

Navigating Through the Changes in Higher Education and Balancing Faculty Workload:

An Action Research Study

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Navigating Through the Changes in Higher Education and Balancing Faculty Workload:

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Abstract

The ongoing changes in higher education, especially over the past 5 years from 2019 to 2024, have increased tasks to the already high-demand workloads of full-time faculty. The workload demands that full-time faculty are experiencing are challenging to sustain, disengage them from their work-related roles, and increase their risk for high burnout levels. This action research study examined how resources identified from the Job Demands and Resources Theory (JD-R) could buffer the effects of full-time faculty workload while navigating the changes in higher education over the past 5 years. The participants for this study were full-time tenure-eligible/tenured faculty members. The action research intervention included three phases: participants taking the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) survey, attending a Resources Team (RT) meeting and incorporating new job resources for 6 weeks, and participating in a virtual semi-structured interview. Data collection included new job resources RT members found to buffer workload, how they perceived that their work-related roles changed over the 5 years, and their recommendations for navigating the changes in higher education. The OLBI survey data was analyzed using an independent t -test. The qualitative data sources were transcribed and coded using multiple coding processes. The study found that faculty's high workload and pressure represent job demands that support the high level of burnout found in the OLBI results. During the 6 weeks, RT members used job resources autonomy to focus on one work role, created opportunities for more collaborative work, and provided social support, providing motivation and productivity during stressful times.

NAVIGATING THROUGH THE CHANGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND BALANCING
FACULTY WORKLOAD:
AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Higher education in the United States is a complex system that includes a diverse range of institutions. Institutions are differentiated by public or private, 4-year university or college, 2-year community college, or the size and age of the institution (Bess & Dee, 2012). These institutions include various people, departments, technologies, strategies, and goals in changing and challenging environments. Higher education institutions have encountered challenges and changes, especially over the 5 years from 2019 to 2024, which are intricate and are not simply solved (Dewey et al., 2023; Pope-Ruark, 2023). Currently, higher education is dealing with decreasing enrollment numbers, remote, hybrid, and in-person work requirements affecting campus cultures and climates due to lasting changes from the COVID-19 pandemic, the introduction of Artificial Intelligence challenging academic policies and ethics, and reduced budgets. These changes have increased full-time tenure-eligible/tenured faculty's work tasks within their three work related roles of teaching, research and service (Dewey et al., 2023; Muscanell, 2023).

Universities and colleges' primary income sources come from tuition and fees, federal and state funding grants, endowments, and auxiliary enterprises to allocate towards their fiscal budget (Smith, 2019). The fiscal budget supports the institution by funding employee salaries, student financial aid, university departments, university or college operations, and new construction and updating buildings (Smith, 2019). Current data, provided by the National

Center for Education Statistics (2023a), reported total post-secondary institution revenue for the academic year 2020-2021 increased by 33% compared to 2019-2020. However, most of the increase in revenue was provided by federal funding due to the COVID-19 pandemic (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023a). Prior to the pandemic, post-secondary institutions experienced a 1% decrease in revenue between academic years 2018-19 and 2019-20 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023a). To balance the decrease in income within an institution's fiscal budget, presidents and executive leaders sought to increase incoming revenue or decrease the number of expenses. To increase income, institutions can increase tuition or maintain current tuition levels and increase student enrollment (Smith, 2019).

Immediate college student enrollment, defined as high school students who have graduated high school and are enrolled in a 2- or 4-year college for the October following high school graduation, has decreased from 68% in 2010 to 62% in 2021 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023b). The overall number of 18- to 24-year-old students enrolled in a 2- or 4-year college decreased from 41% in year 2010 to 38% in 2020 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023c). Total undergraduate enrollment in degree granting higher education institutions has declined 15% from 2010 to 2021 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023c). The decline in student enrollment has been termed the student enrollment cliff and the reason for this decline could be due to the 2008 birth rate decline during the recession or high school students losing faith in college degrees. The decline in enrollment is forecasted to last about 10 years with multiple universities already seeing lower enrollment (Barrios, 2023). However, the National Center for Education Statistics (2023c) forecasts enrollment to increase by 9% from 2021 to 2031 due to increases in adult student enrollments. Thus, to counter the lower enrollment numbers, universities are focusing on recruiting more non-traditional students

and retaining current students. If university departments fail to recruit the intended number of students to meet their enrollment quota, their budget could be negatively impacted, which puts low enrollment programs at risk of being terminated (Barrios, 2023; Smith 2019).

In a survey of 178 provosts from private/public non-profit and for-profit institutions across the United States conducted by *Inside Higher Ed* (2022), 87% held reservations about their institution's finances being a predominant factor in deciding about launching new academic programs. However, the surveys indicated that 72% of campuses are cutting underperforming academic programs. In addition, only 22% of the provosts surveyed believed that their institution is very effective at retaining and recruiting talented faculty.

Faculty in Higher Education

The current challenges in higher education have affected faculty work, with many faculty leaving higher education (Flaherty, 2022; McClure & Fryar, 2022). There are multiple reasons faculty in higher education leave their institution and many of these reasons are related to faculty's roles, teaching, research, and service. University full-time faculty work roles and responsibilities policy classifies faculty's work-related roles (Bess & Dee, 2012). When higher education organizations introduce the faculty roles as three separate roles (teaching, research, and service), they can appear overwhelming, especially to new faculty (Balkin & Mello, 2012). The workloads of tenure eligible/tenured faculty spread across teaching, research, and service often include chairing and participating in research committees, teaching undergraduate and graduate-level courses, applying for grant funding, and conducting research (Xu & Solanki, 2020). Faculty typically work over 50 hours per week, 142% hours higher than the average worker's week, to meet the demands of their three work roles (Griffith & Altinay, 2020). However, faculty roles in both teaching of undergraduate and graduate students and in research

influence student retention, graduation rates, and research and development, which ultimately can increase the financial health of the university.

Statement of the Action Research Problem

The ongoing challenges and changes in higher education over the past 5 years have added more tasks to the already high-demand workloads of faculty, with little additional support or extra resources. This could be one of the reasons why faculty seem to be leaving higher education (Flaherty, 2022). White-Lewis et al. (2023) found the main factor that weighed on faculty's ($n = 773$) decision to depart their institution was a lack of support. White-Lewis et al.'s participants explained a "lack of administrative support in my department, a lack of fairness in determining responsibilities, and a lack of recognition for academic achievements" (p. 483). Other reasons faculty are contemplating leaving higher education include how their institution handled the COVID-19 pandemic, the environment and culture they work in, high levels of burnout, and the toll that their work has on their mental and physical health (Flaherty, 2022). Faculty are retiring sooner than planned, and an increasing number of faculty who are staying in their current position are dealing with their higher work demands by disengaging from their work roles (McClure & Fryar, 2022). The higher work demands stem from colleges asking more of faculty, such as placing increased importance on student recruitment due to lower enrollment (Dewey et al., 2023), teaching classes in different modalities (online vs. in-person), and online courses requiring continuous training on the latest technologies (Griffith & Altinay, 2020).

The increase in work demands and the multiple roles faculty perform in higher education puts them at a high risk of burnout. The tasks in each role have the chance to increase faculty's emotional exhaustion and disengagement (Biron et al., 2008; Pope-Ruark, 2022; Sabagh et al., 2018). In addition, the empirical findings are extensive on how faculty's workload could generate

high levels of role overload, burnout, lower quality of life, and higher work stress due to an increase in conflicting demands from teaching, research, and service (Alves et al., 2019; Biron et al., 2008; Boamah et al., 2022; Dinibutun et al., 2020; Pope-Ruark, 2022; Sabagh et al., 2018). Faculty experiencing burnout may avoid work tasks or decrease the work they complete, resulting in decreased university production (Balkin & Mello, 2012; Taylor & Frechette, 2022). The review of research on faculty roles leading to burnout due to the changes in higher education over the past 5 years has highlighted key areas of what is leading faculty to disengage and burnout (Alves et al., 2019; Biron et al., 2008; Boamah et al., 2022; Dinibutun et al., 2020; Flaherty, 2022; McClure & Fryar, 2022; Pope-Ruark, 2022). However, there is limited research on how motivation provided by job resources could reduce the impact of faculty workload during the past 5 years. Therefore, this mixed methods action research study examined how resources identified in the job demands and resources theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) could buffer the effects of increased faculty workload while navigating the changes in higher education over the past 5 years.

Evidence Supporting the Existence of the Problem

The U.S. Department of Education (2021) reported in the academic year 2019-2020, 7,000 fewer full-time faculty members (including professors, associate professors, assistant professors, instructors, lecturers, and other faculty) in higher education, marking the first decrease in full-time faculty since 1985. The decrease corresponds with the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on full-time faculty. However, 2021, a year after the decline of faculty due to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, only reflected a .06% increase in total full-time faculty members, marking the lowest increase since 1986 (U.S. Department of Education, 2023). However, despite the reduced number of newly hired full-time faculty, the output of faculty's workload has

remained consistent or increased. The number of conferred degrees increased from the academic year 2009-2010 to the academic year 2019-2020, accounting for a 15.3% increase in undergraduate degrees, a 21.6% increase in master's degrees, and a 19.5% increase in doctoral degrees (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Furthermore, Taylor and Frechette (2022) found that faculty workloads have increased because of the pandemic, and their perceptions of productivity have decreased. Finally, Dinibutun et al. (2020) found that workload and time pressure positively relate to the level of burnout experienced by an employee.

Context of the Action Research Problem

As a large university on the east coast, BU (a pseudonym) offers a variety of academic programs and services. These programs and services are accessible through the institution's seven colleges, Arts and Letters, Business, Education, Engineering and Technology, Health Sciences, Sciences, and Continuing Education and Professional Development. Within these seven colleges, there are over 2,400 courses that are part of 225-degree programs. BU employs over 800 full-time faculty employees, of which over 400 are tenured faculty, 100 are tenure-eligible, and 300 are non-tenure-eligible, that provide students at the university a 16:1 student-to-faculty ratio. In 2021, BU was classified by the Carnegie Foundation as an R1 institution accounting for approximately 200 doctoral degrees conferred and reported over \$65 million in research expenditures in the 2019–2020 academic year (Carnegie Foundation, 2021). BU's total enrollment consists of approximately 17,000 full-time undergraduate and 3,500 graduate students. Of the seven colleges on BU's campus, this action research study focused on the College of Education. The College of Education offers over 100 undergraduate and graduate programs that enrolled over 4,000 students in 2021, taught by over 200 part-time and full-time faculty. In academic year 2022-2023 the College of Education conferred over 350 undergraduate

degrees and 375 master's degrees, the most of any college at the university. In addition, the College of Education accounted for 12% of undergraduate and 33% of graduate enrollment, highest of any college at the university. The 2018-2022 strategic plan for the College of Education focuses on improvement and foresight into what the college can become through the faculty's work-related roles.

Bay College reached university status in the late 1960s after conferring their first master's degrees earlier that decade. Currently, BU is a community driven institution that promotes dedication in creating lasting community partnerships to further research and strengthen its reputation. To increase enrollment at BU, the university seeks to work in close collaboration with Pk-12 and local community colleges.

Information Related to the Organization

Like other universities, faculty work roles at BU include teaching, research, and service. The department chair and the faculty member determine the faculty member's workload balance within the three roles by reviewing the needs of the college/department and the faculty member's goals and objectives. The faculty handbook recommends that the distribution of the faculty's teaching load at BU should be between teaching, research, administration, and other teaching-related responsibilities. Other teaching-related responsibilities include curriculum development, supervision of theses, dissertations, and student internships, advising, service in professional organizations, and special community or university services. Full-time tenure-eligible and tenured faculty at BU can hold the following ranks, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. The teaching load policy states that all faculty must conduct research and serve the community in addition to their teaching role.

Full-time tenure-eligible/tenured faculty are required to teach 24 load hours in the academic year. The 24 load hours within the College of Education could be divided by teaching two 3-credit-hour courses in the fall and spring semesters. In addition, faculty conducting research and scholarship will have one 3-hour load in the fall and spring semesters committed to research and scholarship. Lastly, tenure-eligible/tenured faculty will have one 3-hour load devoted to non-compensated administrative/professional service. All tenure-eligible/tenured faculty must teach one course per academic year. Each college at the university has different workload policies. Of the seven colleges at the university, only two provide faculty workload information and available faculty resources on their website; the College of Education is one of those two.

Probable Causes Related to the Problem

Some of the probable causes related to increased faculty workload and consequent increased risk of burnout for tenure-eligible/tenured faculty at BU include the delayed implementation of the 2020-2025 strategic plan due to the pandemic. The strategic plan may have increased the availability of faculty resources and offered clearer guidance to faculty and staff by outlining a new vision and university goals during a major shift of university operations. In addition, new executive leadership at the presidential level was confirmed in the summer of 2021 when the university was adjusting to transitioning back to in-person classes due to COVID-19. The transition back to in-person classes required an increase in faculty workload due to an increase in student needs and teaching courses in multiple modalities (Dewey et al., 2023; Pope-Ruark, 2023). Lastly, the multiple changes to higher education over the last five years could affect faculty's ability to use resources to buffer the impact of their workload related to conducting research and providing quality instruction and service. Examples of factors inhibiting

faculty's ability to use resources include a decrease in social support from colleagues due to the COVID-19 pandemic's remote working requirements and a decrease of autonomous time with the increased pressure of faculty in administrative roles on recruitment to increase enrollment (Dewey et al., 2023).

Information Related to the Intended Stakeholders

The primary stakeholders for this action research study included full-time tenure-eligible and tenured faculty, associate deans, and the dean of the college of education at BU. The College of Education was chosen due to the level of engagement the faculty have in the direction of the college's strategic plan, the amount of graduate enrollment, and the number of conferred degrees compared to the rest of the university. Most colleges at BU do not share their strategic plan online as the College of Education does. Their plan outlines the vision, mission, goals, and objectives of the college. The inclusion of faculty planning and voting on the strategic plan conveys the College of Education's consideration and commitment to the faculty. Faculty who participated in this action research study were in the position to discuss the findings of this study with key decision-makers to improve faculty experiences at the College of Education.

Theoretical Framework

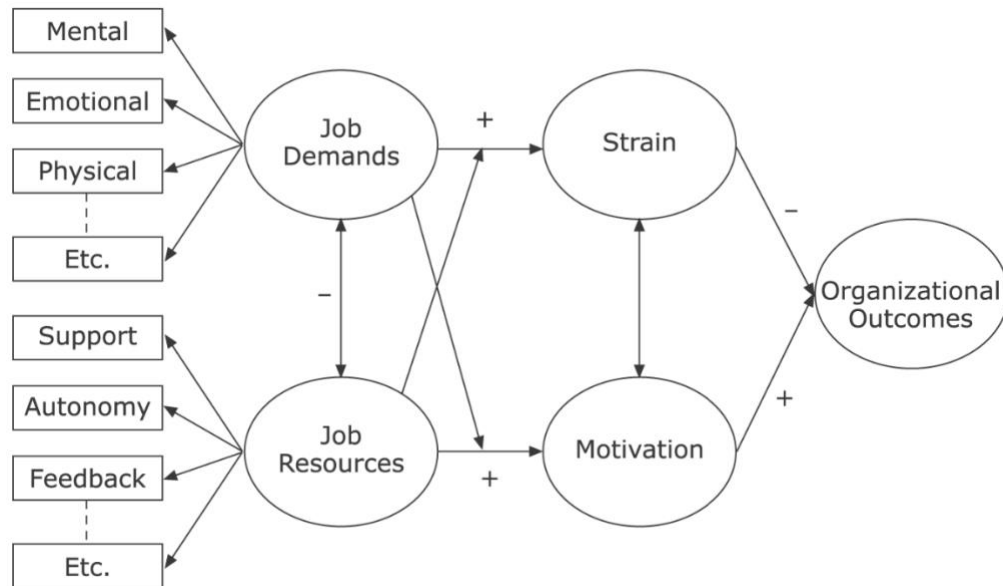
The job demands and resources (JD-R) framework (see Figure 1) suggests that every occupation has a specific set of risk factors—job demands and job resources—related to job stress (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). These two risk factors create an all-encompassing model that applies to multiple occupational settings regardless of specific demands or resources associated with stress (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job demands represent the physical, social, psychological, or organizational aspects that require a continuous physical or mental effort that can be physiologically and psychologically taxing (Demerouti et al., 2001). Examples of job

demands include high work pressure, workload, emotional demands, and poor environmental conditions (Bakker et al., 2004).

Similar to job demands, job resources refer to the physical, social, psychological, or organizational aspects that (a) function in achieving work goals, (b) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs, or (c) stimulate personal growth and development (Bakker et al., 2004). Due to the lack of agreement on the stability and situational independence of internal job resources (cognitive features and action patterns), the JD-R theory focuses on external job resources (organizational and social; Demerouti et al., 2001). At the organizational level, resources include salary, career opportunities, role clarity, task variety, participation in decision-making, and job security. The social-level resources include supervisor and coworker support, performance feedback, and team climate (Bakker et al., 2004). A job resource imbalance at either level will affect an employee's engagement in work-related tasks (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Figure 1

The Job Demands and Resources (JD-R) Theory



Note. The JD-R theory shows the negative (-) and positive (+) relationships between job demands and job resources. From “The Job Demands-Resources Model: State of the Art,” by A. Bakker and E. Demerouti, 2007, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 22(3), p. 309–328 (<https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940710733115>). Copyright 2007 by Emerald Group Publishing Limited. Reprinted with permission.

The negative relationship between job demands and resources is essential for balancing job strain and motivation. The impacts of job demands are lower if job resources are high, like job team cohesion, coaching, and colleague support. When job resources decline, an employee’s cynicism increases (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011); inversely, when job demands are high, job resources are needed to alleviate an emotionally exhausted employee (Bakker et al., 2004). When job demands are high and job resources are low, employees are subject to poor well-being and burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Typically, employees with high-workload jobs have many available resources to alleviate the risk of burnout (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). However, further investigation is needed to provide more evidence of the direct links between job demands

and resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In addition, Bakker and Demerouti (2017) encouraged researchers to investigate occupations with high workloads. This action research study focused on the direct links between job demands and resources on tenure-eligible/tenured faculty members exposed to high job demands within their three work-related roles at BU.

Brief Description of the Action Research Intervention

This action research study focused on the tenure-eligible/tenured faculty members' perceptions of job resources while participating in a resource team (RT) intervention to buffer the effects of job demands, specifically within their work-related roles while navigating the ongoing changes in higher education. The first cycle of this action research study involved defining the problem of practice and identifying how tenure-eligible/tenured faculty buffer the impact of workload and which JD-R resources alleviated those demands. The RT then applied new resources identified in a RT meeting and implemented them for 6 weeks to potentially reduce the effects of their identified job demands. By putting resources into action as a team, faculty could potentially reduce negative perceptions of the current challenges within higher education.

