afforded him opportunities to stay abreast of the current trends in graduate education. 
Joseph noticed the overarching employment trends for recent bachelor’s degree holders, 
as well as the Ph.D. degree holders. He reflected that it is more likely for individuals to 
have multiple careers in their life course. As a result, graduate schools must think 
forward regarding the necessary training for doctoral students and the need for 
interdisciplinary programming. As a result of his reflection, Joseph thought it necessary 
to think beyond traditional graduate programs (master’s and Ph.D.’s) and equally 
important for graduate education to come up ways to capitalize on non-degree education 
programming. He commented:
When it comes to professional degrees, masters, certificate programs, professional doctorates, we're in a pretty unstable time right now, right? So, we know by looking at a forecast that young people who are getting their bachelor's degrees now will have multiple, not just jobs, but multiple careers across their life course. Well, if you have multiple careers, you can't really go get multiple master's degree, right? So maybe you get one. How do you build on that? What if you get a master's degree in computer science and it becomes clear that you're moving toward data science? Are there ways in which we can serve to provide supplementary non degree education to people across their life course? So, I think these are matters of I think substantial debate and discussion.

In addressing these questions, Joseph saw the importance of transparency and began to convince others why P University should begin to create performance boards that include critical information for prospective students, such as time to degree, diversity measures, financial aid, and so on.

What added to the uncertainty of the future of graduate education is the uncertainty in 2019 regarding national immigration policy for certain student populations at P University, which had a large percentage of international students and immigrants. The challenges for Joseph’s leadership and his unit were not limited to external circumstances. Within the institution, the university’s shrinking budget and the smaller scale of staff support created a difficult situation for the office to maintain its efficiency and required Joseph to set priorities for staff. A strategy Joseph employed was to hire a faculty member to work part-time on a project.
The agency between the blurred lines of centralization and decentralization.

Having served at multiple institutions, Joseph gained institutional knowledge from the places he worked at: the differences between public and private institutions, and how the governance or decision-making process could be very unclear. Despite the organizational structures being inherently complex, Joseph had a high degree of agency from his research expertise and past experiences to navigate through the blended realities resulted from the university’s management modes in place.

For Joseph, the transition in institutions was a choice he made because he was attracted to the position description at P University. His experiences so far supported his assessment and the alignment he saw between his values and the institution’s priorities. Working in the context of graduate education, Joseph spent much time understanding the changing landscape of employment patterns, educational degree, and political environment, as well as translating such understanding into actions on how to support graduate students, especially those with marginalized experiences, to thrive at P University and prepare them for diverse careers.

Joseph attributed his political savviness to his training as a sociologist as well as someone who had worked in different types of institutions. Utilizing his insights, Joseph found ways in his new association provost position to work through the obstacles and grey area in which both centralization and decentralization co-existed at P University. Joseph amplified his capacity by collaborating with the academic deans and faculty, whose positions and power implicitly influenced his leadership effectiveness. Within his unit, he relied heavily on his staff to make sound judgments and met with his team
regularly. Joseph carefully deliberated how to take actions and build relationships both internally and externally.

**Beth.** To date, Beth had spent close to three decades in higher education and had substantive exposure to academic work at five different institutions. Over her career, she has held positions in both student and academic affairs. Beth received tenure from T University, a public institution with the highest research intensity. With over 300 academic programs, T University’s total enrollment exceeded 30,000 students, of which around 6,000 were graduate students.

**Individual background and career trajectory.** With a master’s degree in higher education and student affairs, Beth worked in student affairs for about a decade. Beth entered her doctoral program at a Doctoral University knowing she wanted to become a faculty member. She ultimately entered the professoriate and eventually received tenure and was promoted to an associate professor. As an associate professor, Beth was asked to take on the department chair role given she was the most senior faculty in the unit at the time. She continued in this capacity for a few years.

Right before Beth was offered the chair position, she had applied for an associate dean position in the graduate school and was a finalist. As a result of the chair offer, she withdrew from the graduate school search. Beth remained connected to the graduate school and eventually moved into graduate studies as the assistant vice provost for graduate affairs. She recounted, “My academic department is a graduate-only department and my research expertise is aligned with graduate education, and it was a nice progression from my role as chair for four years.” In her first position at the graduate school, Beth oversaw fellowship programs, awards, postdocs, and served as the primary
contact for student grievances and graduate program directors. In her current role at T University, Beth has oversight and responsibility for all aspects of the office of graduate studies.

As a former student affairs administrator and department chair for her academic unit, Beth felt well-prepared for her current role the vice provost for graduate studies: In student affairs, I had to manage staff. I had to manage staff as chair as well. So, I had that experience going into it. As a chair I worked very closely with faculty. I study faculty. I am familiar with faculty governance and the roles faculty play in the training and preparation for graduate students.

Staff and budget management were two central skills Beth acquired as she reflected upon her time in both functional areas.

After working as department chair for four years, Beth worked in the graduate studies office as an assistant vice provost. During this year, the then graduate dean made conscious efforts in guiding her to participate, shadow, and practice in the daily operations of the office. This mentoring exposed her to various nuances of the work, and she got to see first-hand several unique situations. This year-long experience provided Beth with plentiful opportunities to learn how to lead a graduate school and gave her the chance to familiarize herself with issues related to postdocs, federal policies impacting graduate students, advocating for graduate students, as well as consulting with the institution’s legal counsel.

Beth felt a key to her leadership proficiency was her scholarly identity, specifically her understanding and familiarity with the research on graduate education and graduate students. Her scholarship too enhanced her general appreciation of the
disciplin ary differences and the application of such differences in graduate education. Additionally, Beth valued the importance of social research, assessment, as well as program evaluation and felt she had the skills to pursue these areas. In her opinion, the ability to apply these values and skills into the management of graduate education enhanced the success of graduate education.

Furthermore, Beth intentionally built relationships with campus members in different disciplines. She engaged STEM faculty colleagues in grant applications and applying for federal funding, and she served as an external member for dissertation committees for the arts and humanities departments. She also taught courses in the graduate school that were open to all graduate students wanting to pursue faculty careers. Beth thought her efforts were paying off for her as she held visibility among faculty and graduate students. Unlike some of her predecessors in the graduate school who had difficulty engaging with faculty members and graduate students from particular disciplinary backgrounds, Beth did not encounter this problem.

Beth noted awareness of her identity status as a White heterosexual woman, and “the privileges I have as a White person who is highly educated and well-compensated for the work I do.” Beth recognized too her racial identity helped her garner certain authority and advantages in her role as a leader. However, her gender identity as a cisgender woman played a different part with the university’s predominantly White and men upper-level administration.

**Institutional context.** As an institution, T University was well known for its eminent research reputation. The current graduate office operated with approximately 20 staff members. Functionally, the office oversaw all the postdocs, admission process,
orientation, degree checks, commencement, student grievances and appeals, and worked closely with the graduate faculty senate to implement policies affecting graduate education and graduate students. Additionally, the graduate office approved the curriculum for all graduate programs, managed fellowship and tuition waivers, supported recruitment initiatives, provided reports to institutional leaders and accreditation bodies, ran professional development programs for international students and domestic students, and offered classes for non-native teaching assistants as well as courses to support non-academic career preparation.

For several reasons, the organization of graduate education at T University went through a reorganization two years ago. A new chancellor, without experience working at an institution with a graduate school, questioned the value of maintaining a graduate school as a separate unit. He convened a task force to investigate if the functions of the graduate school could be reorganized and decentralized like at other institutions that had an office of graduate studies instead. The end result was that the task force, constituted by academic deans, concluded that the other schools and colleges on campus did not have the resources or requisite leadership to take on additional responsibilities such as admission, graduation, financial aid, and all other administrative functions that were managed by the centralized graduate school. Eventually, the graduate school had a name change to the office of graduate studies, yet the office maintained most of the same functions as the previously configured by the graduate school. A key difference of the reorganization was that the office no longer housed interdisciplinary programs. The vice provost of research was interested in taking on graduate education into that unit’s portfolio. Therefore, Beth started reporting to the research officer instead of the provost.
When she transitioned into her current role in the newly formed graduate studies unit, Beth negotiated adding “vice provost” to her title to symbolically showcase the graduate office’s academic functions. Although the graduate studies office was still granting degrees, it was not in the reporting line of academic affairs like other academic units that reported to the provost. To address the challenges that could emerge from this change in reporting structure, Beth requested permission to attend meetings of the Dean’s Council. During our interview in 2018, Beth related too that she was working on transitioning the graduate studies office back to a graduate school. Although the proposal was already approved by the chancellor at the time we spoke, Beth was not getting the support she expected to implement changes. Now that a new provost came to campus and Beth was able to connect with the provost and could convey the reorganization efforts she had been working on, she predicted she would be reporting directly to the provost again soon, who took serious interest in Beth’s work and graduate education.

Beth viewed the current graduate studies office as a combination of centralization and decentralization. Centralized functions included curriculum review, professional development, policy, and graduate students’ commencements, orientations, and graduations. The administration instead was decentralized as the office relied on the graduate program directors of the academic colleges for communication and accommodations to make final admission decisions.

**Leadership experience.** Beth used terms such as “collaborative” and “transparent” in describing her approach to leadership. She trusted the individuals she worked with deeply and always saw them as an integral part of the organization. There was a strong sense of appreciation and support for Beth knowing her staff was
“incredibly talented and good at what they do.” She strove to provide support to her staff instead of micromanagement of their work. She highly valued professional development and made it explicit that staff members in academia often were overlooked for those opportunities. Beth emphasized being honest did not mean that she was not strategic or political at the same time. However, Beth preferred to be direct, or in her words, “blunt,” since she had been around leaders who “would dance around the issues but that is not the way how things get done.”

However, after carefully deliberating the challenges graduate education faced on campus, Beth started working on bringing the graduate school setup back into administration. During the transition, Beth remained active in finding ways to address the decentralized decision-making in academic departments by starting regular meetings with the associate deans who were the go-to people for graduate education in academic units, who served as the “buffer and broker” between the faculty and the academic deans. In connecting all the associate deans and creating a forum for graduate education institutionally, Beth aimed at creating additional advocacy for graduate affairs not only through her office but also gaining root support from every academic unit.

When asked about her leadership goals, Beth’s top priority was to move her unit back to be a graduate school. She listed the most salient reasons for this push: legitimizing the unit’s authority and being able to create shared urgencies among all the academic schools and colleges. Beth noted frustration in the lack of attention of graduate student issues in campus discussions, and the lack of consideration of the ways in which institutional initiatives could affect the graduate student population. Recall, this
population is not a small number at T University as more than 6000 graduate students studied there.

The reorganization to a graduate studies office limited what the office could do as compared to the previous configuration as a graduate school. As a unit, the office aspired to reinforce some priorities shared by the graduate education community, yet it was not in the position to instruct or direct the academic colleges, schools, and their respective unit heads. Beth thought T University as an institution also had the capacity to make changes in graduate education to reflect the discussions in the greater graduate education community, but in reality, graduate education was not yet a priority institutionally. In Beth’s own work, her current supervisor, vice provost of research, was supportive but did not always fully understand what she was trying to achieve. Since Beth began her efforts in communicating the importance of a graduate school to the new provost, she felt a difference in the support received. The attention from the chief academic officer was demonstrated through the provost’s seeking Beth’s opinions and insights and having regular meetings with her. Such change made Beth hopeful in her organization and bringing her approved proposal into actions and to bring back the graduate school organizational structure.

_A feminist and social scientist bringing back a graduate school in leadership turmoil._ Beth’s case is unique in this study due to the recent leadership changes on campus that created turmoil for the graduate unit functions and organization. Although it is not uncommon for upper administration to go through reorganizations when they arrive at campus, the influences of such moves often hit individuals and units with surprise and inconvenience. Beth challenged the new organizational structure and actively sought out
measures to rebuild her unit’s authority and effectiveness, including reaching out to the new provost for support. She felt well-positioned to mount the approved proposal to revert the organization of the graduate unit to its previous structure. Beth’s robust knowledge and sound understanding of the campus and graduate education, as well as her scholarly knowledge of administration and governance in higher education, guided her efforts.

Beth was also not afraid to speak of the truths to accomplish what she envisioned as a leader for her graduate students on campus. Beth often noticed herself being “one of the very few women in the room” with other senior campus leaders. Yet it was specifically her feminist identity and her disciplinary training that she felt provided her leadership pillars to be more social justice oriented. When she spoke out about issues related to diversity, gender, and race, Beth was aware of her role to be the voice of those not typically at the decision-making table “because very few of us in the room actually consider those students’ experiences.” Despite Beth’s efforts and her commitment to social justice, Beth did not always succeed in connecting with some of the graduate students. She reflected, “In some cases, particularly with some men international students who come from very masculine and patriarchal societies, I think they question whether I have the authority to make certain decisions.” Occasions and observations like this pushed Beth further on her pursuit of social justice as well as how she led her unit in serving the graduate students.

Michelle. Michelle’s professional career spanned sectors as she held positions in private industry, governmental agencies, and educational organizations. This background provided her with a variety of perspectives. Michelle’s current position as the graduate
dean was at W University, a public Doctoral University with higher research activity. The mission of W University was to train citizens, in collaboration with both the corporate community and public agencies, for a variety of careers. The university had a total enrollment of above 12,000 in 2018, with one in four being a graduate student.

**Individual background and career trajectory.** Michelle’s interest in and passion for higher education and higher education administration were first kindled when she was in undergraduate studies. She was highly involved in student organizations and student government and began to see the role administrators had to make a difference in people’s lives on a greater scale. Michelle went on to pursue her graduate education in electrical engineering. She recalled,

> My motivation for getting a PhD was not solely because I wanted to be a Nobel laureate researcher. Because I saw that pathway [to college administration] and the Ph.D. is sort of the membership card that you have to have in order to pursue that pathway.

Michelle started a company using a grant from the National Institute of Health when she graduated from her doctoral program. Despite early success, Michelle grew uncomfortable working with the National Institute of Health’s point of contact, who was responsible for the venture funding. Around this time, a former professor of Michelle’s became a department chair and recruited her to his university. She recalled, “And naively I think sure as an assistant professor I can do all the things an assistant professor has to do and run my company. I quickly found that that was not the case.” The relocation resulted in surging expenses for the company, which resulted in her startup folding.
Michelle focused instead on her journey as a junior faculty. At the time, her institution was interested in increasing graduate student diversity in engineering. As a minority engineering faculty, she was identified as a faculty leader to become involved in the initiative. As contracted, she would devote 15% of her time allocated as a project director for a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant intended to improve diversity in STEM fields. However, Michelle felt she was receiving mixed messages from her dean compared to what was outlined in her tenure review guidelines. Regardless of her personal confusion, the grant-supported diversity initiative was very successful, and Michelle thoroughly enjoyed the experience in working with the administration to put policies and practices in place to increase diversity.

Despite the success of the grant program focused on increasing diversity, the work took a toll on Michelle. As the first female and first minority faculty member at the School of Engineering, she was tapped for every diversity committee at the university, sometimes even without being asked or notified. This service made it difficult for her to maintain her research productivity. Pressure also emerged due to mentoring minority students. Michelle recounted,

It became very stressful to manage being the role model to so many students. In fact, people I don't know—who may be students—set up a row of chairs outside my office door so that there can be a waiting room, students from all different departments wanting to come talk to me.

Besides all the diversity-related work, her department asked if she could apply for some corporate grants to build labs, knowing that she had direct experience and success in that area. She worked to meet all these requests yet discovered there was no location to
document this labor on her annual faculty report. Michelle discovered that the work she was doing was not valued for merit increases for her tenure decision.

Michelle had an epiphany in her fourth year. She finally realized she was being asked to do things that would never help her acquire tenure. Coming to such a belated realization caused her much frustration given her success in achieving all the tasks she was asked to perform that were not considered relevant for tenure. Ultimately, Michelle realized that her goals, aspirations, and motivations did not align well the institution’s. The accumulated disappointment and fatigue drove Michelle to take a leave of absence from her faculty position. She went to work for NSF as a program director. The dean warned Michelle that she was at risk of losing her tenure if she took a leave, but she felt at the time, “I'll have to take that chance because I need to step away from this place for my own sanity and my own health.” After graduating the rest of her students, Michelle left her institution. She continued her NSF appointment for seven years and was ultimately assigned to work with another institution as a program officer.

At the same time Michelle was sorting out her professional goals, she married and started a family, all with the intention of stay in the area location of her second institution. Michelle was getting ready to leave her NSF affiliation and head back to academia, but the NSF needed someone experienced to direct one of its core programs. Hence, she worked for NSF for an additional year. Coincidently, an opening at W University became available, and her NSF colleagues strongly encouraged her to apply. Michelle followed this advice and had been happy with her second institution (W University) ever since.
Michelle appreciated her time working with NSF and regarded it as “transformational” because it provided her with abundant opportunities to understand the larger higher education landscape. Her work helped her learn about different types of universities, to understand their distinctive missions and strengths, as well as how the entire higher education ecosystem worked. Michelle felt that it was her time at NSF that made her much more effective in her current position as a dean of graduate school. Additionally, having the private sector experience as a reference point, Michelle was able to distinguish university research from corporate research, which proved indispensable in her faculty and leadership roles related to graduate education in providing insights and directions to grants, research, and corporate relationships. Furthermore, Michelle had an accurate understanding of the differences in disciplinary practices across the country. She considered that a bonus compared to someone who might have had only one reference point from a single discipline. Combined, those out-of-academia exposures in addition to being a tenure-track faculty member helped her learn about the broader issues in higher education, thus preparing her for leadership of a graduate school.

Michelle felt her career experiences prior to her current position prepared her to set equitable standards, build intellectual communities, and provide graduate student services. Michelle was mentored by a strong graduate dean after she began working in the graduate school who helped her see how to take strategic approaches to planning, to understand the power of persuasion, and to see the value in building partnerships. Those strategies were particularly helpful in her institutional context where her unit had very few monetary resources. Over the past 17 years, her attention expanded from being
detail-focused to visioning the bigger picture. Concurrently, Michelle branched out from her campus to a national level on her advocacy work for U.S. graduate education.

**Institutional context.** Michelle’s unit was a graduate school with 22 full-time staff and an additional part-time employee. The graduate school was responsible for “the whole life cycle of a graduate student,” including recruitment, admissions, degree progressions, and final degree clearance. The unit also provided oversight regarding new graduate programs, new courses, graduate faculty affiliation, and academic program review. As a regionally known institution, W University had close ties to local industry, which relied on STEM education.

As the graduate dean, Michelle was a member of the three leadership councils at the university, including the council of deans, of which all the positions directly reported to the provost including the academic deans and the vice provosts; the council of vice presidents and deans, which was known as the decision-making group for budgetary issues, direction, and strategic planning; and lastly the president’s council, which included a larger group of individuals reporting directly to the president, including vice presidents, vice provosts, heads of the faculty governing committees, and legal affairs. In summary, Michelle was involved in leadership groups across the campus that addressed a host of issues and was not confined to considering solely issues of graduate education. Such involvement in all three councils was incepted by Michelle’s predecessor who made a case for the role of the graduate school and defined the unit’s standing and interactions on campus. Since Michelle’s appointment, she continued the work to grow and strengthen the graduate school as a unit.
Leadership experience. Michelle’s minority identity continued to influence her leadership experiences as she was the only minority leader in academic affairs at W University. Here, Michelle found support from other women in leadership positions was helpful. Through NSF’s ADVANCE [Program to Increase Advancement of Women in Science and Engineering] grant, Michelle and her fellow women colleagues in leadership positions at the same institution made an agreement to reinforce each other’s comments in meetings to combat gender macroaggressions that often took place in the workspace. One example was when a woman raised a point it was often valued less than if the idea was proposed by a man. Having now been at W University for over a decade, Michelle remarked that those around her no longer saw her minority status, but rather, “just Michelle.” The overall campus welcomed and celebrated diversity in students and staff, and there was support from the president and the provost.

Michelle saw her disciplinary background, identity, and knowledge of her field aligned well with W University’s STEM focus. Although Michelle had never received tenure and had no intention to seek tenure at this stage of her career, she was still selected by the search committee for her graduate dean position. The committee removed the tenure requirement to affirm their endorsement of Michelle and her work. Beyond rewriting the job description to align the narrative close to Michelle, her affiliated department also treated her as a tenured faculty:

And in my department here, I have an affiliate appointment, they have a listserv of tenure track faculty and they treat me like as a tenured faculty member, even though I've never gone up for tenure here and don't intend to, but they treat me as
a tenured faculty member in everything except serving on the promotion and
tenure committee.

The steps the search committee took reinforced Michelle’s choice on her current
institution and her academic unit also made sure that she was welcomed as a full-time,
tenured faculty. In many ways Michelle gained support from faculty in her discipline
which further allowed her capacity as a graduate dean.

Having been in her position for over a decade, with highly relevant experiences in
higher education and beyond, Michelle considered herself “a veteran dean” who had
many opportunities to serve in leadership positions in the national graduate education
community. Because of the breadth of her experiences and her work at NSF, Michelle
was often drawn into national conversations, chairing committees and boards for
professional organizations. She also noted her time devoted to mentoring newer deans
went up. At her own institution, W University, Michelle found most support coming
from the graduate program directors across campus. These faculty members were deeply
involved in graduate education and were committed to address issues on campus. When
it came to graduate education-related issues, Michelle’s position was that “the president
and the provost and the university leadership is aligned behind those issues, but the rank
and file members of the campus level are probably not thinking about a lot of these
issues, not on their radar screen.” Michelle’s leadership goals focused on enrollment,
access for the in-state residents, and creating programs with tangible career outcomes.
Additionally, Michelle would like to scan her institution from top to bottom to identify all
international research and studying abroad opportunities, and simultaneously provide
good experiences for international students at W University.
In Michelle’s experience, some of the challenges related to advocacy for graduate education were to make sure someone thinking of graduate education would always be present at the table. For many working at W University, undergraduate education would take precedence due to the larger number of students they had and the need to streamline the processes in undergraduate education, with an underlying assumption that the needs of undergraduates would win out. The strategy Michelle used to combat such assumptions was to remind the entire campus of graduate education and to ensure the needs of the graduate community were considered in every decision-making process.

**A non-traditional pathway to homegrown leadership.** As the only participant who is not a tenured faculty, Michelle’s story demonstrated a different career pathway compared to her peers in this study. Unlike some who went through the traditional faculty-administrator route, Michelle left academia to work for the government, and came back to the university setting when an opportunity emerged. Even though Michelle did not receive great mentorship when starting in her faculty career, given the focus on diversity-related administrative work in her tenure-track position versus research, those experiences confirmed her passion for administration and opened her door to work for at NSF. Michelle continued to grow her expertise as a program officer and director at NSF, which earned her a national reputation and visibility. She gained much of her social outside of academe but has parlayed this to her work as dean.

The experiences she accumulated across sectors later became the foundation of her leadership. When Michelle felt ready to go back to academia, she carefully chose an institution that matched her background in STEM and her commitment to diversity. And those working at W University indeed welcomed Michelle: they saw her leadership and
were willing to endorse her to be a dean to go against the rest of the institutional expectations and practices – a dean had to be a tenured faculty. Such a non-traditional case of hiring proved to be a fitting match for both Michelle and W University.

Michelle continued to thrive at her institution as an individual and capitalized her network with outside agencies and the private sector to lead W University’s graduate education to the next level. Michelle’s case demonstrates how one could hone skills around graduate education and bring those experiences back to a campus from a national perspective. The connections between Michelle’s journey and her career pathway, her knowledge across sectors, as well as her understanding of the development in higher education and graduate education all contributed to her learning as a non-tenured graduate dean.

Valeria. Valeria served as the dean for the division of graduate studies for over two decades at Q University, which is a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) with higher research activity. With seven years of experiences in the corporate world and 10 years of experiences with the state government, Valeria worked in higher education on and off for four decades at a total of six institutions. With over 80 degree programs, Q University served more than 8,000 students, and 2,000 of this total were graduate students.

Individual background and career trajectory. Valeria’s career in higher education began in the 1970s at a very small HBCU. She started as the assistant registrar and eventually become the business manager of the college. Her employer then offered her the opportunity to earn a master's degree in secondary education with a full scholarship. After she completed her master’s degree, Valeria had another chance to go
on and earn her doctoral degree in higher education administration. With her terminal
degree in hand, Valeria next went to work for a state board of higher education and
oversaw the approval of new continuing and extended programs for all institutions in the
state, and private institutions in the region. Given her experiences in accreditation at the
state level, Valeria was very successful in her work as the associate graduate school dean
for about seven years:

When the accreditation team came, they were so impressed as to what we had
been doing that after the team visit—and we were very successful with that - the
chairperson of the team told me about a job that was going to open up at Q
University as the Graduate Dean and would I be interested in that?

Initially, Valeria did not intend to pursue the opportunity, but finally applied and
accepted it after being sought after for three years.