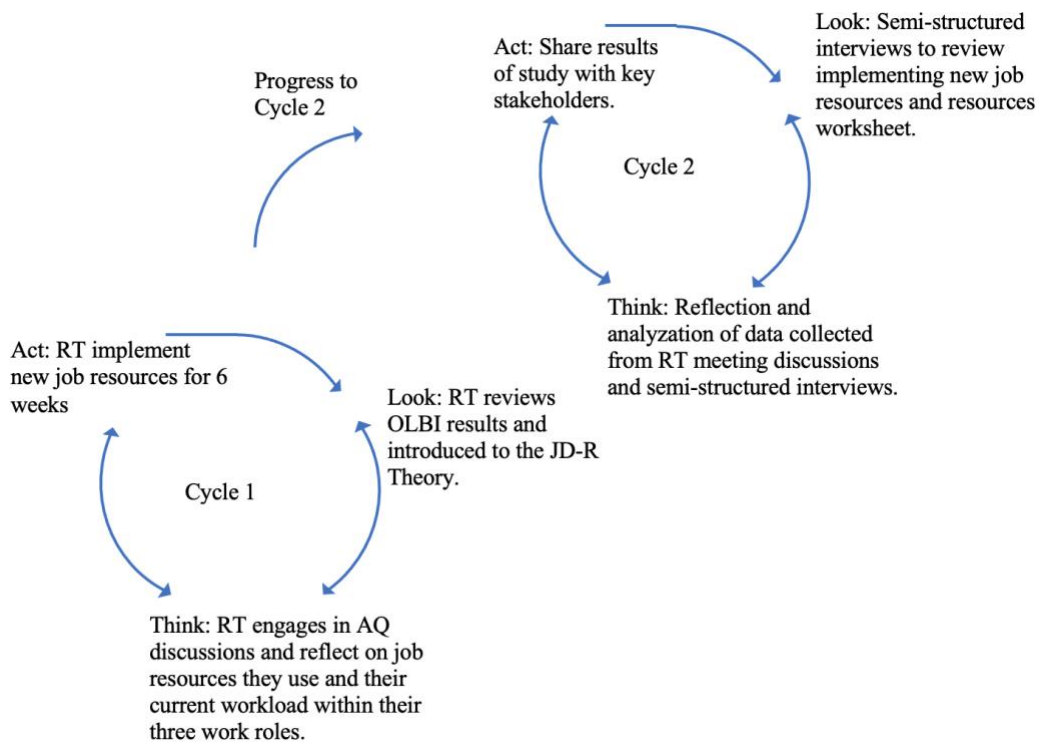
Action Research Model

In this action research study, I sought to expand on the outcomes of the studies that provided researchers with the relevant knowledge of the problem of practice (Alves et al., 2019; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Daumiller et al., 2021; Dewey et al., 2023; Lackritz, 2004; Pope-Ruark, 2023; Taylor & Frechette, 2022) and apply that knowledge toward a resolution (Stringer & Aragon, 2021). Action research is not a step-by-step process, rather it allows each three-phase cycle to be re-cycled until a meaningful, effective outcome emerges (Stringer & Aragon, 2021). The process of this action research study (see Figure 2) is based on the continuing cycle of

activities to investigate an effective way to solve the problem of practice. To investigate an effective way to solve this action research problem, each cycle of the action research process will be a continuous process of observation, reflection, and action.

Figure 2

The Action Research Model



Note. The application of the action research model for this action research study. Additional cycles may be necessary beyond Cycle 2. RT = Resources Team. AQ = Appreciative Inquiry. OLBI = Oldenburg Burnout Inventory. JD-R = Job Demands and Resources. Adapted from *Action Research* (5th ed., p.10), by E. T. Stringer and A. O. Aragon, 2021, Sage. Copyright 2021 by Sage Publications. Adapted with permission.

The first cycle of the action research study involves three phases, look, think, and act. During the first cycle tenure-eligible/tenured faculty members of the College of Education took the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI; Demerouti et al., 2001), which was titled Faculty Work

Experience Survey to reduce any bias from participants. In addition, participants that took the OLBI were asked to participate in the RT meeting. Next, in the look phase, RT participants met to observe the problem of practice regarding the results of the College of Education's tenure-eligible/tenured faculty work experience survey and gathered information on the JD-R theory. In the second phase think, RT members participated in an appreciative inquiry (AQ) discussion during the RT meeting, to reflect on past experiences at the College of Education and how they currently use job resources to help reduce job demands. After the AQ discussions, RT members explored and analyzed the emerging themes gathered from the discussions and identified how the themes relate to social and/or organizational resources from the JD-R Theory. The final phase of the first cycle involved using the identified job resources during the 6 weeks to potentially buffer against the effects of the RT members' job demands.

The second action research cycle started after the 6 weeks. This cycle started with virtual semi-structured interviews to give the RT members an opportunity to share their perceptions on how their workload within their three roles is changing due to the multitude of changes to higher education starting in 2019 and continuing to the time of the study in 2024. In addition, RT members identified what new resources were most helpful to them in buffering the effects of job demands during the 6 weeks while using the resources worksheet as a reflection tool. The think phase encompassed reflecting on and analyzing the data from the AQ discussions during the RT meeting and from the virtual semi-structured interviews. Finally, the last phase of the second cycle included sharing the results of this study with participants and key stakeholders, including department chairs and the dean of the College of Education.

Action Research Questions

The purpose of this mixed methods action research study was to determine how tenure-eligible/tenured faculty could buffer the effects of faculty workload by using resources from the JD-R theory while navigating the multitude of changes in higher education over the past 5 years. This study addressed the following research questions:

1. To what extent do the tenure eligible/tenured faculty at BU College of Education report burnout during the 5-year period of 2019–2024?
 - a. To what degree do they report emotional exhaustion?
 - b. To what degree do they report disengagement?
2. What recommendations do tenure-eligible/tenured faculty have to reduce the impact of job demands for themselves and their colleagues?
3. How, if at all, do tenure-eligible/tenured faculty perceive that their work-related roles changed due to the changes in higher education during the 5-year period of 2019–2024?
4. What new resources do tenure-eligible/tenured faculty report having been most helpful to them in buffering job demands while incorporating new resources?

Definitions of Terms

Burnout – Burnout is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by three dimensions:

- feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion;
- increased mental distance from one’s job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and
- reduced professional efficacy (World Health Organization, 2023).

Emotional Exhaustion – a consequence of intensive physical, affective, and cognitive strain (Demerouti et al., 2001).

Disengagement – distancing oneself from one's work, and experiencing negative attitudes toward the work object, work content, or one's work in general (Demerouti et al., 2001)

Job Demands – physical, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical or mental effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and psychological costs (Demerouti et al., 2001).

Job Resources – physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that may do any of the following: (a) be functional in achieving work goals; (b) reduce job demands at the associated physiological and psychological costs; (c) stimulate personal growth and development (Demerouti et al., 2001).

Job Stress – the harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker.

Workload – the amount of work to be done by someone or something.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

To effectively extend, deepen, and justify the problem of practice for this action research study, the literature review includes the following sections. First, the theoretical components of JD-R noting burnout are reviewed with attention to an employee's work context and how burnout can affect work productivity and well-being. Next, how the JD-R was developed and the methods for creating and validating the two structures' job demands and resources. In addition, the dual processes of, disengagement and exhaustion, in the JD-R theory are detailed, explaining the relationship between job demands and the health impairment process and how motivation relates to job resources. The interrelationship on how job resources impact or buffer job demands referencing two propositions is also reviewed. The chapter then details how social and organizational resources buffer the effects of workload and job-related strain. Finally, literature is presented on how full-time faculty's work roles in higher education increase the possibility for them to experience exhaustion or disengagement and the resources available to buffer the work-related demands.

Background of JD-R Theory

The first identification of employee burnout was in employees working in human services and healthcare occupations (Freudenberger, 1974). Freudenberger (1974) stated that burnout unfortunately cannot be prevented, however when employees are burned out, they should ask for help and focus on themselves. To advance research on burnout, Maslach and Jackson (1981) found burnout to be a psychological syndrome of a prolonged response to worksite stressors. In

addition, they designed items for the Maslach Burnout Inventory to investigate the different aspects of experienced burnout. As research on burnout developed using the Maslach Burnout Inventory, levels of burnout were found in employees working in any occupation, including education, and speculation grew that burnout was not distinctly different from employee depression (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Maslach et al., 2001). However, several researchers established a distinctive difference between depression and burnout. Burnout is specific to a person's work context, and depression infiltrates every facet of a person's life (Maslach et al., 2001). Currently, burnout is not clinically diagnosed by the American Psychological Association, but the World Health Organization did add it to the International Classification of Diseases (Pope-Ruark, 2022). Researchers have found that the relationship between employees and their work could increase the level of burnout employees experience at various intensities and cause several symptoms in each person (Demerouti et al., 2001; Maslach et al., 2001).

Employees can feel multiple physical and behavioral symptoms while experiencing any level of burnout (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). The physical symptoms may include a feeling of exhaustion and fatigue, suffering from frequent headaches, sleeplessness, and shortness of breath (Freudenberger, 1974; Maslach et al., 2001). The behavioral or mental symptoms of burnout include instantaneous irritation, detachment from the job, lack of accomplishment and motivation, and negative feelings towards themselves or others (Maslach et al., 2001). Exhaustion and detachment from the job (disengagement) are the two symptoms identified in JD-R Theory (Demerouti et al., 2001) that were included in this study.

JD-R Theory

Demerouti et al. (2001) developed the JD-R theory to expand on the empirical evidence on how burnout occurs. In addition, the JD-R theory is influenced by earlier job stress and

motivation models including Herzberg's (1966) Two-Factor Theory, Hackman and Oldham's (1980) Job Characteristics Model, Karasek's (1979) Demand-Control Model, and Siegrist's (1996) Effort-Reward Imbalance Model. However, the difference between the JD-R theory and these earlier models is the consideration of job stress and work motivation within the same study (Bakker & Demerouti, 2014). To provide more empirical evidence on the development of burnout and explore job stress and work motivation simultaneously, they researched the two working condition categories, job demands and resources. By using a series of linear structural relation analyses on self-reports and observer ratings ($N = 374$) of the working conditions from three occupational groups, human services, industry, and transportation, they concentrated on the unique contribution of job demands and resources to explain the variance in each burnout dimension, emotional exhaustion, and disengagement (Demerouti et al., 2001).

Two goals aided in researching each dimension: (a) to establish the factorial validity of the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) and (b) to test the JD-R theory of burnout (Demerouti et al., 2001). The OLBI was created to expand on measuring burnout independent of the type of occupation using two dimensions exhaustion and disengagement from work (Demerouti et al., 2001). While validating and constructing the OLBI, the Maslach Burnout Inventory–General Survey was developed (Demerouti et al., 2001). Nevertheless, both versions only measured burnout situations where exhaustion was limited to emotional aspects; in contrast, the OLBI extends to physical and cognitive aspects of exhaustion (Demerouti et al., 2001). In addition, the Maslach Burnout Inventories measure burnout through three dimensions (*exhaustion*, *cynicism*, and *professional efficacy*; Bakker et al., 2004). Two scales of the Maslach Burnout Inventories, *exhaustion* and *cynicism*, are worded negatively, and the *professional efficacy* scale is worded positively. Demerouti et al. (2001) stated:

From a psychometric point of view, such one-sided scales are inferior to scales that include both positively and negatively worded items, because this will increase acquiescence tendencies and thus can lead to artificial factor solutions in which positively and negatively worded items are likely to cluster. (p. 500)

The results of Demerouti et al.'s (2001) first study confirmed the two-factor structure of the JD-R, exhaustion and disengagement, and the consistency of the OLBI's factorial structure across different occupations.

To increase their understanding of the causes of burnout, Bakker et al. (2005) extended the JD-R theory to test if burnout results from an imbalance of job demands and resources and if several job resources could balance the effects of several job demands. The job resources in Bakker et al.'s study focused on alleviating job demands (work overload, emotional demands, physical demands, and work-home interference) were the following:

- Social Support – Support from colleagues can help in the achievement of work goals on time and alleviates the impact of work overload on strain and burnout (p. 171).
- Supervisor Support – may alleviate the influence of job demands on burnout, because leaders' appreciation and support put demands in another perspective (p. 171).
- Autonomy – Independence from other employees while working on certain job tasks giving more time to cope with stressful situations (p. 172).
- Performance Feedback – improves communication between supervisor and employee enhancing the effectiveness of work tasks (p. 172).

The focus of Bakker et al.'s (2005) study was to "offer organizations a clear tool for competitive advantage because proof for such moderating effects implies that employee well-being and productivity may be maintained, even when it is difficult to reduce or redesign job demands" (p.

170). The assessment of the job resources (job autonomy, social support, and performance feedback) on higher education employees ($n = 1000$) were all found to buffer the effects of work overload on an employee's exhaustion level (Bakker et al., 2005). In the years since this study, research measuring burnout in different contexts expanded how the JD-R theory can be applied to various occupational settings and provided unique results on how job demands correlate to the health impairment process and job resources are motivational (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2017; Bakker et al., 2005; Demerouti & Bakker, 2011; Dinibutun et al., 2020).

The Dual Processes of the Theory

Two separate psychological processes led to the development of job-related strain and motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2017; Bakker et al., 2005; Demerouti & Bakker, 2011; Dinibutun et al., 2020). The first process, the health impairment process, states perceived job demands tend to exhaust an employee's mental and physical resources, which could deplete energy and lead to health problems (Bakker et al., 2007; Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). Under the influence of chronic job demands, for example work overload defined as when job demands exceed an individual's ability to deal with them (Kirch, 2008), individuals use performance-protection strategies mobilizing sympathetic activation and/or an increased subjective effort fatigue (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). The higher the sympathetic activation or subjective effort, the greater the mental cost that individual pays (Hockey, 1993). The two mental costs a person could experience include strategy adjustments formed by narrowing of attention, increased selectivity, and redefinition of task requirements, or subsequently, fatigue after-effects involving risky choices or high levels of subjective fatigue (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011).

The second psychological process to buffer job related strain focuses on motivation, wherein job resources can be motivational, leading to lower cynicism, higher work engagement,

and excellent performance (Bakker et al., 2007; Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). The motivational nature of job resources can be intrinsic or extrinsic (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Intrinsic motivators that satisfy personal needs, could be in the form of performance feedback, social support, and decision latitude promoting an employee's growth, learning, and development, fulfills an employee's need to belong and to work autonomously, respectively (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Extrinsic motivators provide "work environments that offer many resources that foster the willingness to dedicate one's efforts and abilities to the work" (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, p. 298). When an employee dedicates their efforts and abilities to their work, their potential in achieving work goals and complete work tasks increases (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). In addition, workers who are engaged in their work and are provided multiple job resources, have shown a lower tendency to leave the organization (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Currently, faculty resignations are high on college campuses and the environment on college and university campus' is a bit unstable (McClure & Fryar, 2022). However, one method to begin building a more solid environment is exploring what initially motivated faculty to be faculty. Dewey et al. (2023) explored faculty motivation and perceptions of their job and found intellectual engagement and a passion for education were key reasons for faculty pursuing a faculty position rather than money or benefits.

The effects between job demands (strain) and job resources (motivation) depend on the level of job resources and job demands (Bakker et al., 2007; Demerouti & Bakker, 2011; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Bakker and Demerouti (2007) explained in their review of literature using the JD-R, that the level of motivation or strain employees experience depends on the level of influence job demands have on job resources. Their first prediction concerned the impact of job demands on job resources. This prediction considered the influence of job demands on job

strain, regardless of the level of job resources, and the influence of job resources on motivation regardless of job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; see Figure 3). When job demands are high, and job resources are low, an employee will experience high strain and low motivation. The reverse experience happens when job demands are low and job resources are high (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Furthermore, when the two processes are combined, when job demands and job resources are both high, strain and motivation will be as well (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Figure 3

Job Demands and Job Resources Additive Effects

Resources	High	Low strain High motivation	High strain High motivation
	Low	Low strain Low motivation	High strain Low motivation
		Low	High
		Demands	

Note. The additive prediction of the influence of job demands on strain. From “The Job Demands-Resources Model: State of the Art,” by A. Bakker and E. Demerouti, 2007, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 22(3), p. 309–328 (<https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940710733115>). Copyright 2007 by Emerald Group Publishing Limited. Reprinted with Permission.

However, by considering the evidence of multiple studies (Demerouti et al., 2001; Lewig & Dollard, 2003), Bakker and Demerouti (2007) adjusted the effects between job demands and resources, modifying the High-High and Low-Low quadrants of the model (see Figure 4). They explained that while job resources are low, an employee will experience the lowest level of motivation with high job demands, leaving an average level of motivation for the Low-Low

quadrant. The same reasoning can explain the modification to the High-High quadrant. The employee will experience the lowest strain level while job demands are low and resources are high, altering the strain level for the High-High quadrant (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Figure 4

Interactive Effects of Job Demands and Resources

Resources	High	<p>Low strain High motivation</p>	<p><i>Average strain</i> High motivation</p>
	Low	<p>Low strain <i>Average motivation</i></p>	<p>High strain Low motivation</p>
		Low	High
		Demands	

Note. Interactive Job Demands and Resources proposition between Job Demand and Job Resources. From “The Job Demands-Resources Model: State of the Art,” by A. Bakker and E. Demerouti, 2007, *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 22(3), p. 309–328 (<https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940710733115>). Copyright 2007 by Emerald Group Publishing Limited. Reprinted with permission.

The additive and interactive perspectives have considerable supportive evidence (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In addition, they conclude that future research should consider both perspectives. Bakker and Demerouti (2007) discussed the importance of these modifications explaining that studies should note the level of strain or motivation that employees experience, low or average, when faced with high job demands and various job resources.

Social Support

One job resource, social support, can alleviate work related strain, help employees meet deadlines, and complete work goals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bakker et al., 2007; Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). To illustrate the importance of social support, Maas et al. (2022) used longitudinal data from teachers ($N = 1,071$) who received social support from school principals at a primary school in Switzerland during a school year. Teachers who received social support from school principals mediated the job demand time pressure ($r = -.09, p < .05$) and stated, “the social support that school principals provide, influences job demands and job resources and, therefore, enhances teachers’ basic need satisfaction” (p. 1556). However, it is important to note that social support may not reduce the demands of a high workload for every employee (Ong & Johnson, 2023).

Ong and Johnson’s (2023) adaptation to the typical variable-centered approach used a person-centered theoretical approach examining different configurations of job demands and job resources that could produce exhaustion, engagement, and other strain outcomes. The qualitative analysis across three studies found that three configurations, low social support, high workload and emotional demands, and high workload and low autonomy, were all sufficient to produce exhaustion. Furthermore, they highlighted “that certain job demands may only be buffered by specific resources, and that certain configurations of demands cannot be buffered at all” (p. 1). Finally, they found that autonomy and not social support buffered against employee workload, and the lack of social support exclusively was significant to produce exhaustion, regardless of other job demands and resources.

Typically, organizations provide resources through the human resources department. However, direct supervisors may also provide structural organizational resources (Bakker & de

Vries, 2021). Further research confirmed employees were more willing to dedicate their effort and abilities to specific work-related tasks when an organization offered many resources to buffer the effects of job-specific demands (Bakker et al., 2007).

Organizational Resources

The organizational resources that buffer job demands include professional development, performance feedback, participation in decision-making, and autonomy (Bakker et al., 2007; Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). Admiraal and Røberg (2023) analyzed a data set from 2018 from 24 European countries using the JD-R theory and found that professional development could be perceived as a barrier and not as an opportunity as other studies have found (Bakker et al., 2007; Bakker & de Vries, 2021; Demerouti & Bakker, 2011; Demerouti et al., 2001).

Opportunities for professional development highly depend on the organization's view and plan for professional development. One method for organizations to offer professional development is through collaboration between managers and employees, which instills a sense of employee confirmation, being listened to, and influence. In an exploration of nurse's working conditions, Jakobsson et al. (2023) interviewed 14 surgical care nurses four times to identify opportunities for professional development. Their interviews found that when nurses collaborated with ward managers, the ward managers could appropriately identify tasks that nurses were capable of doing. In addition, ward managers offering nurses paid time to attend conferences and time to study gave nurses more opportunities to further their specialist education and competency (Jakobsson et al., 2023). Finally, nurses' trust in their ward manager and freedom in decision-making offered more role autonomy leading to an increase in motivation (Bess & Dee, 2012).

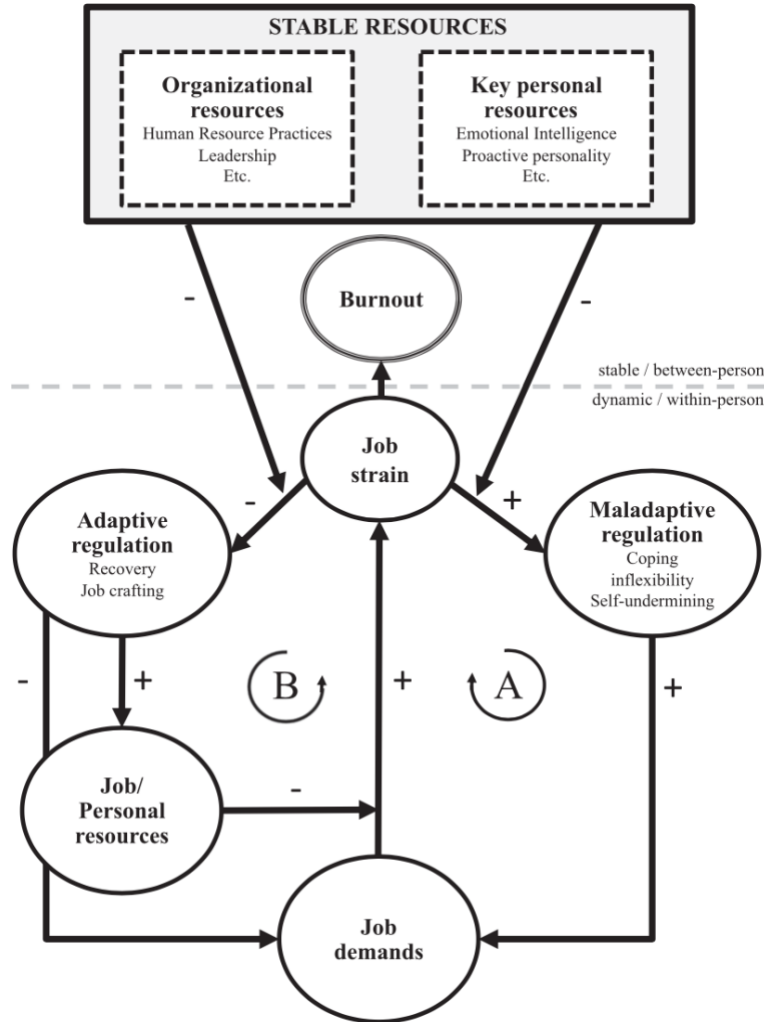
Organizations can promote job autonomy by offering employees opportunities in decision-making, scheduling work, and determining their work methods. In a meta-analysis of perceived leader autonomy support, Slemp et al. (2018) drew from a database with over 754 correlations across 72 studies. In their meta-analysis ($N = 32,870$), they found a negative correlation between organizational leadership using an autonomy-supported leadership style and employee burnout and work stress. This meta-analysis confirms that job autonomy supports employees, can potentially buffer against employee burnout and work-related stress, and supports employee well-being. Considering the high amount of autonomy within faculty's work roles (Dewey et al., 2023), faculty should be well buffered against high work stress and strain. However, faculty are still reporting increased levels of stress and strain from the amount of quantitative workload (Pope-Ruark, 2023). This action research study sought to further explore tenure-eligible/tenured faculty's perceptions of how their workload from 2019 to 2024 may potentially be increasing their levels of work-related stress and strain.

Furthering the JD-R Theory

The JD-R model, now referred to as the JD-R theory, over the past 15 years, has been used in many Occupational Health and Safety/Workplace Health & Safety regulators, government agency, primary school, and higher education studies worldwide (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Bakker et al., 2005; Dinibutun et al., 2020; Mudrak et al., 2018; Reis et al., 2015; Taylor & Frechette, 2022). The evolution of the theory has proposed a new burnout model (see Figure 5). The new model has highlighted that “employees do not simply react to leaders or work environments. They also actively influence their job characteristics through adaptive or maladaptive self-regulation strategies” (Bakker & de Vries, 2021, p. 5).

Figure 5

The Job Demands and Resources Theory



Note. The new burnout model specifying the relationships with job strain, adaptive regulation, and maladaptive regulation. A = Maladaptive regulation feedback loop. B = Adaptive regulation feedback loop. From “Job Demands–Resources Theory and Self- Regulation: New Explanations and Remedies for Job Burnout,” by A. Bakker and J. D. de Vries, 2021, *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping*, 31(1), p. 1-21 (<https://doi.org/10.1080/10615806.2020.1797695>). Reprinted with permission.

When job demands and strain are high, employees may use maladaptive strategies, creating more difficulty completing work tasks (Bakker et al., 2023). Common maladaptive

strategies include poor communication, careless mistakes, and initiating interpersonal conflicts. In addition, when employees experience exhaustion or anxiety, they deplete their energy resources, and over time can lead to self-undermining behavior, increasing job demands and strain. Employees can use adaptive regulation or job resources to help mitigate self-undermining behavior and job demands (Bakker et al., 2023). When an employee uses adaptive self-regulation strategies to help buffer job demands and strain, they create adaptive behaviors to modify the stress response resulting in new job resources. The main limitation of adaptive behaviors is that employees who are stressed or have increased job demands can continue to work during non-working times, reducing the time for recovery (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). Recovery is one of the adaptive regulation strategies to help reduce stress levels and resorting cognitive and energetic resources to baseline. Each person recovers differently, whether it involves participating in leisure activities or disconnecting from the work-related problem.

Faculty Workload in Higher Education

Faculty workload with faculty roles of teaching, research, and service depends on the university's faculty policy, the institution's type, and rank (O'Meara et al., 2019). University faculty policies can vary between institutions (Fairweather, 2005), and typically focus on the terms of employment, referring to the period the employee will be employed for, salaries and fringe benefits, and roles and responsibilities (Bess & Dee, 2012). In addition, department chairs and the faculty member determine the balance of the faculty member's workload within those three roles by reviewing the needs of the college/department and the faculty member's goals and objectives.

When tenure-eligible/tenured faculty members are hired, they are ranked assistant professor, associate professor, or professor depending on their previous work experience.

Tenure-eligible faculty typically apply for tenure prior to their sixth year (Bess & Dee, 2012). The process for tenure requires faculty to have maintained relevant research in their field of study during their time at the university (Fairweather, 2005; Fowler, 2015). Once the faculty receive tenure, they obtain an indefinite position at that institution, assuming their program still exists (Bess & Dee, 2012). University academic affairs departments endeavor to promote qualified faculty to increase retention numbers and reduce the financial cost and time commitment that hiring new faculty requires (O'Meara et al., 2014). Faculty promotion within the ranks depends on their accomplishments in teaching, research, and service (Lackritz, 2004).

The balance of tenure-eligible/tenured faculty's time between teaching, research, and service is critical as to the current shift of increasing the number of online courses in higher education involves more faculty time and the increase of non-tenure eligible positions results in fewer professors engaging in research (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013; Taylor & Frechette, 2022). Faculty in higher education typically have higher workloads compared to many positions in business and government, and this leads to increasing use of maladaptive strategies. Countering these challenges are the multiple job resources faculty have at their disposal resulting in a positive correlation between job demands and job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). A review of the literature confirms that the balance of faculty's time spent between each work-related role and each role's workload amount has been increasing faculty stress and levels of burnout (Alves et al., 2019; Biron et al., 2008; Dinibutun et al., 2020; Sabagh et al., 2018). However, prior to the pandemic, faculty roles were already shifting, workload was increasing, and institution's budgets were shrinking (Biron et al., 2008; Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2012; Griffith & Altinay, 2020; Lackritz, 2004; McClure & Fryar, 2022; Pope-Ruark, 2023; Sabagh et al., 2018).

Lackritz (2004) examined sources of faculty burnout ($n=265$) at a west coast public university within the United States that counts teaching as the main factor when awarding promotions and tenure to full-time faculty. The results found faculty workload significantly correlated to emotional exhaustion due to teaching load ($r = 169, p < 01$), time spent grading ($r = 166, p < 01$), office hours ($r = 72, p < 01$), applying for grant money ($r = 160, p < 05$), time spent on service ($r = 169, p < 01$), the number of service activities ($r = 169, p < 01$), and the overall time spent as a faculty member ($r = 216, p < 01$; Lackritz, 2004). During the 2020-2021 academic year, faculty roles shifted, increasing workload due to the COVID-19 pandemic required the transition of all classes online, which involved an increase in time devoted to teaching. Complicating this increased workload was a decrease in the number of full-time faculty. The U.S. Department of Education (2023) reported that 2020 was the first year since 2009 that full-time faculty numbers decreased.

The Sources of Faculty Job Demands

To further research on employee stress levels at Universities, Biron et al. (2008) studied the prevention and management of the sources of occupational stress at a Quebec University.

They found that:

major sources of stress common to the universities and among both general and academic staff were (a) lack of funding, resources and support services, (b) task overload, (c) poor leadership and management, (d) lack of promotion, recognition and reward and (e) job insecurity. (p. 2)

Their research confirmed that faculty ($n = 1086$) reported a high occupational stress risk from pressure linked to publications and grant applications, insufficiency and non-transparency of information, and little or no recognition from co-workers. Furthermore, faculty reported a

moderate risk of occupational stress from poor relationship with superiors, poor socialization between co-workers, and low participation in organizational decision making.

Socialization between faculty has also been related to faculty's quality of life. Alves et al. (2019) assessed the impact of burnout on the quality of life of faculty members from different fields at a public university. Using the OLBI and the World Health Organization Quality of Life-Abbreviated version, they found that more than a third of their sample suffered from burnout. In addition, women had a lower perception of quality of life in psychological health, physical health, and social relationships. Alves et al. discussed the difference in perceptions between genders, stating that individuals use different strategies to face stress. Nevertheless, they did not find significance between faculty members perceptions of quality of life and their different fields of knowledge. Other risk factors to quality of life include general feelings of workload, a strong need for rest, and a state of physical exhaustion. Finally, Alves et al. discussed how faculty's lower perceptions of quality of life could directly affect their productivity and quality of education.

Faculty productivity requires a balance between their three work roles (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013; Sabagh et al., 2018). McClure and Titus (2018) stated that when universities seek to become a higher-status research university, they often re-balance faculty's workload to represent more time on research and less time on teaching. Moreover, to increase the number of conferred graduate degrees, universities seeking to climb the Carnegie Classification ladder often emphasize the importance of graduate courses over undergraduate courses (McClure & Titus, 2018). In addition, universities may allow faculty to balance their workloads, reducing the number of courses taught in one semester to focus on research and stacking courses taught in the next (Sabagh et al., 2018). However, Balkin and Mello (2012) claimed that this method can send

faculty mixed messages on the importance of teaching, also that teaching and research are best focused on separately. They illustrated this balancing of time between faculty's two work roles, teaching and research:

teaching and research activities of faculty within business schools can have a synergistic relationship and the nature of that relationship is particularly relative to how administrators can work with faculty to bridge the gap and better align teaching and research activities. (p. 1)

Administrators and faculty should work together to align research and teaching topics to mitigate stacking courses. Doing so can help maintain course currency and relevancy and create a motivating climate for faculty (Balkin & Mello, 2012).

Another method for motivating or re-motivating faculty is by promoting collaboration between faculty. Emphasizing the importance of collaboration among faculty members to develop new strategies for the classroom and approaches to research, Eddy and Garza Mitchell (2012) suggested the creation of thinking communities. They explain that thinking communities help group members focus on learning and expand their understanding of ideas. In the concluding remarks, Eddy and Garza Mitchell (2012) highlighted that "encouraging collaborations may be a way of repacking faculty work and keeping the initial spark that started individuals on the pathway to the professoriate" (p. 294). In addition, collaboration can reduce workload demands that faculty experience within their work roles and increase the organization's productivity, knowledgebase, and diversity of thinking.

Organizational Resources in Higher Education

Higher education as a large organization includes various people, departments, technologies, strategies, and goals in changing and challenging environments (Bolman & Deal,

2017). Simplifying the changing environment is difficult due to the complexity of problems and the multitude of oversimplified solutions. Online learning has added more challenges to the changing organizational climate for administrators and faculty (Sabagh et al., 2018). To buffer the challenges and meet the growing demands from online learning, universities must provide faculty with professional development in teaching and course development and new technology to support research (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013).

Faculty teaching roles with new hybrid, face-to-face, and online courses, have increased workload, and aligning teaching and research methods has been challenging due to new teaching methods and few organizational resources for faculty (Austin & Sorcinelli, 2013; Haggerty, 2015). Austin and Sorcinelli 2013 stated “the pace of work afforded by today’s technologies coupled with the level of accessibility and connectedness most faculty members experience means new demands on faculty time and blurred lines between the professional and personal components of academic lives” (p. 87). Recently, these challenges have been accentuated due to the pandemic forcing many courses online. Taylor and Frechette’s (2022) empirical study measured the perceived increase in workload and subsequent burnout of faculty during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using the JD-R theory as a framework and the OLBI to measure burnout, they found a positive relationship between faculty’s teaching workload ($\beta = .385, p < .001$) and research workload ($\beta = .412, p < .01$) and burnout. They noted that aligning teaching and research methods has recently been challenging due to the pandemic rushing new teaching methods into operation with few resources for faculty. However, the pandemic did not create the challenges that faculty face, but it did force institutions to immediately shift to fully online with little preparation. In addition, department chairs and others in administrative leadership positions

need to be aware of the impacts that the increase in workload has on faculty (Taylor & Frechette, 2022).

University deans and department chair's influence on the organizational environment that faculty work in is significant. Nonetheless, the complex higher education system and external political forces driving university decisions weigh heavily on a dean's ability to decrease the amount of faculty workload and provide more assistance in faculty's roles (McClure & Teitelbaum, 2016). When deans and department chairs offer more transparency on departmental data, including class size, the number of advisees, and service on committees, it tends to increase faculty's organizational commitment (O'Meara et al., 2019).

Using the JD-R theory to frame their study, Mudrak et al. (2018) explored the relationship between higher education's work environment and faculty well-being at a Czech Republic public university. The assessment of full-time faculty members ($n = 1389$) found further evidence supporting the relationship between the number of available job resources (e.g., support from supervisors and colleagues and faculty having influence over their work) and high job demands. In addition, their study provided more support detailing how the two-dimension processes, the health impairment process and motivation of the JD-R, impact faculty. The motivational process of job resources and support from the supervisor ($\beta = 0.26, p < .001$) was significantly related to work engagement but not job demands. Furthermore, the confirmation of the JD-R's dual processes within a higher education context, Mudrak et al. argued "that as long as the academics have available sufficient job resources (e.g., perceive their social environment as supportive and retain high influence over their work), they may be predominantly satisfied with the academic job regardless of the growing work demands" (p. 341).

Mutual co-worker support not only has the potential to reduce high workload demands but also positively impacts the organizations climate. Dinibutun et al. (2020) examined how the organizational climate influenced faculty members burnout level at both state and private universities. Dinibutun et al. noted that:

Employees who have friendly relations with their coworkers in an organization possess a sense of support and security. The study findings demonstrated that faculty members who reported higher levels of the balanced workload and cohesion [organizational climate] dimensions within both state and private universities were less likely to report emotional exhaustion and a depersonalization level of burnout. (p. 14)

In their analysis of faculty member survey responses ($n = 984$), they found a negative relationship between a balanced workload and cohesion, and faculty's level of emotional exhaustion. (Dinibutun et al., 2020).

Workload inequalities related to faculty's balance of tasks within their three work-related roles has been acquiring more research attention. O'Meara et al. (2019) study using a qualitative cross sectional survey design examined how departmental practices and conditions from institutions in Maryland, North Carolina, and Massachusetts affected faculty's workload satisfaction, overall satisfaction, and intentions to remain at their university. The researchers survey responses, totaling 464 participants including provosts and department chairs, found faculty who worked in equitable environments were likely to approve of how their workload was distributed (O'Meara et al., 2019).

Summary

Faculty's work-related roles are difficult to change, often requiring executive leadership to amend departmental policy, and the workload associated with their roles is increasing. The

increase of workload over the past 5 years has shifted faculty's perceptions of their departmental leaders and working in higher education (Dewey et al., 2023). Faculty's workload is measured by their teaching load, the amount of their research during an academic year, and their amount of service. In addition, faculty acting as undergraduate or graduate program directors, or department chairs, have many more tasks added to their three work roles, which is typically supported by a course release or a monetary stipend. Nevertheless, faculty, whether in a program director or department chair role or not, are still unable to balance the increase in workload due to higher enrollment pressures and the decrease in healthy organizational cultures within their departments. "People burn out when they internalize unhealthy expectations and experience constant expectation escalation and poor working conditions with little recognition" (Pope-Ruark, 2023, p. 66).

The research using the JD-R to increase available job resources for faculty, reducing job demand strain, poor working conditions, and exhaustion, provide key results and discussions that drive this action research study. Although the JD-R theory has been used in numerous studies confirming the positive correlation between faculty job demands and the buffering effect job resources have on that correlation, there is still a considerable amount of work and research needed to expand the JD-R theory (Bakker et al., 2023). Organizational and social resources can reduce the maladaptive strategies and self-undermining behavior that high job demands and strain lead to, leaving faculty with higher motivation to complete work tasks.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This action research study examined how resources identified from the job demands and job resources theory (JD-R theory) could buffer the effects of faculty workload while navigating the changes in higher education since 2019 to today in 2024 at a research university. Since a psychological trait is better understood by collecting quantitative and qualitative data (Campbell & Fiske, 1959), this action research study used a convergent mixed methods research design. Creswell and Creswell (2018) found that using a mixed methods research design can strengthen the research results due to drawing from both qualitative and quantitative research, minimizing the limitations of both approaches. This chapter details a description of the action research intervention, the role of the researcher, the description of the participants, the data sources, collection, and analysis.

Action Research Questions

1. To what extent do tenure eligible/tenured faculty at BU College of Education report burnout during the 5-year period of 2019 - 2024?
 - a. To what degree do they report emotional exhaustion
 - b. To what degree do they report disengagement
2. What recommendations do tenure-eligible/tenured faculty have to reduce the impact of job demands for themselves and their colleagues?

3. How, if at all, do tenure-eligible/tenured faculty perceive that their work-related roles changed due to the changes in higher education during the 5-year period of 2019–2024?
4. What new resources do tenure eligible/tenured faculty report having been most helpful to them in buffering job demands while incorporating new resources?

Action Research Plan

The first section, Overview of the Action Research Design, provides details of the action research design's three phases look, think, and act. The next section describes the action research intervention explaining how participants attended a resources meeting, introduced new job resources for 6 weeks and used the resources worksheet to record their feelings and which job resource they used.

Overview of the Action Research Design

I used Stringer and Ortiz Aragon's (2021) action research framework. Action research is grounded in a constructivist paradigm relying on the participant's perceptions of the problem and allows the construction of the meaning of the situation through discussions and interactions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Stringer & Aragon, 2021). Furthermore, the qualitative characteristics of action research establish a process of trust and the examination of naturally occurring events (Stringer & Aragon, 2021). The ongoing three-phase Look-Think-Act action research cycle allowed participating faculty to focus on the established problem with an adaptive approach and effectively tested the validity of the emerging research outcomes (Stringer & Aragon, 2021).

The first phase, *look*, comprised two components, (a) letting faculty establish issues, problems, or needs related to burnout; and (b) provide a more in-depth understanding of the

people, setting, and social dynamics related to the issues and problems of faculty burnout. The next phase, *think*, focused on participating faculty identifying, organizing, and analyzing information from the look phase by reflecting on past experiences where resources buffered the effects of their workload and how they connect with the research problem. Stringer and Ortiz Aragon (2021) explained, "the task of research participants in this phase of the research process is to interpret and render understandable the problematic experiences being considered" (p. 164). Finally, during the *act* phase, faculty introduced the resources they identified to buffer the effects of job demands in their work-related roles and developed ways to use those resources during the 6-week individual action plan. The three-phase action research cycle provided faculty time to look, think, and act on their progress to determine what resources work or could work better to help reduce the risk of burnout.

Description of the Action Research Intervention

The action research intervention included three phases. In the first phase, the College of Education's tenure eligible/tenured faculty ($n = 78$) were invited to take the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) to establish the level of burnout in relation to their level of emotional exhaustion and disengagement from their work-related roles. A question at the end of the survey invited faculty members to volunteer to participate in the resources team meeting.

Second, the resources team (RT) attended a RT meeting to review the results of the OLBI and the JD-R theory, as well as to discuss how the RT could incorporate job resources for 6 weeks using appreciative inquiry. In the third phase, virtual semi-structured interviews with each of the RT members explored the extent to which they used resources to possibly buffer the effects of job demands related to their three work roles.

RT Meeting. Faculty volunteers ($n = 4$) who comprised the RT met for a two-hour resources team meeting (see Table 1). The meeting began with the RT participants signing a consent form and a brief presentation explaining the purpose of the action research study, the manner of how the meeting will proceed, and the activities that they will engage in. The RT meeting activities consisted of reviewing the OLBI survey results from the College of Education’s tenure-eligible/tenured faculty, an overview of the JD-R theory, and an appreciative inquiry discussion that provided the foundation while incorporating new resources for 6 weeks. All participating RT members were offered a \$75 gift card.