Valeria valued her training in higher education administration because it helped
her to understand the differences between colleges and universities, and to understand
more fully the major differences between the types of institutions. The
interconnectedness between units, such as the finance management and academic affairs,
and the undergirding management models used by universities became evident to Valeria
because she had been involved in both finance and accreditation in her previous
positions. As far as her own faculty experience, Valeria said she worked hard to go
through each of the academic ranks of assistant, associate, and full professors, and noted,
“it helps me to understand what was really required at each level.” Such first-hand
learning helped her understand the tenure and promotion process and helped her learn
“how to do those things and do them well; it was a training program.”
Valeria’s experiences as a registrar, a business officer, working for the state higher education’s accreditation board, and her academic positions leading up to her dean position gave her the opportunities to see how different organizations worked. Having worked as a business manager for the university, Valeria noticed the models used in corporations were very different from higher education. She reflected on how the business operations in colleges strictly adhered to guidelines, just like in the private sector. However, in her academic roles that involved working with students, she recognized that academic affairs tended to be more flexible, nurturing, and caring due to the intention of creating a learning environment for students to be successful.

Valeria felt her involvement with several national professional organizations, including the Council of Graduate Schools, National Association of College and University Business Officers, and several accrediting bodies, taught her how to lead a graduate school. She thought that these organizations helped her understand the best practices of other universities. Her network of graduate deans provided support along her leadership pathway; she related, “I made friends with a lot of experienced graduate deans who took me up under their wings.” Such peer-to-peer mentoring equipped Valeria with the readiness in handling conflicts with other college deans and challenging situations that typically occurred in graduate education. The fundamental principle for Valeria was “the students were always the number one reason why we were looking into any situation.” Her guiding principle for any decision-making was “what would benefit graduate students the most?”

Valeria felt well-prepared in areas such as academic programs, student services, and financial aid. Upon arriving at the position, however, Valeria had to spend some
time to learn how to work with faculty members “who did not meet the qualifications for
graduate faculty.” Soon, Valeria became good at coaching faculty. She discovered that
her peers were also dealing with similar concerns, namely training quality graduate
faculty. Training included handling delicate issues with graduate faculty members, and
training potential graduate faculty members to understand the scope of the affiliation.

**Institutional context.** The graduate division Valeria supervises employs eight
full-time staff members and six graduate assistants. All academic colleges on campus
have graduate programs, and the directors of these programs report to the division of
graduate studies. Valeria’s graduate division sets the vision and standards for all
academic-related issues related to graduate education. The unit also provides support for
student services (comprised of student clubs, organizations), graduate honor societies,
student internships, and academic probations. In addition, her division oversees some
areas of finance, including tuition waivers, remission fees, and scholarships. The division
also has a graduate council in which information and policy around graduate education
were shared.

During Valeria’s tenure at Q University, her academic dean colleagues did not
always agree with her decisions. She noted:

So, you have to help the academic deans understand the role of graduate
education and the role of working together for the university; it's not one against
the other. It’s the two working together for the university. Typically, academic
deans work with undergraduate activities and graduate deans work with academic
deans on graduate affairs.
At times, Valeria convinced the academic deans to support her when she was trying to get more funding for graduate education. By doing so, she was able to have support across the academic units instead of merely using her singular voice. Likewise, Valeria found it helpful to present herself to the president and provost as the point person for graduate education. She considered her advocacy around graduate education “a teaching process” to make sure the university, including its students, understood that graduate education served a role in increasing the institution’s reputation. She felt obliged to educate others that Q University was classified as a Doctoral University because of its graduate offerings.

**Leadership experience.** Having been a graduate dean for more than two decades, Valeria considered herself “knowledgeable, fair, and equitable,” and often served as a “professional trainer” for new chairpersons. Furthermore, her involvement with professional organizations made her a national leader. Valeria had several goals for her role as graduate dean. First, Valeria felt she served as an important role model in the development of qualified and well-prepared graduate deans and wished to continue doing this activity via mentoring. Second, she sought to ensure a significant learning environment for graduate students. Third she wanted to offer information to new graduate faculty. Fourth, she desired to help graduate students secure the best internships and externships possible. Finally, she wanted to partner with regional and international partners to provide resources or programs that Q University did not have.

In reflection, Valeria felt her leadership and the effectiveness of the division were best supported by quality faculty, professional organizations, and the state higher education regulatory body. Especially her earlier experiences working for the state
higher education accreditation board offered her additional confidence in reviewing programs and support programs through the accreditation process. The challenges she now faces emerged due to reduced funding, which affects her capacity to better support students through fellowships, assistantships, and student services. As well, tight funding impacted faculty salaries and the ability of faculty and staff to attend professional development activities. Valeria saw the shortage in funding as a collective issue encountered by all units in academic affairs. She had succeeded in getting buy-in from other college deans to argue for additional funding. Valeria felt strongly that adequate funding directly reflected if the institution seriously valued graduate education. She pointed out: “[Graduate education] has to be valued to the point that funding supports that idea.” Valeria admitted there was pressure and hardship in the university due to shrinking state funding, yet also felt compelled to argue for sufficient resources to support graduate education given its role in guaranteeing the preparation of future leaders. She wanted the university to “find a way to give [students] the opportunity to be the best that they can be.”

**Being resourceful because “we are training future leaders.”** Having worked outside of higher education in government, Valeria believed because universities worked primarily with students, “we tend to be a little bit more flexible, nurturing, caring because we really want them to be successful and we are a learning environment” as opposed to the outcomes-driven and guideline-adhering nature in business management and state accreditation. Valeria’s early career at universities as a business officer continued to influence how she viewed resources and her approach to advocating for enough resources for graduate students.
She stated: “So we must find a way without fiscal resources to give them the opportunity to be the best that they can be.” Throughout her career as a graduate dean, Valeria made sure she was present in discussions related to graduate education. She collaborated with internal academic deans and programs to argue for more funding for academic affairs as a functional area against sports, advancement, and student affairs; she worked with external allies and partners to provide students the opportunities for education and internship, even if Q University did not have them. For example, she would send students to universities in the region that offered fields of study her institution did not have. Now that she saw the growing needs to international collaboration for graduate programs and students, Valeria had spent the past decade building relationships and exchange opportunities with universities overseas.

Valeria’s commitment to the students also resulted in her high expectations for faculty who wanted to be affiliated with the graduate division. She spent her time educating and working with faculty to make sure they understood the definition of a Doctoral University and how the quality of graduate education should be matched to such institutional categorization. Her lengthy career and experiences in working with faculty and senior leaders at her institution also gave her different perspectives in working with new presidents and provosts coming to campus during her tenure. Rather than complaining about the lack of understanding of why graduate education was important to Q University, Valeria dedicated herself in a teaching role to explain and advocate for graduate education, making graduate education an institutional priority while strengthening the status of the graduate school to promote the services, resources, and presence of the unit.
Taylor. As a public, regional university with high research activity, O University was located in an area without many other institutions of higher education nearby. Per state requirements, the University was designated with services which led to a high volume of contracting work to support the local community and the institution provided additional training for the university’s designated service areas. Common partners include government agencies, social support agencies, or school districts in which the university offers professional development. With more than 100 areas of study, O University enrolls more than 24,000 students, with over 3,000 students in graduate studies. Taylor worked at O University for close to three decades, which represented the majority of his career in higher education.

Individual background and career trajectory. Taylor’s career in higher education immediately took off at O University upon his initial hire as an assistant professor soon after he finished his doctoral program. Prior to being in academia, he worked briefly as a field scientist and spent three years as a high school science teacher. After going “rapidly” through the tenure process, Taylor started to assume leadership roles in his academic unit. He was a program coordinator, department chair, and the associate dean of the College of Education. Ultimately, he served as the dean for School of Education. When in this position, Taylor was also appointed as a university dean for graduate studies. This role in “double deaning” lasted approximately one year. Taylor explained that this rare position occurred because the provost reorganized units and eliminated the position of the associate vice president for research. Due to both personnel and fiscal concerns, the provost combined the research portfolio with the
responsibilities of the dean of graduate studies. Personally, the provost trusted that Taylor would provide good leadership as graduate dean.

Taylor’s experiences as a professor primarily focused on post-baccalaureate education, which provided him with a good background when assuming a leadership role in graduate studies. As he noted, “I've never taught an undergraduate class. My work as a professor and as a college level leader was all at the post-baccalaureate level, not at an undergraduate level.” Taylor also had ample experience leading given his roles as a department chair and an associate dean. As a result of this background, he felt very confident in dealing with budgets, personnel, curricular issues, program reviews, and accreditations. After a year of “double-deaning,” Taylor took over the graduate dean position and no longer was the School of Education dean. In the meanwhile, he began to supervise aspects of research at the university, which included grants and contract work the university was involved with. He spent some time “ramping up” his knowledge about university contracts. Because he was very experienced with grants, he picked up the knowledge of contracting in a relatively fast manner.

Taylor perceived his role as department chair filled a critical time of professional development and exposed him administration expectations, even though department chairs were not viewed as administrators at O University. Many viewed the chair position as highly unpopular because the role held a great deal of responsibility but came with very little authority. Nevertheless, Taylor was successful when he was department chair. As a result, he was tapped as associate dean, and ultimately the School of Education Dean position and graduate dean. For Taylor, everything leadership-related took off after he said yes to becoming department chair. He reflected:
Had I not been in that department chair, I could not have done my job as associate dean very well or as well. And similarly, being a dean, all of the issues that you deal with as department chair, I used to do it on a smaller scale because it's just a department.

Taylor thought he was good at offering compelling arguments to faculty for the greater good when he began his leadership position as the department chair, which made him a highly sought-after candidate for higher level positions and paved the way for his promotions to the dean of education and eventually the graduate dean.

**Institutional context.** Taylor is the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research and oversees 21 employees. The division also employs 10 student assistants. O University offers approximately 40 master’s degrees and fewer than five doctoral programs. Taylor’s office oversees the life cycle of a graduate student. The division is responsible for graduate students from the time a student is admitted to graduation. This oversight involves evaluation, advancement to candidacy, applications for graduation, and ensuring compliance with the university’s policies. Since Taylor also served as the university’s program review officer, the graduate division was also in charge of graduate program reviews. Additionally, Taylor helps the provost take care of student or faculty grievances that move beyond the program or college level. As the chief research officer, Taylor’s responsibilities were also to manage the pre-award and compliance aspects for grants and contracts.

Taylor served on the university’s dean’s council along with other deans. His division worked closely with all the graduate degree programs within the various colleges. Taylor himself would frequently attend college-level meetings as a consultant.
on behalf of graduate studies to offer advice on what colleges intended to propose. Aside from Taylor, there were several other university-wide deans: dean of undergraduate studies, dean of extension, dean of the library and himself, dean of graduate studies and research. He recounted: “We all serve together side by side. We have very similar salaries and things. There isn't any segregation.” As Taylor’s time grew in the position, he began to notice how his unit’s services could perform better if the unit was to transform into a graduate school. Taylor thus had proposed the reorganization plan and was waiting to hear back from the provost’s office by the time of our interview in late December 2018.

**Leadership experience.** In Taylor’s perception, his job was “to serve.” His servant leadership approach included both the faculty and students of O University. Taylor provided additional descriptions of his leadership:

> I think of myself as kind of a transformational leader because in my roles I've done a lot to make positive change and like right now this initiative to create a graduate school is an example of that. That's a big transformation for our campus. We're also at the same time creating a new research foundation - big transformational change. And I'm the driver for those initiatives.

Taylor took his dual roles of the graduate dean and the dean of research at this campus and noticed a graduate school setup would best serve his campus moving forward.

Since close to 90% of O University’s student population was in undergraduate studies, the institution’s priories were mostly on its undergraduate population, especially when the university was being evaluated by the state for a series of metrics associated with student success. These metrics, along with the state-wide initiatives focused almost
exclusively on the success of undergraduate students, making graduate education an overlooked area from a performance perspective. Concerned about the current status of graduate education on campus, Taylor’s current priority was to establish a graduate school, in hopes of raising the prominence of graduate education both on campus and within the community. Ultimately, Taylor would like to consolidate services, create a graduate student association, and become more actively involved in the university's philanthropic efforts, which traditionally did not include graduate education.

Despite the lack of institutional focus on graduate education, Taylor felt well-supported by his staff. The unit historically enjoyed a reputation for having highly qualified people. Taylor noted:

“We have one of the best staff on the entire campus. Everybody wants to work in this unit across campus. Whenever we have a position opening, which we rarely do, but when we do, we get tons of applicants because everybody knows that this is the place that you want to work at if you're going to be at O University. And so, it's almost entirely the staff that supports the success of [the division].

Taylor too had taken extra steps to make sure that his staff felt significant and deemed their roles as important, challenging, and rewarding. However, the biggest challenge for Taylor was stagnant funding. His strategy was to be always present at the table whenever there were discussions associated with resources. He would go to budget meetings fully prepared to deliver compelling evidence and statistics about graduate programs, graduate students, and graduate student alumni regarding what they were doing in the communities to bolster arguments related to resource allocation as related to state requirement and community engagement.
Creating positive change while meeting the institution’s responsibilities. Seeing himself as a servant leader who cultivates transformative change on campus, Taylor worked his way beginning from an assistant professor of science education to the dean of graduate studies and research. The pathway unfolded naturally once Taylor became aware of what administrative positions entailed and grew institutional knowledge as well as leadership successfully through multiple leadership roles he had assumed over the years as the department chair, dean of school of education, and now a university dean for both graduate education and research. Taylor’s current responsibilities included graduate programs on campus, research oversight, and program review responsibilities university-wide.

O University was recently granted with a R3 status, which acknowledged its growth in research activity. Historically, the institution had close partnerships and obligations in serving its regional communities as a state university. In recent years, the state where O University was located increasingly demanded regional universities taking roles in service-oriented activities, such as supporting local school districts through contract work. Furthermore, the metrics for evaluating institutional success were primarily undergraduate education-based and did not result in graduate education being considered as a priority on campus.

To highlight graduate students and graduate programs on campus, he focused on initiatives to promote research and grants on campus as well as reorganizing his unit to be a graduate school for a better organizational status. This unique leadership mix encouraged Taylor to advocate for the creation of a graduate school and a research foundation. He felt this change would “raise the prominence of graduate education by
establishing a graduate school, raising the prominence not only on our campus but within our community.” Such reflections demonstrated Taylor’s understanding of his institution’s mission, the connection to the local community, as well as how to utilize graduate education and research together to create a stronger research profile for O University’s institutional reputation.

**AZ.** University I was a regionally focused public university, classified as a Doctoral University with higher research activity. With more than 15,000 students and over 150 academic programs, the institution dedicated itself to creating learning opportunities for students to work in industry. AZ was dean of the graduate school. His unit supported graduate education and graduate students, which consisted of one-third of the student population. Only one year on the job and very new in his current role, AZ was very familiar with University I’s operations through the multiple leadership positions he held over time on campus.

**Individual background and career trajectory.** AZ embarked on his assistant professor appointment 14 years ago and progressed through all faculty ranks at University I by 2016. In the meanwhile, AZ served for three years as the president of the university’s faculty senate, which provided additional credentials for AZ among the faculty and proved useful later in his conversations with faculty to make progress on various issues as the graduate dean. The accumulation of both faculty and administrator experiences at the same institution led to strong relationships with faculty and institutional leaders on campus over the years.

Regarding his readiness to lead the graduate unit, AZ was most experienced with curriculum, program development, and student experiences, including graduate student
organizations. AZ saw both his research experiences in computer science and his involvement in the faculty senate as foundational to his knowledge of curriculum and program development, which were pertinent to the leadership of the graduate college. His research was highly interdisciplinary, “being able to look at multiple fields and understanding discipline was very appealing to me.” His faculty senate experience “was involved in curricular matters at a very mid-level.” This latter experience helped AZ to gain experiences in reviewing curriculum as well as providing feedback to academic programs.

As a full professor in computer science, AZ felt confident in his ability to conduct data analysis and interpretation. He worked hard to learn more about student recruitment and enrollment management as the graduate college served as a liaison for the university’s admission office and all the program directors.

**Institutional context.** In addition to AZ, there were eight staff members in the graduate school. All, but one of these employees worked full-time. The college of graduate studies oversaw recruitment and enrollment management, student experience, student services, and unit coordination. The graduate college provided administrative support for all graduate programs at the university; worked with the departments to help academic units craft proposals and develop curriculum and programs.

As a result, AZ had a position parallel to the academic deans on the organizational chart, and all deans reported to the provost. AZ would often assist the provost on special projects and new initiatives, such as building meaningful partnerships with regional employers to create student internship opportunities. AZ also worked closely with the
office of research in the development of multidisciplinary programs in terms of proposal writing and curriculum review.

**Leadership experience.** AZ perceived he was a collaborative leader as he considered the staff working not “for” him but “with” him. Appreciating every staff’s area of expertise and specialty, AZ viewed himself as the person to advance the best idea based on consensus forward. Additionally, AZ sought to inform his academic dean colleagues with the specific information from the perspective of graduate education to assist the deans’ efforts in the development of new programs and improvement of existing programs. In fact, AZ confirmed that the largest support for his leadership was the collegiality of the academic deans and positive reactions the group had to new initiatives and proposals proposed by the graduate college. AZ contributed his success as an outcome of ensuring every academic unit valued the graduate college’s each and every initiative. To achieve this goal, AZ tried to identify measurable and verifiable outcomes to engage those academic colleges. Such strategies paid off with a high level of academic college engagement.

When AZ was the faculty senate president, AZ served on the university’s enrollment taskforce which identified graduate enrollment as a significant component to overall university targets. As a result of this institution task force, AZ was attracted to the graduate dean’s position. He recalled, “The priority [graduate education and enrollment] was established about a year ago before I stepped up as a dean. That was actually one of the things that attracted me to apply to be a graduate dean in the first place.” Ever since AZ was appointed dean, he was able to leverage the evidence learned from the task force to advance issues of graduate education. AZ provided several
examples on how University I had supported graduate recruitment and graduate assistantships. For instance, when recruitment was identified as an institutional priority, a director of recruitment position was created, and after a year and a half, an improvement was observed in graduate enrollment.

Another example of AZ’s leadership was the budgetary support the graduate college received when the entire university was undergoing massive fiscal cuts. Although the graduate assistantship budget was cut as well, it was significantly smaller compared to the rest of the academic units. Such actions from the institution spoke strongly about the level of support graduate education received from University I under AZ’s helm.

Knowing the institutional characteristics and mission, in addition to the population University I served, AZ intended to establish top graduate programs that were “responsive and centered to that need in the region.” However, to accomplish this mission and to improve the graduate college’s success, graduate enrollment increases were required. The challenge AZ continued to face was to maintain graduate enrollment figures and deliver the promised results of initiatives proposed by the graduate college to academic colleges in a consistent and reliable manner.

**Graduate education as an institutional priority to meet the regional needs.**

Unlike other interviewees, AZ worked at an institution that prioritized graduate education. The graduate programs had strong connections to its regional workforce development and the private sector. Therefore, the support AZ received in terms of both attentions from senior leadership as well as financial resources was different than others in this study.
At an individual level, AZ also had the leadership and qualifications to lead the unit with his long-established relationships with faculty on campus through faculty governance as well as the strategic intentions to engage his academic dean colleagues in every initiative he proposed. It was the combination of both the experiences AZ brought into the position as well as the institution’s strategic planning that planted the support for further establishing graduate education at University I.

**Leslie.** Leslie just began her second year as the director of graduate studies for the graduate college at Z University, a public Doctoral University with high research activity. Having more than 25,000 students on three campuses, graduate students made up slightly over 10% of the student population. Leslie worked in both higher education and the private sector and had experiences in both student and academic affairs at three different institutions.

**Individual background and career trajectory.** Leslie’s career began in health promotion, first in the private sector and then in university settings. She thoroughly enjoyed working with college students, which made her realize her interest in getting more involved in students’ education. This interest spurred Leslie to pursue a Ph.D. in community health. After obtaining her degree, she taught at two institutions in different capacities. While she was going through her doctoral program, she was also a lecturer at a different university. Because of Leslie’s active involvement in that program, she was offered the opportunity to become a program coordinator of health promotion, a role that was rarely given out to someone in a lecturer position. This coordinator role allowed Leslie to accrue experience in program assessment.
In retrospect, Leslie expressed gratitude for the different opportunities in her professional life to get involved in an array of areas and tasks. She reflected:

I've had different opportunities to get involved with different things. And one of the things that I always have actually enjoyed about being a faculty member outside of my teaching was being involved in university level work and working with different faculty across campus and working on policies and procedures.

As a faculty member, she found pleasure in serving the university and working with faculty colleagues across campus, which helped her discover a deeper appreciation for administration. Her faculty unit at the time was going through a unit change, which placed Leslie in a situation in which she needed to understand the university’s policy to be able to help her department. This exposure resulted in Leslie wanting more leadership opportunities. An opportunity came around when there was a failed search for the graduate dean position, she currently occupies. Leslie’s academic dean recommended her for the job, and she applied. She got the position two years ago.

Soon after her appointment, Leslie realized there was a particular expectation coming from other faculty, namely, “they want to see that whoever is leading something has actually been in the trenches and doing it themselves.” Other than the pressure from faculty, Leslie had no clue of what to expect when she walked into the job. She did feel confident in her ability to work with faculty as a means to “serve,” serving the institution, the programs, and the work of faculty. Beyond this orientation, Leslie lacked guidance regarding how to fulfill her leadership role.

As a result, Leslie felt she employed a “trial by fire” approach. She lacked experience regarding institutional policies and procedures but was soon fielding questions
from others on how to interpret particular policies. As she tackled major issues, she learned more. Ultimately, Leslie found she experienced a mental shift. She described this as follows:

Probably the biggest transition is to understand that, okay, I don't know everything. And I need to make sure that I am reading, and I'm asking, and I'm looking at what other colleges or schools or graduate studies we're doing.

Being new to leadership, Leslie felt overwhelmed at first yet began to find her own way navigating through the responsibilities: utilizing her past experiences as well as gaining new perspectives.

In her role as the director of graduate studies, Leslie benefitted from both her student affairs and faculty experiences. She commented on her observation regarding the “us versus them” state of mind that commonly emerged in her work. Her experience in both academics and student affairs allowed her to understand how these areas served the same purpose, namely providing for the overall student experience in the university. In her own words, those experiences allowed her to “understand the inner workings of how an institution works and appreciating what the overall goal or purpose of student affairs.” Furthermore, she found that she had a higher tolerance of uncertainty and understood outcome-driven accountability, which was not the case of some administrators. Leslie viewed writing reports for justification or transparency a natural process instead of merely something she had to comply with. In fact, because of the differences she saw between business and education, Leslie did not take her academic appointment for granted.
Institutional context. The college of graduate studies was mainly in charge of graduate admissions and graduate student services. With admissions, the graduate college oversaw all the various program requirements and ensured each application complied with admission standards. Once students were admitted, the college housed and managed all the logistics for students’ programs of studies.

Even though Z University’s graduate unit was a college, Leslie only had a title of a director. In fact, Leslie shared that a role change was made before she stepped into the job:

At the time the provost talked to me about the position, they switched it to a director out of a recommendation from the other academic deans because in this position, the college is more of a service college making it, everything that comes from Grad studies is housed in our unit from the logistics perspective. This decentralized approach resulted in the academic deans viewing the graduate college as a clearing house for policy and processing. Within her unit, Leslie had seven full-time employees and a few graduate assistants. To facilitate better communication with all the graduate programs, Leslie had annual program director meeting as well as an in-semester meeting with each department or college to address any issues related to graduate education.

Leadership experience. Leslie described herself as a servant leader. Consequently, she saw her role in a serving capacity to move her unit and the institution forward. Part of her understanding of her role came from the resemblance between the serving orientation of her discipline, community health, and her current work. At the same time, Leslie was grateful for the work of the program directors and always thought
of ways to support them and the students they directly served. The way Leslie described her disciplinary training was to work with and alongside groups of people to help understand their needs and create appropriate interventions based on the resources within the community. Leslie was able to translate underlying principles from her academic work to “any type of service-oriented or agency when you are trying to have a strategic plan and moving that group forward.” Bearing that value in mind, Leslie made intentional efforts in listening to the faculty and understanding their needs rather than impose her perceived needs onto them. To sum up, Leslie took it as her job to always “improve and work to improve.”

On a personal note, Leslie’s academic experiences as a student and progression in academia too deeply influenced her leadership approach. As a first-generation student, Leslie articulated a sense of gratitude for the opportunities, betterment, and pursuits of excellence she acquired due to her education. Leslie was an active participant in her education, taking full advantages of opportunities presented to her. Yet often, Leslie would remind herself of her background – her upbringing, her hometown in a small rural area, and her earlier social economic status – and how she worked hard to address her imposter syndrome. The sense of being an outsider at times made her uncomfortable and question if she fit in with a particular group or was good and smart enough for what she was doing. To Leslie, the weight she bore as a first-generation student was much greater than being a woman, despite that she recognized there were still not many women in leadership positions at the university.

As Leslie continued to process her understanding of her personal and professional identities, she always wondered about the real purpose of education. Did the students she
worked with understand why they should attend higher education? Keeping such inquiries in mind, Leslie had both support and challenge in leading. The administrators were supportive of her work when she needed additional resources or funding, as long as there was reasonable justification. In return, she worked harder to meet the institution’s mission as a form of thanks to upper administration. The biggest challenge for Leslie, however, was a lack of connection to faculty who were in direct contact with graduate students and who had much more capacity to do more with students, especially in areas like professional development. Leslie could not meet student professional development needs without personnel. As an alternative strategy, Leslie actively looked out at other institutions for best practices and turned inside for possibilities to partner with programs and colleges on specific projects and causes.