Table 1

RT Meeting Timeline

Subject	Description	Time
Overview of RT Meeting	Welcome Review OLBI Scores Introduce the JD-R Theory	30 minutes
AQ Discussions	Breakout into paired discussions Share Partners Strengths Discuss Themes from Stories	45 minutes
Incorporating New Resources	Incorporate recommendations based off themes of how to use new job resources over the next 6 weeks	45 minutes

Note. The overview 2-hour resources team meeting. RT = Resources Team; AQ=Appreciative Inquiry; OLBI = Oldenburg Burnout Inventory; JD-R = Job Demands and Resources.

Reviewing the OLBI results helped the RT understand the level of burnout that their tenure-eligible/tenured colleagues in the College of Education were experiencing, while taking the OLBI survey, due to their work-related roles. In addition, the overview of the JD-R theory reviewed the definition of each job resource, how job resources can buffer the effects of job

demands and reduce the risk of burnout. The resources that were defined focused on interpersonal and social relations (e.g., supervisor and co-worker support, professional development, coaching, or team climate) or on how faculty's work is organized (e.g., autonomy, or participation in decision making; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Appreciative Inquiry Discussions. To identify job resources, the RT separated into pairs and engaged in a strengths-based discussion based on an appreciative inquiry (AQ) framework. “Appreciative Inquiry is based on the assumption that every person, group, organization, and community possess a unique set of strengths, resources, skills, and assets” (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010, p. 2619). RT members were invited to conduct the breakout discussions with another RT member who they did not already know well, giving them the chance to get to know someone they otherwise would not have met (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). Using four core AQ questions (see Figure 6) RT pairs discussed a positive experience they had at BU.

Figure 6

Appreciative Inquiry Discussion Questions

Interview Question

Question 1: Tell me about a peak experience or highpoint as a faculty member, a time when you felt most alive, most engaged, and proud of yourself and your work.

Question 2: What do you most value about yourself and the work that you do? What unique skills and gifts do you bring to your program, department, and the College as a whole?

- What do you value about the university and its contribution to society and the world?
-

Question 3: What core factors give life to this organization when it's at its best? What factors in your work support you to be your best?

Question 4: If you had a magic wand and could have any three wishes granted to heighten the health and vitality of this university, what would they be?

Note. Four core interview questions. Adapted from *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry* (2nd ed., p. 161), by D. Whitney and A. Trosten-Bloom, 2010, Berrett-Koehler. Copyright 2010 by Diana Kaplin Whitney and Amanda Trosten-Bloom. Adapted with permission.

The AQ discussions lasted approximately 30 minutes to allow both RT members an opportunity to answer the four core questions. The four-core questions framed the discussions the RT pairs had reflecting on positive experiences while working at BU. Once the discussions were completed the full group reconvened and each RT member then introduced their partner to the RT and “focused primarily on great stories and inspiring best practices and ideas that they heard” (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010, Identify Themes section, para. 1). After all the RT members shared their partner’s story, they discussed how the common themes from their stories relate to specific job resources and how they can incorporate new job resources (autonomy, professional development, professional feedback, participating in decision making, and social support) into their daily workdays during the next 6 weeks to possibly buffer the effects of job demands that lead to stress and strain. RT members were told that the resources they use over the

next 6 weeks needed to be new resources they never used before but could reuse the resources that seemed to help buffer their work-related strain or stress. See Table 2 for examples of how to use job resources.

Table 2

Job Resources and Examples of How to Use Them

Job Resource	Example
Social Support	Resource Team member seeks help from or talks to a colleague to help reduce the feeling of frustration or stress due a work-related task.
Professional Feedback	Resource Team member reaches out to a supervisor to receive feedback through an evaluation or after completing a work-related task.
Professional Development	Resource Team members attend a university presentation on how to use artificial intelligence to aid in their daily work tasks.
Autonomy	Resource Team member uses time during their workday to actively work towards achieving a work goal even if members use autonomy in the past.
Participation in Decision Making	Resource Team member participates in program, department, college, or university level decisions.

Note. The job resources that were used during the study.

Incorporating Resources. During the 6-week timeframe after the RT meeting, RT members introduced new job resources that incorporated social support, participation in decision making, professional feedback, autonomy, and professional development into their daily work routine. RT members during the 6 weeks worked as usual and planned to use the resources worksheet (see Appendix A for an example) to record times they used a new job resource (social support, autonomy, professional feedback, participation in decision making, or professional development), which were reviewed during the RT meeting, to possibly reduce the impact of

work-related stress or strain. The resources worksheet filled out by RT member participants, helped provide a concrete visualization (Stringer & Aragon, 2021) of how the RT members would use job resources during the 6 weeks to reduce the impact of work-related job demands. The resources the RT members chose to use were resources new to the RT members and identified during the RT meeting. The new resources included working with other RT members or faculty (team climate, decision making), in pairs (coworker/social support), or individually (work organization, autonomy), depending on the resource the RT member chooses to buffer the impact of the job demand. RT members used the resources worksheet (see Figure 7) to record the date and time of using the new resource, what resource was used, how they felt before using that resource, and how they felt after. The RT member was given the option to handwrite on the resources worksheet or save the worksheet in a Google Doc. RT members used the worksheet during the virtual semi-structured interviews to reflect on what new resources were most helpful to them in buffering job demands.

Figure 7

Resources Worksheet

Resources Worksheet				
Date/Time	Explain the new resource you used.	Was this an existing resource at the university?	How did you feel prior to using the resource?	How did you feel after using the resource?

Note. Each row represented a new time the resource team (RT) member used a new resource during the 6 weeks.

Participants

All full-time tenure-eligible/tenured faculty ($n = 78$) from the College of Education were sent the OLBI survey and were invited via email to participate in the RT. I sent a personalized email (Appendix B) to each tenure-eligible/tenured faculty member that detailed the purpose of the study, why the study is important, and how it might affect tenure-eligible/tenured faculty. Individualizing the emails has the potential to increase the response rate of the OLBI and participants volunteering for the RT. The recruiting email was sent twice during January 2024 to increase the number of participants taking the OLBI and RT member volunteers (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To volunteer for the RT, tenure-eligible/tenured faculty were provided a link at the end of the OLBI that directed them to a Google Doc to enter their contact information for further communication on the RT meeting time and location.

The rank of potential faculty participants for this study included assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. The minimum sample size for this mixed methods action research study was four RT members. The four RT members that participated in the study were offered a \$75 gift card as an incentive for volunteering for the RT. Had there been more than 12 volunteers, the selection would have ensured the members of the RT were diverse across tenure-eligible, tenured, gender, years employed at BU. In the case that there was an odd number of participants, I would have participated in the AQ discussions, listening to and reporting my partners' responses. Although I would have shared my experiences as an adjunct professor, my responses would not be included in the large group sharing or be included in the discussion of themes. The RT meeting occurred in person in one of the college's classrooms. Descriptive demographic information for each participant included gender, department, years of teaching, conducting research and service, and teaching load.

A total of 11 tenure-eligible/tenured faculty in the College of Education participated in the OLBI survey (14% response rate) and four of those 11 participants volunteered to participate in the Resources Team. The low response rate could be due to full-time faculty already having a high workload and not enough time or energy to participate in a study (O'Meara et al., 2019). Participants ranked as associate professors 45% or full professors 55%, and a total of 55% of participants have been in their role for more than 10 years, 27% for 7–10 years, and 18% for 4–6 years. Finally, 55% of participants had a 1/1 teaching load and 45% a 2/2 teaching load. No assistant professors participated in the study, which could be indicative of assistant professors disengaging from participating in extra work due to high work demands of meeting tenure requirements or an imbalance in workload distribution (Griffith & Altinay, 2020). The resources team (RT) members ($n = 4$) demographic characteristics reflected 50% female ($n = 2$) and 50% male ($n = 2$). RT members teaching load per academic year was 25% 2/1, 50% 1/1, and 25% 2/2. One of the RT members was a department chair, two were graduate program directors, and one a president-elect of a national research association. RT members rank was 75% professor and 25% associate professor and years in role was 75% 10+ and 25% 4-6.

Data Sources

The data sources used in this action research study informed the research problem by investigating how participants described their experience and how it affected them (Stringer & Aragon, 2021). Due to the convergent mixed methods research design, this action research study used the OLBI as the quantitative data source and themes from the AQ discussions, the resources worksheet, and semi-structured interviews served as the three qualitative data sources. The semi-structured interviews helped explore the participants' perceptions and events while using new job resources during the 6 weeks (Stringer & Aragon, 2021). Interviews were open-ended data

sources that allowed the members of the RT to freely share their thoughts and ideas and were not constrained by predetermined instruments (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In addition, Bakker et al. (2004) explained “the incorporation of a qualitative phase in the research is valuable because it can generate knowledge about unexpected, organization-specific job demands and job resources that will be overlooked by highly standardized approaches” (p. 99). This action research study included an AQ discussion during the RT meeting and virtual semi-structured interviews after the 6 weeks to inform the quantitative OLBI results.

Triangulation provided trustworthiness by using multiple data sources “to build coherent justification from emerging themes” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 200). The OLBI, AQ discussions, and the semi-structured virtual interview provided evidence from different quantitative and qualitative data sources to ensure the findings from each source were accurate.

OLBI

Since an increased workload has been found to lead to work-related strain and burnout, both increasing faculty’s emotional exhaustion and disengagement (Biron et al., 2008; Sabagh et al., 2018; Taylor & Frechette, 2022), I used the OLBI (Appendix C). The OLBI measures burnout through two subscales, emotional exhaustion and disengagement. Each subscale uses a 4-point Likert scale comprising eight positively or negatively worded items (Demerouti et al., 2001). The Qualtrics link to take the OLBI was sent via email to every tenure-eligible/tenured faculty member in the College of Education. The title of the OLBI was changed to “Faculty Experience Survey” to reduce bias faculty might have had knowing they were taking a survey related to burnout. The first two questions of the OLBI survey screened for tenure-eligible/tenured full-time faculty of the College of Education. At the end of the OLBI, tenure-eligible/tenured faculty were asked to volunteer to participate in a 2-hour in-person resource

team meeting to develop recommendations on implementing new resources to buffer against the effects of job demands and the risk of burnout.

Multiple studies have tested the OLBI's internal consistency of each subscale, exhaustion, and disengagement, reporting Cronbach's alphas in the range of about .82 and .83, respectively (Demerouti et al., 2001; Reis et al., 2015). Construct validity was tested and found exhaustion to be significantly related to mental fatigue ($r = .52, p < .05$) but not to satiation ($r = .00$). Disengagement was found to be significantly related to satiation ($r = .53, p < .05$) but not to mental fatigue ($r = -.10$; Demerouti et al., 2001).

AQ Discussions

AQ is a highly recognized methodology within the field of organizational change and “a variety of Fortune 500 companies, Big Five consulting firms, and religious denominations, even the United Nations have used AQ to institute change and drive results” (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010, p. 1606). AQ focuses on organizational change through positive collaborative interview questions that invoke discussion which strengthen the organization's vision, values, and employees (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). The AQ interview questions investigated employee's experiences and focused on the organization's effectiveness, when it was at its best, during the past, present, and future (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). When employees discuss their positive experiences, the organization develops a positive core that expands into a culture of cooperation and discovery, strengthening resources and assets to include social capital, relational resources, positive emotions, and leadership capabilities (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005; Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010).

Prior to the start of the RT meeting, I ensured that each member of the RT had read and signed an informed consent form (Appendix D). To record the RT member's discussions a

microphone on a personal device recorded the sharing of partners' stories and the discussion about the themes revealed during the stories. In addition, the RT members' themes were typed on a personal password protected computer and used to create a reference list identifying how each theme relates to a specific job resource. In addition, during the RT meeting, the RT members were asked to think of a resource wish list that they perceived to help decrease the effects of job demands. RT members resources wish list was discussed during the RT meeting. The discussion from the RT meeting was coded and themes were used to help provide recommendations for Action Research Question 2.

The Resources Worksheet

During the 6 weeks RT members worked as usual and used their resources worksheet to record times they used a new job resource (social support, autonomy, participation in decision making, professional feedback, or professional development), which were reviewed during the RT meeting, to possibly reduce the impact of work-related stress or strain. The resources work sheet were sent via email and/or discussed during the semi-structured interviews.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Members of the RT were interviewed 6 weeks after the meeting to better understand how they perceived their work-related roles changed, if at all, due to the multitude of changes in higher education and what resources were most helpful in buffering the effects of job demands during the 6-week period. Prior to the start of the interview, I ensured that the interviewee was aware of the confidentiality of the interview and was apprised of their rights as a research participant. Semi-structured one-on-one virtual interviews allowed the RT members to describe their work-related experiences in their terms after incorporating new resources for 6 weeks. The interview consisted of 10 semi-structured questions using suggestions from Creswell and

Creswell's (2018) interview protocol. The semi-structured interview protocol used included hand-written notes, digitally recording the interview using two methods (Zoom and a handheld audio recording) that were later transcribed on Microsoft Word on a password protected computer.

The first three introductory questions of the interview established a relaxed environment with the interviewee (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Interview Content Questions 4-10 focused on action research questions three and four. Interview Questions 4 and 5 focused on the RT's three work roles teaching, research, service workload change while navigating the changes in higher education. In addition, Interview Questions 6 and 7 focused on resources that faculty reported having been most helpful to them in buffering job demands while navigating the changes in higher education.

The interview content questions also included probes. Probes in the interview content questions reminded me as the interviewer to ask the interviewee for more information or to explain their thoughts or ideas in more detail to allow me to learn more about the conversation topic (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In addition, RT members were able to review their resources worksheets during the interview to provide more detail on the new resources used during the 6 weeks. Finally, I asked, if needed, if I may follow up to clarify any parts of the interview discussion (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Table 3 provides details for how each interview question helped identify the resource used during the 6 weeks. The full interview may be found in Appendix E.

A trial interview was conducted prior to the start of the intervention to review the questions and ensure consistency with the interview protocol and the action research questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The trial interview provided feedback on how long the interview

took and if certain questions needed to be altered for clarity. Participants for the trial interview were full-time faculty members with more than 10 years' experience at a higher education institution. The final interview protocol included the suggestions and edits made by the participants.

Table 3

Table of Specifications for Semi-Structured Interview Questions and Potential Job Resource

Interview Question	Research Question	Topic Addressed
Preliminary Questions	N/A	N/A
Tell me about your role in the College of Education. What aspects do you find especially rewarding? What aspects are most taxing? How long have you been in your current role?	Q3	Work Roles
Tell me about your current workload balance between your three roles: teaching, research, and service.	Q3	Work Roles
How many courses do you typically teach?	Q3	Work Role: Teaching
How has your workload in relation to your teaching role changed, if at all, due to the multiple changes in higher education over the past 5 years?	Q3	Work Role: Teaching
How has your workload in relation to your research role changed, if at all, due to the multiple changes in higher education over the past 5 years?	Q3	Work Role: Research
How has your workload in relation to your service role changed, if at all, due to the multiple changes in higher education over the past 5 years?	Q3	Work Role: Service
What is your experience with the available university resources prior to the Resources Team meeting?	Q4	Reported Job Resources
Describe times during the 6-weeks that you felt an increase of job demands.	Q4	Reported Job Resources
During the 6-weeks, what new resources did you use to buffer the demands of your three work roles?	Q4	Reported Job Resources
Is there anything else you'd like me to know about your workload as a faculty member and your experiences with the changes in higher education?	Q4	Reported Job Resources

Note. Potential job resources could change due to the resource team identifying which job resources they align with.

Data Collection

Data collection included both quantitative and qualitative data sources. Creswell and Creswell (2018) state that the initial research plan needs to be fluid and not tightly prescribed. Further, a shift in data collection can signal that the researcher is exploring deeper into the research topic and learning about the research problem. Data collection focused on what new job resources faculty found to buffer workload, how the RT members perceived that their work-related roles changed over the 5-year period 2019–2024, and the recommendations faculty provide related to workload change as part of navigating the changes in higher education after participating in the RT.

Data collection began in January of the Spring 2024 semester with the College of Education faculty taking the OLBI survey and concluded the first week of April with the completion of the RT semi-structured interviews.

OLBI

The OLBI was available at the beginning of January on Qualtrics for the entire College of Education's tenured/tenure-eligible faculty ($n = 78$) accessible through a personalized email. The OLBI survey aided in determining the faculty's level of burnout about emotional exhaustion or disengagement from their three work-related roles. Faculty that took the survey were notified at the beginning of the survey that their participation is construed as informed consent. Participants who clicked the "do not consent" button were taken to a screen thanking them for their time. After the OLBI, faculty were able to volunteer to participate in the RT. To sign-up faculty clicked a link that took them to the RT sign-up page on a Google form. Faculty were unable to see other faculty who had signed up for the RT, given the Google form format. Each volunteer filled out a blank form entering their name, email, and selected a time that they are available for

the RT meeting. Submitting the form sent the information to my email. Once the RT was formed, the Google form was deleted to ensure participant confidentiality. The OLBI scores did not influence the selection of the RT members.

RT Meeting

The AQ discussions were recorded using a microphone while each RT member introduced their partner's stories and highlights. In addition, the common themes that the RT members identified while they were sharing their partner's stories and discussing job resources were typed on a personal password-protected computer. The microphone recorded the RT meeting from the beginning of the sharing their partner's stories to the conclusion of the meeting. The recording of the meeting was kept on a password-protected device that was kept in a secure location. Written informed consent was collected at the start of the meeting.

Semi-Structured Interviews

I scheduled the virtual semi-structured interviews during the 6 weeks via email. The interview gave the RT participant a chance to reflect on the resources meeting and the 6 weeks using the resources worksheet as a reflection tool, which provided information for Research Question 3 and 4. Interviews were virtually done on Zoom to provide faculty the most flexibility in scheduling the interviews. Interview recordings and transcripts of the interview audio was kept on a password-protected device and categorized by RT member letter. RT member letters were randomly assigned to each RT member.

Data Analysis

Analyzing the quantitative data provided insight into the level of emotional exhaustion and disengagement from each participant that took the OLBI. The transcription of the qualitative data sources, the AQ discussions from the RT meeting, the virtual semi-structured interviews,

and the resource worksheets the RT members used during the 6 weeks, provided an in-depth reflection of the RT members perceptions and experiences during the entire action research intervention. Reading each RT members transcription provided me time to reflect on their perceptions and experiences during the action research study.

The first step of analyzing the data comprised of analyzing the quantitative data from the OLBI survey. Data analysis for the OLBI involved calculating the mean of each scale exhaustion and disengagement on Microsoft Excel. The total score provided information on the level of emotional exhaustion and disengagement of each participant. A score greater than or equal to 35 indicated an increased level of burnout (Summers et al., 2020).

The second step of data analysis included organizing and preparing the qualitative data from the RT meeting AQ discussions and virtual semi-structured interviews for analysis. The first set of data that was transcribed was the AQ discussions from the RT meeting. While playing the recordings, Microsoft Word's dictation tool transcribed the recording into a Word document. Once completed, I reviewed the transcription twice while the recording played to ensure the accuracy of the transcription. After reviewing the transcription, I segmented each participant's AQ discussion into its own Word document. Separating each RT members discussion into a separate document allowed me the chance to read, reflect, and write memos about my general thoughts concerning the data. The audio recordings of the virtual semi-structured interviews were analyzed the same way as the AQ discussions.

Prior to data analysis for the qualitative data sources, I member-checked the RT discussions and semi-structured interviews to ensure the recorded data was accurate and interpreted correctly (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The first cycle of coding began which included attribute coding, In vivo coding, and emotional coding. Attribute coding provided

information about each RT member including gender, faculty rank, years in role, their current teaching load, and race. Next, I started the In Vivo coding process to establish codes of each RT members' own words. The In Vivo codes gave insight into what each RT member experienced during the intervention. Emotional coding, the final step in the first coding cycle, identified the feelings of how each RT member felt during challenging and demanding moments during the 6 weeks.

Next, the data were inductively segmented into categories and themes. Once a set of themes was established, data were deductively analyzed to see if the data collected supported each theme or if more information was needed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In addition, the themes from deductively analyzing the qualitative data from the AQ discussions, resources worksheet, and the semi-structured interview provided validity to participants OLBI emotional exhaustion and disengagement scores. Due to the multiple data sources, data analysis, and collection were done simultaneously throughout the action research study. Reviewing interview recordings allowed the identification of key experiences or events that were significant to the participant (Stringer & Aragon, 2021). Creswell and Creswell (2018) urge "researchers to look at the qualitative data analysis as a process that requires sequential steps to be followed, from the specific to the general, and involving multiple levels of analysis" (p. 193).