**From a first-generation student to a servant leader.** Recommended by her academic dean, Leslie took on the role as the director of graduate studies at Z University. As a first-generation student, Leslie was dedicated to the value of education and making education accessible to students. Central to her leadership was both her personal identity, mainly as a first-generation student, and her area of study, community health. Her upbringing and past experiences simultaneously inspired her to continue work for excellence and challenged herself in her self-perception as a leader.

Additionally, how her position and unit were organized on campus together with her professional training as an expert in community health, which places the needs of the community being served upfront, supported her servant leadership and provided her with a focus to support other academic units. Leslie commented:
We oversee the paperwork for graduate assistantships that are in the classroom teaching, but I'm not supervising to make sure that they're doing x, y, and z. So how my unit is structured: we do a lot of the logistic side of it, but we have other units on this campus that are here to contribute to some of these things. And though we work together, and I support and I promote and try to figure out how we can come together specifically from a budget standpoint, because money is scarce.

Leslie actively brought in what her discipline taught her in helping a community to create change utilizing available resources and transformed such principles in her current work in serving the graduate college and the academic units the graduate college serves. Within her college, she worked to ensure her staff felt rewarded and satisfied from their work. Externally Leslie supported other academic units as she actively sought to be a servant leader to enrich the professional environment through better collaborations.

**Summary**

Following a maximum variation sampling strategy, I highlighted eight participants in this chapter to emphasize their individuality, examining each participant’s personal accounts based on interviews supplemented by their professional records and institutional websites. I reviewed and reported on each individual’s professional career development, their institutional contexts, as well as their leadership experiences in details with a theme analysis at the end. Next, I present the cross-case analysis by utilizing the theoretical frameworks of this study, highlighting the results learned across participants.
CHAPTER 6: CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

The theoretical frameworks guiding this research inquiry include theories on leader and leadership development, mid-level leadership, and academic leadership. By doing a cross-case analysis, the interview data highlighted how each of these three frameworks emerged for the graduate deans and how their positions leading graduate education at Doctoral Universities were perceived by these leaders. Using the three theoretical frameworks for analysis, I present the cross-case analysis using evidence drawn from individual case analysis.

Leader and Leadership

The concepts of being a leader and the leadership displayed by the participants are deeply intertwined. As a result, to understand one’s leadership requires a deeper understanding of the leader’s *intrapersonal development*, consisting of experiences in development and identity development, as well as how the development is influenced by others, *interpersonal development*. This section specifically focuses on the development of the participants and the shared themes emerged from their individual journeys as leaders.

**Experiences in development.** Experience is often regarded as a fundamental aspect of leadership development (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2011). For the participants in this study, experience too stands out as a determining factor contributing to their development and identity. The participants in this study highlighted how their experiences throughout their career pathway, years in the field, and readiness helped shape how they view leadership.
**Career pathway.** Before interviewees rose to their current positions, many had experiences in- and outside of the academia. These experiences either helped them decide on what next steps to take, or later became reference points that were beneficial in their understanding of their positions. This section outlined how these experiences influenced individuals in what ways.

**Cross-sector experiences.** In addition to the fact the most participants had significant experiences in higher education, several individuals had experiences outside of colleges and universities. For instance, Michelle, Valeria, and Leslie addressed the differences they saw between the corporate sector and higher education. Michelle’s extensive experiences in collaborating with the private business helped her see the disciplinary differences in research conduct and process at the university. Valeria was a business officer in the central management office, and this background showcased for her how universities adopted different business models compared to the private sector. The business models in the university sector were similar to general business models to a certain extent but had greater flexibility in the freedom of following the guidelines. Having worked for corporations, Leslie was highly familiar with working in an environment driven by outcomes and having an accountability-focused mentality. As a result of these non-higher education work experiences, all three participants showed further appreciation for academia as its intention and environment primarily fosters learning. Pointedly, the individuals coming from the private sector had less criticism regarding what was required of them, especially tasks such as producing reports or providing justification in budgeting and asking for additional resources.
Aside from ventures in the business, several participants had experiences in either K-12 education or working in government. Both Taylor and Tully were educators in public schools, and both used their experiences as a stepping stone for them to acquire teaching credentials and master’s degrees to fulfill state requirements for public school teaching before coming to university teaching. From the classroom, Taylor and Tully both moved up the administrative ranks to their ultimate positions as deans of graduate schools. Michelle’s work with a government agency was deeply transformative. She offered:

So, the time that I spent at NSF really helps me to understand the higher education landscape wholly. Because up to that point, I really knew about engineering and I didn't really understand and appreciate the breadth of the different types of universities that there are in the country and what their missions are and what their strengths are and how the whole higher education ecosystem worked. Oh, I'd say that that experience was transformational and really makes me much more effective in this current position.

Working in other sectors provided these participants with a different worldview, which allowed them to transition to their current positions with more ease.

Having worked for the state higher education board to approve continuous and extended programs for all types of institutions, Valeria summarized her takeaways similarly:

One thing is it helps me to understand the differences in colleges in universities and there are major differences between private institutions and state-supported institutions as well as proprietary institutions. And once you understand those
kinds of inferences, it’s very easy to determine, the selection of students that come from those different types of universities.

Several others dabbled in other sectors as well. Even though some of these experiences were brief, the participants gained insights that spurred their return to graduate school and to obtaining a terminal degree. For example, Joseph’s experience working in a non-profit organization motivated him to seek how to understand people. Taylor worked for a state as a field scientist, which was helpful for his later career in science education. Leslie figured out her passion in working with students in a college setting when she supervised graduate students in health promotions. Many, in the process of working outside of academia, too, came to the realization that the “Ph.D. is sort of the membership card to working in academia” (Michelle). Obtaining a terminal degree allowed participants to jump the first hurdle on their pathway to graduate school leadership.

Other experiences in higher education. Graduate deans often bring extensive experiences in academic affairs with them into administration. Having experiences in areas other than academic affairs, such as student affairs, proved to be beneficial to those in the graduate dean position. Leslie’s background in student wellness, for example, contributed to her leadership in two ways. First, she appreciated the student affairs side of higher education, in conjunction with academic affairs, and firmly believed in its purpose in serving the graduate students and improving their academic experiences. Second, she took an interest in improving her staff members’ job satisfaction as she knew how much one’s career affected one’s holistic wellbeing.
Likewise, Beth learned how to manage staff and budgets; gained better teaching and training skills and the understanding of how to train students for non-academic jobs as a result of working in student affairs for a decade. Beth, too, was a strong believer in professional development for the staff, whom she believed had traditionally been overlooked. The exposure to issues outside of academic affairs allowed many of the participants insights into operations, as Valeria offered how she was able to see the “interworking and the models that were used by universities” based on her prior work as a registrar and her experience in the Bursar’s office.

**Years of experiences.** The interviews with the graduate deans indicated that not only does the breadth of experiences matter, but so too the time in the field. For example, the length of one’s experience provides context and institutional knowledge that contributes to the ability to lead. Many of the participants attributed their achievements to a range of opportunities they encountered in their lengthy careers, as well to the role time in the position shaped their growth.

Years of experiences included time spent in academia in general. For Joseph, the number of institutions he had worked was an indicator of the experiences he had and the readiness to learn because “every university is different… I would say that those details obviously I couldn't possibly have learned until—about the specificity of P University—until I made the transition.” As a result of this range of positions in the field, Joseph walked into his current position with the readiness to apply what he knew, anticipating that he would also need to spend time learning about the current context and practices at P University. Similarly, Taylor recounted that even though he did not have graduate education leadership experience, he “wasn’t new to leadership.” In fact, having been an
academic dean for many years with sufficient institutional knowledge, Taylor felt much more at ease when starting his position as the graduate dean. Unlike Joseph and Taylor, however, Leslie had no idea what to expect. Recall, Leslie took over as the director of graduate studies when the initial search for the position failed. Wishing to find guidance through university policies, Leslie was not able to find expectations for being a university administrator. Having fewer years of experiences in the field, Leslie used a “trial and error” method, pushed herself by reading extensively, and finally accepted that she could not know everything.

Focus is another byproduct that was fine-tuned over time for the participants. Some of the senior deans who had been in their positions for over 10 years shifted their focus to national networks and to serving in leadership roles in professional organizations. Whereas those newer in the graduate dean’s position spent more time learning about how to best fulfill their internal roles. For example, Tully, who had been on the job more than 20 years across different institutions, felt very well-prepared in all aspects of her job and considered her job as much broader than other graduate deans. She reflected,

This is what I have been doing for a long time, and this is the knowledge I am sending to my colleagues. [I’m] trying to do it all the time, inside of the university as well as among the grad deans.

In a similar fashion, time in the position provided Michelle and Valeria different perspectives in approaching their work. Michelle noted, “[I] am veteran dean who has had opportunities to serve in leadership positions in the graduate community nationally.” Valeria viewed her relationships with presidents and provosts as “a teaching process—
you have to teach to tell them why; you have to teach them those definitions.” Rather than getting frustrated with how the senior leadership did not understand the importance of graduate education, Valeria took every opportunity to coach her new campus leaders when it came to what she did, and her unit responsibilities were.

**Readiness.** In addition to time spent working, knowledge, skills, and training gained from past experiences also contributed to one’s readiness for positions. On the one hand, since all participants had first-hand experiences working as a faculty member, many went into the position feeling confident in their ability in curriculum review (Taylor, AZ), program development (AZ), working with faculty (Leslie), and personnel management (Joseph, Tully, AZ). Several also felt prepared in student service areas, such as navigating financial aid and working with student organizations (Valeria, Michelle).

On the other hand, given the breadth of the responsibilities graduate deans had, very few interviewees went into their dean’s positions feeling that they were ready in every aspect of the job. For those who had the opportunity to work at a graduate school in some administrative capacity before taking over the dean’s position, having that time in the unit was regarded as very helpful (Joseph, Beth, Michelle, Valeria, and Tully). In their prior position, these individuals took advantage of the opportunities present in the unit and learned enormously from their staff colleagues and their supervisors. Others who did not have these types of graduate school unit opportunities learned via other experiences how to handle “the administrative side of things” (AZ). For example, AZ’s five years of experiences in the faculty senate, and as the president of the senate, equipped him with a strong knowledge of curriculum and program development. Taylor,
found his previous work as an academic dean and a department chair familiarized him with working with faculty, staffing, and scheduling. As well, Leslie, who worked as a program director, felt very confident in her ability to serve faculty.

The areas in which participants felt less experienced were recruitment and enrollment management (AZ), policy interpretation (Leslie), non-Ph.D. doctoral education, online education, and post-baccalaureate education (Joseph), contracting (Taylor, whose portfolio consisted of both graduate studies and research), fundraising (Tully), working with graduate faculty to help them understand the standards of graduate education (Valeria), postdoc affairs, federal policies, and policy advocacy (Beth), and setting a vision of excellence for the graduate community (Michelle). Notably, except for policy interpretation (Leslie), contracting (Joseph), and working with graduate faculty (Valeria), all the areas identified as challenging reflect the trends occurring in graduate education in recent decades. Specifically, these challenges include the development of non-traditional graduate programs, recruiting and retaining quality students for programs, the increasing number of graduate students going into postdocs who are looking for ways to enter the workforce, utilizing fundraising to support the graduate school’s limited budget, and dealing with federal policies and policy advocacy for graduate education.

**Personal orientations and development.** Although experiences play a significant role in one’s career, personal orientations observed from the eight participants further explained why they became leaders in graduate education. The commonalities among participants included a desire to work in higher education, the value of education and learning, disciplinary connections to leadership, and a shared passion for graduate education.
Desire to work in higher education. Several participants went back to graduate school for a Ph.D. to acquire the skills and credentials necessary for a career in higher education. Michelle’s remarks embodied the essence of such desire:

So, in thinking about why I got the Ph.D. I always had an interest in higher education and in particular higher education administration. So, I wasn't sure what my pathway would be, but because as an undergraduate and graduate student I had been very involved in student organizations and student government, I was interested in ‘how do you impact for the better?’ And I saw that administration was a pathway that was of interest and where you could impact a lot of people's lives.

Working in higher education was a career choice, and several participants were aware that having a Ph.D. was a necessary pre-requisite for academic leadership. Some also noted their interest in working with students as well as joy doing education-related work as motivations for seeking a career in higher education.

Value placed on education and learning. Similar to their desire to work in higher education, many of the participants expressed how much they valued education and learning. These values were integral to their own upbringing and journey. Born in a family of educators, Tully felt strongly about her educator identity too. She stated: “Because I am an educator. Being in education and being raised by a family of teachers, I have always valued education and learning.” Leslie’s family experience as a first-generation college student continued to contribute to her persistence and motivation to help others. Her hard work throughout her journey built a desire to make sure those working or studying at universities also see the value of education. Leslie reflected:
And what I have always strived for in my academic career is to always understand the real purpose of why we are here, and that is to work with college students to contribute to their higher education learning experience. And because of my personal background, I really have appreciated all the opportunities that have been afforded to me—being an active participant in education. And what I always aim to do in whatever I'm doing, whether it's in the teaching arena, if I'm doing my scholarship or in my current role is that I want to make the educational experience of the students at the institution I'm at—I want it to be valuable and I want them to really appreciate what they are receiving because I do understand that that is not everyone's path in life. So, there's a lot of individuals out there who don't have that opportunity and it should not be taken for granted, and I try to get in whatever role I'm in. That's just a really important piece of making sure that we all understand our number one goal here is to make sure that we are taking care of our students; that our students value what they are receiving when they're under our care.

Similar to the desire to work in higher education, participants inherently believed the value of education either from their own journeys or their observations of what learning and education could bring to individuals. Working as graduate deans would further enhance their capacity to share what they valued in educational settings and allowed them to inspire their students.

**Disciplinary influences.** The participants had a range of disciplinary backgrounds given that the participants were selected to achieve maximum variation. For example, the fields of study and disciplines included higher education administration
(Beth and Valeria), sociology (Joseph), engineering (Michelle), community health (Leslie), computer science (AZ), science education (Taylor), and Kinesiology (Tully). All the participants actively tapped their disciplinary training in their current position, and in many ways, these disciplinary practices continued to shape their leadership.

For some, their disciplinary training provided them with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes helpful for their current position. For instance, AZ’s background in computer science came handy in his role. He noted, “I am quite comfortable working with data, understanding, and interpreting data as well. That’s been useful.” Tully’s disciplinary training was also impactful to her work. She noted:

Actually [my educational background] helped me in dealing with individuals who look at things in different ways, or they look at in one way and I can see it in a variety of ways. So, my disciplinary background helped… And sociology as well. It is very interdisciplinary background that I have. What runs across all those disciplines is disability because I specialized in disability. I think it [training] helped me see things in an interdisciplinary way and helped me understand a wide variety of disabilities but also social identities.

In Tully’s case, her disciplinary background influenced her cognitive approach to conceiving issues as well as how she approached others who held different opinions from her. The ability to switch perspectives proved helpful in her role working with individuals with different disciplinary backgrounds.

The disciplinary backgrounds of the participants and their continued research in the field manifested in the daily operations and decision-making activities of the job.
Joseph, for example, spoke to how his sociologist identity and research on science and knowledge creation guided his approach to his job. He offered:

So, on the sociology piece, I think in terms of the structure of social relations and so issues of inequality and access and institutional barriers and so on are always kind of the front of mind. I've written a book and maybe a dozen articles that are related to knowledge production in university settings and commercial pressures on universities setting. So, I come with that. I think the fact that I studied the sciences means that I have some understanding of graduate education in the sciences just by virtue of what I studied.

Joseph was able to apply his scholarship directly into his administrative work as a social scientist. Compared to others who might not have had exposure on organizations or power dynamics, Joseph started off with much advantage and tools to bridge research to theory.

In addition, Leslie’s training in community health further shaped her understanding of her own leadership and the specific approaches she took to serve others. She stated:

My background is in community health and a lot of what we do in that area is working with groups of people and working alongside groups of people trying to identify what their needs are and creating appropriate interventions that they can actually do based on what resources they have, and then implement them to make either a major or a slight small changes in their overall quality of life…

I think that that though, again, everything that I've done academically has from a health standpoint.
Reflecting upon her academic achievements, Leslie noticed how the health studies perspectives shaped her professional approaches throughout her career. Leslie expanded:

It's still those same principles I think follow into any type of a service oriented or agency like when you're trying to have a strategic plan and moving that group forward. I've always made sure that getting the perspective of the faculty and not just, okay, yeah, this is what I think we should do, and this is what we're going to do. There are of course things that had an agenda that I would like to get done, but I can also understand that we got to involve people in which is going to be impacting the most and who's going to be doing this. And if we were to do this, how will it work best at this institution based on the capacity and the resources? So, I think that a lot of what I learned in my academic studies is parallel to a lot of things that I'm doing just from an administrative perspective and not just a public health perspective.

Beth’s unique background in higher education provided her with additional knowledge about graduate education. She recalled:

My experiences as a higher education scholar equip me well to understand and be familiar with the research around graduate students and graduate education. Because of what I study, I have a general sense of the differences between the disciplines and how the disciplines inform graduate education… It’s also helped me because I am a social scientist in terms of the research, the assessment, and program evaluation. We recognize the importance of those kinds of things, which are obviously important for the success of graduate education as well.
Similar to Joseph and AZ, Beth’s background provided her both the tools and attitudes that promoted her readiness as a leader, benefitting from her scholarship that enhanced her leadership understanding and practices.

Others relied on their disciplinary training and research to position themselves in an advantageous position on campus to help increase their reputation and visibility, including creating a sense of credibility and building relationships with faculty and other campus units. Such credibility is especially important when an institution had a focus on STEM education (Taylor and Michelle). Taylor added,

Because my position is a dual role in research and grad studies and we're at a university that's attempting to ramp up our research capacity, having a background in science helps me to connect with the others, the other faculty, and the colleges that focused on what we call STEM education. I'm a colleague. I was a field biologist. I was a scientist. I have that connection to the STEM disciplines [and this] helps me to build our research portfolio, particularly in the areas of stem which happened to be the most active in grant and in research activity. It gives me some level of credibility among some of these faculty on the campus.

In Taylor’s case, not only has his STEM background helped his leadership role in graduate education but also contributed to his promotion and initiatives of strengthening the research section. Similarly, Michelle found that her STEM background was an asset when she became dean. She stated,

Well, we are a STEM-focused institution at the graduate level. We have no humanity PhDs. We do have one interdisciplinary PhD and so much of what
we've been trying to do, particularly diversity wise, has focused on STEM disciplines. So, having an identity and direct knowledge of engineering has been very helpful for the initiatives that we've been trying to do.

These faculty members tapped into their disciplinary background to enhance their leadership as graduate deans. They also took measures to position themselves carefully in order to make connections with other disciplines. For example, Beth made intentional efforts to assure she was well-connected to faculty and students across all disciplines. She commented:

I have federal funding with scientists and engineers on campus – that also helps. I have made some conscious decisions in my research to engage with STEM and to engage with arts and humanities… Also, we have a minor for College Teaching at the University. I taught several courses for the graduate studies’ minor in College Teaching and that drew students from a lot of disciplines. That has also helped me in terms of people recognize me. I am also an outside committee member because I might be the only person outside of the discipline they have ever had any contact with because they take a course on the professoriate or college teaching.

This type of border crossing requires years of relationship-building as well as intentionality. The expansion beyond one’s immediate discipline too demands extra measure; in Beth’s case it was beneficial for Beth’s campus visibility as well as gaining support from both faculty and students.

**Passion for graduate education.** In addition to the strong disciplinary influences that individuals carried into their current lines of work, many had a post-baccalaureate
This interest in graduate education primed their gravitation toward leadership positions in this area. For example, in Tully’s case, the focus on graduate education in the strategic plan at D University piqued her desire to pursue the graduate dean position. Similarly, when University I identified graduate education as a significant component through an overall enrollment taskforce, AZ decided to step up as a dean. He reflected, “that attracted me to apply to be a graduate dean in the first place.”

Tully, Beth, and Taylor’s teaching experiences were all on the graduate level, and their programs or departments were post-baccalaureate focused as well, which gave them ample opportunities to work with graduate students. Even though his position at P University was not Joseph’s first time being a graduate dean, he applied due to the responsibilities outlined in the job description. He recalled:

They reflect my values… But I would say, about a month ago I was working on my budget, which I present to the provost and a friend of mine who doesn't work here, asked me about it and I said, you know, I'm really proud of this. And the person said, why? And I said, well, I think all of the things that I want to fund reflect things that I think are important. And there was no staff in my office working on these issues before I got here. And now we have two part-time faculty members working on them [issues related to diversity and professional development]. I'm going to put money into programming again.

Joseph continued to feel excited and satisfied for what he contributed to graduate education on campus, making progress on some inattentive areas that were overdue.

Identity development. Both professional and social identities are critical for intrapersonal development. The former directly impacts one’s career choices and
priorities, while the latter is increasingly discussed in higher education as many begin to recognize social identities often affect an individual’s leadership experiences.

**Professional identity.** The development of professional identities requires exposure to positions that expanded participants’ original knowledge or understanding of higher leadership positions. Thus, the development of professional identity is a journey of shaping oneself within the environment, working to align personal values with institutional values, and finding the best fit.

**Faculty identity.** Central to all participants is their faculty identity. All interviewees had tenure (or were once on a tenure track in Michelle’s case) faculty experiences. For those who were tenured, going through the tenure and promotion process was considered pivotal. Tully stated:

> The best preparation I had to be an academic dean was to be a tenured full professor, and to go through the ranks of faculty. That prepared me to understand the academic side of the university and to assume some leadership positions, opportunities, or leadership roles.

Similarly, Valeria recalled her experiences “going through the ranks,” adding that she had to work hard for it [tenure and promotion] to come from being an assistant professor all the way up through each one of those academic ranks. By going through each one of the academic ranks, it helps me to understand what was really required at each level and that if you wanted to move up you had to learn how to master whatever was required at the assistant professor level, at the associate, and then at the full professor level. And it was just a learning experience that carried me from the lowest to the highest academic rank part. And learning how to do
those things and do them well and you had to be evaluated by students, by your peers on your research and publications, and by chair persons. Those things were required. And it was a training program.

Ascension through the academic ranks provided the participants with experiences to relate in their current roles that involved leading other faculty. Leslie expanded on this concept:

What I'm doing now, I think it was probably just my work when I started getting involved in more leadership positions, committees, university-level opportunities as a faculty member. Because the reality is, is that when you're in a position like this [director of graduate studies], faculty like that you were an involved faculty member. They want to see that whoever is leading something has actually been in the trenches and doing it themselves. You hear that. And, and again, it's not just the institution I'm at now. I've worked at three different institutions… And it's a very common thing you hear like, why should I trust that you understand what I'm going through if you have never done x, y, and z. and that's really important to faculty that you have kind of - I've been in the classroom; I have been actively involved in service; I've been actively involved in scholarship; I've been actively involved in service in my institution and trying and trying to meet those goals as any faculty members is doing. And so, I think just the fact that I do come from this institution. I do know the culture of the institution. Though faculty don't always agree with the decisions I make, they at least appreciate that I've kind of come up through the system.
Leslie attributed the support and appreciation she received from her faculty colleagues to the fact that her own faculty experiences fulfilled their expectations. Since she had done what other faculty were doing, they trusted her with the ability to serve them based on the shared understanding coming from the faculty identity.

*Faculty-administrator identity transition.* Even though being a faculty was instrumental in the participants’ professional identity development, many considered the shift from a faculty to an administrator of equal weight in preparing them to lead. From the perspective of academic leadership pathway, academic leaders often rise from tenured faculty positions to become program director, department chairs, and so on. The experiences gained as a department chair too resonated as a milestone and first step into administration (Beth, Joseph, and Taylor). Beth said: “As a chair, I worked very closely with faculty. I study faculty. I am familiar with faculty governance and the roles faculty play in the training and preparation for graduate students. Having done that, too, myself.” For Joseph and Taylor, the experience as a department chair opened their eyes to administrative responsibilities and what it means to be a leader in academic affairs. Joseph added:

You start out, you're a regular faculty member, maybe you sit on a particular university wide committee. In fact, I think that that all created important foundations for me. I chaired the tenure committee for Social Sciences and a review at social science department at my previous institution and that was all really before I had any administrative role. But then I think I learned both about the university and what leaders do. I don't think I really had an idea what a dean or an associate provost or provost did before I was a department chair.
Step by step, opportunity by opportunity, participants like Joseph and Taylor expanded their vision from a faculty member who conducted research and teaching to see what capacity the administrators held. Through serving on committees and department chairs, they too gained first-hand administrative experiences.

Taylor reflected:

The department chair role at our campus—you're not an administrator; you're still a faculty member; you just happened to be responsible for the department. In my case I felt like it was my turn to be department chair. In many departments, nobody wants to be the department chair because it's a hard job and you have a lot of responsibility but very little authority… Because I was successful as a department chair, then I was targeted for an associate dean position. And then because I was a successful as associate dean, I was targeted for dean position. So, everything evolved from that department chair experience. And I tell other people now that I'm mentoring - our emerging leaders on our campus - do you want to be a leader in academic affairs? You have to be a department chair at some time. Critical steps. And so that was a critical step for me. Had I not been in that department chair, I could not have done my job as associate dean very well or as well. And similarly, being a dean, all of the issues that you deal with as department chair, I used to do it at us on a smaller scale because it's just a department. Those are critical skills you’d develop as a department chair that are essential to be a college level dean or a university level.