The second coding cycle used axial coding to group similarly coded data into categories. The categories from the first cycle of coding will identify relationships between each RT members AQ discussions, resources worksheet, and answers to the semi-structured interview questions. Themes emerged from the axial coding process and were verified through a cycle of deductive coding to ensure the data collected support each theme or if more information was needed. The themes generated from the RT members' experiences and actions presented the

perspectives and were supported by quotations and specific evidence (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Action Research Question 1

To what extent do tenure-eligible/tenured faculty at BU College of Education report burnout during the five-year period of 2019 - 2024?

a. To what degree do they report emotional exhaustion?

b. To what degree do they report disengagement?

OLBI. Analysis of the OLBI data was conducted by totaling the eight items of each subscale, emotional exhaustion (Items 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12, 14 and 16) and disengagement (Items 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13 and 15; Demerouti et al., 2001). The OLBI's two subscales are scored *Strongly Agree* (+1), *Agree* (+2), *Disagree* (+3), or *Strongly Disagree* (+4) for items 1, 5, 7, 10, 13, 14, 15 and 16. For items 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11 and 12, the scoring was reversed, *Strongly Agree* (+4), *Agree* (+3), *Disagree* (+2), or *Strongly Disagree* (+1; Demerouti et al., 2001). Prior to totaling each sub-scale, the reverse-scored items were recoded (1=4, 2=3, 3=2, 4=1). Once recoding was completed, the total OLBI score were reached by calculating the mean scores of each item. The higher the score, the greater the level of emotional exhaustion and disengagement. The total burnout score indicating an increased level of burnout is ≥ 35 (Summers et al., 2020). Descriptive statistics were analyzed and presented by gender, years teaching, conducting research and service, and teaching load. A *t*-test in IBM SPSS Statistics was performed to analyze the two sub-scale exhaustion and disengagement scores, to determine if there are significant ($p < .05$) differences between the two subscales.

Action Research Question 2

What recommendations do tenure-eligible/tenured faculty have to reduce the impact of job demands for themselves and their colleagues?

AQ Discussions. Inductive in vivo coding uses the terms and concepts of the participants themselves and the wish list of social and organizational resources that each RT member recommends would help decrease the influence of job demands (Saldaña, 2021). The next cycle used emotion coding to provide insight into the personal thoughts, feelings, and actions during the RT member's discussion during the RT meeting. The second coding cycle used axial coding to group similarly coded data into conceptual categories. Establishing categories and subcategories from the first cycle of coding helped identify relationships between categories and provided details about how and why they are connected (Saldaña, 2021). The details provided in the axial coding process generated themes for the next step. Once a set of themes was established, data were deductively analyzed to see if the data collected supported each theme or if more information was needed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The themes generated from participants' experiences and actions presented their perspectives and are supported by quotations and specific evidence.

Action Research Question 3

How, if at all, do tenure-eligible/tenured faculty perceive that their work-related roles changed due to the changes in higher education during the five-year period of 2019 - 2024?

Semi-Structured Interviews. Inductive in vivo coding was used for the semi-structured interview and used the terms and concepts of the participants themselves (Saldaña, 2021). The first cycle used emotion coding to provide insight into the personal thoughts, feelings, and actions during the semi-structured interviews. The second coding cycle used axial coding to

group similarly coded data into conceptual categories. Establishing categories and subcategories from the first cycle of coding identified relationships between categories and provided details about how and why they are connected (Saldaña, 2021). The details provided in the axial coding process generated themes for the next step. Once a set of themes was established, data were deductively analyzed to see if the data collected supported each theme or if more information was needed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The themes generated from participants' experiences and actions presented the perspectives and were supported by quotations and specific evidence.

Action Research Question 4

What new resources do tenure-eligible/tenured faculty report having been most helpful to them in buffering job demands while incorporating new resources?

Semi-Structured Interviews. Inductive in vivo coding was used for the semi-structured interview and used the terms and concepts of the participants themselves (Saldaña, 2021). The first cycle used emotion coding to provide insight into the personal thoughts, feelings, and actions during the semi-structured interviews. The second coding cycle used axial coding to group similarly coded data into conceptual categories. Establishing categories and subcategories from the first cycle of coding identified relationships between categories and provided details about how and why they are connected (Saldaña, 2021). The details provided in the axial coding process generated themes for the next step. Once a set of themes was established, data were deductively analyzed to see if the data collected supported each theme or if more information is needed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The themes generated from participants' experiences and actions presented the perspectives and were supported by quotations and specific evidence. The data source and data analysis can be found in Table 4.

Table 4*Data Source and Data Analysis*

AR Question	Data Sources	Data Analysis
1. To what extent do tenure-eligible/tenured faculty at BU College of Education report burnout during the five-year period of 2019 - 2024? a. To what degree do they report emotional exhaustion? b. To what degree do they report disengagement?	OLBI Demographics: Gender Rank Years in Role Teaching Load	Descriptive Statistics: Means, Standard deviation, Range, <i>t</i> -test
2. What recommendations do tenure-eligible/tenured faculty have to reduce the impact of job demands for themselves and their colleagues?	Recording of Appreciative Inquiry Discussions	Inductive in vivo coding Emotion coding Axial coding
3. How, if at all, do tenure-eligible/tenured faculty perceive that their work-related roles changed due to the changes in higher education during the five-year period of 2019 – 2024?	Semi- Structured Interview	Deductive Coding A priori: Job Demands (Workload) Job Resources (Social Support, Autonomy, Professional Development) Inductive in vivo coding Emotion coding Axial coding
4. What new resources do tenure-eligible/tenured faculty report having been most helpful to them in buffering job demands while incorporating new resources?	Semi- Structured Interview Resources Worksheet	Deductive Coding A priori: Job Demands (Workload) Job Resources (Social Support, Autonomy, Professional Development) Inductive in vivo coding Emotion coding Axial coding

Note. The data source and data analysis for each action research question. AQ = Appreciative Inquiry (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). OLBI = Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (Demerouti et al., 2001).

Role of the Researcher

Due to the interpretive nature of qualitative research, as the researcher, I was involved in the action research experience with the participants during the RT meeting and while conducting virtual one-on-one interviews (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Importantly, Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated that during the "entire qualitative research process, the researchers keep a focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue, not the meaning that the researchers bring to the research or that writers express in the literature" (p. 182). As the researcher, I was open to the participant's views and interpretations during the action research process. Working in a department within the college of education as an adjunct instructor, I am aware of the biases the connection may have had on the research results.

My experiences over the past 5 years, 2019–2024, as an adjunct instructor for the College of Education predominately focused on teaching online courses and in-person courses. Teaching in-person courses during this time, in my experience, provided more engagement between students and course material. Teaching in-person I could identify students who were paying attention and witness active discussions between students. I was able to probe into student discussions organically while walking around the classroom prompting deeper reflective thought. Teaching online synchronous courses provide the virtual classroom, a chat feature to give students a place to ask questions and discuss relevant topics, but it removed the confirmation of students actively engaging with each other during one-on-one discussions and increased students' ability to disengage through social media on their computer or phone. As I taught more online courses due to the COVID-19 pandemic I found myself not as energized to start class and felt less able to proactively engage in group discussions.

Considering my bias and reflecting on my involvement in the RT meeting and semi-structured interviews, I am aware of how these could have potentially shaped the responses from the participants (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). During the RT meeting and the interviews, I noted my observations, what I learned during the action research study, and any reactions that participants may have had. In addition, by using a reflexive journal, I reflected on how my personal experiences and background could affect this action research study's data collection and analysis, and put any experiences, beliefs, and values aside (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Each reflexive journal entry had two sections, detailing what happened and what I was feeling in section one and what I learned from the experience in section two. Finally, I currently have only had connections with faculty from my department rather than the entire College of Education faculty. The steps validating the data of this action research study assisted in demonstrating the accuracy of the data collected.

Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions

Delimitations

This study was delimited to full-time tenure-eligible/tenured faculty in a college at a research university. No adjunct faculty or non-faculty members were included. The study focused on job demands as they pertain to faculty's work-related roles and not demands from elements outside the workplace to keep the focus of data collected within the scope of the action research questions. Future research could focus on how work-related and non-work-related demands affect faculty in higher education while navigating the multiple changers in higher education of the past 5 years.

Limitations

The first limitation involved the interview process. Virtual interviews are helpful when participants can provide information in their own words from their own perceptions. However, participants may be more easily distracted during a virtual interview, which could limit their responses. Furthermore, the only participants being interviewed concerning the effectiveness of using new resources for 6 weeks are the ones who participated in the RT meeting and their perceptions may not reflect the entire faculty population. Another limitation of this study was faculty with a higher workload level may have engaged less in participating in taking the OLBI and participating for the RT meeting and semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, the only tenure-eligible/tenured faculty that volunteered to participate in the RT were all in leadership positions, who might have an increased workload compared to tenure-eligible/tenured faculty not in leadership positions. In addition, the short 6-week timeframe could have limited the type of new resources the RT participants used. Finally, the solutions the RT recommended during the resources meeting may only have a short-term effect on their job demands.

Assumptions

As the researcher, I made several assumptions about this action research study. The first assumption was the RT participants used the recommendations made during the RT meeting. In addition, I assumed the RT recommendations from the AQ discussions would relate to resources from JD-R theory and would buffer their job demands. Furthermore, I assumed that the participants in this action research study might have been subject to increased workload while navigating multiple changes in higher education over the past 5 years, 2019–2024. However, even if faculty participants were not subject to an increase in faculty workload, I assumed they would respond openly and honestly to the OLBI, resources team meeting discussions, and the

semi-structured interview questions regardless of their workload. Finally, due to the timeframe of this action research study participants in the RT and semi-structured interviews might have had other events planned that could have acted as social and organizational resources potentially buffering the impact job demands.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations included an institutional review board (IRB) application that was submitted and approved prior to conducting this study. The disclosure of the purpose of this study, considerations for the protection of data, removing participant identifiers, and methods of securely storing data was made clear to all participants in this study. Prior to participating in the resources team meeting, and semi-structured interviews, participants were first asked to sign consent forms (Appendix D) and informed that their participation was voluntary (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Triangulation and member checking with participants helped to ensure the accuracy of the qualitative findings. Finally, the RT members and key stakeholders, the dean and department chairs of the College of Education, received an executive summary of the study results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This action research study examined how resources identified from the job demands and resources theory (JD-R) could buffer the impacts of tenure-eligible/tenured faculty workload while navigating the changes in higher education over the past 5 years. The job resources, social support, autonomy, performance feedback, professional development, and participation in decision-making (Bakker et al., 2005) focused on alleviating the impact of faculty job demands from their three work-related faculty roles: teaching, research, and service. The negative relationship between job demands and resources is essential for balancing job strain and motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2011).

The three-phase action research intervention focused on the faculty members' perceptions while participating in a resource team (RT) to help buffer the effects of job demands, specifically within their three work-related roles. The findings of this action research study presented in this chapter focused on answering the four action research questions. The data sources used to provide answers to the action research questions included the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) survey, RT meeting AQ discussions, the resources worksheet, and virtual semi-structured interviews. Due to the multiple data sources, data analysis and collection was simultaneous throughout the action research study. Data analysis followed Creswell and Creswell's (2018) data analysis process and Saldaña's (2021) coding methods and techniques. The three major themes from analyzing and coding the three qualitative data sources included the importance of workspace climate, balancing time between roles, and the challenges of change.

This chapter details the quantitative data findings and the RT member participant's responses and codes from the qualitative data sources that supported the three major themes.

Action Research Question 1

To what extent do the tenured/tenure-eligible faculty at BU College of Education report burnout during the five-year period of 2019 - 2024?

a. To what degree do they report emotional exhaustion?

b. To what degree do they report disengagement?

Calculating the OLBI scores involved downloading the OLBI survey data from Qualtrics to a password protected computer. Microsoft Excel was used to total the eight items of each OLBI's subscales: emotional exhaustion and disengagement. The total from each subscale was then added together to find the total burnout score for each participant. The total OLBI cutoff score indicating an increased level of burnout is greater than or equal to 35 (Summers et al., 2020). The total score from each subscale and total burnout score was entered into IBM SPSS to perform an independent *t*-test to determine if there were significant ($p < .05$) differences between the two subscales or total burnout score and participants gender, years teaching, conducting research and service, and teaching load.

OLBI Survey

Tenure-eligible/tenured faculty participants mean OLBI score was 40.18 ($SD = 4.57$). The mean score of the sub-scale emotional exhaustion was 20.27 ($SD = 2.28$) and the mean score for the sub-scale disengagement was 19.90 ($SD = 2.80$). Of the 11 participants who took the OLBI, 10 scored higher than the increased level of burnout cutoff score indicating an increased level of disengagement and/or emotional exhaustion impacting participant's level of motivation and/or productivity. Members of the RT total OLBI mean score was 41.75 ($SD = 3.30$), the mean

score for the sub-scale emotional exhaustion was 21.25 ($SD = .95$), and the mean score for the subscale disengagement was 20.5 ($SD = 2.88$; see Table 5).

Table 5

OLBI Subscale and Total Scores

Participant	Exhaustion Subscale Score	Disengagement Subscale Score	Total OLBI Score
1	16	15	31
2	20	19	39
3	19	21	40
4	23	21	44
5	20	21	41
6	22	20	42
7	22	24	46
8	20	17	37
9	23	24	47
10	17	20	37
11	21	17	38
Total Mean	20.27	19.90	40.18
Total SD	2.28	2.80	4.57

Note. Each participants subscale scores and total score. Bold and Italic = Resources Team Member Scores. OLBI = Oldenburg Burnout Inventory.

OLBI participant demographic characteristics reflected 55% female ($n = 6$), 36% male ($n = 5$), and 9% unreported ($n = 1$). Female participant's total OLBI mean score was 40.83 and male participants was 41.5. Refer to Table 6 for a full summary of demographic characteristics.

Table 6*Demographic Characteristics of OLBI Participants*

Demographic Characteristics			Disengagement Score		Emotional Exhaustion Score		Total OLBI Score	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gender								
Unknown	1	9	16.00	0.00	15.00	0.00	31.00	0.00
Female	6	55	20.16	2.32	20.66	2.16	40.83	3.76
Male	4	36	20.75	2.87	20.75	1.70	41.50	3.87
Rank								
Associate Professor	5	45	20.40	2.60	21.20	1.64	41.60	3.97
Professor	6	55	19.50	3.14	19.50	2.58	39.00	5.05
Years in role								
4-6 Years	2	18	20.00	.000	19.50	3.53	39.50	3.53
7-10 Years	3	27	21.33	2.51	22.00	1.73	43.33	4.04
10+ Years	6	55	19.16	3.37	19.66	2.06	38.83	4.95
Teaching Load								
1/1	6	55	19.00	3.28	20.83	2.63	39.83	5.70
2/2	5	45	21.00	1.87	19.60	1.81	40.60	3.36

Note. No assistant professors participated in the study. OLBI = Oldenburg Burnout Inventory.

The independent *t*-test found no significant difference between participants' gender and total OLBI score, $t(8) = .271, p < .05$. No significant difference was found between participants rank, associate professor and professor, and total OLBI score $t(9) = .932, p < .05$. No significant difference of participants years in role and total OLBI score was found between 4–6-and 7–10 years, $t(3) = 1.082, p < .05$; 7-10 and 10+ years $t(7) = 1.350, p < .05$; or 4-6 and 10+ years in role $t(6) = .172, p < .05$. Finally, no significant difference was found between teaching load (1/1 or 2/2) and total OLBI score, $t(9) = .263, p < .05$. Refer to Table 7 for the independent *t*-test results for each subscale and total OLBI scores.

Table 7*Independent t-test of Subscales and Total OLBI Scores*

Demographic Characteristics	Disengagement Subscale		Emotional Exhaustion Subscale		Total OLBI Score	
	<i>t</i>	95% <i>CI</i>	<i>t</i>	95% <i>CI</i>	<i>t</i>	95% <i>CI</i>
Gender						
Female	.356	-4.36 - 3.19	.064	-3.06 - 2.89	.271	-6.33 - 4.99
Male						
Rank						
Associate Professor	.509	-3.09 - 4.89	1.26	-1.33 - 4.73	.932	-3.71 - 8.91
Professor						
Years in role						
4-6 Years	.711 [^]	-7.30 - 4.63	1.03 [^]	-9.71 - 4.71	1.08 [^]	-15.10 - 7.43
7-10 Years	.289 ^{**}	-3.10 - 7.43	1.67 ^{**}	-9.70 - 5.63	1.35 ^{**}	-3.38 - 12.38
10+ Years	.332 ^{**}	-5.31 - 6.98	.086 ^{**}	-4.91 - 4.57	.172 ^{**}	-8.82 - 10.15
Teaching Load						
1/1	1.202	-5.76 - 1.76	.882	-1.93 - 4.39	.263	-7.35 - 5.81
2/2						

Note. *t*-test group sets [^] paired with 7-10 years. *t*-test group sets ^{**} paired with 10+ years. OLBI = Oldenburg Burnout Inventory.

Action Research Question 2

What recommendations do tenure-eligible/tenured faculty have to reduce the impact of job demands for themselves and their colleagues?

Discussions based on the four AQ questions (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010) during the 2-hour RT meeting provided the RT members time to reflect on positive experiences within their department, how they use their skills within their three work roles and how they would heighten the health and vitality of the university. The following responses represent the RT member's recommendations during the AQ discussions: the importance of focusing on accomplishments, providing motivation to keep working through obstacles and challenging moments, University expectations, and workspace climate. The challenging moments discussed

related to the administrator's expectations of the task's faculty have within their work-related roles.

AQ Discussion Responses Regarding the Importance of Focusing on Accomplishments. Both AQ discussion questions one and two prompted the RT members to think about when they were most engaged, and proud of their work, what they value about themselves and the work they do, and the unique skills they bring to their program, department, and the College as a whole. Three of four RT members reported the importance of their mindset, how meeting a work-related goal provides the feeling of accomplishment.

- “When you get an article out for review and accepted, the feeling of validation and accomplishment is just really great.”
- “There are times when you just keep doing something, it's not that the work is hard necessarily, what's hard is making yourself continue doing it when your mind just wants to quit and do something else.”

The importance of RT members focusing on their feelings of validation and accomplishment helped them to achieve work goals, increase their level of engagement to complete a work-related task and how they felt about the work they do. Even when work-related tasks were difficult to start due to a lack of motivation, once the work task was started and completed, it provided members the feeling of accomplishment. The increase of motivation that RT member participants felt could have shifted their interactive effects discussed in Chapter 2. The mindset and the feeling of accomplishment felt by RT members could have increased their motivation, moving them from a high strain, low motivation quadrant to an average strain, high motivation quadrant. The quadrant and level of motivation and strain the RT member participant felt is dependent on their level of strain and motivation prior to completing the work task.

AQ Discussion Responses Regarding the Feeling of Validation. Two of the four RT members discussed how validation from students and publishing in highly valued journals provided the feeling of validation as well. This type of feedback helped them to continue to push past challenges.

- What I appreciate most as a faculty member is knowing my work has an impact with students. When a student comes to me after class and tells me how wonderful the class is or a student who 5 years later comes back and tells me how impactful my work with them was, that's what really moves and drives me.
- “I published in the highest journal and that's that validation that yes, I know what I'm doing is important to others out there.”

AQ Discussion Responses Regarding University Expectations. Themes emerged from the RT's discussions in response to question three regarding support from the university to be at their best. Codes from three of four RT member's discussions concerned how the university or college seems to be fixed on making money and is losing sight of the core mission of the university. In addition, RT member participants who were in administrative positions discussed the change at the university regarding the increase of marketing and recruiting pressure limits their time to spend on their work.

- “The job of the university has been pushed back down to faculty, so marketing, recruitment, all these barriers that then rob you of that time and space to sit and be curious.”
- “I think we need to go back to that core and remind ourselves of the mission of what we do.”

- Our job is to facilitate the growth and development of others, where, as educators that's what we do. And I think some of the administrators forget they're not in the trenches. You know what's happening in the classrooms and how difficult it is to teach online when you have 40 or 60 students in there.