Not only did Taylor see and become interested in the administrator role but also, he was good in the chair position. Compared to his colleagues, Taylor enjoyed the experiences
and embraced the challenges whereas other faculty struggled with it. Taylor was more inclined to becoming an administrator based on the interest and his success.

Even though some of the participants like Beth and Michelle, had always wanted to go into administration as they saw the capacity of administration very early on in their career, others felt they were leaving their faculty identity behind to become an administrator. This type of shift required more pondering for some. For example, Tully first worked for a graduate school in a part-time appointment, she expanded this was because “I did not want to be a full-time administrator.” Some accidentally found their way into administration. For example, Leslie’s unit went through unit relocation, as a result of which, she had to learn about the university policies. In retrospect, she did not fully appreciate the administrative role until her own program was in a problematic situation. She stated:

It was kind of in-between department chairs and we were trying to get a grasp on everything. And I really got into the importance of understanding university policy in the handbook and all that so that it really got me involved in wanting to do more active roles in leadership positions. And so, I took on a few things, some university-level community, [and] some college-level committees.

Leslie was drawn into administration due to unexpected events, which forced Leslie to learn from institutional policy in order to help her unit through the reorganization.

**Social identity.** The eight interviewees comprised a diverse group based on personal individual characteristics. The literature outlines certain assumptions about leaders based on individual characteristics, such as gender, sexual orientation, and race and ethnicity. However, such assumptions cannot always be generalized to all
individuals, nor do the known variables explain all the personal factors that affect one’s approach to leadership or their educational philosophy. Also, in cases where there are multiple identities, the intersectionality is much more complicated than what is often conceived based on a singular identity. The intersectionality of identities is a result of an individual’s self-understanding, the external conception of the identity, as well as the context in which the individual works.

Three interviewees self-identified as minorities. AZ was an Asian man; Michelle was a light-skinned Black woman; and Valeria identified as a Black woman. Both AZ and Valeria perceived that they had never been affected by their social identities (gender, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation and so on). Despite assumptions of Asians excelling in STEM or Blacks flourishing in HBCUs, these links were not prominent for AZ or Valeria. Michelle, however, noted different reactions to her minority and gender identity based upon institutional context. Recall, at her first university, she was often mistaken with another Black woman, as if all Black women are alike and interchangeable. At her current institutions, Michelle thought her long-tenure as the graduate dean resulted in other “people now just see me as Michelle.” Yet Michelle did note that her gender was crucial in building relationships with other women in leadership positions. Given that she was the only minority leader in academic affairs, Michelle did not comment on the fact she was the “only” person of color in a leadership position and did not perceive this identity as limiting at her current institution.

For individuals who identified as White, all but one acknowledged their socially-charged privileges and the limitations of their experiences, which influenced how they felt they could relate to students of color. An exception was Leslie, who as a first-
generation student continued to suffer from imposter syndrome given her upbringing and former social-economic status. She did not see that being White afforded her privilege as her focus was on her class. For other White interviewees, each individual’s experience varied based on their other identities.

As White men in academia, Joseph and Taylor understood their double privileges of being a man and being White. However, Taylor viewed his background in science education as minoritized given few men in K-12 education, especially in elementary education. Yet, he realized that there are fewer women in STEM in college settings, though Taylor felt this representation was changing and with more women enrolling in STEM majors. Joseph fully acknowledged that “by definition, I do not have any marginalized experiences.” Yet he personally put diversity and inclusion a top priority of his and worked hard to listen and understand those who had marginalized experiences. Joseph believed that the success of a graduate dean depended on one’s understanding and efforts on matters of diversity and in his work, he made sure there were attention and actions devoted to historically underserved populations by listening to students’ experiences as well as devoting resources to support diversity initiatives.

The White women deans, Tully and Beth, offered reflections on privilege. Being a feminist at heart, Beth took her identity as a woman seriously and was firmly committed to social justice issues. She noted that she was often “the only woman in the upper administration room.” As a result, Beth felt compelled to advocate for minority graduate students, especially those identifying in the LGBTQ community. Beth had extensive training and knowledge as a higher education researcher, thus she was able to argue in meetings and influence her unit and its priorities to be highly equity-driven.
Likewise, Tully’s understanding of equity and inclusion came from her own identity as a non-heterosexual woman, as well as her disciplinary training. She almost left administration because of her experiences with discrimination based on her sexual orientation. Nonetheless, Tully persisted, knowing that for these exclusionary practices impacted others like herself. She sought out leadership positions to help others. The knowledge and standpoints she gained from her special education and kinesiology training additionally reinforced her commitment to creating a welcoming and affirming environment for graduate students on her campus. Tully expanded:

Yes, I think because I am not a White heterosexual male, I have experienced privilege as a White person. But I don’t have the same experiences—I have different experiences with the various intersections of social identity. And I have been able to reflect from a different perspective. And bring that into my job and my responsibilities here.

Tully and Leslie’s experiences added more complexity to the less visible social identities and the impact those identities could continue to have over individual’s personal and career development.

**Interpersonal development.** Parallel to each individual’s intrapersonal development, interpersonal development also occurred. This type of development emerged due to networking (e.g., professional organizations, staff, and colleagues) and mentorship. Work with others further facilitated the participants’ leadership development and learning how to lead.

**Mentorship.** Several participants had the opportunity to work in a graduate school before stepping in the position as a graduate dean. Those opportunities provided
space for mentorship. Joseph, Beth, and Michelle all noted the influence of this type of
mentorship at their local institutions. Importantly, such mentorship came from all
directions. Participants felt mentored by their predecessors or those in ranks above them,
but also felt they learned from the general staff members in the graduate unit or by
working as graduate program directors in other academic units. The staff in the graduate
school often had specialized areas, such as student service, professional development,
diversity and inclusion, and budgeting. Working in a range of functional areas daily
offered Tully an experience to observe others in leadership positions and gave her a
chance to envision leadership possibilities. She noted too, “just taking on tasks that
needed to be done. And finding my way through that” provided learning opportunities.
In Beth’s experience, she worked for a year in the unit she now leads and had the chance
to watch how her predecessor did the job. She commented:

So, she [predecessor] made a very conscious effort to have me participate, shadow
her, and do those things to prepare me as well. That has certainly helped me to be
in the position and know the various nuances. There is always going to be
unexpected things, but I was able to watch her do some of that.

Like Beth, Michelle was also directly mentored by her predecessor. Michelle added:

Having the opportunity to serve as associate dean under a very strong dean and
one who was a great mentor and helped me to understand the strategy side of
some of his approaches: how do you have the conversation before the meeting so
that when you have it will flow more smoothly; and how do you develop your
allies? How do you survey the landscape so that you can come up with the win-
win pathway so that others buy into what you're trying to get done? Because
graduate deans have very few monetary resources. And so, the power of
persuasion and partnerships is what drives success.

Also, worth mentioning is that many participants now took on the role mentoring others
on campus or newer deans in the greater graduate education community. These deans
were paying it forward in the profession.

**Network.** The participants found both institutional networks and connections in
the regional and national graduate education community beneficial to their leadership
development. The internal and external connections collectively proved useful in
participants’ leadership efficacy and effectiveness.

**Institutional network.** The network or relationships developed at the participant’s
home institution were particularly important for “moving things forward,” according to
AZ. He added, “That has been useful in making progress on various kinds of issues if
there are conversations to be had. My relationships with the faculty also helped quite a
bit.” To Joseph, equally important was having access to the academic deans since he
came into his current position from another university. Joseph recalled:

So, the first thing I did was I went around on their turf and met with every single
dean. I asked them about what their concerns were, how I could be of assistance
to them. And then those relationships have built over time. Certain Dean's I see
pretty regularly, and I'm engaged with pretty regularly and some much less so.

Building internal networks helped the deans when leading their graduate education units.
Beth spoke to her own observation when previous leaders on her campus did not have
good relationships with faculty from certain disciplines. She noted:
I haven’t really experienced this, but I have seen this play out in other settings with other deans in the past that if the person who is leading graduate studies coming from a particular discipline, faculty from particular disciplines that are not in that area - don't think that you get it. We had a previous dean who was in the humanities. And I know many of our STEM faculty really took issue with him. There were probably many complicating factors, but discipline mattered a lot in that. That certainly has the potential for me to play out that way.

Knowing the past challenges existed for her position, Beth worked closely with faculty across fields through grants, department services, and teaching courses to all graduate students to position herself advantageously.

*Regional and national network.* In addition to growing their local connections, many reached out to regional and national networks in graduate education to connect with others in similar positions. At many institutions, the graduate deans are the only ones dealing with the entirety of issues related to graduate education on campus. Valeria, for instance, found her network with other graduate deans through working with professional organizations. She commented:

And those were organizations that helped me to understand what other universities were doing and what best practices were. And typically, that's what we followed. As a graduate dean I made friends with a lot of experienced graduate deans who took me up under their wings and taught me the best practices.

Sometimes, this type of national involvement led to more opportunities. In Michelle’s case,
As graduate dean, I've been able to participate in national issues and national conversations because of those affiliations and I get other opportunities that come about because they're looking for experienced deans who had a broad level of experience. So those have been wonderful opportunities and now I do spend some time mentoring newer deans.

The external networks created more opportunities for the graduate deans to stay current with the discussions facing graduate deans and the graduate schools around the nation. The national platforms created platforms to share practices worked and lessons learned. For Tully, her ongoing involvement with a national professional organization began to let others see D University as “a leader in graduate education.” She added,

I know a lot of people look at the various things that we are doing either want to adopt or see some of things we are doing. I think that’s a leadership role that I did not seek. But because of the things we are doing, I am very happy to share what are the things we’ve done or success and failures so that other people can create a quality and affirming graduate experience.

Thus, regional and national networks of graduate education provided graduate deans with access to peers working at other institutions to exchange information, strategies, and create meaningful learning opportunities among the graduate dean community.

**Summary.** This section emphasized the personal development of leaders through highlighting experiences and personal events in intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions. On an individual level, past experiences, personal orientations, and identities played major roles in leadership development. Beyond this individual scope, it
was the interactions with other professionals, mentors, and experienced others that further
developed leaders in their capacity to lead.

**Academic Leadership**

As the discussion of leader and leadership unfolds, not only are the two concepts
themselves deeply intertwined, but also embedded in the academic culture. What
separates academic leadership from other types of leadership is its particular cultural
contexts. The participants in this study shared different aspects of academic leadership in
relation to the academic culture and organizational culture. The former provides a grand
environment as it is rooted in institutions, as well as trends and topics in higher education
and graduate education, whereas the latter focuses on the unique structure,
administration, features, histories, and responsibilities of graduate education units on the
respective campuses.

**The academic culture.** Overall, the participants felt they had sufficient
understanding of how universities worked. Such appreciation of the academic culture
displayed through participants commenting on reactions to change (Tully), collegiality
(AZ and Michelle), lateral collaboration (Taylor), faculty expectations (Leslie and
Michelle), in addition to the flexibility compared to the strict guidelines and deadline in
the corporate world and a focus on learning (Leslie and Valeria). Several of these aspects
underscore how organizational climate, relationships, and overall values at colleges and
universities result in particular organizational orientations that differ from corporations.

For instance, the reluctance in the academe toward change is a long-standing topic
for many higher education stakeholders, especially those who have been in the field for a
rather long time. Tully, for instance, who “liked innovation and change,” spoke about how she encountered this culture of resistance against change. She stated:

Most of the times at the university level, I find people to move at a glacial speed and resist that change. We are really a big boat and it is hard to turn that ship around. So as a culture we are not particularly open to change. I think it is really kind of the underlying thing. There are some faculty who resisted strongly the diversity requirement. So, there are things they will resist specifically. But mostly it is the challenge of change and the challenge to change. People don’t like to change. We have to if we are going to survive as institutions of higher education, we’d better change.

Because change is hard, the participants worked hard to ensure they would receive support once they initiated change or new initiatives. They built relationships to enhance collegiality (AZ) and worked collaboratively with university-wide deans (Taylor) to build alliances.

Some of the participants realized that not only was the process of change laborious, it was particularly important to meet certain expectations of those whom one intends to lead as this earned trust and buy-in to changes (Leslie and Michelle). Michelle’s experiences served as an outliner case as she was a non-tenured faculty who became a graduate dean. She noted that “at most universities, in order to be a dean, you have to be a tenured full professor.”

The previous dean left to become provost at another university. They decided to do an internal search. And as far as I know, I was the only candidate. They wrote the job description to not have [being a tenured full professor] as part of the
requirements. And when I was in the acting role, they allowed me to be acting vice provost but didn't allow me to have the dean title because on this university dean had been reserved for tenured faculty. We don't have a dean of students for example. There are no deans in outside of academic affairs. And so, the search committee had to work with the provost to say essentially, and it was very affirming that they decided that they wanted me and they wrote it so that the person just needed to have an understanding of and experience in faculty, as a faculty member job.

Michelle’s appointment was further supported by her affiliated academic unit, which treated her as if she was tenured. She was added to faculty lists, served on students’ dissertations as committee members, and involved in department conversations.

Although there were particular conditions of change and strong academic norms and expectations of the graduate dean, Leslie and Valeria still found these more malleable compared to what they were used to in other sectors. Thus, even though they are institutions slow to change, the priority colleges and universities place on learning and educating students creates a higher ideal. Valeria elaborated:

It [work in corporate sector] gave me the opportunity to see how different organizations work. [Business management] all use different models in higher education. Sometimes we do not always follow the same models as corporations. We tend to be a little bit more flexible. Now in the business sense of it, we have to follow practically the same thing because our business end of it has to be adequate and we have to meet all of those guidelines, as the private sector would have to meet. But when you start looking at how we work with students and
things of that nature, we tend to be a little bit more flexible, nurturing, caring because we really want them to be successful and we are a learning environment. So, we give them just a little bit more leeway.

These differences were noticed by participants who compared higher education to other sectors confirmed unique organizational culture and unit contexts that require those leading in academia to have very specific knowledge about higher education as a whole.

**Organizational culture.** The overarching culture of academics manifests differently based in individual college and university organizational cultures. The participants; leadership experiences are ingrained in the organizational realities of their institutions, including organizational functions, organizational structure and organization, organizational administration, and organizational features.

**Organizational functions.** When asked about the major responsibilities of the graduate units, the participants provided highly varied areas that defied categorization. The organizational responsibilities range from Leslie’s unit that focuses on graduate admissions and graduate student matriculation, to Tully’s unit in which the graduate school was in charge of a bigger portfolio (e.g., recruitment, academic progress, student services, commencement and graduation, budgeting, informational technology maintenance, communication, assessment, diversity and inclusion, and even provide facilities for graduate students).

The unit functions of the other participants resided somewhere in between Leslie’s and Tully’s areas of responsibility. Areas such as recruitment and enrollment management, admissions, student experience and services (including programming and providing academic resources), and program review and assessment are the most
frequently mentioned areas also included within graduate units. Other less mentioned areas included scholarships and financial aid, student grievances and appeals, data and decision-support, communication, and hosting interdisciplinary programs. The range of functions reflects an institution’s effort in organizing graduate education and the subsequent structures in place that further determines if a graduate school is more centralized in its responsibilities or decentralized which requires collaboration and strategies to work with other functional areas or academic units.

**Organizational structure.** Similar to the high degree of variation in responsibilities, the university’s structure and organization also showed diversity with respect to unit size and resource allocation. Half of the participants’ units (AZ, Joseph, Leslie, and Valeria) had around seven or eight full-time employees along with a couple of graduate assistants. Michelle, Beth, and Taylor instead supervised around 20 full-time staff members. Tully’s unit had the largest staff with over 50 people in the graduate school.

For smaller units, it was common to hear how individuals served multiple roles in order to cover the range of the unit’s responsibilities. In Joseph’s opinion, his unit was “radically understaffed for the amount of work we are doing.” Some of the participants enhanced their unit’s capacity by hiring graduate student assistants who worked 20 hours per week or by establishing part-time appointments for faculty. For larger units, the number of staff members seemed to associate positively with the range of services provided. This too depends on the budgetary resources allocated for graduate schools and the degree of centralization: if the budget was small, the graduate school’s focus
would be rather limited; it would be up to individual graduate programs to decide to their focus and the degree of services devoted to graduate students.

**Organizational administration.** The degree of centralization and collaboration varied from institution to institution, and even, by function. The high level of complexity and ambiguity present in the organizational hierarchy precluded simple tallying of types. Lines of responsibilities were very blurry. Tully, Valeria, and Michelle considered their units highly centralized. Valeria noted: “All of our colleges have graduate programs and those graduate program directors report to the graduate school… We have a more centralized administration.” Michelle commented that “All of the graduate programs reside in the graduate school.” Thus, Michelle assessed that her unit organization was centralized as it was self-contained in one unit, namely the graduate school, whereas Tully used the same assessment of centralization even when functions were fulfilled outside of the graduate school. How the participants defined centralization differed. Even with the units that claimed they were centralized, they had to collaborate with other campus units depending on the area. For instance, Tully’s unit was most extensive in the services provided and the largest among the participants, yet it still collaborated significantly with the offices in student affairs.

Participants also viewed centralization as discretion of graduate programs, as they may also collaborate with academic units in decision making (Beth, Taylor, and Joseph). This type of administration builds on the graduate deans’ conscious decision as well as how the organization was set up in relation with other academic units. Both Beth and Joseph had the authority to dictate process to other units on campus but chose not to do so. Joseph provided an example of a new initiative underway: the creation of website
profiles of Ph.D. programs. Currently, P University did not have data on key information such as time to degree, employment outcomes, diversity, and so forth on their website but many other universities did. In deliberating the best way to launch this initiative, Joseph decided:

My office has been developing an interactive dashboard to provide both to prospective students and to allow us to make assessments of program health for the last several years. I could just tell someone in my office to put those on the web, but I think it will work much better if we have buy-in from the deans, so in December [2018] I'm going to present this to the Dean's council and get their feedback and hopefully their buy-in before putting them up.

This case highlights how some of the participants used their power judiciously to build collaboration among academic colleges and deans. This type of collaborative style, however, is not always smooth. For instance, Beth was often a target when faculty took issue with their graduate school policy.

In Taylor’s case, however, there were more nuances to his responsibility in a way that he viewed his unit operating in a more “consultative” manner. He elaborated:

That's (number of acceptance) their [academic units] discretion in consultation with the dean of their college. For instance, for the master’s in history, the program coordinator and those program faculty members would work with their dean to determine what's the capacity that they can manage and what can their budget handle. So, they make those decisions. However, because I do program review every five years, one of the things we do is look at those numbers and see
what the trends are and make recommendations accordingly. So, my office does serve in a way—in a consultative role regards—to numbers of graduate students. When the unit operates in this type of consultative manner, key decisions are not made by the graduate school, only in retrospect does Taylor weigh in on the decisions made by the academic units.

With the least degree of centralization, AZ and Leslie considered their respective units a service unit to other academic units, as its primary goal was to support the rest of the schools and colleges in managing graduate operations. As Leslie stated, “The college is more of a service college, everything that comes from Grad Studies is housed in our unit from the logistics perspective.” AZ described his unit similarly:

So, the graduate school essentially provides administrative support for all graduate programs at the university. In terms of proposals and new programs and so on, we do work with the departments to help them in crafting their proposals and take it to the curriculum approval process.

If a graduate school was to serve other graduate programs, it would be drastically different from another graduate unit which may provide oversight or supervision on all aspects of graduate schools.

*Organizational features.* As mentioned in the last section, there is indeed a high level of complexity and ambiguity in how graduate units are organized. This organization contributes to how they are perceived, processed, and managed both within and beyond the unit. Several contributing factors emerged to explain the complexity of unit organization. The main contributors were the history of the unit and the position of
the graduate dean, which both resulted from an institutional interpretation of the role of a graduate school and accordingly, its academic standing.

*History.* Some of the participants’ institutions had long histories of centralization in which the establishment of a graduate school was well-conceived, whereas others were recently reorganized because of leadership changes or strong lobbying from other units. Both Michelle and Valeria’s units still felt the influence of their previous deans. Indeed, both women were mentored by their predecessors, who reinforced the graduate schools’ status at the institution. At this point, Michelle and Valeria, with longs years of service in their positions, continued to reify the legacy of the units they took over.

A group of four interviewees took over the graduate unit as a non-graduate school unit (i.e., division of graduate studies, college of graduate studies, or office of graduate studies, but not graduate schools) and discovered some of the nuances and capabilities the unit missing as a result of not being a dedicated school unit. They experienced the process of reorganization, which was driven by both a desire from upper administration to change reporting structure and function and from pushback from other academic schools and colleges that desired more control over graduate programs in their areas. In Beth’s case, she witnessed these two forces of change on her campus, namely her chancellor came from an institution that was highly decentralized with a graduate school, and the other academic deans did not approve the standing of her unit as an academic unit since Beth’s unit had no faculty. Beth argued that her unit indeed served an academic function and therefore, demanded it to be an academic unit. However, her arguments did not sway the final decision as she received no support from either the upper administration or academic schools and colleges to remain a graduate school.
Disputes and disagreements resulted from reorganization efforts. The relationships the graduate deans had with other academics, a salient theme that came out earlier from the interviews, continued to influence and be influenced simultaneously on the level of centralization as well as the dean’s position on campus. Realizing how they might be constrained by their units’ titles, for instance, as an office not a graduate school, these deans who had non-graduate school units were more careful in how they approached their peers, the academic deans, and in which areas they would exude their power.

The dean’s position. How the deans were positioned reflected the history of the units and influenced the titles conferred to the position. As highlighted in the literature review, the institutional leaders of graduate education often have titles that provided campus visibility. Yet, institutional context and unit organization influenced what titles were conferred to the deans. For instance, the interviewees’ titles varied from vice chancellor to director, which inevitably could influence the ways in which the graduate leaders were perceived on campus and beyond. For example, Tully oversaw the entire graduate school with “vice president” in her title, whereas Leslie’s title of “director” resulted in different optics on campus. Leslie reflected:

I'm in charge of the college, but I would not say I'm on the same level as a dean. I would really argue if you were to try to compare apples to apples as far as the position, I would be more like an associate dean if you will, and the vice provost would be at the same level as a dean.
This type of title difference placed the participants in various locations on the organizational chart, which resulted in how they could access resources and the type of power they held.

True, the participants regarded their titles and positions differently, but many also held opinions about what it meant to be a graduate dean or in charge of graduate education. These perceptions about the position were influenced by the participants’ proximity to a provost. In Tully’s mind,

Our jobs are similar to a provost, who oversees the entire university. A provost has faculty, and graduate deans typically don’t—we are involved with a lot of faculty. So, we have to see the big picture. It cannot just come from a technology perspective or a specific discipline.

Tully viewed the scope of her responsibilities broadly despite not having faculty as direct reports under her unit. This macro view of the unit held a different vantage point. Tully expanded:

The college dean sees it from an engineering perspective. They have to be aware of the whole university, but they have to advocate for a discipline, and put their college as priority. At the graduate school, I can’t prioritize one college over the other. I have to see the whole of the university and see how all the parts fit. And advocate then for what is best for the students, best for the university.

Others saw the position as seemingly adjacent to academic deans, but here too with a larger scope. Michelle added:

One thing that I'll add also is that I had the opportunity to work across disciplines and so that exposure helped me to understand some of the differences in
disciplinary practices across the country. And so when you're in the graduate school in central administration, and you have to work with all different disciplines, having that exposure was really helpful because some people struggle to - when they get into a graduate dean position to not think, with the hat on that they've had, if you've spent 20 years as a faculty member in a particular discipline and then you come to be the graduate dean, everything that you do is compared to your own discipline. And sometimes it's always good to have an anchor point, but sometimes that can cloud your vision because there's one way that you think of as the way things are done and different disciplines have different ways of doing things. And so, it's important to understand some of those differences and to appreciate where those differences come from.

Valeria spoke about helping academic deans understand better what graduate deans do:

Well, you have to have a strong graduate dean because graduate deans and academic deans do not always understand or not always on the same page. So, you have to help the academic deans understand the role of graduate education and the role of working together for the university it's not one against the other. It’s the two working together for the university. Typically, academic deans work with undergraduate activities and graduate deans work with academic deans on graduate affairs.

Here, the local context and history mattered particularly as of how graduate education has been managed at an institution and if there are any tensions among the functional areas. The position too depends on others’ understanding of it and often requires sophisticated organizational knowledge to steer through the complexity.
Knowledge of higher education as an entity. In addition to having a substantial understanding of the academic and organization contexts, another critical aspect of academic leadership is to have the knowledge of higher education. Such knowledge is complemented by an understanding of the types of institutions of higher education and the trends occurring in both graduate education and higher education.