The increased amount of time that RT member participants spend on their administration duties, recruiting and marketing, to meet the expectations of executive leaders, was perceived to reduce the time for their teaching, research, service roles. The RT members expressed the core mission of being a faculty member is lost with the increase of their administrative duties. The recent decrease in enrollment numbers support the RT members responses about the recent shift of increasing pressure on student recruitment.

AQ Discussion Responses Regarding Workspace Climate. Question four of the AQ discussion questions focused on heightening the health and vitality of the university. All four RT members reported that finding common interests with colleagues inspired collaborative research and that the energy of being part of a team was important to their motivation.

- “If we have a culture of joint work and support, it would go a long way. It would be better than any strategies we could develop to try to address specific issues.”
- “The university is a powerful idea, it’s a space to be curious and to learn, to sit, talk and read, and to nurture one another’s curiosity and desire to learn.”
- “My focus is on how we see each other but also how we interact with each other and regard each other.”
- “I found it quite helpful when we had the meetings with the Dean and having someone at the table who would force me to think a lot deeper than I naturally think.”

- “Some faculty unfortunately who have left and gone other places with that great energy that was in your department for a while.”

The positive energy the RT member participants discussed between them and their faculty member colleagues prior to the COVID-19 pandemic was said to provide a collaborative culture within the college and/or department they worked in. That culture and energy provided them an increase in motivation to support and respect each other in sharing diverse ideas and to help solve difficult issues. All four of the RT member participants discussed how the positive energy and culture within their departments was negatively impacted due remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic. Reestablishing that positive energy and culture has been difficult due to faculty turnover.

Summary. The discussion during the RT meeting emphasized the different methods in helping reduce the impact of the RT member’s job demands and increased the climate in their department and/or College. In particular, the importance of focusing on the positive influence the RT member’s work has on students and what their research provides to the community. Three of four RT members reflected on how a mindset of just keep going, you got this, during challenging tasks or times of high stress can help motivate them to continue. Three of the four RT members reflected on how interactions and the relationships between faculty are important in accomplishing goals and helping solve difficult obstacles. In addition, two out of the four RT members reflected on how finding common interests with colleagues can help inspire collaborative research and how collaboration with colleagues can help mitigate their own weaknesses.

One of the main challenges discussed during the RT meeting focused on administrators losing sight of the core reason for universities, which RT participants who were in administrative

roles felt was due to the increase in pressure focused on recruitment and marketing. Three of the four RT members reflected that their job as educators is lost when they are constantly tasked to recruit students and how difficult it is to teach online when they have a large number of students in the course. Three of four RT members discussed how the added pressures of recruiting students to increase enrollment robs faculty of time they have to focus on research, teaching, or building relationships within their departments. The emotions felt by RT member participants during the RT meeting discussions included: safe, encouragement, valued, appreciated, supported, recognized, disappointed, and unsupported. Table 8 provides the emerging themes that supported Action Research Question 2.

Table 8

Themes and Number of Participants for Action Research Question 2

Emerging Theme	Participants*
Focusing on Accomplishments	3
Feeling of Validation	2
University Expectations	3
Workspace Climate	4

Note. Emerging themes from the RT discussion in relation to the appreciative inquiry questions.
**n* = 4

Action Research Question 3

How, if at all, do tenure-eligible/tenured faculty perceive that their work-related roles changed due to the changes in higher education during the five-year period of 2019 – 2024?

The semi-structured interview the RT members participated in after introducing new job resources into their daily work tasks for 6 weeks, provided information on if their three work-related roles changed due to the multiple changes in higher education. Responses to Interview Questions 1–6 provided the perceptions of member’s roles including balancing time between all three roles (teaching, research, and service), the shift in teaching modalities, publishing research, the service role, and administrative tasks focused on enrollment. Emotion codes that emerged from Questions 1 – 6 included, inefficient, unsupported, disengaged, and stressed.

Semi-Structured Interview Response Regarding Balancing Time Between Roles. The workload between the RT’s three roles in addition to their administrative roles has created an imbalance of time spent on each role. Each of the four RT members expressed difficulty and frustrations in establishing some balance of time. To balance time between their three work roles, deadlines of tasks may get delayed. Even with the reduced load that the administration of the college offers department chairs and program directors, the workload of those positions has consumed the time for their three roles.

- “I think the balance starts to become out of whack which can create these ‘what’s the point’ moments.”
- “I don’t take a lunch, and I work weekends often, and I’m behind.”
- “It keeps me surprisingly busy, all the things I do administratively with the program director role.”

The difficulty and frustrations felt by RT members in graduate program directors or department chair roles in balancing their time between their administrative role and their teaching, research, and service roles created feelings of disengagement and exhaustion. Disengagement from their work roles and exhaustion from their administrative work demands

can increase their work-related strain. When RT members work-related strain is increased it decreases the RT member participant's motivation for their work-related tasks (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Semi-Structured Interview Response Regarding the Shift in Teaching Methods.

Question four of the semi-structured interviews focused on how RT members' teaching role has changed if at all, due to the multiple changes in higher education. Three of the four RT members discussed how the transition to online due to the COVID-19 pandemic was not as stressful due to the online learning platform that was currently setup with the university.

- "That transition was actually very smooth."
- "We were already in it, and I am so thankful that we had that 1 semester head start."
- "We were well positioned to navigate that change and in a lot of ways we just kept doing what we were doing."

Discussion Concerning Online Courses Creating More Pressure. The RT also highlighted that the shift to teaching online courses brought additional pressure. Two out of the four RT members discussed how distance learning in graduate education removes the face-to-face requirement creating challenges to connect with students.

- When you're face-to-face with people that you've had a video conference relationship with, the face-to-face interaction really strengthens that relationship, you already know them. Then when you go back to the online interaction, it's sustaining. Because of COVID, that part went away, and we haven't reintroduced it. And I find it exhausting as I think about moving into the fall, the thought of another semester of 100% video interactions with people is really demotivating. I feel disconnected from my students in a more intense way [than] ever.

One RT member of four highlighted how in-person and distance learning are causing complications with hiring faculty within the department due to executive leaders requesting all faculty be in-person but administrators refusing to amend the hiring policy to reflect that requirement.

- “We’re getting a lot more support in some way and a lot more pressure in other ways to do distance learning in a certain way. So that we’re in a moment, a very tense moment.”

Semi-Structured Interview Response about the Disruption of Research. The discussions about how research has been affected due to the multiple changes in higher education varied between the RT members. One of four RT members commented that the amount of research they publish has not changed due to sticking to their goals and timeline to meet deadlines. However, the guidelines on using Artificial Intelligence to the advantage of increasing research productivity is not clear at the university, and that has possibly affected the time it takes to publish articles.

- “I’m not sure that it has. I’ve been in the game a long time. I have a pretty robust research agenda that I kind of stick with.”
- The large language Artificial Intelligence models that allow you to write things quite quickly we are seeing scholars generate journal articles in lightning speed. In a lot of ways, I feel like a dinosaur that I’m still doing two a year.

Two of four RT members highlighted that their other work role tasks and time constraints from switching courses to fully online due to the pandemic pull time away from their research role. One RT member highlighted the recent shift to an R1 university, indicating very high

research activity (Carnegie Foundation, 2021), has affected the balance between research and teaching, with more focus needed for research.

- “I would say research tends to suffer most.”
- “You get pinched for time and it’s just too easy, especially for a full professor, to let the research be put that on the back burner for a little bit.”
- Teaching is one of the things that attracted me to the university, now 24 years later we’re R1, we’re now very much a research institution. The balance for me is not ideal because I like the teaching. The research is OK, but I don’t get as much reward, I suppose, from the research as I do from the teaching.

The shift to an R1 university can change the balance between faculty’s teaching and research roles to a heavier research focus to maintain the university’s research status ranking. This shift puts more pressure to maintain or increase the amount of research each faculty member publishes. However, three of the four RT member participants were fully tenured professors, which can reduce the pressure to publish more research, as tenure-eligible professors need to stay competitive to possibly receive tenure.

Semi-Structured Interview Response Regarding the Service Role. The RT members were asked about how their service role has changed due to the multiple changes in higher education. The themes that emerged from coding their responses included two of four RT members discussed how the conflict of time between teaching and research provides less for service and the time spent on some service is not of value and does not provide a feeling of accomplishment as it once did.

- “The greatest gift we can give our faculty for research is to give them more time, and the best way to do that is to reduce their service.”

- I sat on committees where we work, we hammer out something over a semester, and a new person comes into an administrative position, and they get rid of it. We were doing this for a semester, for a year and you say I want to do this, and you throw it away.

One RT member described how the same people from certain demographics are repeatedly being asked to do service and the need for increased attention on service audits to ensure each faculty member's service load is equal throughout the department and not solely faculty of color and/or female faculty.

- “We see the same people doing the same service. We see them being mostly women or persons of color being tapped over and over again.”

When faculty who identify as female and/or faculty of color are selected repeatedly for certain service tasks, it reduces the time they have for their research or teaching roles.

Semi-Structured Interview Response Regarding the Pressures of Enrollment. During all four RT members' discussions regarding how their three work roles have changed in the past 5 years, three of four RT members, all of which are in administrative positions, mentioned the shift in accountability and reporting around recruitment has increased enrollment pressures. Three RT members highlighted that they are under weekly pressure to recruit students, and their time allotted for each work role has decreased due to the focus on recruitment and growth. Most of their time is spent on finding new ways to market and attract new students to boost enrollment numbers. Two of the three RT members discussed their difference of opinion on the enrollment cliff. Both agreed however, the method on how the university is choosing to avoid the cliff is too heavy of a push for enrollment.

- The way BU has chosen to combat the enrollment cliff is to really emphasize graduate education and work hard bringing graduate students. I have felt additional pressure to recruit more graduate students. I definitely have felt that pressure in every meeting. We get emails all the time about enrollment issues. That's because it all boils down to the budget issues.
- "Basically, your job is to get on the phone and call these students."
- "My experience of it has been a heavy and non-strategic push for enrollment."
- We are getting a ton of pressure about enrollments. But if I hear the term "enrollment cliff" it just does not apply to our market. We're heavily into distance. Those declining numbers to some degree, yes, in the undergraduates. But it's not a cliff and it probably has to do with what we're doing here, frankly. We are under weekly pressure for enrollment. It's been very frustrating.

Summary. The RT member participants discussed how their work-roles have changed due to the changes in higher education during the five-year period of 2019 – 2024. Their perceptions of the changes included the recent shift regarding the increased pressure on recruitment due to low enrollment numbers, the introduction of artificial intelligence, and the lasting effect the transition to total online due to the COVID-19 pandemic had to the climate and cultures within their departments. However, the transition to total online courses due to the COVID-19 pandemic had little effect on all four RT members' teaching role. The RT members discussed the online learning platform that was currently setup with the College of Education gave them the necessary tools and information to aid in the transition. One challenge the COVID-19 pandemic did have on two of four RT members was the removal of the face-to-face

time that faculty have with students. The thought of more semesters of 100% online created a feeling of demotivation and disconnection in the relationship between faculty and students. The responses about the effects of the changes in higher education have had on research, two of four RT members highlighted that they have less time to spend on research. The two reasons included the increase of other work role tasks and transitioning courses fully online due to the pandemic. The RT members discussion on their service role varied. Two of four RT members felt pressure to serve on certain committees but feel some of the committees are a waste of their limited amount of time. Three of four RT members emphasized the pressure from administrators to recruit more students. The reasons for recruitment were to grow programs even when they are at capacity and to help alleviate the budget issues within the university. Table 9 provides the emerging themes that supported Action Research Question 3.

Table 9

Themes and Number of Participants for Action Research Question 3

Emerging Theme	Participants*
Difficult Balancing Time Between Roles	4
Shift to Teaching Methods	3
Online Courses Creating More Pressure	2
Disruption of Research	2
Less Time for Service	2
The Pressures of Enrollment	3

Note. Emerging themes from the RT discussion in relation to semi-structured interview question 1–6.

* $n = 4$

Action Research Question 4

What new resources do tenure-eligible/tenured faculty report having been most helpful to them in buffering job demands while incorporating new resources?

Semi-Structured Interview Questions 7–10 provided information on the RT member's experiences with available university resources prior to the 6 weeks, when they felt an increase of job demands and what resources (i.e., social support, autonomy, professional development, participation in decision making, or professional feedback) they used to buffer the impact of the demands while using new job resources during the 6 weeks. Members of the RT were able to reflect on the prior 6 weeks using the resources worksheet. After an initial In Vivo coding, emotional coding, and a cycle of axial coding themes emerged from Questions 7–10 of the semi-structured interviews and the resources worksheet including a limit in resources, an abundance of tasks, barely hanging on, creating opportunities, and taking a step forward. Emotion codes that emerged from Questions 7–10 of the semi-structured interviews included: unheard, exhausted, disconnected, pressured, demotivated, disengaged, stressed, and inefficient.

Limited Resources. Prior to participating in this study and using new job resources, RT members discussed the limited use of the available resources the university offers. Three of four RT members disclosed they typically didn't use any resources during times of stress due their work. Venting to a family member during times of stress or strain was mentioned by one of four RT members disclosing they have not had the opportunity to develop the level of trust with co-workers due to working remote during COVID-19.

- “The short answer I'm going to say is no.”
- “This is something I've really reflected on and as I was taking notes on the different events and situations, I think there are very limited resources.”

- “I just haven't had time to build those kinds of relationships where I have somebody that I'm close enough to share that way.”
- Well, it's interesting because I've been keeping this, this little log of different things and we're supposed to, when we get frustrated, reach out. But that's when you have less time and things. But as I was writing this out or doing notes and things, there's a lot out there that the university does provide. It's a matter of taking advantage of those things. And realizing that they exist, and in developing those relationships and connections.

The resources the RT members did use prior to participating in the study were more personal resources, for example exercising and not the available university resources. When RT member participants took time to investigate available university resources, they had mixed feelings about how effective they would be for themselves, with one member stating there were limited resources and another stating there were a lot available to participate in. One of four RT members shared while feeling stuck or overwhelmed with work they will walk around, possibly talk to someone, do wall-sits or jumping jacks.

- I'll just say like I'm overwhelmed, I'm feeling stuck. And so, I'll just get up out of my chair and go do that. And I have fewer of those episodes if I put in a good workout before. But that doesn't necessarily fit our lifestyle in terms of you have to do that quite early or quite late.

Due to the increase in workload in administrative tasks in addition to their teaching, research, and service roles one RT member found it difficult to fit in an effective workout routine.

An Abundance of Tasks. When discussing their daily workload three of four RT members mentioned they felt overwhelmed, exhausted, and frustrated by the number of daily

tasks. While coding the resources work sheet, RT members shared when they were dealing with the number of daily tasks, they felt they were failing and drowning. The feeling of being overwhelmed resulted from emailed surveys from administrators regarding university planning, recruitment of students, and tasks piling up due to administrators not responding to emails.

- “I sent my feedback and an idea that I think might work better and I still haven't heard back from her, which was frustrating.”
- The things that we're asked to do in terms of service are sort of more mandated and autocratic than it is from your deep knowledge of your program area. Instead, these sort of uniform, “we need a 10% increase,” without respect to the capacity of programs. We're fortunate we have good enrollment, but we really can't produce more. It stretches our capacity beyond to a breaking point while other programs are underperforming.
- “Very frustrated! I just wanted to communicate!”
- “So, then I took over the graduate program director role with no notice and just a ton of loose ends.”
- You get something they're like ‘ohh you need to fill out a master plan survey as well.’ What the fuck is that? Where did it come from? So just add it on to the list, but it's due in 2 days.
- We've gotten all fixated on enrollment. Where, if the real goal is the growth and learning of others and building a career that you can support a family on or the kind of intellectual satisfaction in doing important or interesting things. That's the deeper goal. That goal gets deflected for generating enrollment like the machinery of higher Ed.

The RT member's shared that last minute tasks in addition to their daily tasks, the inability to communicate through email due to other administrators not responding, increased their work-related stress and frustration. In addition, RT members discussed how the goal of higher education to educate and help students grow or stimulate faculty and student's intellect, is put aside when faculty find less time to work on research or with students, due to more of their time is spent focusing on administrative tasks such as recruiting.

Three of four RT members explained how ambiguous standards and guidelines concerning their requirements for their annual research evaluation were demotivating and unrewarding and the evaluation merit ratings for their research lack consistency.

- For my annual evaluation, while there are two book chapters, I was encouraged to publish more in top tier journals. Because often book chapters are seen as second, they are less valuable than journal articles. It doesn't really matter, but it's the tone.
- "I'm saying like, look, I'm not hung up on me in this situation. I just want clear [research] standards.
- "But you cannot give faculty these ambiguous standards. I don't know how we're expected to function as professionals."

Creating Opportunities. Two of four RT members while using new resources for 6 weeks, used the job resource participation in decision making by creating opportunities for other faculty to be involved in the decision-making process. The two RT members discussed the feeling of satisfaction after using the job resource.

- I was thinking how even if I don't have those resources to make my job easier, if I can create those authentic opportunities for the new faculty to be involved in decision making, that ultimately will make my job easier.

- “So now they're all participating in the culture building as an active participant in in this decision making. We're already jointly making decisions, but we need to be jointly active, engaging with each other.”

Two of four RT members shared the lack of a social space within the building for faculty to sit and share ideas or support one another. One of the two RT members had the opportunity as a department chair to proactively create that space for her colleagues.

- I ordered four chairs and a coffee table and we're going to have a place where you can sit down, and they could take an autonomous moment or have a cup of coffee with a colleague and not lose the 15 minutes to go across campus and come back. You know, like, here is a comfortable chair, here is a place to put down your cup, sit down and have a conversation.

Taking a Step Forward. All four RT members discussed how they used new resources throughout the 6 weeks that gave them moments of appreciation, joy, and productivity. The resources that the RT members used were professional development by attending webinars and seminars on campus, autonomy by focusing on work that promotes the feeling of accomplishment, and co-worker support by leaders supporting research presentations.

- “Fascinated. The Webinar was excellent and opened my eyes to embracing Artificial Intelligence. I used Chat GPT for the first time and was able to generate surveys in seconds.”
- “One instance where I was just feeling overwhelmed and I said OK, go back to what sparks joy. I took several hours, and I just did data analysis. ‘Cause for me, that sparks joy.”

- So, there's one [job resource, co-worker support] that, actually, I'm very, very appreciative of and that worked out really well. The dean and department chair were very supportive, and they both together jointly sponsored the research keynote presentation. People loved the keynote.

It is important to note that using job resources may not always reduce job stress or provide moments of motivation or validation. One RT member highlighted how co-worker support did not provide the motivation or support.

- “And I thought a lot about this, like I'd reached out to my department chair for support, and he was generically supportive, but not instrumentally supportive. Like there was nothing he could do other than go ‘good job’.”

Two of four RT members discussed why they could not use autonomy some days due to other administration tasks decreasing their time to be productive to accomplish their work-related goals. When there was time to use autonomy for their work-related roles, even if it felt overwhelming to think of doing it within their busy schedule, they felt satisfied after completing some work.

- “I'm not doing autonomy because I don't have time for autonomy.”
- “I often found that I've got plenty of autonomy, but very little infrastructure to utilize that autonomy in productive ways”
- “I'm going to give myself this moment to be in flow. It was an escape for me.”

During the discussions of the semi-structured interview regarding job resources three of four RT members shared how using the resources worksheet helped them understand how job resources are a way to relieve stress and remotivate themselves. They found that taking a moment to reflect

on what they were feeling and choosing their own job resource provided a path to take a step forward and help themselves.

- When I first started trying to capture notes, I thought, ‘Wow.’ I mean, I can capture the event, but I'm not sure I can explain how the new resource was used. But as soon as I kind of turned it on its head, I was like, ‘OK, it's a really interesting reflective device.’ And it's funny because it resonated with me because I create things like this for my students all the time.
- I think the new thing is consciously thinking about it as a resource versus just an action, a reaction. Instead of saying and especially writing it down, you're like I'm in a moment and I cannot function. I know this will pass. What can I do to get myself back to productivity is always what I want to do. How can I get myself back to productivity? And so, I can pick one of these things and I remember one day sitting there and saying, ‘OK, I wrote the four [job resources] at the top of the resources worksheet so I can pick.’ I was like, OK, so what are you gonna do right now?

Summary. The resources the RT members used during the 6 weeks provided moments of motivation, support, or reduction in workload while feeling overwhelmed, exhausted, or stressed. Each RT member mentioned they were overwhelmed, exhausted, or frustrated by the number of tasks of their three roles. Three of four RT members explained how ambiguous standards and unclear guidelines within the university policy concerning their requirements for research were demotivating and unrewarding. The task that consumed most of three of the four RT members’ time was the recruitment of students to increase enrollment numbers.

The resources that the RT members used during the 6 weeks were professional development by attending webinars and seminars on campus, autonomy by focusing on work

that promotes accomplishing a work-related goal, professional feedback from a supervisor, and co-worker support by leaders supporting research presentations. To reduce their own workload two of four RT members created opportunities for other faculty to be involved in the decision-making process increasing collaboration within their department. To increase the feeling of accomplishment and relieve stress there were some moments when RT members preferred autonomy to work on research providing the feeling of productivity. However, two of four RT members discussed they could not use autonomy to self-govern their time on accomplishing work-related goals some days due an increase of administration tasks. Three RT members shared how incorporating new resources and the resources worksheet helped them understand how job resources are a way to relieve stress and motivate themselves to accomplish goals or daily work-related tasks. Table 10 provides the emerging themes that supported Action Research Question 4.

Table 10*Themes and Number of Participants for Action Research Question 4*

Emerging Theme	Participants*
Limited Resources	3 of 4
Abundance of tasks	3 of 4
Most time spent recruiting for enrollment	3 of 4
Ambiguous standards and guidelines concerning research	3 of 4
Creating opportunities	2 of 4
Participation in decision making for other faculty	2 of 4
Lack of a social space	2 of 4
Taking a step forward	4 of 4
Lack of time for autonomy	2 of 4
Used new resources during 6 weeks	4 of 4
Job Resources are a way to relieve stress and remotivate themselves	3 of 4

Note. Emerging themes from the RT discussion in relation to semi-structured interview question 7 - 10.

**n* = 4

Summary of Findings

There were five major findings from this action research study. One was that participating tenure-eligible/tenured faculty who took the OLBI survey presented increased levels of burnout. Second, members of the RT expressed the importance of their workspace culture and the lasting impact of remote work from the COVID-19 pandemic and the increase in faculty turnover had on their workspace culture. Third, there is a need to balance work-related time between the faculty's three roles: teaching, research, and service and administration roles. The fourth finding focused on how the challenges that the changes over the past 5 years, 2019–2024 have affected four full-time faculty members. Finally, I found that job resources, social

support, professional feedback, professional development, and autonomy can provide motivation and help buffer the effects of full-time tenure-eligible/tenured faculty's work-related demands. It is important to state that my findings were based off perceptions and discussions from interview questions from only four full-time tenure-eligible/tenured faculty members. In addition, three out of the four of the RT member participants were in administrative roles, which could have increased their workload compared to full-time tenure-eligible/tenured faculty not in administrative roles.

I found that the 11 full-time tenure-eligible/tenured faculty who volunteered to take the OLBI survey scored higher ($M = 40.18$) than the total cut-off score (≥ 35) for the OLBI indicating an increased level of burnout. There was no significant difference between any participant demographic information and total burnout score. The RT meeting, the resources worksheet, and the semi-structured interviews provided data from the RT members ($n = 4$) that was coded and themed revealing the potential causes for the increased risk of burnout.

The first qualitative data source informed Action Research Question 2, using the RT member's recommendations from the four AQ question discussions (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010) during the 2-hour RT meeting. The focus of the discussions during the meeting included time to reflect on positive experiences within their department, how they use their skills within their three work roles, and how they would heighten the health and vitality of the university. The AQ discussions indicated the importance of focusing on accomplishments to help stay motivated, workspace climate, and motivation to keep working through obstacles and challenging moments. The challenging moments discussed related to the administrator's expectations of the task's faculty have within their work-related roles and the pressure from administrators to recruit more traditional and non-traditional students to increase enrollment numbers. The increase in pressure

from administrators reduced the time RT member participants spent as educators and increased their time spent on their administrative roles. In addition, all four RT members expressed difficulty and frustrations in establishing some balance of time devoted to their three work-related roles. This was mostly related to three of the four members experiencing an increase in workload within their administrative role due to increased recruitment pressure due to the decline in enrollment numbers. If the RT members do find a way to balance time between their three work roles it is because deadlines of other tasks may get delayed, or they spent less time on another role.

The RT member's responses to Questions 1–6 of the semi-structured interviews informed Action Research Question 3 highlighting how the changes over the 5-year period 2019–2024 have impacted them. The RT members discussed their teaching role was not significantly affected due to the COVID-19 transition of moving classes fully online. They highlighted the university's online learning platform that was currently setup with the College of Education gave them the necessary tools and information to aid in the transition. Nevertheless, one challenge the COVID-19 pandemic did have on two members was the removal of the face-to-face time that faculty have with students. The removal of face-to-face time, the two RT members shared, creates a disconnection between them and their students.

The RT member's responses regarding how their research role has changed varied among participants. One of four members commented that their research has not changed, however, the guidelines and policies on using artificial intelligence to the advantage of increasing research productivity is not clear at the university. By adding clearer language on artificial intelligence to the university's research policy could reduce the ambiguity of using artificial intelligence to support research productivity. Another theme that emerged from two of four RT members was

their other work role tasks and time constraints from switching courses fully online due to the pandemic pulled time away from their research role. The increased workload that preparing and teaching courses online required, provided less time for other RT member's work roles. The RT members' discussion on their service role varied as well. Two RT members felt pressure to serve on certain committees but felt some of the committees are a waste of their limited amount of time. Furthermore, the theme of enrollment emerged with emphasis from three RT members highlighting the pressure from administrators to recruit more students takes away time allotted for their service role. The reasons given for the pressure for recruitment were to grow programs regardless of the capacity of the program and to help alleviate budget issues.

The RT member's responses to Questions 7–10 of the semi-structured interviews and the resources worksheet informed Action Research Question 4 detailing how they used job resources to potentially buffer the impacts they previously discussed. The resources that the RT members perceived to buffer their job demands were professional development by attending webinars and seminars on campus, autonomy by focusing on work that promotes accomplishment, and support from colleagues and leaders supporting research presentations. The themes about the RT members reducing their own workload, two RT members created opportunities for other faculty to be involved in the decision-making process increasing collaboration within their department. RT members preferred autonomy to work on research to increase the feeling of accomplishment and relieve stress. A theme from the last semi-structured interview question emerged from three of four RT members sharing how job resources and resources worksheet helped them understand how job resources are a way to relieve stress and remotivate themselves to accomplish goals or daily work-related tasks. Table 11 provides the job resources the RT member participants used and how often during the 6 weeks.

Table 11

Job Resources Used During 6 Weeks

Job Resource	<i>f</i>
Autonomy	9
Participate in Decision Making	2
Professional Development	8
Professional Feedback	4
Social Support	9

Note. RT members had 30 working days during the 6 weeks to use job resources.

The themes discussed in this chapter will be categorized into three major themes, the importance of workspace climate, balancing time between roles, and the challenges of change, in Chapter 5 to provide recommendations for practice and supported with relevant literature. In addition, implications for policy will be discussed in relation to the recommendations of practice. Finally, a summary detailing the direction for future research to expand on the findings of this action research study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding balance between tenure-eligible/tenured faculty's three work roles is a difficult task even when faculty devote late nights, early mornings, and weekends to finish work-related tasks. The impact from tenure-eligible/tenured faculty's work role demands could be reduced by using resources that can help in achieving work goals (Bakker et al., 2004). This chapter presents the major findings discussed in Chapter 4, categorizes them into three major themes, and associates them with relevant literature. The three major themes are the importance of workspace climate, balancing time between roles, and the challenges of change. In addition, this chapter provides recommendations for practice and implications for policy regarding tenure-eligible/tenured faculty's three work roles. The conclusion of the chapter provides directions for future research focusing on reducing the impact of faculty workload.

In this action research study, I examined how resources identified from the job demands and resources theory (JD-R) could buffer the impacts of faculty workload while navigating the changes in higher education over the past 5 years. The resources team (RT) member participants introduced new job resources for 6 weeks and recorded their experiences on their resources worksheet. The resources worksheet provided an in-depth reflection of the RT members' perceptions and experiences regarding their three work roles and the impact of the multiple changes in higher education. The data sources that informed the action research questions included the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) survey, RT meeting Appreciative Inquiry (AQ) discussions, the resources worksheet, and virtual semi-structured interviews.

Summary of Major Findings

The Importance of Workspace Climate

The recommendations that the RT members had to potentially reduce the impact of their job demands indicated the importance of workspace climate and motivation to keep working through obstacles and challenging moments. The obstacles and challenges the RT members reported to face daily relate to the changes in higher education over the 5-year period 2019–2024 (Dewey et al., 2023; Muscanell, 2023; Pope-Ruark, 2023). To help overcome challenges and obstacles, RT members reflected on how interactions and the relationships between faculty are important in accomplishing goals and more powerful than developing strategies to solve specific issues. This supports what Mudrak et al. (2018) found on positive social environments providing support through an increase in work demands. In addition, members of the RT reflected on how the job resource social support provides opportunities to find common interests with colleagues and helps inspire collaboration through research. Furthermore, members found collaboration with colleagues can help mitigate their own weaknesses. Not only can collaboration support faculty work (Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2012), but it has also provided an increase in faculty's perceptions of their quality of life which can directly affect faculty's productivity (Alves et al., 2019). Faculty's level of productivity affects the institutions graduation rates, research activity, student retention, community engagement, and level of motivation (Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2012).

Members of the RT discussed the job resource of professional feedback when students mention how impactful their class was or how much they enjoyed working together on research, provided a feeling of accomplishment and motivation compelling them to continue their work. This connection is consistent with what Dewey et al. (2023) found concerning faculty who are

increasingly motivated by intellectual engagement like teaching. However, two of four members expressed how demotivating the thought of teaching graduate students 100% online is and how it creates a strong disconnection in the relationship with students which was easier to develop and maintain prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Another unmotivating challenge members of the RT shared involved the struggle of balancing their time between their three roles due to recent increases in their workload.

Balancing Time Between Roles

Faculty are finding it more difficult to allocate time to balance the workload of their three work roles (Griffith & Altinay, 2020). To find time to complete their work, RT members discussed working 12-hour days and weekends and still felt as though they were behind. Some faculty might find this level of work enjoyable, their dedication to their work admirable, however treating this level of work engagement as normal, typically is not sustainable (Griffith & Altinay, 2020; Pope-Ruark, 2023). Members of the RT shared the number of daily work tasks were overwhelming and created the feelings of exhaustion and frustration. These feelings that the members shared stem from high workload and pressure representing job demands (Bakker et al., 2023; Bakker et al., 2004) which could support the high level of burnout found from the OLBI results.

The workload demands that members of the RT discussed during the RT meeting, semi-structured interviews, and on their resources worksheets, correlate with the job demands discussed in the review of literature. The workload demands discussed by RT members is consistent with what Taylor and Frechette (2022) found concerning faculty's increase in workload. In addition, the impact of the job demands expressed by members relate to the health impairment process framed in the job demands and resources theory (Bakker et al., 2007). When

faculty experience high job demands, potentially exhausting faculty's mental and physical resources, and have low resources to counter those demands, they will experience the lowest level of motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Members of the RT described times of irritation, detachment from the job, and lack of feelings of accomplishment and motivation. Each of these four behavioral and mental symptoms can be felt by employees while experiencing any level of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). To reduce the impact of the job demands, members of the RT focused on resources to help increase their level of motivation.

The resources that members of the RT used incorporated intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. The intrinsic motivators that members used included performance feedback and social support. Extrinsic motivators relate to the environment they work in, and members of the RT fostered these motivators by creating a space for others to sit and decompress and by providing more opportunities for collaborative work. RT members found that using autonomy to focus on one work role, even if it meant delaying other tasks like responding to emails, provided relief from stress and a feeling of accomplishment. Considering the high amount of autonomy within faculty's work roles (Dewey et al., 2023), faculty should be well buffered against high work stress and strain. However, due to the increased amount of work related to teaching, research, or service and/or their administration role, faculty reported less moments of productivity regarding their work roles and are reporting increased feelings of being overwhelmed, frustrated, and stressed from their workload, causing them to disengage or feel emotionally exhausted (Pope-Ruark, 2023). As faculty spend more time during non-working hours to complete work tasks it can reduce their time to recover from feeling emotionally exhausted, overwhelmed, or stressed (Bakker & DeVries, 2021).

RT members reflected on moments pre-COVID-19, when it was easier to balance time between their work roles and the feelings of stress and frustration were not as persistent as they are currently. Members expressed that balancing the tasks of their three work roles reduced time they spend on another, even with aligning their teaching, research, and service topics as Balkin and Mello (2012) suggested. However, what Balkin and Mello could not account for was the increase in enrollment demands that administrators have placed on faculty over the past few years.

The Challenges of Change

Recently, some of the challenges higher education is dealing with stem from an increase of importance on student recruitment due to lower enrollment (Dewey et al., 2023), teaching classes in different modalities, online courses requiring continuous training on the latest technologies (Griffith & Altinay, 2020), and faculty leaving higher education or retiring early (McClure & Fryar, 2022). One method to relieve stress and frustration as Austin and Sorcinelli (2013) found, even if it takes time away from other work tasks, is to encourage faculty to participate in professional development concerning new technologies. Members of the RT discussed how the transition to online due to the COVID-19 pandemic was not as stressful due to the online learning platform the university was using for multiple years before the pandemic. One lasting effect of the pandemic is the popularity of online courses from students. However, online courses with more than 30 students can pose challenges with student engagement (Muscanell, 2023) and the quality of education. The most significant challenge that members discussed was the increased pressure of recruiting students to boost enrollment. Perceptions of the RT did differ on whether there is truly an enrollment cliff, but they did agree that enrollment has decreased and the pressure to recruit more students has increased. Furthermore, they agreed

as Barrios (2023) highlighted, the time dedicated to do their job as educators is lost to their administration role tasks including recruiting students and finding new ways to market and attract new students.

Another challenge discussed by members of the RT was how ambiguous standards and guidelines are concerning their three work roles. The annual review guidelines that faculty use to receive tenure, or a promotion lack transparency, creating hurdles for faculty to establish annual goals. Biron et al (2008) noted that by offering transparent faculty workload data supported by clear faculty policy guidelines could increase trust and accountability between faculty. Clearer workload guidelines concerning faculty's teaching, research, and service roles can also increase faculty productivity by offering them more efficient use of their autonomous time (Griffith & Altinay, 2020; O'Meara, 2019). When members used the job resource autonomy to accomplish goals during the 6 weeks related to research, teaching, or service they felt an increase in their motivation. However, during annual evaluations, members expressed that being told their accomplishments were not quite good enough and to try again next time, was unmotivating. This negative feedback can increase their level of disengagement and risk of burnout.

Faculty experiencing an increased level of burnout are likely to be emotionally exhausted or disengage from their work (Bakker & de Vries, 2021; Pope-Ruark, 2023). Research has continuously found that an increase in workload through faculty's three work roles has emphasized the increase of their emotional exhaustion and level of disengagement. The level of burnout that a faculty member could experience is distinctive to that person. The mean OLBI score showed the College of Education tenure-eligible/tenured faculty participants ($n = 11$) had an increased level of burnout ($M = 40.18$). However, there was no significant difference found between the total burnout score and any participant demographic characteristics. It is likely that

was due to the limited sample size of participants that took the OLBI survey. Another reason, which has been supported through recent research, is that anyone could have any level of burnout from their work-related roles, dependent on the individual and/or the job characteristics of where the individual works (Bakker et al., 2023). Job characteristics that could affect the level of burnout a person experiences include the workspace climate that encourages growth and learning or co-worker support that provides motivation and validation of accomplishing work goals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Faculty, like any other employee, need to be motivated and one method of motivating faculty is validating their skills through decision making. Members of the RT used the job resource participation in decision-making by creating opportunities for other faculty members. Creating new opportunities for faculty to be part of the decision-making process incorporates different perspectives to mitigate challenges and promotes active engagement through collaboration. Another method of staying actively engaged in work tasks that members of the RT discussed was reflecting on their feeling of stress or frustration and being proactive in reducing their stress. The resources worksheet offered that reflective opportunity giving the members of the RT a place to write down how they were feeling and what resource they could use to be productive again.

Recommendations for Practice

The job resources the members of the RT used during the 6 weeks gave them opportunities to reflect on how job demands impact their motivation and productivity. Three of the four RT member participants are in administrative positions that could initiate discussions with faculty in their program or department that focus on motivation and production. Griffith and Altinay (2020) explain:

the changing face of the student body and evolving teaching methods (i.e. remote learning) demand more time, resources, and skills of an educator, while administrative duties and service requirements creep up on faculty disrupting or halting the flow of intellectual creativity. (p. 697)

Providing faculty more time for intellectual creativity provides moments of curiosity and expansion of knowledge, which can then be reciprocated through faculty teaching, research, and service. This section will highlight the recommendations for practice concerning faculty motivating each other by working together, creating equitable faculty workload policies, and more transparent policies concerning research and service expectations.

Recommendation on Building a Motivating Culture

The first recommendation encourages faculty to work together to create a culture within their program or department that provides an environment of motivation and support. The results from all three qualitative data sources revealed the importance of the relationships between faculty and the effect those have on the environmental culture that faculty work in. When faculty work in an environment that encourages motivation that supports faculty, they are more likely to remain in their position at the university (Flaherty, 2022). In addition, faculty production is directly related to their research activity which can increase the university's research ranking and marketability (Daumiller et al., 2021).

Currently, faculty are finding it more difficult to initiate relationships due to the lasting impact the pandemic had on the social aspect of their departments. Furthermore, given the time demands that the faculty's three roles produce, it could be difficult to find time to attend or even find the motivation to be social, increasing their feeling of isolation (Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2012). However, Pope-Ruark (2023) discussed how creating a monthly check-in with a small

group of faculty members discouraged the feelings of isolation and provided support for an increase in well-being. By shifting how faculty respond to feelings of frustration, stress, and discouragement can provide relief and encourage productivity.

One key element to increase motivation is not solely focusing on the obstacles that higher education is facing and focus on positive collaborative solutions. When faculty focus on how to solve all the obstacles and challenges in higher education it is extremely difficult to feel accomplished or motivated. A shift of mindset was found to help change the feeling of disengagement to become more motivated from members of the RT.

Recommendation on Creating Equitable Faculty Workload Policies

It is recommended that the College of Education conduct time studies to determine a precise analysis of graduate program directors and department chairs workload over the course of a semester. The time study data could then be used in a full-time faculty workload audit that could redistribute graduate program director and department chair workloads to have more time to either focus on the work within their three work roles or their work in their graduate program director or department chair role. One of the many responsibilities of graduate program directors, detailed by two of the four RT member participants, involves program marketing and recruitment of students in addition to their three roles teaching, research, and service. Graduate program directors are offered course releases each semester, teaching a 1/1 load compared to a 2/2 load to reduce their workload, or a monetary incentive to compensate for faculty's extra workload. These incentives are valued but still are not providing enough relief to meet the level of productivity needed to keep up with the current job demands (Pope-Ruark, 2023). Similar to graduate program directors, department chairs are offered a course release to relieve some of the workload from their other roles, but the incentives are not specified in the department chair

university policy, nor does it state recruitment as one of the 13 primary responsibilities. The amount of time graduate program directors and department chairs spend on recruiting students for online and in-person classes consumes most of their daily workload and their focus shouldn't primarily be on recruiting students especially when classes are at capacity (Barrios, 2023; Griffith & Altinay, 2020).

In addition to shifting graduate program director and department chair roles, full-time faculty not in administrative roles who prefer to spend more of their workload on teaching rather than research, would be given the opportunity to teach a full 4/4 load per academic year and be required to publish two journal articles (first author articles) over 3 years. Full-time faculty not in administrative roles who prefer to conduct research would be required to publish four research articles (2 or more first author articles) during an academic year and be required to teach an equivalent of a 4/4 load over 3 years. This shift could play to faculty's strengths and increase their engagement and motivation.