Types of institutions. The participants noted how critical it was for them to have knowledge about institutional differences in higher education. In all but one of the participant interviews, the deans mentioned either their institution’s mission or how knowing the different types of institutions contributed to their understanding of higher education in general. The type of institution determined the institution’s focus, and consequently, the emphasis of its graduate education mission. For example, regional, public institutions, and private universities had different foci for graduate education. In AZ’s work at University I, his goal was

To establish our graduate programs as best class in the region. We are a small, regional, public institution. Most of our graduate students are in professional graduate programs. A large majority of our graduates stay in the region and contribute to the local economy. So that is the role the institution plays. I see my leadership goal primarily being our program offering as a whole is responsive and centered to that need in the region.

Taylor, who also worked at a state university, also set as his priority to raise the prominence of graduate education in the community O University serves:
In my state and the state university system, each of the campuses has a designated service area. Ours is four-county region with 1.7 million people. And we're the only major university in that region… We are the only game in town.

Beth instead focused on a larger scope of work and offered: “We are a research university and we are an [Association of American Universities] institution. Graduate students are critically important to those missions.”

Some of the participants gained insights about differences in institutional type through their work in other sectors. Both Michelle and Valeria learned the differences between colleges and universities in the higher education sector when they were working with government agencies. Such insights were not often obvious for those who did not have an academic background in higher education. Michelle found this information particularly impactful in her understanding of the higher education landscape: “I didn't really understand and appreciate the breadth of the different types of universities that there are in the country; and what their missions are, what their strengths are, and how the whole higher education ecosystem worked.” Now, knowing more about institutional differences, this information helps inform Michelle’s work as dean.

**Trends in higher education and graduate education.** The general trends influencing higher education also affect graduate education. For example, changes in student population, the development of non-traditional graduate programs, interdisciplinary education, global and international education, and altering career prospects for graduates all influence the work of graduate schools as well as the undergraduate work of their institutions.
Thinking of who might enter graduate education in the future, Leslie, AZ, and Beth all addressed the importance of recruiting working professional and non-traditional students as well as finding ways to better support these student populations. Leslie offered:

I think that probably most institutions for the most part, and we are seeing a change in higher ed.—there is definitely a push and trying to recruit more grad students to try to get adult learners to come back for graduate degrees. We also have to understand that also means getting adult, what we call on nontraditional students back getting a four-year degree. Because the reality is that our 18-year-old population, there's just decreasing—people just having children and so you've got your people that are in that pool of coming in as an undergrad. So, I think as an institution they are starting to see the value of that.

Related to changes in the student population is the rise of non-traditional graduate programs and the new program delivery modes, including online and distance education. Joseph noted:

Subsequently, the focus and outcomes of graduate education are also changing: more programs of study are becoming interdisciplinary; more programs are seeking out opportunities to engage its students in global education; more programs are realizing the need to train students for non-academic careers. As a result, professional development opportunities, workshops, and programs are seen as means to help prepare students for the job market today.

These areas require support from both a resource and an advocacy standpoint. Being able to provide the programming and services required for graduate schools pushes the
graduate deans to come up with ways to improve funding and hire staff, as well as being able to provide evidence, data, and arguments to compel others that graduate education and students on campus deserve such support. Furthermore, this enrollment pressure drives graduate deans to become more adept in internal policy formation and policy advocacy. Beth provided an example of how advocacy was especially needed:

That’s mostly why we need to have a graduate school, because that means we can bring graduate students to the table - they get overlooked. Another goal of mine is advocacy for graduate education, external to campus, but internal. We have 6,000 graduate and 25,000 undergraduate students. The narrative on campus is around undergraduate education. All these new processes—we have a student success compact and a strategic enrolment management plan. And 95% of the conversation is around undergraduate students. My role is to be the person in the room that says, “What about graduate students?” I often have to remind people about graduate students when the institution is initiating things without thinking about what it implies for the graduate student population.

Beth’s remarks reflected general experiences others encountered on campus: the lack of awareness and knowledge of the differences between graduate students and undergraduate students. The insufficient awareness on campus about graduate students made graduate deans to put more emphasis on advocacy and helped the rest of the campus to understand the needs of graduate students.

**Summary.** This section on academic leadership reviewed academic culture and organizational culture. Academic culture paints the overall tone of the climate, norms, and beliefs universities and those working in higher education hold. The organizational
culture provided the graduate deans with ways to look at the particular contexts of graduate education on their campuses through unit function, administration, structure and organization, feature, and the specific knowledge necessary for leading graduate education in this era.

**Mid-Level Leadership**

If leader and leadership development inform work in graduate education, academic leadership helps narrow the realities and contexts in which the leaders create their narratives. What are these narratives? How do these individuals who are leading from the middle perceive themselves as leaders? The narratives and perceptions, indeed, are rooted in their organizational context in addition to their campus presence, which further reflects what they truly value. Leadership was accompanied by a combination of support, challenges, and strategies by the participants.

**Leading from the middle.** The literature suggests that mid-level leaders sometimes do not see themselves as leaders. How do the participants envision themselves as leaders? What about their experiences in working with others, connecting those above them, parallel to them, and below them?

**Self-perceptions.** To understand better the participants’ self-perceptions of leadership, I asked a straightforward question, “How do you perceive yourself as a leader?” Keywords for this prompt were “collaborative/collaboration” (Tully, AZ, Joseph, and Beth), “national” (Tully, Valeria, and Michelle), “servant/to serve” (Taylor, Leslie, and Michelle), and “equitable/diversity” (Valeria and Tully).

*A collaborative leader.* The participants thought they were collaborative. As a collaborative leader, collaboration occurred both in- and outside of the graduate unit, with
their staff, and with the academic deans of other units. The within-in unit collaboration was rooted in how the participants held a deep appreciation of staff talent and capabilities. The following comments attest to the trust and support participants felt every day at work:

- Inside of the graduate school it is more of collaboration – yes, I make final decisions – but we have a lot of conversations and discussions about general directions we want to go in general. And the directors and associate deans are very capable people. So, I trust what they will do. They do well and they get the work done – keep me informed. (Tully)

- I perceive myself as a collaborative, flat leader in the sense that I see the people that work with me and technically work for me as my collaborative colleagues. Each of them has their area of expertise and specialty. I see my role as finding the best ideas that come from the group and enabling those ideas to move forward. (AZ)

- I think of myself as a collaborative leader. I tend not to be a unilateralist. I tend not to dictate decisions but to build support for decisions. I tend to give the people who report either directly or indirectly to me as much autonomy as possible and allow them to have as much a feeling of ownership of the larger mission in which we're engaged as possible. I see we have graduate affairs staff meetings every other week and I am seeking their input in those meetings as well… So, a lot of contact. (Joseph)

As for cross-unit collaboration, AZ put,
I see myself as the person that provides feedback to my academic dean colleagues in terms of where the state of graduate education is; in specific areas providing information that they can use for the development of new programs, structuring the existing programs and so on.

The collaboration is often multi-directional, which occurs not only within the unit (vertically) but also cross-unit (horizontally and diagonally). Participants’ shared remarks highlighted their effort in inclusion of staff’s voices and ideas as well as the connectedness to other academic units who often overlap in areas of responsibilities.

_A national leader._ As individuals continued to gain experiences in their career, many became increasingly involved in national professional networks through serving on committees or serving as leaders of regional and national organizations. CGS is frequently mentioned as an important organization for individuals to obtain information and take on opportunities. Some chaired national committees regarding graduate education admissions processes; some served as residents for regional professional organizations. Such national recognition in return led to Tully, Michelle, and Valeria becoming mentors for others new to the leadership in graduate education.

_“My job is to serve.”_ Two participants, Leslie and Taylor, defined their leadership as centered on service to others. The two participants offered the following comments:

- Well, my perception is my job is to serve. And it's that notion of a servant leader that's my units that I'm responsible for. Their primary responsibility is to serve the faculty and students of this university. That drives my leadership philosophy. It’s very service-oriented… I go to great extent to make sure that
everybody feels significant within the staff that their roles are important and challenging and rewarding. And so, a lot of my job is to ensure that people feel like they belong. (Taylor)

- My philosophy, and one of the things I did before I took this position, I read this great book called servant leadership and higher education. And that spoke to me and I kind of tried to prescribe that out again, that my primary role is to serve the institution and to move the institution forward, and in my unit forward, and to do what I can to support those individuals who are actually again in, who are working with the students and helping them. Like how can I make their job easier or how can I help them meet their needs? I do see myself as I am providing a service to this institution. (Leslie)

Their service supported their staff, the faculty, the students, the institution, and the greater graduate education community.

Institutional presence. To further understand the presence of graduate deans on campus, I asked about the types and scope of discussions of graduate education occurring on campus and in the field. Valeria and Joseph shared that whenever there was a decision related to graduate education, they would be invited to, or “called to the table” (Valeria). Pointing out when they were invited into conversations serves as a good reminder that merely having “graduate dean” in one’s title of graduate dean does not automatically grant institutional authority or influence. In several cases, either the participants or their predecessors worked hard to earn a seat for graduate education at the table. For those that did not have a strong graduate unit, some had to come up with alternative approaches to strengthen graduate education on campus. In the case of larger
institutions like Beth’s, she organized a monthly meeting to provide a forum for associate deans from all schools and colleges to discuss issues at hand. Both Beth and Taylor realized the importance of having a graduate school and proposed a unit status change to elevate the work they do. Leslie’s strategy was slightly different, however, since her college mostly provided logistics support to the graduate directors.

How top administrators view graduate education influences the unit’s role on campus. Valeria stated: “a president or a provost’s focus depends upon their knowledge level of graduate education.” Her comment was supported by other participants’ observations on this matter. Beth’s chancellor decided to change the graduate school into a graduate office because of his previous experiences, pointedly, he came from an institution that did not have a graduate school. Leslie also faced a change given the perceptions of the role graduate education should have on campus. The title became the director of graduate studies position when she took over, which represented a change from dean of graduate studies. This change occurred because the other academic deans wanted the graduate unit to support only logistics and to not oversee any academic functions. These examples highlight how the position of a graduate dean or the existence of a graduate school is not guaranteed or protected. Titles or indeed the very presence of a graduate unit on campus depends strongly on those in other positions above them or with power on campus.

**Values.** All the participants attempted to represent the value of graduate education on campus. Given the scope and the duties charged to the participants as outlined above, they ultimately prioritized the tasks, resources, and approaches to achieve goals based on what they truly individually believed as important. Two themes were
prominent drivers in the decision-making process of the graduate deans, graduate student-centeredness and institutional priorities.

**Graduate student-centered.** Whether promoting diversity and inclusion, enhancing professional development opportunities, or providing quality programs for students, all the participants asked themselves how would students benefit? This rationale was ubiquitous among the study’s mid-level leaders as they all cared deeply about their graduate students. Following are some examples of the participants’ student-centered approaches:

- Graduate education, in my opinion, is very valuable to universities who want to move forward. For that to happen, it has to be valued to the point that funding supports that idea. And when funding in the state is rather short, then it becomes more difficult for you to do all the things you want to do, but you can't stop there because we are helping to develop future leaders. So, we must find a way without fiscal resources to give them the opportunity to be the best that they can be. For example, someone maybe they have a good research and it needs to be presented at a national meeting, and you just don't have the funding for it. Well then you have to go beyond your funding budget and go to other places to try to find funding to send that student so that they can present that research, so you just have to become very, very creative. And then push students so that they will become scholars in their field, keep them unmotivated, and then check with corporations that possibly will give you some money to send students to different meetings and organizations and things of that nature. (Valeria)
• We need to be all about the graduate student, because that’s why we are here. I can’t say that I am going to educate for X position, but I will find the problem-solving, the team work, the disciplinary/interdisciplinary knowledge. I need to make sure that’s available for our students so they can take advantage of these things to better prepare them for wherever they are going. (Tully)

• We have long assumed that Ph.D. education is to prepare people for academic jobs, but if you cross fields, it is probably closer to half and in all fields going into academic jobs. And so, we need to be thinking about what other jobs these people might do and how we prepare them and how we make them - we allow people to have choices and feel good about their choices. (Joseph)

Such understanding comes from the experiences these individuals gained from understanding who they are serving as well as why it is critical for graduate schools to be in place to support graduate students. The dedication to students drives the participants to pay great attention to the shifting landscape of higher education and to continue addressing the emerging challenges.

**Institutional priorities.** Based on the interviews in this study, it remains unclear how much emphasis individual institutions had on their graduate education programs. A few outliers existed, however, as some of the participants’ institutions did prioritize graduate education. As much as possible, the participants aligned themselves with their institutions’ identified priorities, and at the same time advocated to promote graduate education.

Some utilized the Carnegie Classification as a vintage point to advocate for more attention on graduate education. Valeria and Tully both felt that graduate education had a
significant role for any DU to move forward. This claim aligns with the institutional designation as high research universities for some of the participants. According to AZ,

The priority [for graduate education] was established about a year ago before I stepped up as a dean. That was actually one of the things that attracted me to apply to be a graduate dean in the first place. We did an overall university enrollment task force (a lot of senior leaders at the institution involved), which I was part of. In that process we identified graduate education as a significant component of the institution and moved that forward. That’s where most of this is coming from. I have been leveraging many of the things we did in the process.

Note here that the institutional priority for graduate education that AZ experienced is not a given. In this case, institutional strategic planning and shared understanding among the top administration built upon compelling evidence on graduate education to propel it to an institutional priority.

For others, the institutional priorities did not always incorporate specific goals built on the work of the graduate school. Counter to the support AZ received were examples from others that showed a lack of institutional support for graduate education.

- The university does not serve as an advocate for graduate education. They serve as an advocate for the undergraduate education because that is the majority of the population. And that’s what they are mostly concerned about. I advocate for grad ed. (Tully)

- The narrative on campus is around undergraduate education. All these new processes – we have a student success compact and a strategic enrolment
management plan. And 95% of the conversation is around undergraduate students. (Beth)

- And so, we regularly remind people of graduate education. We had a retreat on our strategic planning with the vice presidents and deans and when we were understanding how to use certain ending strategies, took a sample undergraduate student success and everybody in the room could talk about what were the needs of undergraduate students to be more successful. Then tried to do the same thing for graduate. It was clear that maybe a quarter of the people could think of one or two things that were needed for graduate students. (Michelle)

- And if a university is a doctoral research, high research-activity university, then they can't attain that kind of recognition without graduate programs or without a graduate school, because it's primarily based on the number of doctoral degrees awarded across three or four disciplines. And that's how you get that designation… A lot of faculty like to say we are a doctoral research university, but they don't know why. (Valeria)

Center to such accounts was competing interests as well as a dearth of understanding and discussion undergirding the meaning of graduate education.

Support, challenge, and strategies. Pertaining to their campus realities, graduate deans found relevant support and strategies to combat the challenges they encountered to their daily operations. In particular, advocacy and finding ways to engage and collaborate stood out as the most commonly utilized approaches.

Support and challenge. Some found support from those they worked with the most helpful, including the staff, the faculty, and the support from their supervisors too.
Joseph, AZ, Taylor, Leslie, Valeria, and Michelle all mentioned their gratitude toward the people they worked with closely, describing them as “energetic, smart, open-minded people” (Joseph). Often the support from the provost translated to enough financial support (AZ) and resources (Leslie), as well as more leadership capacity and authority on campus (Beth and Michelle).

The biggest challenge perceived by the participants (Taylor, Joseph, Michelle, Valeria) was funding. According to Michelle’s words, “there is not unlimited resources.” Similarly, “stagnant” and “contracting” were some descriptors used to describe the funding resources for graduate education, while some acknowledged that higher education at large was experiencing shrinking budgets, and academic affairs too had to compete with other campus units on an institutional level. The second most mentioned challenge related to personnel issues: needing more staff support and how to work with faculty. Concerning faculty, Leslie wished that she and her unit had more connection to the faculty, whom in her opinion had the capacity to do more with students. Beth, on the other hand, had to deal with faculty complaints about graduate-level policies when her position was to ensure policy compliance, not the making of the policy itself.

**Strategies.** The strategies mentioned by the graduate deans can be principally summarized into two main approaches: one is to advocate for graduate education, and the other is to invoke engagement and collaboration across campus. Some participants spoke about how they served as the “primary spokesperson” (Tully). Similarly, Michelle made every effort to ensure graduate education was being considered in university-wide decision making. Taylor too was already ready to show evidence about the graduate programs, graduate students, and graduate alumni, “Whenever there are meetings and
things and topics associated with resources, I'm always at the table… You got to be present to win. And I come prepared with compelling statistics… to bolster any arguments related to resource allocation.” Following are comments from other participants:

- Always reminding people if they don’t include graduate education. So, anything that they are doing I have to be at the table, or I am often at the table. If I am not and if graduate education is important, I will make sure that I am at the table… So primarily people think about undergraduate education. When they say students, they mean undergraduate students. I just have to remind people. When the BOV [Board of Visitors] was here, when we invite students. If you want undergrads, I am fine with that. But if you say students, you’d better invite graduate students as well. (Tully)

- Make sure that I'm keeping tabs of what's going on across the university and making sure that we're at least at the table. I recognize that decisions are made in factoring into a whole lot of things and that doesn't always mean that you have to say graduate is more important than something else. Strategy of making sure that the needs of the graduate community are considered in the decision making. And so, we regularly remind people of graduate education. (Michelle)

In a similar manner, the participants capitalized every opportunity to assure there was a shared understanding or value of graduate education campus-wide, especially at the mid-level rank. The targeted members to engage were often academic deans and faculty for more buy-in, in which many applied individualized approaches in their efforts. In
some other occasions, graduate deans realized the need to collaborate with mid-level leaders in other units either to share resources or advocate together for greater resources.

- The strategy is to make sure each of the academic college is valuing what we are doing. If there are new initiatives that we are launching as graduate college, are there measurable and verifiable outcomes from it and how will they benefit the academic colleges? As long as we can show academic colleges the benefits, we can keep them engaged in what it is that we would like them to do. (AZ)

- I always engage people. I will go out and talk to faculty and take these people head on, because I need to explain. I take the responsibility to explain, elaborate, and get them engaged with what it is we are doing. But there was a lot of resistance earlier on. But now some of the resisters are the biggest fans of what we do at the graduate school, because they can see. For some it is data. They need to see – I have data to show them how well our programs are appreciated and welcomed by the graduate students. So, it is individualized strategy dependent upon who I am talking with. One size does not fit all. (Tully)

- I try to figure if there is anyone on campus that might be doing something that we could be partnering with. If someone identifies a problem, I try to figure out what's going on and what's happening and what can we do. I do a lot of looking inside and seeing what people are doing, what are people's expertise and trying to get them involved. I also do a lot looking outside, you know, reaching out to other directors or deans or associate deans and grad studies looking, just surveying what other colleges are doing and if they've had a problem, how have
they done to solve it or to at least provide a solution. To see if there's (opportunity) with the resources that we currently have. (Valeria)

- Getting the academic deans of the colleges to buy into additional funding for graduate education. And when they do that, you not only have your voice, but you have the voice of academics pushing forward and trying to get some of the university's money for that because you're fighting with athletics, and things of that nature. (Valeria)

Summary

In summary, as the individual cases illustrated, very few participants had intentions of being a graduate dean at the beginning of their career. The theme of non-linearity mainly came out in retrospect: as individuals took the time to think about their journey, the reflection upon one’s path pointed to a seemingly winding road to their current positions. Several individuals did not have the knowledge of how to rise to a mid-level administrator position and discovered their appreciation for administration along their career pathway once they received tenure. A few did have administration in mind, yet their pathways were also winding compared to those who did not, if not more.

This chapter explored the leadership experiences of the eight participants and sought to uncover commonalities. The cross-case analysis revealed the patterns and themes that emerged from multiple participants’ narratives and contexts. The findings point to how the participants’ interpersonal and intrapersonal development accompanied their growth in leadership positions. The influence of disciplinary background and the academic culture at their current institution resulted in participants tapping into particular skill sets.
The location of these leaders in mid-level positions allowed them distinct advantages and disadvantages. For example, the organizational structures, administration, features, history, and the academic culture, how it continues to shape the expectations, norms, and leadership experiences resulted from the context. However, the desire to work in higher education, the passion for graduate education, the values placed on learning and education, the commitment to graduate students, as well as the support and challenges individuals embodied continue to shape how they perceive themselves as leaders as well as the strategies they deemed most effective in advocating for graduate education on campus.
CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

This chapter integrates both the quantitative and qualitative findings. Survey findings outlined in Chapter 4 consisted of three major sections, namely, general demographics, professional experience, and professional perceptions. Chapter 5 presented the findings of the eight individual case studies, and Chapter 6 presented a cross-case analysis, organized by the theoretical frameworks. This final chapter first provides an integration and discussion of both the quantitative and qualitative findings using the literature to address the research questions. Next, a discussion of the findings relative to the theoretical frameworks about leader and leadership, academic leadership, as well as mid-level leadership occurs. Sections on the implications for practice and future research follow. The final section offers the conclusions of this study, which includes a discussion of the finding and the revisited theoretical frameworks.

Integrated Findings and Discussion

The integrated findings are presented in the sequence of the four research questions. Recall, the questions are:

1. What is the descriptive profile of graduate deans in U.S. Doctoral Universities, including demographic information and professional experiences?
2. How do graduate deans perceive the functions of graduate school as defined by Council of Graduate Schools (2004) at their institutions?
3. How much confidence do graduate deans have in their ability to influence the functions of the graduate school at their institution?
4. How do graduate deans perceive leadership in their institutional contexts?

**Leadership profile.** The leadership profile goal of this study examined who the graduate deans are and what career trajectories, personal and professional experiences, identities, as well as values with them into their leadership positions. This profile helps in comparing the leaders in graduate education to other higher education leaders and administrators along several dimensions.

**Diversity.** Campus leadership should reflect the diversity of student populations. Often, factors such as gender and race and ethnicity are reported out most often as diversity indices. In addition to these variables, this study also queried participants’ sexual orientation as an aspect of diversity.

Compared to the most recent survey conducted by CCAS on the academic deans, the gender composition of participants in this study suggests more than 40% of graduate deans are women, which is higher than the one-third of women in the academic deans (Behr & Schneider, 2015). The percentage for minorities in graduate deans (12%) is slightly higher than that reported by CCAS (9%; CCAS, 2013). According to the American College President Study (Gagliardi, Espinosa, Turk, & Taylor, 2018), which sampled from all types of institutions, public and private, two- and four-year, overall, women comprise 30% of college presidents and minorities make up 17% of presidency. Additionally, relative to the demographics of professors from all degree-granting postsecondary institutions, there were a higher portion of women among the graduate deans than women full professors (40% vs. 33%). But, graduate deans of color comprise a smaller number (14%) relative to full professors of color (18%, McFarland et al., 2018) at all degree-granting postsecondary institutions.
Gender. However, the case studies suggest that despite the higher number of women in the position of graduate dean, the experiences of the case study participants were affected by their gender identity. In particular, differences were noted when it came to the amount of authority they held and how they were perceived by their colleagues in higher leadership positions (Michelle and Leslie) and by students (Beth). Interestingly, three of the five women interviewed noted the scarcity of women leaders in top positions at their institutions. As a result, certain strategies to gain authority and credibility were noticed by the women interviewees. For example, women developed effective strategies that built on supporting each other. In Michelle’s case, the university’s ADVANCE grant convened the women leaders and offered them an outlet to discuss issues women leaders encountered. Meanwhile, Beth reached out to associate deans at individual departments for information and collaboration that exceeded the organizational structure in place.

Women leaders in academic affairs traditionally are underrepresented, as evident in the literature (West & Curtis, 2006) and recent discussions on academic leadership (Behr & Schneider, 2015). This study’s higher representation of women in the graduate dean position requires thoughtful interpretation, especially in comparison to the presidential group and the academic dean group comparisons. On the surface, the high percentage of women deans might convey evidence of a more diverse leadership composition among the graduate deans. However, the narratives provided by the participants lead to a perception that a graduate dean’s position has certain degrees of “serving” nature, if not to serve other academic units entirely.

An extensive body of research exists on women’s overrepresentation in service roles at universities (e.g., DeZure, Shaw, & Rojewski, 2014), with feminist theories
highlighting how stereotypes of gendered roles emerge especially when women have already spent more time in mentoring and serving than their male colleagues (Misra, Lundquist, Holmes, & Agiomavritis, 2011). Women spend more time on service and are often expected to be in managerial roles such as department chairs, graduate program director, and committees. These service-oriented roles can impede career advancement for women. Consider how Michelle took on service roles as a junior faculty, and how this work ultimately derailed her quest for tenure and promotion. Thus, on the one hand, the higher proportion of women deans suggests leadership diversity, yet on the other hand, the service requirements of the position may make the graduate dean a “lesser” title among the academic deans. When fields become feminized (e.g., teaching and nursing), wages stagnate, and prestige associated with the position diminishes.

Race. Compared to gender, issues of race were less emphasized by the three minority deans (Valeria, AZ, and Michelle). Michelle mentioned her experiences as a tenure-track faculty at her first institution, which was Predominantly White. Valeria spent most her time at HBCUs where she did not perceive race as an inhibiting factor for leading. AZ did not report out any concerns related to his social identities either, though granted the combination of his area of study, gender, and race as an Asian man in computer science did not put him in a marginalized status in STEM. It was the White leaders, instead, who more often acknowledged their privilege and took measures to learn how to be more inclusive and attentive to marginalized groups’ experiences (for example, Joseph and Beth). Taylor, being a White male in education, pointed out the lack of male teachers in elementary science education was an issue he too cared about. In summary,
the intersectionality of race and gender became more complex given the disciplinary contexts of the graduate deans.

The influence of identity. In addition to gender and race, sexual orientation, or LGBTQ status, as well as first-generation identity both emerged from individual interviews as strong influencers on participants’ leadership experiences. Tully (sexual orientation) and Leslie (first-generation) both shared how their identities influenced their approach to leadership, which was based in part on what they saw as the value of education. Tully dedicated herself to creating a welcoming and affirming campus climate for graduate students after her appointment received controversy on campus due to her sexual orientation. Leslie made sure to remind her colleagues about the opportunities and access a college education provided to students. At the same time, she continued combating her own imposter syndrome in her leadership journey. Even though the survey did not specifically ask for how these identities affected individuals, the case studies provide insight into how leaders coming from minority or underserved backgrounds might see themselves differently and have different leadership priorities. Consequently, the challenges spurred from personal backgrounds may affect individuals in different manners.

Professional experiences. Survey results highlighted that more than one-third of individuals worked in at least one additional sector outside of their experiences in education (including both K-12 and postsecondary experiences). Moreover, 37% of participants worked in functional areas different from academic affairs. Although the survey did not capture the sequence of positions along the career pathway, the interviews supported that individuals valued their experiences outside of education.
The shorter appointments along the career paths for interviewees highlight how these positions helped spur participants to obtain terminal degrees. For example, Joseph, Taylor, and AZ went back to get their doctoral degrees after working in the private sector. The longer tenures individuals held leading graduate education units typically influenced them more significantly and made them more appreciative of the learning centeredness and values of education. Both Michelle and Leslie worked in the private sector; Valeria had experiences in business management at universities. The participants with experiences in business management talked about how the “models” (Michelle and Valeria) used in business were different from education that higher education. Participants (Valeria and Leslie) held the perception that higher education is more flexible compared to the outcome- and accountability-driven atmosphere in the business.

Similarly, the experiences within higher education in different functional areas also proved to be beneficial to individuals to understand the “interworkings” (Leslie and Valeria) of the universities. For example, both Leslie and Beth had experiences working in student affairs. Therefore, both appreciated the perspectives gained from student affairs on how to use student services and programming to support students’ academic growth, or in Leslie’s words, “the whole student.” Given that professional development or programs are common unit duties for the graduate schools, such perspectives proved useful in combatting a common “us versus them” mentality between academic affairs and student affairs. Further, Beth also attributed her belief in professional development for staff from her student affairs experiences in which she saw the staff as an overlooked group for continuous learning opportunities at work.
**Educational background.** The survey results indicated that 98% of respondents held doctoral degrees (Ph.D. or Ed.D.). Similarly, the interviewees mentioned how terminal degrees were viewed as the ticket to work in academia. Even for those who did not plan to be administrators early on, the Ph.D. was the basic requirement for them to become a faculty member or university professional.

In terms of the degree backgrounds, close to half of the respondents were in STEM fields (48), followed by humanities (20), and social sciences (16). All other fields such as education (2), law (2), business (3), and “other” fields (5) did not yield a large enough number of respondents who became graduate deans. Like the research from this study, the percentage of individuals with STEM backgrounds becoming academic deans in the academic dean survey was over half (Behr & Schneider, 2015).

Previous research sought to understand how disciplinary background influenced academic leadership (Braxton & Hargens, 1996; Del Favero, 2006a, 2006b). Common perceptions were that academic administrators from more “pure” disciplines that required high levels of consensus that tended to seek uniformity instead of a multi-frame approach in leadership. Those trained in applied fields instead preferred a multi-framed approach. Due to the smaller number of participants in the survey, statistical tests measuring differences between graduate deans of STEM and non-STEM backgrounds occurred, yet no statistical difference was detected between the two groups. The lack of statistical significance in part is due to the small sample size; using one’s degree field as a proxy of one’s cognitive orientation could also be problematic given the changing paradigms in knowledge creation in many disciplines. The leadership here also is specifically related to issues in graduate education which inherently require multi- or cross-disciplinary
thinking in approaching leadership compared to previous studies that examined leadership in the context of certain academic areas.

Additionally, the interviews showed that disciplinary training influenced individuals to varying degrees, with the most obvious influence on their beliefs despite the lack of statistical evidence. The increase in the interdisciplinary nature of disciplines of science education, health development, sociology, and higher education administration added complexity in understanding of the influence of disciplinary training and challenged the narrative in literature on academic leadership. For Taylor, AZ, and Michelle, their STEM backgrounds helped them connect with their STEM colleagues as well as match their institutions’ STEM focus. Both Tully and AZ had interdisciplinary research interests, which they felt helped give them tools in approaching data and presenting arguments in various ways to convince others.

Equally important is how disciplinary training influenced leadership approaches (Beth, Leslie, and Joseph). Beth was highly familiar with the trends and best practices as a higher education scholar, which allowed her to use her knowledge from her field in leading. As well, her feminist identity provided her with motivation to advance issues around social justice. Leslie found her background in community health helped in building listening skills and serving the audiences in the community. She considered herself a servant leader as she helped to support the faculty and academic programs instead of imposing her own thoughts upon them. Joseph’s background as a sociologist provided him with familiarity in knowledge production, structural inequity, and power struggles within university settings.
Contemplating a singular orientation of disciplinary background on leadership is changing given the increasingly common use of interdisciplinary practice. Graduate education too sets the context differently in leadership studies that require a university perspective rather than a discipline-oriented perspective. What seemed to be more essential than graduate deans’ own disciplinary background was the awareness to develop an inter- or multidisciplinary perspective in viewing university issues, understanding of the disciplinary differences outside of their immediate academic homes, and recognizing how practices and norms can be different in other departments. Obtaining and developing such understanding can occur through working with individuals outside of their academic units in university settings, serving on institution-wide committees, and through working with external constituents such as governmental agencies based on the interview accounts, which provides an alternative way to understand the landscape of higher education.

Leadership pathways. Out of the 100 survey respondents, 98% of them held advanced degrees (Ph.D. or Ed.D.), and 94 were once a tenured faculty. If considering program director, department chair, and academic dean in addition to a tenure-faculty position as leadership ranks, 82% of the respondents had gone through two or three ranks to get to their current positions. These results reinforced how little has changed in the past three decades regarding expectations for the graduate dean position. In the 1980s, a Ph.D. degree, scholarly activities, and having experiences with research, administration, and teaching was also the norm. The study also confirmed that other desirable experiences with external agencies, graduate programs, funding agencies, and eligibility for faculty appointment align with historic norms (Mutchnick, 1987). These
qualifications are common and necessary not only for the graduate dean position but for other academic leaders, such as university presidents. The AACPS noted that the most common road to the presidency was a traditional route of academic affairs (43%).

The interview data provided more detailed information and explanation of leadership trajectories. Interviewees discussed how their pathway through the ranks beginning as a faculty as very helpful to their current work with faculty. They learned about specific aspects of administration, as well as learned about graduate programs in their administrative roles on their pathway. The progression through ranks also exposed them to institution-wide committees, which aided their understanding about administrative positions and roles. The role of department chair, in particular, was noted for its critical contributions to the deans’ leadership preparation.

More importantly, their pathway, including their start as faculty member, proved crucial in developing their credibility and reputation as an academic leader with other campus faculty. Participants mentioned how other faculty held expectations for the graduate deans as allies in understanding the faculty role. Disciplinary training mattered in cases where the institution had a STEM focus. For example, Beth mentioned the strategies she took to build relationships with the faculty in STEM as well as arts and humanities, and how previously faculty of certain backgrounds took issues with leaders from other disciplines. One interviewee, Michelle, who did not obtain tenure, was once in a tenure-track position. Her experience served as an outliner as she did not ascend in the typical fashion to her current position. As a minority, Michelle was directed by her initial tenure-track appointment institution to conduct service work; however, no one informed her that those activities mattered little in tenure evaluation. Later, when
Michelle was applying for the graduate dean position as an internal candidate at her new university, the search committee worked to convince the provost that not only was Michelle the most desirable candidate, but the committee also convinced the Provost to remove the requirement from the position description of the need to be a tenured faculty member. Even though the institution did not have any previous deans without tenure, Michelle was hired as the graduate dean without having earned tenure. This occurrence may be opening up alternative pathways to the position of graduate deans based on ability to do the job functions versus having a particular academic pedigree and pathway.

Similar to Michelle, other sitting graduate deans had varied pathways. For those who did not go through the typical rank progression (faculty, program director, department chair, etc.), chances were that their career began in administrative positions in a graduate school as an assistant dean or associate dean or other functional areas at an institution (e.g., student affairs). From the survey, 94% of the graduate deans began their career in faculty, 79% had program director experiences, and 52% had been department chairs.

However, having backgrounds in academic administrative positions helped leading graduate schools or academic colleges whose main responsibilities were to work with faculty and support academic functions. In addition to department chairs, other campus leadership positions also provided access to faculty and helped individuals connect to faculty institutionally. For instance, AZ was a faculty senate president prior to becoming a graduate dean, and this experience helped him become well-prepared to work with faculty colleagues as well as doing curriculum and program reviews.
These variations of experiences and different entry points also highlighted the non-linearity of leadership pathways. Although the survey did not collect information on how individuals arrived at their current positions, the interviews provided information on their administrative entry position. For example, Taylor was appointed by the provost out of trust in his ability to resolve personnel issues. Leslie was recommended by her academic dean when there was a failed search for her position, and Michelle was the only eligible candidate in that internal search. Beth initially applied for working at a graduate school but did not come back until she finished her department chair responsibilities. Valeria and Tully were invited to apply for their positions. AZ applied within his institution when he saw that graduate education was becoming an institutional priority. Joseph applied from a different institution when he saw the similarities of the position description and his own values. Being tapped and mentored for the position has implications for others who may also seek out the graduate dean position, as having broad institutional knowledge and experiences exposed the participants to a range of work and allowed others to see the capabilities the deans possessed for ultimate success in the position. Although the motivations to seek out a graduate dean position differed for the case study participants, a commonality was the way in which institutional context played a role and how the timing of individual readiness needed to align with the timing of graduate dean openings.

**Leaders’ perspectives of graduate schools and graduate units.** Despite there being no universal, standard approach to graduate education, graduate education requires a campus advocate for graduate faculty, students, and programs. The survey and case study participants shared that oftentimes graduate deans serve as the primary, if not only
advocate on campus, with senior leaders and they need to remind others in decision-making to consider the implications for graduate students and programs. From the survey findings, advocating for graduate education and graduate programs, articulating of vision of excellence, and providing quality control of all aspects of graduate education were ranked as very important among the respondents.

Literature suggests that institutional advocacy is viewed as a way to combat the fragmentation resulted from disciplines, departments, schools or colleges, which attenuates shared responsibilities for all graduate programs (Lloyd, 1972). This holds true for the study’s participants. For instance, Joseph became in charge of professional development efforts across all graduate programs when the provost realized there were underlying assumptions regarding what type of programming was being done in the graduate programs on campus. Connecting to the prominence of preparing graduate students for a variety of careers, making sure that students in all programs can receive some professional development is central to the graduate school experience.

The CGS (2004) provided 12 statements regarding what graduate schools should strive to achieve in their unit roles, but the graduate deans did not consider all the statements as equally important. The statements considered as important were supporting graduate student services, enhancing the intellectual community, and maintaining equitable standards across all academic disciplines. These roles supported the “very important” ones, including serving as an advocate for graduate education, articulating a vision of excellence, serving as an advocate for graduate programs, and providing quality control, which addressed issues related to graduate education across disciplines and academic units. In the somewhat important category, survey respondents included:
bringing an institution-wide perspective to all post-baccalaureate endeavors, as well as providing an interdisciplinary perspective.

On the less important side of the continuum, the graduate deans included the points of “define what graduate education is and what it is not,” “training future college and university teachers,” and “develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance undergraduate education.” Complementing these ratings, the interviewees provided several explanations as to why preparing future faculty and contributing to undergraduate education were not regarded as important. The first reason, mentioned by Joseph, was that given limited resources, graduate deans and schools had to make priorities on what goals they wished to achieve. Compared to the rest of the statements, training future faculty and contributing to undergraduate education did not rise to the top. The second reason, provided by Taylor, was that there were too many services dedicated to undergraduate students that the preference instead was to focus on post-baccalaureate areas. Lastly, several interviewees commented about training future faculty in relation to the changes in graduate education today; traditionally Ph.D.s were going into academia, yet today half of them do not. With the increasing number of graduate certificates and non-Ph.D. graduate programs, the focus of graduate education has begun to shift to help individuals to get advanced credentials and opportunities for professional learning, rather than focusing entirely on Ph.D. education to prepare the professoriate.

Leader efficacy. In addition to how the graduate deans perceived the importance of the CGS’s statements regarding the organization and structure of graduate education, the survey captured graduate deans’ perceived leadership efficacy through three measures on the individual, unit, and institution level. Based on the statistical testing, a finding that
emerged from the survey was the relatively lower institution efficacy rated by the respondents compared to efficacy of individual graduate deans and their units’ efficacy in supporting graduate education on campus. Although the literature suggests that institutional advocacy is often utilized as a way to address the decentralized efforts and approaches led by disciplines, departments, schools or colleges, the survey findings pointed to the incongruences between what was perceived as important as well as what could be achieved.

The interviews with eight individuals provided in-depth explanations regarding efficacy. The interview questions around institutional challenges to graduate deans’ leadership highlighted that in their institutional contexts there was a predetermined or inherent focus on undergraduate education. Not everyone regarded their institutional efficacy as low. AZ noted that as the graduate dean he was happy with the resources and support the unit received to support graduate education. As about 25% of University I’s enrollment were graduate students, there were significant institutional connections to the local economy and businesses that required a robust STEM graduate education to support the regional workforce. This linkage provided motivation for the university to support graduate education, particular in STEM.

Other graduate deans commented how they tried hard to establish graduate education as a priority of the institution. They dealt with a lack of attention devoted to graduate students, a lack of understanding on campus about the unique needs of graduate education, and encountered a dominant institutional narrative focused on undergraduate students. Often times, the number of students or the percentage of undergraduate versus graduate student became the sole indicator for resource allocation. The graduate deans
could not advocate for graduate education when others did not perceive its value compared to the value given to undergraduate education. Hence, measures of success unique to graduate education provided the deans with the ability to convince senior leaders and other campus stakeholders about the value of graduate education to the institution. Another frustration of graduate deans concerned their position in the organizational chart of an institution, and given this hierarchical location, what types of responsibilities they should undertake. As such, leadership efficacy focused on how graduate deans could lead in the middle and within their institutional contexts.

One of the initial assumptions that guided the research questions was that the graduate deans at different types of institutions would potentially differ in their opinions and leadership efficacy due to the sector or level of research activity occurring at their institutions. The results showed some differences, yet not in every aspect. With respect to sector (public or private), the graduate deans working at public institutions considered themselves more capable in supporting “preparing future faculty” and “contributing to undergraduate education” than their colleagues at private institutions. In Morphew and Hartley’s (2006) research on mission statements of Doctoral Universities there were differences in goals based on institutional characteristics. They found that public Doctoral Universities gravitated more toward teaching and undergraduate education in their institution mission statements. Traditionally, graduate students would serve as teaching assistants to courses at the undergraduate level, which could affect how graduate education at these types of universities fit into the overall campus goals.

The level of research intensity was another institutional characteristic assumed to affect graduate deans’ perceptions. When asked to rate the importance of role relative to
“serve as an advocate for graduate education,” graduate deans at R1 institutions rated the importance of the statement higher than the deans at R2 institutions, whereas no significant difference was detected between either R1 and R3 or R2 and R3. According to the interviews, participants working at R1s (Tully, Joseph, and Beth) had more and a wider range of responsibilities compared to others working at R2 and R3 institutions. As a result, having more leadership support as well as sufficient resources and budget was seen as vital to the success to keep the unit functions going. However, concerns for limited budgets were consistent across R1, R2, and R3 institutions. Among the selected institutions for case studies in this study, R1 institutions had larger numbers of undergraduate students on campus overall. As a result, graduate deans at R1 institutions may be more likely to be in greater competition with other units on campus for resources and needed to defend for the support necessary for the full range of functions of graduate education units on campus.

As for “provide an interdisciplinary perspective,” post hoc analysis demonstrated no significant difference between the R1 and R2 graduate deans; but deans at R2 institutions rated the importance of the statement higher than those at R3 and R1 deans rated the statement more important than R3 deans. The differences seemed to highlight a higher awareness of those working at R1s, and such awareness could be due to their larger numbers of graduate programs in various disciplines and their extensive knowledge in promoting research on campus. Given the size of R1 institutions, graduate deans needed to work with a broader range of disciplines and functional units. Several interviewees spoke to the difficulty of having interdisciplinary programs on campus, noting the structural barriers present when working across academic units and
departments to collaborate on curriculum, share faculty, and other arrangements of logistics (e.g., facilities, course registration). Despite the awareness of the importance of interdisciplinary work, the infrastructure of institutions often presents difficulty. It is more likely for R1 and R2 institutions to be able to host interdisciplinary programs on campus.

Global shifts in research paradigms have been well documented in the literature in Europe (Foray, 2004; Gibbons et al., 1994; Holland, 2005) and suggest a movement from a pure, disciplinary, homogeneous, expert-led, hierarchical, peer-reviewed, and exclusively university-based to transdisciplinary modes in the context of application, and more recently, integrating data and knowledge produced by the workforce and industries. Such paradigmatic changes further influence how research is designed, conducted, and disseminated as well as what constitutes scholarly work and academic excellence. Because R1 institutions often enjoy an elite reputation and are sites of cutting-edge research, the faculty and research-related personnel on campus may be more in tune to the global research paradigms that continue to impact how research is produced today. The global trends in knowledge and research provide another possible explanation to why interdisciplinary perspectives are endorsed more at R1 and R2 institutions.

Overall, the lack of differences based on institutional characteristics found in this research may be due to institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). There are three types of isomorphic processes, namely, coercive, mimetic, and normative. Levels of coercive isomorphism exist as Doctoral Universities are highly dependent on the external pressure as well as expectations imposed by outside organizations, such as the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Mimetic processes refer to when
institutions model themselves after other institutions. This type of process was evident in the interviews as several graduate deans mentioned how they looked to others for best practices. The third source of institutional isomorphism, normative isomorphism, stems primarily from professionalization. One mechanism of norming is hiring similar talent and skill sets for faculty and leaders. Consider how the hiring of faculty, especially, Ph.D.s graduating from Doctoral Universities continue to reside in other Doctoral Universities for faculty appointments. Therefore, regardless of a Doctoral University’s research intensity, the faculty are highly likely to be socialized and thus brought the expectations they were ingrained with into their new institutions, which refines the norming process (Labaree, 2017).

Leadership in context. The last research question investigated the perceptions of leadership in context. First, I discuss the context of institutions, organizations, and administrative features. Second, I present how the participants’ self-perceptions connect to the literature on leadership.

Institutional context. Before the survey distribution, I completed a web-based search to identify individuals and units at R1, R2, and R3 institutions to see who was in charge of graduate education on campuses. The results of the search showed that nearly all R1 and R2 institutions had established graduate units and the titles of those designated to lead the areas were typically the “chief graduate officer” on campus, albeit with variations of this title observed. Another observation is that a much higher proportion of public institutions were included in the survey pool: 189 (71.59%) public and 74 (28.03%) private, not-for-profit respectively. Overall, R1 and R2 institutions as well as public institutions had higher presence of a graduate school.
**Organizational structure.** Several data points combined build an understanding of the location of graduate deans in their organizations. For example, contributing data to situate the graduate deans within their institutions included their titles, reporting lines, their peer groups, and relationships with stakeholders.

*Reporting lines.* Both survey and interview findings supported that the majority of graduate deans report to their chief academic officers, the provosts on campus. According to the survey, 88% of the respondents report to their provosts on campus (or titles similar to chief academic officers). The interviewees perceived this line of reporting emerged due to the belief that graduate schools or offices are academic units, and hence should fall in the purview of the provost. For the few that did not directly report to the provost, it was evident that they would have preferred reporting to the provost. For instance, when Beth was reporting to the Vice Provost of Research and Economic Development, she felt supported to a certain extent, but not necessarily understood by her direct supervisor. As Beth began to work on transitioning the graduate office back into a graduate school, the support she received from direct engagement with the provost made a difference in her work. Thus, the majority of survey respondents did have access to their academic officers on campus and were in the direct reporting lines to the provost to ensure their work and their units’ work receive attention as an equal component of academic affairs.

*The peer groups.* Besides reporting lines, the qualitative findings also highlighted the importance of how their peers perceived the graduate deans, and who exactly were considered peers. If reporting to the provost sets the graduate units under academic affairs, then the peer group determined whom they were meeting with and the type of
decision-making to which they were included. Several interviewees mentioned how critical it was for them to be at the table with other academic deans, or on the dean’s council. The dean’s council was the unit the provost consulted to inform decisions specific to academic affairs. Working with other deans provided the opportunity to coordinate strategies and advocate for the needs and vision of the graduate schools.

For those whose titles were graduate deans, they had certain benefits compared to others whose titles varied from associate provost or graduate director. Being considered as a dean was central to having access to decision-making committees and groups. Joseph, for instance, with a title of the associate provost of graduate affairs, helped the provost understand the needs of the graduate programs. Yet, Joseph had to request to go to the dean’s meetings or participate by invitation whenever there was a discussion about graduate education. This type of contingency diminishes the graduate dean’s authority relative to others in deciding when and when not to involve graduate education in discussions. Even for those with more ready access to meeting with the academic deans, attention to advocating the graduate schools’ needs and reminding others of the differences in perspectives for graduate education relative to undergraduate education.

**Administration and leadership.** As early as in the 1980s, researchers concluded that the sizes of American graduate schools were severely skewed and that graduate education lacked administrative centralization (Lynch & Bowker, 1984). These outcomes remain true today as size of graduate units run the gamut and no clear organizational template exists regarding the centralization or decentralization of graduate education units. The cross-case analysis underscores these challenges. The size of units ranged from seven full-time employees (Leslie) to over 50 staff members in highly
specialized areas (Tully). For example, a unit that supervised all the graduate programs could be perceived as centralized; a unit could be centralized in all areas but student support service, or in all areas but admissions. A unit could be decentralized regarding management of admissions and supported logistics only. As a result, the administration of graduate education largely depends on the history of the unit and the institution, the title of the unit, the title of the dean, the support the unit receives from leadership, peers, and staff, and others.

Some of the interviewed graduate deans perceived that having a graduate school conferred more authority compared to a graduate office, a division, or a college. Taylor, for example, spoke on his efforts in establishing a graduate school on campus to reflect the newly gained institutional status as a R3 university. The establishment of a graduate school could mean hiring more staff and further transition to a more centralized, united campus effort to support the unit’s work. According to Taylor, graduate divisions were for institutions that did not have a research university status. However, given the institution’s new R3 designation, Taylor felt the timing was right for him to propose a graduate school.

However, the advocacy of graduate deans for unit titles, reporting structures, and scope of responsibilities did not always align with other stakeholder groups on campus, such as the academic deans, institutional leaders, and faculty. Not all understood the role of organizing the unit as graduate school or how this related to the perceptions of graduate education on campus. A common battleground involved whether the graduate school was considered an academic unit, or if the graduate dean’s oversight of faculty located in academic units. Stakeholder perceptions regarding the role of the graduate unit
created tension regarding the scope of the graduate unit’s authority, especially for institutions with no history of having a graduate school. Traditions and norms swayed current day practices regarding the power of academic units and disciplines.

Historical models for graduate education on campus influenced the type of power conferred to a graduate unit and to the graduate dean. Even with institutions that traditionally had graduate schools, the interview participants mentioned how they or their predecessors found various ways to secure the role of the unit, strengthen its ties, as well as innovate in the prescribed organizational structure to continue the support for graduate education. Another aspect worthy of attention is the service function of graduate schools, in particular regarding the influence of the units and the implications to leadership. The theme “to serve” emerged when the graduate deans were asked to describe themselves as leaders, which underscores a servant leadership approach. The case study evidence indicated that the deans felt their graduate offices or divisions held less autonomy or supervision over graduate programs at the institution. Even for the institutions that had graduate schools, the descriptions of the functions of the graduate school showed interdependencies with other academic units. Here, the opinions and reactions of other academic offices held sway over the scope of the work of the graduate schools.

The nuances of how centralization occurred on campus further complicates the administration of the graduate units because a leader cannot dictate total control as various coalitions existed. When outlining priorities, the graduate deans had to consider the logistics support their units provided to other units on campus. A graduate dean and a graduate school’s power partially come from the reporting levels of their positions, as such positions convey power that has been historically normed and reinforced by the
academic culture at the level of dean. Yet, power exists in other forms beyond one’s position, power is distributed in the organization, leverage via relationships, and individual institutional knowledge contributes to one’s power and influence at an organization (Ball, Campbell, Steed, & Meddings, 2008). Parallel to the discussion of power, the distinction between management and leadership also influences power, especially in the instance of mid-level leaders. Are mid-level leaders managing or leading?