Discussions from the semi-structured interviews and resources worksheet emphasized the stress and feeling of disengagement the members of the RT felt when they are continuously pressured by administrators to recruit students. The continuous pressures from administrators on graduate program directors and department chairs are creating increased work demands requiring a continuous mental effort that can be physiologically and psychologically taxing (Demerouti et al., 2001) increasing members of the RT burnout level which was already at a level of high risk. The continuous demands result in little to no time for achieving work goals that could provide relief through resources. The recommendation for graduate program directors and department chairs to either have more time to focus on the work within their three work roles or less time spent on recruitment would offer less pressure to maintain the standards of teaching, research

and service and provide a balance between job demands and resources which will positively impact an employee's emotional exhaustion and engagement in work-related tasks (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Recommendation on Establishing Clearer Research and Service Policies

Faculty policies concerning their research and service roles will be less ambiguous and provide transparent expectations for annual evaluations. The annual expectation for faculty at BU is a minimum of two published articles in peer-reviewed journals and to serve the university. Each department of BU determines the criteria for evaluating research and service regarding the mission and type of disciplines within the department. During the annual evaluation, the department chair will consider the quality of research and service, not just the quantity during the evaluation period. The quality of research is determined by considering the publishing journal's reputation and level (local, national, or international), the type of peer review, and the faculty member's level of authorship on each research article. In addition, the faculty member assists the department chair in documenting the quality and value of each research article. The department chair's method of evaluating faculty's quality of service is complicated due to the lack of transparent measures of how much service time each faculty member is obligated to during the academic year (Griffith & Altinay, 2020). The opaque nature of the service requirement and determining the value of each research article is subjective to the person conducting the evaluation.

One approach to providing an equitable measure of research and service is to establish an equity audit on the amount of service each faculty member provides. The data collected in an equity audit would include the amount of hours faculty spend working on each service task, what type of service each faculty member is participating in, and how each faculty member's

workload between teaching and research compares to their service workload to ensure an equitable workload distribution. In addition to an equity audit on faculty's service workload, providing faculty with clearer standards for the outcome of their annual research evaluation can help them establish goals for the academic year and distribute their workload to meet their research goals.

Currently, the distribution of service work shared by faculty members is disproportionate by routinely selecting women and people of color to commit more time to conduct service (Guarino & Borden, 2017). "There is a cost to such inequity, as perceptions of unfair workload have been linked to lower overall job satisfaction, reduced productivity and morale, higher intent to leave, and increased faculty turnover" (O'Meara et al., 2019, p. 749). Given the increase in faculty turnover in higher education (McClure & Fryar, 2022), more explicit standards and transparent policies that establish trust and equity between faculty and executive leaders might be beneficial in more ways than one. The added transparency for annual evaluations could help faculty balance the tasks between their three roles and be more productive, increasing the department's or college's efficiency.

Implications for Policy

This section will review the implications of the three recommendations for policy or practice. The implications will focus on faculty working in an environment of motivation and support, and task variety for faculty, graduate program director, and department chair roles. Task variety will provide faculty with more time for autonomy and offer opportunities to balance their workload between their three work related roles (Griffith & Altinay, 2020; O'Meara et al., 2019).

Motivating and Supportive Environment

“Instrumental support from colleagues can help to get the work done in time and may therefore alleviate the impact of work overload on strain” (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, p. 315). The workload of faculty is difficult to change, especially with the challenges universities are currently facing. To change faculty workload, university policies could amend the number of research articles required in one academic year, use a 3-year average, or change the amount of courses faculty teach each semester. This change could positively affect faculty workload but ultimately would have negative consequences on the production of the university, as the production of faculty is directly related to the production of the university.

The high job demands that are required for a university to be productive requires faculty to be highly engaged and motivated to complete job tasks. Motivated faculty will be more inclined to accomplish work goals, focus on the development of others, and find alignment between teaching, research, and service. Moreover, when faculty are highly engaged in their work roles the validation of completing tasks during periods of high job demands can motivate faculty at a higher degree than if they completed tasks during times of low demands (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). However, faculty still need support during moments of high demands, without support their motivating ability is decreased (Dinibutun et al., 2020).

Social support from co-workers and supervisors plays an important role that is easily lost with high faculty turnover and high pressure from administrators. “When individuals are able to recognize and manage their own and others’ emotions, they collect more emotional resources during interactions with others” (Bakker et al., 2023, p. 29). Providing opportunities for faculty to establish or invest in their relationships with co-workers or supervisors can help kindle collaboration with research and provide supportive outlets when high job demands exist. In

addition, faculty will be able to provide greater co-worker support when they are highly engaged in their work due to their ability to efficiently complete tasks (Bakker et al., 2023). Faculty engagement will enhance faculty's capability to be creative and will be more accepting of change.

Faculty Task Variety

Considering their three work roles, faculty autonomy can relieve high work demands and the feeling of accomplishment. When faculty's time for autonomy is removed by focusing on one task within a specific role, job resources and faculty's motivation decrease, and their exhaustion and disengagement increase (Bakker et al., 2023). Faculty, especially faculty serving as a graduate program director or department chair, require time to establish and accomplish goals to maintain their level of motivation and productivity. The level of productivity of faculty, graduate program directors, and department chairs impacts the success of the department or program.

The department's success depends on the faculty, department chairs, and program directors' abilities to navigate the daily challenges and obstacles of higher education. Job demands such as work overload, caused by the high pressure of student recruitment to buffer low enrollment, consume most of their time, limiting their overall productivity. Giving faculty the opportunity to engage in multiple tasks rather than being pressured to focus on one task can increase their productivity and innovation (Bakker et al., 2023). See Table 12 for the study's findings and how they relate to the recommendations and literature.

Table 12*Study Findings With Related Recommendations and Literature*

Findings	Related Recommendations	Supporting Literature
1. The importance of workspace climate and providing motivation to keep working through obstacles and challenging moments.	Encourage faculty to work together to create a culture within their program or department that provides an environment of motivation and support to assist in overcoming challenges and obstacles.	Alves et al., 2019; Dewey et al., 2023; Eddy & Garza Mitchell, 2011; Muscanell, 2023; Pope-Ruark, 2023
2. Members of the RT are finding it more difficult allocating time to balance the workload of their three work roles.	Provide enough relief through job resources for faculty to meet the level of productivity needed to keep up with the current job demands.	Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Balkin & Mello, 2012; Demerouti et al., 2001; Maslach et al., 2001
3. RT members find it more challenging to balance their workload between their three work roles due to the recent changes in higher education and unclear evaluation expectations.	Faculty policies in relation to their research and service roles will be less ambiguous and provide transparent expectations for annual evaluations.	Dewey et al., 2023; Griffith & Altinay, 2020; O'Meara et al., 2019; Muscanell, 2023

Note. The three findings are related to each theme that was revealed during the coding process discussed in Chapter 4. RT = Resources Team.

Directions for Future Research

This action research study's intervention focused on a resources team to use new resources for 6 weeks to buffer the impact of the demands of their work-related roles. Extending this study's action research cycle with a longer look, think, and act cycle of investigation could provide faculty more time to engage in job resources they found to provide motivation or support. By adding another longer action research cycle, faculty could first look to see which resources (social support, performance feedback, participating in decision making, autonomy, or professional development) they could incorporate into their daily work routines. Second, faculty could think on how each resource buffered their stress or frustration, and what level of

motivation, low, average, or high they felt after using the resource. Finally, faculty would act on continuously incorporating the resources into their work routines. This longer cycle would provide more data on how different resources provide different levels of relief during an entire semester and provide more data considering the interactive effects of the Job Demands and Resources (JD-R) theory. It is important to note that not all resources work for everyone, and different resources may work one day for one faculty member but not the next day. Collecting data from faculty during an entire semester would offer more apparent examples of how the impact of job demands can be buffered by resources and examine how long the relief the resources provide lasts.

The second recommendation for future research would include examining the relationship between Csikszentmihalyi's (1974) theory of flow and the JD-R theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). The study would start at the beginning of a semester with full-time tenure-eligible/tenured faculty of each rank (assistant professor, associate professor, and full professor) using the job resource autonomy to engage into a work-related task. Participants would record in a journal for 2 months their feelings before and after the autonomous period reflecting on if they were in the state of flow and if they felt satisfied, happier, or more motivated. At the conclusion of the 2 months faculty would participate in an interview to reflect on the journal entries. This study would provide more details concerning whether the challenges of faculty's tasks related to their work roles put them into a state of flow while using the job resource autonomy. "When challenges and skills were both high, they felt happier, more cheerful, stronger, more active; they concentrated more; they felt more creative and satisfied" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991, p. 159).

The final recommendation, which was discussed during the RT meeting, would introduce weekly faculty meetings to two groups of faculty members to examine how an increase in self-

efficacy and optimism could increase the faculty's level of resources and positively change the faculty's work environment. Two teams of full-time faculty members of each rank (assistant professor, associate professor, and full professor) would meet at least once a week, or more if they choose to, to discuss successful moments during the week, how they reached weekly goals, and reflect on the week's positive experiences. These meeting would focus on high levels of employee self-efficacy and optimism which could increase available job resources that can reduce the effects of job demands (Bakker et al., 2023; Mudrak et al., 2018). Increased available resources and a positive work environment offer higher motivation and faculty production (Bakker et al., 2023).

Summary

The workload demands that faculty are experiencing are challenging to sustain, disengage faculty from their work-related roles, and increase their risk for high burnout levels (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). The university's core idea is being lost to the constant drive for increases in enrollment, online courses dissolving the strong relationships between faculty and students, and ambiguous standards and guidelines concerning requirements for tenure and promotion. Furthermore, the ambiguous standards and unclear guidelines within the university policy concerning their requirements for research are demotivating and unrewarding. The accumulation of all these challenges and changes account for the increase of job demands felt by faculty and overloads their capacity to think, be productive, and effectively problem-solve. However, if faculty were able to reduce the maladaptive behaviors and self-undermining behavior that correlates with high job demands, and give themselves a moment, as members of the RT did while using new resources, to identify the reason for their stress, disengagement, or exhaustion. In that case, they can proactively remotivate themselves using a job resource.

As Wheatley (2006) noted, “To stay viable, open systems maintain a state of non-equilibrium, keeping themselves off balance so that the system can change and grow. They participate in an open exchange with their world, using what is there for their own growth” (p. 78). Higher education is in a state of change that continuously throws faculty off balance. Like an open system, if faculty stay fluid and accept this imbalance, they may open themselves up to change and new growth. To remain viable, faculty must ask for help from each other (Freudenberger, 1974), work together, and support one another to foster diverse ideas and overcome challenges.

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Appendix A

Resources Worksheet Example

Date/Time	Explain the new resource you used.	Was this an existing resource at the university?	How did you feel prior to using the resource?	How did you feel after using the resource?
2/12/2024	Social Support Admissions	Yes	Hopeful that changes could be made ASAP.	Frustrated that I have to wait but glad changes are being made.
2/13/2024	Participation in decision making	No	Overwhelmed	Satisfied about Contributing
2/14/2024	Coworker Support	No	Scared	Helpful
2/21/2024	Autonomy Going back to data analysis Flow = Stress escape	No	Rusty	Love data analysis
2/22/2024	Attended webinar on Artificial Intelligence	Yes	Curious.	Fascinated. The Webinar was excellent and opened my eyes to embracing AQ. I used Chat [GTP] for the first time and was able to generate surveys in seconds.
3/11/2024	Coworker Support Attended Research night to support other colleagues	Yes	Behind at work/stressed	Still stressed but invigorated by being with research class.

Appendix B

Participant Recruiting Email

Faculty's work-related roles are difficult to change, and the increase of workload demand due to the multiple changes in higher education over the past five years is increasing. However, the number of resources that higher education as an organization provide to help buffer those demands is crucial to faculty well-being, productivity, and reducing the risk of burnout.

I am writing to let you know about an opportunity to participate in an action research study examining how resources from the job demands and resources theory could buffer the impacts of increased faculty workload while navigating the multiple changes in higher education over the past five years. I am an undergraduate and graduate alumni from the Human Movement Sciences department and an adjunct instructor for the department as well. In addition, I am a Doctoral student at William & Mary, completing a dissertation in Higher Education Administration. I would greatly appreciate if you would participate in my action research study. Below is a summary of my research.

Tenure-eligible/tenured faculty will be invited to take the Faculty Experience Survey, which takes about five minutes to complete. This will assess the experiences that faculty have regarding exhaustion and disengagement from their work-related roles. In addition, at the end of the survey I will ask faculty to volunteer to participate in a two-hour resources team meeting held on campus. The resources team meeting will include the following:

- Reviewing the Faculty Experience Survey results.
- An appreciative inquiry four-question discussion.
- Construct recommendations based off themes to implement during the next six-weeks.

During the six-weeks, faculty will work as usual but use their recommendations from the resources team meeting. Faculty's recommendations will provide ways to buffer job demands using current job resources that faculty haven't used before.

After the six weeks, a Semi-Structured virtual interview will provide information regarding the faculty's workload of their three work roles while navigating the multiple changes in higher education over the past five years. Furthermore, the interview will highlight the resources that faculty feel to be most helpful to them in buffering job demands during these changes.

I will ask participants to give their written consent before the research begins. Their responses will be confidential, and identities (their names and the name of the University) will be anonymous. The research participants can withdraw their permission anytime during this project without penalty. To participate in the study please click [Here](#).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Appendix C

Oldenburg Burnout Inventory

Instructions: This research study concerns the experiences faculty have with the multitude of changes within higher education and how these changes could impact faculty workload. The following statements refer to your feelings and attitudes during work. Please indicate to what extent you agree with each of the following statements by selecting the number that corresponds with the statement. Taking this survey will be construed as informed consent. The results of this survey will be anonymous, you may skip any items or discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

Statement	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
1. I always find new and interesting aspects in my work	1	2	4
2. There are days when I feel tired before I arrive at work	1	2	4
3. It happens more and more often that I talk about my work in a negative way	1	2	4
4. After work, I tend to need more time than in the past in order to relax and feel better	1	2	4
5. I can tolerate the pressure of my work very well	1	2	4
6. Lately, I tend to think less at work and do my job almost mechanically	1	2	4
7. I find my work to be a positive challenge	1	2	4
8. During my work, I often feel emotionally drained	1	2	4
9. Over time, one can become disconnected from this type of work	1	2	4
10. After working, I have enough energy for my leisure activities	1	2	4
11. Sometimes I feel sickened by my work tasks	1	2	4
12. After my work, I usually feel worn out and weary	1	2	4
13. This is the only type of work that I can imagine myself doing	1	2	4
14. Usually, I can manage the amount of my work well	1	2	4
15. I feel more and more engaged in my work	1	2	4
16. When I work, I usually feel energized	1	2	4

Note. The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) measures the two core dimensions of burnout exhaustion and disengagement. From “The Job Demands-Resources Model of Burnout,” by E. Demerouti, A. B. Bakker, F. Nachreiner, and W. B. Schaufeli, 2001, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), p. 499–512 (<https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.499>). Copyright 2001 by American Psychological Association. Reprinted with permission.

**Appendix D
CONSENT FORM**

**Navigating Through the Changes in Higher Education and Balancing Faculty Workload:
An Action Research Study
*The College of William and Mary***

This research study concerns reducing the impacts of faculty workload while navigating the multiple changes in higher education over the past five years. Burnout has become a worldwide occupational issue that is detrimental to the work environment and is emotionally and physically taxing to the individual. These feelings have been linked to job demands such as high workload and could manifest into emotional exhaustion and disengagement towards work-related roles.

Presentations and manuscripts may result from the analysis of these data. Information gathered through this study may benefit and inform others on buffering faculty workload through the job demands and resources framework. There are no anticipated risks or benefits to participating other than those encountered in daily life. The researcher is conducting this study as part his doctoral dissertation at the College of William and Mary.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, you may contact Dr. Thomas Ward, chair of the Education Internal Review Committee (EDIRC), 757-221-2358, tjward@wm.edu. You may also contact the principal investigator, Peter Ahl, ptahl@wm.edu, 603-502-7602 or my faculty advisor, Dr. Megan Tschannen-Moran, mxtsch@wm.edu.

Please read the following statements and indicate your permissions below.

I understand that my involvement in this study is purposeful in that permissions and consent will be obtained only for those included in the narrative.

I understand that I may be asked to voluntarily read portions of the narrative that are associated with my involvement in the researcher's experience as they are composed. Additionally, I may be asked to offer feedback on the written representation using specific guidelines prepared by the researcher.

I further understand that the researcher will hold my information in strict confidence and that no comments will be attributed to me by name without my specific permission. I have the option to provide a pseudonym of my choice, but I also recognize there is a possibility of identification given the nature of the study.

I recognize that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw my participation in this study at any time or decline to give permission in a particular instance. By signing below, I give consent that my involvement and interactions may be included in the study.

Participant	Date
Pseudonym (if desired) _____	
Researcher _____	Date _____

Appendix E

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Faculty's work-related roles are difficult to change, and the increase of workload demand due to the multiple changes in higher education over the past five years is increasing. However, the number of resources that higher education as an organization provide to help buffer those demands is crucial to faculty well-being, productivity, and reducing the risk of burnout. Numerous studies have identified the increased workload to lead to a decrease in well-being and performance among faculty, but few have identified how job resources could buffer faculty workload while navigating the multiple changes in higher education over the past five years.

Purpose of study: Therefore, this mixed methods action research study aims to determine how resources from the job demands and resources model could buffer the impacts of increased faculty workload navigating the multiple changes in higher education over the past five years.

Participating in this interview will help identify important factors that would help buffer the demands of faculty workload while navigating the multiple changes in higher education over the past five years. All responses to the following interview questions will be confidential. Please ask any questions regarding the study at any time. You can skip a question and stop the interview without penalty.

~Thank you for your participation.

Q1: Tell me about your role in the College of Education. What aspects do you find especially rewarding? What aspects are most taxing? How long have you been in your current role?
Follow-up Question/Response:
Q2: Tell me about your current workload balance between your three roles: teaching, research, and service. How did you find that balance?
Follow-up Question/Response: Does that remain pretty stable or does it change from time to time?
Q3: How many courses do you typically teach?
Follow-up Question/Response:
Q4: How has your workload in relation to your teaching role changed, if at all, due to the multiple changes in higher education? <i>Work Role Teaching (ARQ 3)</i>
Follow-up Question/Response:
Q5: How has your workload in relation to your research role changed, if at all, due to the multiple changes in higher education? <i>Work Role Research (ARQ 3)</i>
Follow-up Question/Response:

<p>Q6: In what ways has the amount of service changed, if at all, due to the multiple changes in higher education? <i>Work Role Service (ARQ 3)</i></p>
<p>Follow-up Question/Response:</p>
<p>Q7: What is your experience with the available university resources prior to the RT meeting? <i>Resources (ARQ 4)</i></p>
<p>Follow-up Question/Response:</p>
<p>Q8: Describe times during the six-weeks that you felt an increase of job demands. <i>Resources (ARQ 4)</i></p>
<p>Follow-up Question/Response:</p>
<p>Q9: During the six-weeks, what resources did you use to buffer the demands of your three work roles? <i>Resources (ARQ 4)</i></p>
<p>Follow-up Question/Response:</p>
<p>Q10: Is there anything else you'd like me to know about your workload as a faculty member and your experiences with the changes in higher education?</p>

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Education:

William And Mary, Williamsburg, VA July 2021 – January 2025

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Concentration: Higher Education Administration

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and Balancing Faculty Workload: An Action Research Study

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Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA May 2018 – May 2019

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Emphasis: Nature Based Programming for Urban Youth

Research: Bigfoot Inspires Youth: Leave No Trace in Urban Afterschool Programs

Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA August 2015 – May 2018

Bachelor of Science

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Experience:

Adjunct Lecturer August 2019 – Current

College of Education

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August 2018 – May 2019

Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism

Teaching:

Old Dominion University

- PRTS 368: Internship (3 credits)
- PRTS 209: Introduction to Parks, Recreation, and Tourism (3 credits)
- PRTS 332: Personnel Management in Recreation Services (3 credits)
- PRTS 251: Introduction to Parks and Recreation Management (3 credits)
- PRTS 406: Outdoor Leadership and Environmental Education (3 credits) (Graduate Teaching Assistant)