A helpful distinction between management and leadership lies on the focal points: work versus people; demanding performances versus creating a shared vision; counting outputs versus creating value (Zalesnik, 2004). However, the new literature on mid-level leaders (see Amey & Eddy, 2018) challenges the historical narrative on the separation of the two concepts. Instead, mid-level leaders have to juggle their historical roles as managers and look for ways to lead through relationships, influence, and care for the group members’ needs. In the context of graduate education, graduate deans’ positions too combine the managerial and leading roles. However, the actual makeup of the two roles may vary as the context, administrative features, and individual approaches determine the illustrations of mid-level leadership.

**Theoretical Frameworks, Revisited**

The case study findings in Chapters 5 and 6 began to utilize the theoretical frameworks of this study in presenting the findings. Specifically, attention in the findings included leader and leadership development, academic leadership, and mid-level leadership. Leader and leadership development highlighted the interconnections between
the two concepts: one cannot study leadership without understanding the leader, and vice versa. Understanding the roles of individual leaders aids in discussing overall leadership.

Academic leadership defined the academic leaders’ socialization and understanding of the culture of higher education, including how university and colleges operation and how the functional areas relate to academic disciplines. Of particular import, mid-level leadership, which has been overlooked, helps address the ubiquity of leadership throughout institutions. Those leading in the middle are highly important in carrying out work to support organizational effectiveness as mid-level leaders can navigate through groups within organizations and build connections to accomplish the work of their units.

More revealingly, the intersections of the three aspects of context, leader, and leadership became clearer when generalizing the graduate deans’ experiences using the literature on general leadership. To explain the relationship of these three aspects, I draw from research on human behavior. In the early 20th century, an equation $B = f (P, E)$ was conceptualized and proposed to provide explanations for human behaviors (Lewin, 1936). Here, $B$ stands for behavior, $P$ is the person, and $E$ represents the environment. The mathematical notation of “,” emphasizes the flexibility and receptiveness to multiple ways in which Person and Environment can interact and can vary on a case-by-case situation.

Inspired by Lewin’s equation, I propose the use of a similar equation to capture the three crucial elements within this study as well as the dynamics among the elements. For my equation, $l$ represents the leader, $c$ means context, and $L$ stands for leadership,
which is summarized into the equation: \( L = f(l, c) \). Namely, leadership is a function of both the leader and the context.

This study’s findings point to several important aspects of how \( l, c, \) and \( L \) interact, and how complexity exists in the relationships. First, leaders’ intrapersonal development suggests the importance of looking at individuals alone to understand better how agency and learning influences how graduate deans understand what it means to be a leader. As well, the leaders’ interpersonal development is highly context-dependent as individuals constantly receive and react to a host of contextual factors, both within their institutions and outside of the university setting. Second, when one leads, one’s leadership is a result of one’s past experiences, an evaluation of what works in the current context, as well as the individual values, beliefs, and attitudes. Thus, at any given moment, leadership is reinforced both by the leader and the context. Finally, as leaders continue to develop based on their experiences and context, leadership becomes connected to the past and to the present and continues to create the future. In a sense, the equation is not only highly dynamic but also complicated for its ability to go multi-directional, multi-dimensional, as well as longitudinal. This formula concept serves as a shortcut reminder of the three key components discussed in this study. This mental map readily captures the nuances and the interactions of factors regarding leadership orientations, events, spheres, and points of time. This developmental approach to leadership is the key takeaway. Leadership can be developed and is continuously developing for both the individual leader and the leadership process.
Implications

Scant research on leaders of U.S. graduate education exist, hence this study provides a much-needed understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing graduate deans and graduate schools. Ultimately, the significance of this study is its contribution to the literature on the profile of graduate deans, the identification of current priorities, and information to support graduate leadership. This study has implications for practice and offers directions for future research. Specific to practice, the findings offer insights to understanding the graduate dean position, how to support graduate deans as leaders, implications for mid-level leadership development, as well as challenges facing the leaders of graduate education.

Context-bound agency. The graduate school and the graduate dean have long histories in university administration but are not well understood by the rest of the campus administration or faculty members at institutions. As early as 1890, Charles Eliot pointed to the importance of organizing graduate education by having a designated graduate department. At the time, the goal was to ensure curriculum policies and practices of teaching were managed by the graduate faculty, which would support the graduate dean and the graduate department. The idea proposed by Eliot called for a unique set of faculty to be in charge of graduate affairs to warrant the quality of graduate education.

A century later, however, universities as organizations grew rapidly into more complicated systems. Blau (1973) described universities as bifurcated because of having an academic structure to deliver education and an administrative structure to support the academic structure. Beyond this initial conception by Blau, today’s universities are
further specialized into many more functional areas, including the rise of student affairs
and career development. It is unclear how many graduate schools still require faculty to
apply for their graduate affiliation, according to the interviews conducted for this study
this answer differs based on institutional context.

Graduate deans must now provide an overall institutional perspective to support
graduate education, which may include functional areas of admissions, curriculum,
policies, student support and services, professional development, and other aspects
pertinent to the challenges of graduate education today. Varying by institutions, some
graduate deans are in charge of some functions of either academic or administrative
structures related to graduate education, or responsible for both academic and
administrative functions. The leadership agency of the graduate deans is bound by their
institutional realities.

Despite the intention of the graduate dean position to oversee issues related to
graduate students and graduate education, the organizational structure in place at an
institution often imposes challenges due to the lack of understanding by others of what
the graduate dean position entails. Graduate deans are similar to provosts, who serve as
the chief academic officers on campuses, as both positions possess a wide purview with
graduate deans focused solely on post-baccalaureate education. However, unlike
provosts who are in charge of all academic affairs, or academic deans who are in charge
of affairs related to a specific discipline or field, graduate deans are placed somewhere in
the middle of the organization. Their units’ academic standing sometimes gets
questioned as the graduate dean does not work directly with faculty.
Leadership development in graduate education. Mid-level leaders are receiving more attention (Amey & Eddy, 2018), which requires different understandings relative to those individuals traditionally leading at the top of organizations. This study provides highlights on who gets to be mid-level leaders and how to cultivate academic leadership in graduate education. Embedded in the context of academia is the tradition that academic leadership trajectory begins with faculty positions (Gmelch, 2009; Moore et al., 1983). This study supports this traditional career pathway and considers faculty positions critical to enhanced understanding once in graduate deans’ positions. On the one hand, a faculty position provides proximity to department chairs, academic deans, and provosts, which sows faculty member’s interests in becoming administrators. On the other hand, such proximity and pathways reinforce expectations from other faculty members regarding a faculty-oriented form of leadership normed and communicated in academia. Individuals who do not have a faculty background are more likely to encounter challenges others would not, based on a lack of shared experiences with the rest of the faculty.

For the individuals interested in becoming a graduate dean, accumulating experiences across disciplines and understanding how to work with different disciplines proves important moves beyond the narrow scope of one academic unit or a single discipline. Disciplinary knowledge is important, however, an appreciation of different disciplines and supporting academic fields institution-wide proves more essential when in the graduate dean position. Additionally, this position calls for individuals who are student-centered, willing to collaborate and serve, as well as having basic knowledge of disciplines, universities, and higher education trends to advocate for graduate education.
on campus among competing interests. To be able to all of this requires institutional knowledge, creativity, and a willingness to collaborate with others to find innovative ways to address current issues in the established university systems. Such skills come from leadership opportunities accumulated at different ranks, relationships built with faculty, supervisors, peers, and staff, as well as mentorship received from both within-and outside of institutions on the practices, challenges, and trends of graduate education, even the greater higher education.

For those who supervise graduate deans, primarily provosts, this study offers insights as the participants shared how they became graduate deans. In addition to putting the weight of leadership development on individuals seeking career advancement themselves, those in higher positions and can determine what desired qualifications they are seeking in talents should consider the advantages and disadvantages of current search and hiring practices. For instance, the survey suggests that currently most graduate deans in the position have worked at one or two institutions. Individuals have spent a long time at one institution which helps a candidate with building relationships and gaining institutional knowledge. In other words, many work hard to accumulate experiences and social capital based on what is expected from one institution. If the graduate deans are often chosen from the internal pool, what might be missing in this process compared to an open search? In thinking of leadership pipeline, mobility, diversity, and the vitality for an organization, provosts, presidents, and those leading search committees should consider the nature of the search given the need of the organization in deciding if a fresh perspective from outside could bring the innovation and creativity needed on campus.
Supporting mid-level leaders. Given how leader, context, and leadership \( L = f(l, c) \) are intricately intertwine and affect the other concepts in leadership development, this study argues for an integrated approach in moving forward to consider how to support mid-level leaders. As the findings point out, although a significant number of graduate deans come from faculty ranks, their preparedness varies as well as their knowledge of higher education as an entity. The wide span of functional responsibilities that graduate deans manage, including admissions, enrollment, diversity, retention, and time to degree, require graduate deans to build a strong community both within their institution and in the greater graduate education community in connection with others in leadership space to exchange opinions. This network supports efforts in spotting structural barriers and opportunities to engage faculty, provosts, and stakeholders in academic affairs, and to reach out to professional organizations in which other deans or provosts ponder similar issues and share lessons learned from an institutional perspective.

Structurally, since many graduate units are understaffed and individuals have to carry out multiple roles, to better support mid-level leaders in graduate education, as some participants pointed out, institutions need to devote monetary resources to show the support to hire staff, run programs, and manage initiatives deemed appropriate by the graduate schools. Additionally, graduate deans and graduate schools should be treated as academic leaders. Acknowledging the important roles of graduate units builds more input into decision-making and provides wider perspectives. The intention of having graduate deans to represent all disciplines and graduate programs challenges the bifurcation between academic processes and administration and the loose-coupling nature of academic units. Graduate deans possess an institutional perspective that will serve all
graduate students regardless of the unit they are in. The visibility among colleagues via inclusion in a dean’s council provides access for graduate deans as well as the means to build and sustain relationships and partnerships between the graduate dean and academic units.

It is important for institutions to conduct environmental scans of institutions in similar contexts, and these activities can help build the network of graduate deans. Tapping into professional associations also provides a means for building the network of graduate deans and getting them opportunities to learn and increase their involvement on a greater scale. Leadership development is a lifelong process and requires constant learning and reflection opportunities for graduate deans. The space for learning and reflection, however, is often regarded as limited or not enough (Garvin, Edmondson, & Gino, 2008). Thus, institutions can help provide opportunities to facilitate growth through strengthening connections between units, using team-based, project-focused strategies to address institutional issues, and endorse professional development by encouraging graduate deans to attend some meetings off-campus or nationally. Thus, continuous professional learning proves beneficial to individuals in advancing themselves through involving oneself in the greater community beyond one’s immediate campus. Individuals too have roles to play to acquire learning and spend time in reflection. Not only should leaders familiarize themselves with research on leadership, but also be empowered to advocate for themselves by challenging the dominant narratives on who can become leaders.

The status of graduate education on campus. The findings point to a discouraging circumstance of U.S. graduate education today: nor is graduate education
often an institutional priority or an area viewed central to campus decision-making. Recognizing this, graduate deans responding to the survey indicated they considered advocating for graduate education and graduate programs as their most important activity. The graduate deans had higher expectations for gaining institutional support than they actually received; the cross-case analysis also showcased how graduate deans constantly were promoting the need to support graduate education to their supervisors, other campus leaders, and faculty.

These findings seem to be counter-intuitive to how graduate education is often perceived more broadly. Graduate programming contributes to national and world rankings regarding prestige, cutting-edge research, rigor, and pathways to highly professionalized areas through advanced degrees (Labaree, 2017). This type of recognition requires more intentional incorporation of graduate education into campus operations and planning. Doctoral Universities, as a classification, should boost institutions’ ability and attention devoted to graduate education. This lack of attention occurs at a time when the number of graduate degrees conferred every year has already risen to half the number of bachelor’s degrees (NCSES, 2018). The interview participants felt that the rest of their campuses do not understanding the importance of graduate education or are not doing enough to support graduate students and graduate programs.

The most frequent reason provided by the graduate deans to explain the lack of attention given to graduate students was the high-profile role conferred to the undergraduate population given their larger size relative to graduate populations on campus. Numbers should not be the only indicator of significant. As graduate students
are more developmentally mature and have different needs and purposes for going into
graduate education, institutions should consider how to support these learners’ needs. In
undergraduate education, initiatives in both academic and student affairs are well
developed and supported for a holistic college experience. However, if we look at
graduate education, many areas are either not developed or housed under some general
offices that require students to find out. Even within traditionally highlighted areas for
graduate students, such as professional development, career preparation, recent trends
and changing patterns of employment require all academic programs to be involved in
supporting students in diverse manners.

Implications for future research. This study serves as an exploration to tap into
the understudied area of leadership in graduate education and focused mainly on the
graduate deans’ perceptions. It would be interesting to expand the scope of this study to
acquire more information on the structure, administration, and organizational details of
graduate schools in follow-up studies. Such details will help create better understandings
of the connections between the institutional organization, administration, and highlight
how leadership is attached to the larger institutional landscape.

Similarly, this study places emphasis on graduate deans and their perceptions. It
would be critical for follow-up research to examine academic leadership from the
perspective of others. For example, presenting the same survey instrument to faculty,
provosts, presidents, college administrators, and possibly even students could show more
fully how graduate schools are understood institution-wide. Another idea is to invite
provosts to conduct interviews to understand more deeply the role of graduate education
on campus, and to determine how the institution strikes a balance between undergraduate and graduate education.

As much as the contemporary issues are important to address, this study found a strong influence of history of graduate education influencing current contexts and practices. Little exists regarding cross-institutional approaches to graduate education; therefore, systematic approaches are mostly absent. A review of the history of graduate education to provide a chronological depiction of the nuances of the position of graduate dean, the institutional status, and areas of challenge as a new study would contribute new information to current practices and how and why these practices came into place. Similarly, as the future of higher education renders questions for all areas on campus to react to change and the unknown, it would be worthwhile to ponder in what ways innovation is needed for U.S. graduate education if it is to continue global competitiveness, as well as what is needed for supporting cutting-edge research and workforce development. What kinds of agency can add to the current leadership in addressing the fast-pace change as constraints, challenges, and opportunities co-exist and interact in an ever-complex manner? How does such agency translate into actions on individual campus and what does it mean for the entire graduate education community?

This study was delimitation to focus on the Doctoral Universities. Additional exploration into other types of institutions are worthy of studying as special categories, such as land-grant universities, state universities, minority-serving institutions, or other categorizations by the Carnegie Classification. Future research can address questions such as: Do graduate schools at non-Doctoral Universities have common administrative practices to those highlighted in this study? What issues do leaders of graduate education
in those types of institutions face? Are their leadership realities different from those working at Doctoral Universities? What are the assumptions of graduate education non-Doctoral Universities bear internally and externally when the research narrative predominantly resides within Doctoral Universities? What are the challenges and opportunities for graduate students and programs on those campuses?

On a micro level, the case study approach in this study utilized a developmental perspective in analyzing leaders’ career development through identity development, leadership experiences, and interpersonal development. The individual leader orientation was examined through social and professional identities, in addition to the influence on one’s leadership development. Developmental approaches are useful as a means to determine how one individual may fit into the graduate dean position. These approaches also imposed a greater question: how should researchers and leaders think about an individual’s personal stories in conjunction with the professional responsibilities and expectations? In a time, educational research and leadership practices call for authenticity in a complicated but integrated manner, influenced by social movements rooted in human rights and political climates, the public discussions will continue shape the practices around leadership selection, development, and evaluation overall, but also in high-profile universities.

This study also begins to show a theoretical conceptualization between the three main concepts: leader, context, and leadership, and argues for the use of Lewin’s (1936) \( B = f(P, E) \) equation in describing leadership, \( L = f(l, c) \). Given the growing body of literature on leadership, mainly mid-level leadership, it would be helpful to test this
relationship in other studies and continue to build evidence regarding the functionality of the concepts.

A principle in guiding future inquiries is to make the connections between mid-level leadership to graduate students, graduate programs, and graduate education, and the greater public good more explicit. Advancing the understanding of graduate education empirically using robust theories and/or study designs would help contribute to the current best-practice model in approaching graduate education, which would eventually serve more graduate deans, graduate students, institutions, and those who care about such matters.

Conclusion

This study contributed to the limited literature on leadership within graduate education, primarily through investigations regarding the position of graduate deans in Doctoral Universities’ graduate schools. Examining leader and leadership development within the context of U.S. graduate education, this study brought more insight into the profiles of leaders in graduate education, outlined the perceptions of graduate deans regarding the roles of graduate schools, and explicated their leadership experiences in the institutional context. Furthermore, this investigation contributed to the limited literature on the organization and administration of graduate education and the structural impact on leaders’ experiences, challenges, and approaches to their work as graduate deans.

The purpose of this study is to understand more about the leaders of graduate education in the United States, namely the graduate deans, and how their leadership experiences in the institutional context. When compared to other leadership positions in academic affairs, graduate deans shared similar starting points as faculty members, and
the career trajectories were likely to include program director and/or department chair experiences, similar to pathways to graduate deanship. In terms of leadership perceptions, the institutional characteristics (e.g., sector, research intensity) did not affect what graduate deans perceive is important for graduate schools to achieve, nor did institutional variables affect much of the survey respondents’ leadership efficacy. Gender, however, was a prominent factor in graduate dean leadership, in which women deans felt more capable in certain areas compared to their men peers. Findings confirmed that the graduate deans’ individual efficacy was well-matched with their unit efficacy; however, both were significantly higher than the institution efficacy in supporting graduate schools on campus. The high number of female graduate deans relative to other leadership roles, and the prominence of servant leadership underscore how this leadership role may be becoming feminized. More longitudinal study is needed to understand better the implications of this trend.

The findings also affirmed the integrated development of leader, context, and leadership as the case studies brought the themes of leader and leadership, academic leadership, and mid-level leadership together. Leader and leadership point to the knowledge and directions participants gained past experiences (i.e., length and breadth), readiness, personal orientations and development (i.e., desire to work in higher education, value placed in education and learning, disciplinary influences, passion for graduate education), identity development (i.e., professional identity and social identity), and interpersonal development (i.e., mentorship, network). Academic leadership highlights academic culture, organizational culture (i.e., unit functions, unit structure and organization, unit administration, and unit features), and knowledge of higher education
(i.e., trends in higher education and graduate education). Lastly, mid-level leadership is captured by self-perceptions as mid-level leaders, institutional presence, values (i.e., graduate students-centered, institutional priorities), support and challenges encountered, and strategies utilized.

Recall the problem statement of this study identified the need to find out how mid-level leaders support and determine their institutions’ performances and reputation. These findings contributed to how institutions can support not only the development of graduate deans as mid-level leaders but also how to better promote graduate education on the campuses of Doctoral Universities in this challenging and transforming period for graduate education. Implications for practice called for a greater shared understanding of academic leaders in positions outside of graduate education at the institutional level to view the graduate dean position as legitimate and the work of graduate schools critical to advance an institution’s graduate education forward altogether. The need for innovation in higher education positions graduate schools, and their leaders, at a critical intersecting point of influence. Further examination on mid-level leadership should look into the context of graduate education through other populations (i.e., provosts, academic deans, faculty, and students), contexts (other institutional types, or institutions with special missions), and methodologies (e.g., historical analysis). Critical to are the dynamics of mid-level leadership in graduate education through an integrated leadership approach that stresses how the interactions of the leader, the context, and leadership should occur.
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## Appendix A. An Overview of Studies Focusing on Graduate Deans

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<th>Publication Type</th>
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<tr>
<td>Conceptual</td>
<td>The organization of the graduate school</td>
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<td>Carl Emil Seashore: Dean of the Graduate College of the University of Iowa, 1908 to 1936, dean pro tempore, 1943 to 1946: A study of his ideas on graduate education</td>
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<td>M. A. Stewart (1959)</td>
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<td>1950s</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<td></td>
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| Dissertation      | Johns (1978)                                                        |
|                   | Longitudinal                                                       |
|                   | Single case study                                                  |

<p>| Dissertation      | Attitudinal study of graduate deans regarding external graduate degrees |
|                   | Haenni (1981)                                                       |
|                   | Southern Illinois University at Carbondale                          |
|                   | 364 CGS member institutions (obtained in 1979) (60.4% of return rate), 220 usable returns out of 238 responses received |</p>
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<td>The operational importance of teaching: A study from the perspective of social science and graduate deans</td>
<td>Bowker &amp; Lynch (1984)</td>
<td>All categories</td>
<td>Final months of 1982</td>
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<td>Dissertation</td>
<td>Characteristics of the process used by search advisory committees in the selection of a chief grad school officer</td>
<td>Mutchnick (1987)</td>
<td>Institutions which posted positions through the Chronicle of Higher Education</td>
<td>May 1985 to May 1986</td>
<td>23 public, 5 independent/private, 3 independent/religious</td>
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<td>Dissertation</td>
<td>The changing roles and responsibilities of graduate deans from 1979 to 1989</td>
<td>Pennings (1990)</td>
<td>Permission to use the list provided by the Council of Graduate Schools (1989)</td>
<td>May 1 to June 19, 1989</td>
<td>148 graduate deans enrolling 15,000 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-refereed paper</td>
<td>The central role of the director of graduate studies: Ten years of data from mid-sized public universities</td>
<td>Petersen, Chesak, Saunders, &amp; Wiener (2017)</td>
<td>A single institution: public, mid-sized</td>
<td>2003 to 2013</td>
<td>A total of 91 director of graduate studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B. Survey Instrument

Part I: General Information

*2q1. Name (will not be used in study):________________________
Your title: __________________

*q2. Your age:

*q3. Years of graduate deanship in your current position:

*q3-1. Who do you report to?
________________

*q4. Highest degree held and please specify your degree field(s) with the format of degree and field, for instance “PhD, Physics.” If you have multiple highest degrees, please use the spaces provided:

☐ Doctoral or professional degrees (e.g. PhD, EdD, MD, DDS, DVM): ___; ___; ___;
☐ Master degrees (e.g. MA, MS, Med): ___; ___; ___;
☐ Bachelor degrees (e.g. BA, BS): ___; ___; ___;
☐ Other: _____.

*q5. What is your gender?3
☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Non-binary/ third gender
☐ Prefer to self-describe ______________________
☐ Prefer not to say

*q5-1. (If the answer was among any one response from “non-binary/third gender,” “prefer to self-describe as,” or “prefer not to say,” the survey will jump to this specific prompt.)

Transgender is an umbrella term that refers to people whose gender identity, expression or behavior is different from those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth. Other identities considered to fall under this umbrella can include non-binary, gender fluid, and genderqueer – as well as many more.

Do you identify as transgender?

1 Part I is adopted from Walke’s (1966) study on deans of small liberal arts institutions with church affiliation.
2 Questions marked with “*” will be set as forced response in Qualtrics.
(Optional)
Q6. Do you consider yourself a member of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and/or Queer (LGBTQ) community?
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ No, but I identify as an Ally
☐ Prefer not to say

q6-1. (If “yes,” jump to this specific question)
Is your affiliation in regards to sexual orientation professionally public?
☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Prefer not to say

*q7. Race and ethnicity. Are you Hispanic or Latino?
☐ Yes  ☐ No
Please specify:
☐ White alone
☐ Black or African American alone
☐ American Indian and Alaska Native alone
☐ Asian alone
☐ Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander alone
☐ Some other race alone: ______
☐ Two or more races:
  ☐ Two races including Some other race
  ☐ Two races excluding Some other race, and three or more races

Part II: Professional Experiences
*q8. I have experiences working in these areas as a full-time employee with specific years of experience in that area (check all that apply):
☐ I have served in the military (including Army Reserve): ___;
☐ Government: ___;
☐ Non-governmental organizations, professional organizations, think-tanks: ___;
☐ Educational organizations (schools, colleges, universities or institution-affiliated research centers): ___;
☐ Private sector (businesses): ___.

---

Experiences with higher education institutions.

*q9. How long have you worked at your current institution?

________

*q10. How many higher education institutions have you worked as a full-time employee?

________

*q11. How long have you had a career working at higher education institutions?

________

*q12. Professional trajectory:

Have you ever held any faculty position?
☐ Yes (go to *q12-1)
☐ No (go to *q12-2)

*q12-1: If you have been a faculty prior to becoming a dean or a graduate dean:
☐ I have been through a route like: faculty – department head – dean – graduate dean
☐ I have been through a route like: faculty – department head – graduate dean
☐ I have been through a route like this: faculty – dean – graduate dean
☐ I have been a faculty but my route is not as linear as the options provided (including being a non-tenure track faculty, a faculty at a community college, or a teacher in the K-12 system). Please briefly list the previous positions you have held in a sequential order:

________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________

*q12-2: If you have never been a faculty, please briefly list the previous positions you have held in a sequential order:

________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________

*q13. Have you been a dean of graduate schools prior to this position?
☐ Yes
☐ No

Q12-3-1: If so, which institution and how many years did you work there?
Institution 1: (institution) __________, (duration) __________;
Institution 2: (institution) __________, (duration) __________;
Institution 3: (institution) __________, (duration) __________.
Part III: Perceptions of the Role of Graduate School

For each of the following statements from the Council of Graduate Schools (2004) regarding the role of graduate school at an institution, please indicate on a scale of 5, with “1” representing the lowest and “5” the highest,

$q_{14}$. First, please rate your (a) personal understanding of its importance, (b) self-efficacy (i.e., your ability and confidence in implementing it) on an individual level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>q14-1: Importance</th>
<th>q14-2: Your ability and confidence in achieving the following statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulate a vision of excellence for the graduate community</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain equitable standards across all academic disciplines</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define what graduate education is and what it is not</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring an institution-wide perspective to all postbaccalaureate endeavors</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide an interdisciplinary perspective</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the intellectual community of scholars among both graduate students and faculty</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for graduate education</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize the importance of adequately training future college and university teachers</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop ways for graduate education to contribute to</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
and enhance undergraduate education

| Support graduate student services | 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 | 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 |
| Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success of graduate programs | 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 | 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 |

*q14-1: The statements mentioned are adopted from the Council of Graduate Schools (2004). What is missing based on your understanding and professional experiences in terms of the role of graduate school (unit)?

*q15: Next, with the same statements and same rating scheme (“1” being the lowest and “5” the highest), please rate the extent of alignment between (a) your unit practices, and (b) your institution’s support and the following statements focusing on the role of graduate school.

<p>| *q15-1: Your unit’s ability and confidence in achieving the following statements | *q15-2: Your institution’s ability and confidence in achieving the following statements |
| Articulate a vision of excellence for the graduate community | 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 | 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 |
| Provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education | 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 | 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 |
| Maintain equitable standards across all academic disciplines | 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 | 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 |
| Define what graduate education is and what it is not | 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 | 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 |
| Bring an institution-wide perspective to all postbaccalaureate endeavors | 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 | 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 |
| Provide an interdisciplinary perspective | 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 | 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 |
| Enhance the intellectual community of scholars among both graduate students and faculty | 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 | 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 |
| Serve as an advocate for graduate education | 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 | 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offer</th>
<th>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</th>
<th>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize the importance of adequately training future college and university teachers</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance undergraduate education</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support graduate student services</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success of graduate programs</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
<td>1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for the completion of the survey. For any additional comments or questions, please send an email to the researcher, Yi Hao (yhao01@email.wm.edu).

In addition to the survey, please indicate if you are willing to have a conversation with me to help me better understand your experiences as a graduate dean that allows me to better contextualize and comprehend the survey responses.

*** ☐ I am open to an interview (over the phone or through video conference) to share my experiences as a graduate dean.
☐ I do not wish to be contacted by the researcher beyond the completion of this survey.
Appendix C. Titles of Graduate Deans

Dean, Graduate College
Associate Provost for Graduate Affairs
Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Dean of the Graduate School
Dean of Graduate Studies
Assistant Vice Provost for Graduate Education
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies
Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School
Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs and Dean of the Graduate School
Vice Dean and Dean of Academic Affairs
Dean of the Graduate School
Provost and Senior Vice President at the Graduate Center
Dean of The Graduate School, Vice Provost for Graduate Education
Vice Provost for Academic Affairs – Graduate Studies and Dean of School of Graduate Studies
Dean, University Graduate School and Vice President, Research and Economic Development
Dean of the Graduate School
Associate Provost for Graduate Education
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dean of the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences
Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Faculty Development
Associate Provost for Graduate Programs
Dean
Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Multicultural Affairs and Dean of the University Graduate School
Dean of Graduate College
Vice provost for graduate and professional education
Dean of the Graduate School
Interim Dean
Senior Associate Dean for Graduate Education
Dean and Associate Provost for Graduate Education
Dean, Graduate School of Arts and Science
Interim Dean
Vice Provost for Graduate Education
Dean & Associate Provost
Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate School
Interim Vice Provost and Dean
Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School
Dean of the Graduate School  
interim Dean  
Dean of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies  
Dean, School of Graduate Studies  
Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Postdoctoral Affairs  
Interim Vice Provost for Graduate & Professional Education, Dean of the Graduate School  
Vice Provost and Dean for Graduate Studies  
Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean  
Vice Provost, Graduate Education  
Associate Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies  
Vice Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs  
Dean of the Graduate School  
Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School  
Associate Dean  
Interim Dean of Graduate Studies  
Dean, School of Arts and Sciences  
Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and Research  
Vice Provost for Educational Affairs  
Dean of the Graduate School  
Dean, Graduate School  
Dean of the Graduate College  
Dean for the Graduate School and International Education  
Interim Vice Provost of Graduate Education and Dean, Graduate Studies  
Vice Provost for Graduate Education, Dean Of The Graduate Division  
Vice Provost for Graduate Education / Dean, Graduate Division  
Dean of the Graduate Division  
Dean of the Graduate Division  
Graduate Dean  
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies  
Vice President for the Office of Research, Dean of the College of Graduate Studies  
Vice Provost  
Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School  
Dean of the Graduate School and  
Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs  
Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School  
Interim Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Education  
Associate Vice President and Dean  
Dean of the Graduate School  
Graduate Dean  
Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School
Dean of the Graduate College
Dean, Graduate College
Interim Vice President for Research and Economic Development, Associate Provost for Graduate and Professional Education, Dean of the Graduate College
Dean of Graduate Studies
Interim Dean of the Graduate School
Acting Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs
Acting Dean of the School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies
Professor of Psychological and Brain Sciences
Associate Provost and Dean
Dean of the Graduate School
Office of the Graduate Dean
Dean, Graduate School
Vice Provost & Dean of Graduate Education
Interim Dean of the Graduate School
Associate Vice Chancellor for Graduate Studies and Associate Vice Provost for Advanced Studies
Assoc. Vice Chancellor and Dean of Graduate Education,
Dean
Dean of the Graduate School
Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School
Vice President for Research & Economic Development and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies
Dean of the Graduate College
Vice Provost & Dean of the Graduate School
Dean, Graduate School of Education
George and Diane Weiss Professor of Education
Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Strategic Initiatives
Vice Provost & Dean of Graduate Studies
Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School
Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs & Dean, Office of Graduate Studies
Vice Provost for Graduate Programs
Dean, Graduate School
Professor of Physics and Astronomy
Interim Dean
Graduate School Dean
Dean of the Graduate School
Dean of the Graduate School
Vice President and Dean
Interim Dean
Dean of the Graduate School, Vice Provost for Graduate Education
Dean of the Graduate School and Associate Provost
Associate Provost for Graduate Academic Affairs
Dean of the Graduate School (Arts & Sciences)
Vice Provost for Research & Dean of Graduate Studies
Dean of the Graduate School
Dean, The Graduate School
Dean of the Graduate School
Vice Provost and Dean of Baylor Graduate School
Dean of the Graduate College
Graduate Studies Dean, Office of Graduate Studies
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies
Interim Vice President for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies
Associate Vice President for Academic Planning and Institutional Effectiveness
Interim Dean, Office of Graduate Studies
Dean, College of Graduate Studies
Vice Provost Research, Graduate Professional Studies
Graduate Dean Associate Professor
Dean of School of Graduate and Advanced Studies
Rodgers Professor of Chemistry
Vice Provost for Graduate Education, Graduate College; Dean, Graduate School
Interim Associate Provost for Academic Affairs
Dean of the Graduate School
Associate Provost for Graduate Education &
Dean of the School of Graduate Studies & Research
Interim Dean of the Graduate College
Dean of the Graduate Studies
Interim Dean-Fac A&S/Dean GSAS
Associate Provost for Research and Graduate Studies
Associate Dean, Graduate College
Associate Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies
Dean
Dean, Division of Graduate Studies
Dean of Graduate Studies; Senior Associate Provost
Vice President & Associate Provost
for Research & Graduate Studies
Dean, The Graduate School
Vice Provost for Graduate and Professional Studies and Dean of the Graduate School
Associate Provost for Research and Scholarship and Dean of the Graduate School
Associate Provost and Dean of Graduate School
Interim Associate Dean of the Graduate School
Vice Provost for Graduate Studies
Dean of The Graduate School
Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate Faculty
Dean, Graduate School
interim vice provost for Research, Graduate Programs and Extended Learning and dean of the Graduate College
Dean, College/Grad & InterdisStud
Dean, Graduate College
dean of the Graduate School and associate vice president for Graduate Studies
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Interim Vice President for Research and Creative Activity and Dean of the Graduate College
Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate College
Dean of the Graduate School & Professor
Dean of Graduate Studies
Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education
Dean of Graduate and Postgraduate Studies; Vice President for Educational Affairs
Dean, Graduate School
Associate Provost, Academic Affairs
Vice President of Research and Graduate Dean
Graduate Dean
Interim Associate Dean and Director of the Graduate School
Associate Vice President for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies
Assistant Provost for Graduate Studies
Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School
Provost and Dean of the College
Vice Provost for Research & Dean of the Graduate School
Interim Associate Provost for Research; Interim Dean, Graduate Studies & University Programs
Dean, The Graduate College
Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School
Vice President for Research and Creative Scholarship; Dean of The Graduate School
Dean of the Graduate School
Interim Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School
Executive Dean of the Graduate School
Dean of the Graduate School
Interim Dean of the Graduate School
Vice Provost, Dean of Graduate Education, and Professor
Dean
Associate Provost, Graduate Academic Affairs
Professor, Vice Provost for Research and Graduate Education
Dean
Dean of the Graduate School
Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School
Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School
Vice Provost for Research and Strategic Initiatives & Dean of Graduate Studies
Associate Provost for Graduate Studies
Vice Provost for Innovation & Workforce Development
Interim Dean
Interim Dean, School of Graduate Studies
Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Research
Interim Dean of the Graduate College
Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School
Interim Dean of the Graduate School
Director of Graduate School
Associate Provost and Dean
Vice Provost and Dean
Vice President for Research & Economic Development and Dean of the School of Graduate Studies
Associate Provost and Dean
Dean of Graduate Studies and Research
Dean of the Graduate School and Professor
Dean of the Graduate School; Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dean of the Graduate School
dean of the Graduate School
Vice Provost for Graduate Affairs and Dean, College of Graduate Studies
Vice Provost for Research and Dean of the Graduate School
Dean of the Graduate College
Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education
vice president for research and dean of the School of Graduate Studies
Dean, Graduate Programs in Arts & Sciences
Dean of the Graduate School and Associate Vice President for Research and Technology Transfer
Prof & Dean of Grad Studies
Vice Provost & Dean of the Katz School for Graduate & Professional Studies
Dean of Graduate Studies
Dean of the Graduate College
Dean
Division of Research and Graduate Studies
Interim Director of the Office of Graduate Studies
Dean of the Graduate School
Dean of Graduate Studies
Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research
Director of Graduate Studies
Dean of the Graduate School
Dean, School of Graduate Studies and Research
Dean of The Graduate College
Dean of the Graduate School
Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Graduate Studies
Associate Vice President for Research, Dean of Graduate School
Senior Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies
Vice Provost for Research and Dean of the College of Graduate Studies
Vice Provost for Research and Dean, The Graduate School
Dean of Graduate Studies
Dean of the Graduate School
Dean of Graduate Education
Interim Dean of Graduate Studies
Interim Dean of Graduate Studies
Dean of Graduate Education
Dean of Graduate Studies
Dean of Graduate Studies
Associate Provost Academic and Graduate Affairs and Institutional Research
Associate Provost for Instruction and Dean of the Graduate School
Transformational - Transitional Graduate Dean
Dean, College of Graduate Studies; Senior Associate Provost
Dean, College of Graduate Studies
Vice President for Research & Dean of Graduate Studies
Dean of Graduate School
Interim Dean Graduate College
Interim Dean, Graduate School
Associate Vice President and Dean for the School of Graduate and Continuing Studies
Vice President for Academic Administration and Dean of Trinity College and Graduate School
Interim Vice Provost for Research and Dean of Graduate School
Associate Provost; Dean of Graduate Studies
Dean of Graduate School
Associate Vice President; Interim Dean
Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs & Dean for Graduate Studies
Dean of the Graduate School
Associate Vice President and Dean of the Graduate School
Appendix D. Interview Protocol

Q0: Do you have any questions before we start?

Part I: General Information

Q1: Describe for me the influence of your personal experiences and identities (age, gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc.) on your professional work? Could you give me one example?
Q2: In your survey response, you noted that you currently hold … (level) degree(s) … (fields). In terms of your educational backgrounds and disciplinary training, what do you perceive to be important to your leadership in your current position? Why?

Part II: Professional Experiences

Q3: You indicated that you have worked in the (…) sector(s). To what extent do you think these professional experiences have an influence on your current position?
Q4: Could you describe the timeline for me of how your career progressed to the current position?
Q5: In your professional experiences, what provided the best opportunity for you to learn how to lead a graduate school?
Q6-1: In what areas do you feel prepared as a graduate dean?
Q6-2: In what areas do you feel underprepared as a graduate dean?

Part III: Perceptions of the Graduate Deans and the Graduate School in the institution

Q7: The next set of questions is based on the statements suggested by the Council of Graduate Schools (2004). I’m interested in learning your perceptions (including the importance and your self-efficacy) of how you consider each statement in relation to your unit and your institution. I’m looking to understand where you agree, or not, with the statements as well. [Will have a list to share with the participant for reference] I’d also like to know if anything important to you is missing from the list provided.

CGS in 2004 defined the roles of graduate school in following statements:

- Articulate a vision of excellence for the graduate community
- Provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education
- Maintain equitable standards across all academic disciplines
- Define what graduate education is and what it is not
- Bring an institution-wide perspective to all postbaccalaureate endeavors
- Provide an interdisciplinary perspective
• Enhance the intellectual community of scholars among both graduate students and faculty
• Serve as an advocate for graduate education
• Emphasize the importance of adequately training future college and university teachers
• Develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance undergraduate education
• Support graduate student services
• Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success of graduate programs. (pp. 4-9)

Part IV: Leadership

Q8: How do you perceive yourself as a leader of graduate education?
   o How do you define your leadership?

Q9: How would you describe your ability and confidence as a graduate dean in achieving the initiatives you deem important for graduate education at your institution?
   o What best supports your leadership of your graduate unit?
   o What are the biggest challenges to your leadership of your graduate unit?
   (focus here on the organization structure and reporting lines)

Concluding Remarks

Q10: Is there anything else you would like to add in addition to what we have discussed to help me understand better the issues of being a graduate dean?

Thank you again for your time. I will be in touch with the summary of our conversations. And if I have additional question, I hope it would be okay for me to follow up with you via email or talk over the phone.
Appendix E. Pre-Survey Announcement

Dear Deans of Graduate School,

Currently, there is no updated record or data on graduate deans as the leaders of graduate education, your professional experiences, and your understanding and perceptions of the enterprise of graduate education. This email is a pre-study announcement that invites you to participate in this important topic. In the following week, you should expect to receive a Qualtrics survey link which consists of three parts: graduate deans’ demographics, professional experiences, and perceptions of the graduate deans and the graduate school at your institution. The survey should take no longer than 12 minutes of your time to finish.

This mixed-methods study is approved by the Institution Review Board at the College of William & Mary. I, as the principle investigator of this study, as well as a PhD student, thank you in advance for your contribution to the understanding of the organizational structures, administration, and leadership of U.S. graduate education.

Your contact information was retrieved from your institutional websites. Your name, institution, and any other potential identification information will not be shared nor reported in any part of the study. All data will be reported out in aggregated and anonymous manner. I collect personal information for possible opportunities to connect with you as to follow-up with requests for an interview to make sense of your experiences as the graduate dean. Hence, I will do everything in my ability to protect your confidentiality.

Please note that by clicking next you give permission for Qualtrics to record your data and for me as the researcher to access, observe, store, and analyze such data. Should you find the questions relevant to your work as the graduate dean, please allow me to reach out to you by checking the option at the end of the survey for a follow-up interview. I thank you again for being generous of your time and your devotion to such an important topic.

Sincerely,

Yi Hao
PhD Student in Educational Policy, Planning, and Leadership,
School of Education, College of William & Mary
Appendix F. Consent Form

Thank you again for taking the time both taking the survey and indicating the willingness of interview participation of this study.

WHAT DO I HOPE TO LEARN FROM YOU?

This investigation, entitled “Leader Profiles of Graduate Deans at Doctoral Universities and Their Leadership Perceptions of the Role of Graduate School” proposes to examine eight to ten graduate deans at Doctoral Universities to understand your professional experiences.

WHY IS YOUR PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT TO ME?

Studying your experiences, perceptions, and career-related materials will help me to understand leadership in higher education; especially help contribute to the scholarly understanding of leaders and leadership in graduate education.

WHAT WILL I REQUEST FROM YOU?

• After accepting our invitation to participate and completing this consent form, I will send a scheduling request for an interview via email.
• I will ask that you participate in about an hour-long audio-recorded interview about your experiences, with the possibility of a follow-up interview. The nature of the questions is open-ended to help me understand the whys and hows.
• A copy of your up-to-date curriculum vitae will be requested to help me understand your relevant experiences and to better prepare for interviews. It will help me to make the most of our time together while I try to understand your experiences and perceptions.
• As we flow through the questions, I will try my best to summarize your answers based on my understanding. Please feel free to add, correct, or provide more details to help me capture the essence of your experiences. After the interview, I will send you a summary less than one-page of our conversation and ask for your input on anything you’d like to keep or change before I pursue further with data analysis.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Please know that:
• The confidentiality of your personally identifying information will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.
• Please let me know if you have a preferred pseudonym that you would like me to use in my publication in the future. The pseudonym must not allude to any traceable information of yours. If you have no preference, I will assign a commonly used, female first name to help maintain confidentiality.
• The audio recordings and transcriptions of all of the interviews described above will be erased after the study has been completed.
• You may refuse to answer any questions during the interviews if you so choose. You may also terminate your participation in the study at any time. (To do so, simply inform
the interviewer of your intention.) Neither of these actions will incur a penalty of any type.

Research Participation Consent Form

• This study is being conducted by a Ph.D. student, Yi Hao, as her dissertation study under the direction of Dr. Pamela Eddy in the School of Education at William & Mary.
• Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decline to participate, this decision will not incur any penalty of any type.
• A summary of the study’s results will be sent to you electronically once they are complete. If you would like a copy of my manuscript when it gets published, I would be happy to provide you an electronic copy later as well.

HOW CAN YOU CONTACT ME? If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact the faculty supervisor, Dr. Pamela Eddy (peddy@wm.edu) at The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia (757- 221-2334); or the interviewer, Yi Hao (ybao01@email.wm.edu; cell number, 757-509- 2636). This study is approved by the Institution Review Board at the College of William & Mary. Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential. Please direct any questions to me or feel free to reach out to the William & Mary Institutional Review Board. If you have additional questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact Dr. Tom Ward at 757-221-2358 (EDIRC-L@wm.edu), chair of the two William & Mary committees that supervise the treatment of study participants or Dr. Jennifer Stevens, Ph.D., the Chair of the Protection of Human Subjects Committee at 757-221-3862 (jastev@wm.edu).

☐ I agree to participate.
☐ I don’t agree to participate. A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep.

SIGNATURES:

Participant:                                      Date:
Researcher:                                     Date:

THIS PROJECT WAS APPROVED BY THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE (Phone 757-221-3966) ON 07/25/2018 AND EXPIRES ON 07/25/2019.
Appendix G. Normality Tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov & Shapiro-Wilk Tests Statistics)

Table 46
Results of Test Normality on Perceived Importance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived importance</th>
<th>Tests of Normality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kolmogorov-Smirnov(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulate a vision of excellence for the graduate community</td>
<td>.490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education</td>
<td>.453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain equitable standards across all academic disciplines</td>
<td>.349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define what graduate education is and what it is not</td>
<td>.222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring an institution-wide perspective to all post-baccalaureate endeavors</td>
<td>.301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The importance of the following statement(s) in your own opinion - Provide an interdisciplinary perspective</td>
<td>.256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the intellectual community of scholars among both graduate students and faculty</td>
<td>.355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The importance of the following statement(s) in your own opinion - Serve as an advocate for graduate education</td>
<td>.533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize the importance of adequately training future college and university teachers</td>
<td>.209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance undergraduate education</td>
<td>.203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support graduate student services</td>
<td>.394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success of graduate programs</td>
<td>.458</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Lilliefors Significance Correction
Table 47
Results of Test Normality on Individual Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Efficacy on the Individual Level</th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulate a vision of excellence for the graduate community</td>
<td>.333</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education</td>
<td>.225</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain equitable standards across all academic disciplines</td>
<td>.224</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define what graduate education is and what it is not</td>
<td>.263</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring an institution-wide perspective to all post-baccalaureate endeavors</td>
<td>.229</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The importance of the following statement(s) in your own opinion - Provide an interdisciplinary perspective</td>
<td>.231</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the intellectual community of scholars among both graduate students and faculty</td>
<td>.214</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The importance of the following statement(s) in your own opinion - Serve as an advocate for graduate education</td>
<td>.459</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize the importance of adequately training future college and university teachers</td>
<td>.265</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance undergraduate education</td>
<td>.232</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support graduate student services</td>
<td>.305</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success of graduate programs</td>
<td>.350</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Lilliefors Significance Correction*
Table 48  
*Results of Test Normality on Unit Efficacy*
Tests of Normality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Efficacy on the Unit Level</th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulate a vision of excellence for the graduate community</td>
<td>.373 100 .000</td>
<td>.689 100 .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education</td>
<td>.299 100 .000</td>
<td>.767 100 .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain equitable standards across all academic disciplines</td>
<td>.246 100 .000</td>
<td>.818 100 .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define what graduate education is and what it is not</td>
<td>.273 100 .000</td>
<td>.804 100 .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring an institution-wide perspective to all post-baccalaureate endeavors</td>
<td>.266 100 .000</td>
<td>.799 100 .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The importance of the following statement(s) in your own opinion - Provide an interdisciplinary perspective</td>
<td>.251 100 .000</td>
<td>.820 100 .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the intellectual community of scholars among both graduate students and faculty</td>
<td>.252 100 .000</td>
<td>.807 100 .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The importance of the following statement(s) in your own opinion - Serve as an advocate for graduate education</td>
<td>.479 100 .000</td>
<td>.511 100 .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize the importance of adequately training future college and university teachers</td>
<td>.235 100 .000</td>
<td>.863 100 .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance undergraduate education</td>
<td>.210 100 .000</td>
<td>.884 100 .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support graduate student services</td>
<td>.354 100 .000</td>
<td>.723 100 .000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success of graduate programs</td>
<td>.378 100 .000</td>
<td>.681 100 .000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Lilliefors Significance Correction*
Table 49  
Results of Test Normality on Institutional Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Efficacy on the Institution Level</th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulate a vision of excellence for the graduate community</td>
<td>.213</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide quality control for all aspects of graduate education</td>
<td>.223</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain equitable standards across all academic disciplines</td>
<td>.193</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define what graduate education is and what it is not</td>
<td>.201</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bring an institution-wide perspective to all post-baccalaureate endeavors</td>
<td>.211</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The importance of the following statement(s) in your own opinion - Provide an interdisciplinary perspective</td>
<td>.228</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the intellectual community of scholars among both graduate students and faculty</td>
<td>.250</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The importance of the following statement(s) in your own opinion - Serve as an advocate for graduate education</td>
<td>.230</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasize the importance of adequately training future college and university teachers</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop ways for graduate education to contribute to and enhance undergraduate education</td>
<td>.243</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support graduate student services</td>
<td>.261</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve as an advocate for issues and constituencies critical to the success of graduate programs</td>
<td>.207</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Lilliefors Significance Correction
VITA

Yi Hao

yhao01@email.wm.edu

April 2019

EDUCATION

William & Mary  Ph.D.’19, Higher Education Administration
Beijing Normal University  M.Ed.’15, Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages
Sichuan University  B.A.’12, Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages
(Honors Program)  B.A.’12, English Language and Literature

EXPERIENCE

Council of Graduate Schools  Washington, D.C.
Graduate Student Researcher  Summer 2017 & 2018

College of William & Mary  Williamsburg, VA
Graduate Assistant, School of Education  2016-2019
Editor, the William & Mary Educational Review  2017-2019
Consultant and Data Analyst, English Department  Spring 2018
Program Coordinator, Center for Gifted Education  2015-2016
Chinese Teacher, Confucius Institute  2013-2014

Beijing Normal University  Beijing, China
Graduate Assistant, College of Chinese Language and Culture  2013-2015

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

The Thatcher Prize for Excellence in Graduate and Professional Study  2019
The Benjamin Stoddert Ewell Award  2019
The Armand J. and Mary Faust Galfo Dissertation Research Award  2018-2019
Holmes Scholar  2016-2019
Social Justice and Diversity Fellow  2017-2018
International Student Achievement Award  2017
The Thom Terwilliger Higher Education Fellowship Award  2016-2017
National Scholarship, Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China  2012-2013
Outstanding Graduate Student Award, Beijing Normal University  2015
Outstanding Volunteer Chinese Teacher Award, the Confucius Institute Headquarters  2013-2014
First-Class Scholarship, Beijing Normal University  2013-2014
Outstanding Student Award, Sichuan University  2009-2010

PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS (selected)


5 Place of birth: Chengdu, China.