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**Ebben, James Adrian**

THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT IN MAINTAINING INSTITUTIONAL VITALITY  
IN SELECTED PRIVATE, LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES IN MICHIGAN IN THE  
EARLY 1980S

*Michigan State University*

PH.D. 1985

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THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT  
IN MAINTAINING  
INSTITUTIONAL VITALITY  
IN SELECTED PRIVATE, LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES  
IN MICHIGAN IN THE EARLY 1980s

By

James Adrian Ebben

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## ABSTRACT

### THE ROLE OF THE PRESIDENT IN MAINTAINING INSTITUTIONAL VITALITY IN SELECTED PRIVATE, LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES IN MICHIGAN IN THE EARLY 1980s

By

James Adrian Ebben

The literature on the vitality of colleges and universities revealed a dearth of information regarding the precise role of how college presidents maintained that vitality. At the same time there are many recent articles on the precarious position of the small liberal arts colleges not only with regard to physical survival but also with the survival of their vitality. There are calls for new leadership to maintain the vitality of these institutions in spite of the threats from the external environment. This study investigates the nature of that new leadership.

The purposes of this study were:

1. To describe the practices employed since 1980 by presidents of selected liberal arts colleges in Michigan in order to maintain vitality.
2. To identify the perceptions of presidents and selected administrators regarding the effectiveness of these

practices in influencing the level of vitality.

The study population consisted of a selected group of Michigan private, four-year, liberal arts colleges.

The research technique used in the study was the semi-structured interview. Questions for the interviews were developed from a review of the literature and from the administrative experiences of the researcher at several small colleges.

Major findings led to several conclusions. The most notable are the following:

1. Poor communication is the principal barrier to vitality. Other barriers are scarce financial resources, competition between academic departments for scarce resources, lack of ownership of the college mission, unwillingness to change, and lack of opportunities for personal and professional renewal.

2. To eliminate or lessen the effects of these barriers institutions employ several countermeasures: effective communications, clearly stated college mission, enrollment management, and new faculty/staff development opportunities.

3. Although presidents, chief academic officers, and chief business officers said they understood institutional vitality in terms of the socio-psychological well-being and enhancement of individuals, the indicators they used to assess the level of vitality of their institutions were, with few exceptions, financial in nature; e.g., cash flow, money

set aside for maintenance, expenditures per student, the number of student applications, tuition income, and level of annual giving.

4. Some efforts undertaken to maintain institutional vitality, such as the addition of new programs and reaching out to new student markets, actually reduced vitality because faculty were dissatisfied with the quality of the new students and with the changes in the identity of the college.

5. The data suggests that college administrators agree that colleges need strong directive leadership; but there is some evidence that presidents and chief academic officers differ from chief business officers in what they mean by strong and directive leadership. Presidents and chief academic officers favor a collegial approach to management. Chief business officers favor an authoritarian approach.

6. College presidents maintain institutional vitality more directly through planning, organizational structure and leadership than through staffing and faculty development.

Dedicated to  
Joseph W. Vanden Burgt

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My sincere thanks also goes to the twenty-seven college presidents, chief academic officers, and chief business officers from Michigan Independent Colleges who shared their insights on the role of the president in maintaining institutional vitality.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM

#### Introduction

George Keller (1983) in his book, Academic Strategy, speaks about a specter that is haunting higher education today. This specter is one of decline and bankruptcy. (p. 3) He notes that experts predict between ten percent and thirty percent of America's 3100 colleges and universities will close their doors or merge with other institutions by 1995. Although it is unlikely that any segment of higher education will escape, the small, liberal arts college is expected to be hit the hardest.

This real or perceived decline is causing considerable concern among educators about how it is affecting people and education in our institutions. While many of the key decisions facing American higher education in the 1980s are economic in nature, their qualitative fallout is shaping the quality of life and effectiveness of education. Maher (1982) says it is "appropriate and probably imperative to keep the issue of institutional vitality before academic decision makers." (p. 1)

The critical question is how colleges and universities can sustain a climate which empowers individuals to be

participants in the fulfillment of the college mission and at the same time which gives them the sense of being involved in a creative, productive, and energizing worklife. Richard Cyert (1980), President of Carnegie-Mellon University, says that the penetrating question for presidents is how to "maintain excellence, stimulate high motivation in the participants, develop innovative programs, achieve fiscal equilibrium, and continue the viability of the organization." (p. 38) Arns (1981) speaks about the critical challenges for leadership to find ways "to nurture creative instincts, to tap natural enthusiasm, and to build consensus." (p. 73)

#### Statement of the Problem

One of the facts of life in the contemporary small, liberal arts college is that presidents and deans spend much of their time and energy on economic survival issues. This is apparent when presidents and deans gather at national and state association meetings where conversations are riddled with exchanges about financial issues, declining enrollments, and even survival. These concerns often tend to crowd out the more subtle and sometimes abstract issues dealing with community, opportunity, security, and the quality of worklife.

The literature is replete with references to what is happening to faculty and staff and the quality of academic programs in an environment where so much attention is given to fiscal issues and so little is given to the quality of the

workplace. The titles of many of the books and journal articles are insightful: The New Depression in Higher Education, 1971; "The Management of Decline," 1975; "New Opportunities for Faculty Members," 1981; and "'Creativity of Survival' Is Not Enough," 1980.

Ernest Boyer, Jr. (1980) President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, suggests that colleges are "no longer the creative institutions they could be. They are tired, living on the intellectual legacy of the past." (p. 6) Rosebeth Kanter (1979) expresses her concern about the quality of education when faculty are demoralized and administrators feel overused and underappreciated. Eugene Rice (1980) documents the growing disillusionment of a band of academic idealists. His research shows that faculty have been caught unaware by the current climatic shifts in higher education and are literally asking, "Is this all there is?"

In view of these concerns there is a growing body of literature dealing with the phenomenon of vitality in colleges and universities. National conferences addressing the question of institutional vitality were held at Miami University and Siena Heights College in 1979. The conference at Miami University resulted in a publication by David Brown (1979), Leadership Vitality, and the conference at Siena Heights College resulted in a publication by James and Marilyn Ebben (1981), Institutional Vitality: Up Against the Eighties. These works, as well as so many others related

to the topic, speak to issues of defining insitutional vitality (Maher 1982), capturing institutional vitality (Ebben and Maher 1979), measuring institutional vitality (O'Neill and Barnett 1981), and in general identifying the characteristics of vital institutions (McGrath 1983).

A search of the Current Index to Journals in Education, the Education Index, and computer searches of Dissertation Abstracts and ERIC revealed no research which specifically and directly pertained to the role that presidents have in maintaining institutional vitality. Most of the research is focused on the call for new leadership, the characteristics that the new leaders must have to be successful in the current climate, and the charges to the new leaders. Keller (1983) believes that the kind of leadership higher education needs does not exist yet, but is being created chink by chink by the new breed of administrator. Peck (1983) lists the characteristics of successful small-college administration: "An entrepreneurial spirit, intuitive decision making, an effective intelligence network, planning for the future using analogues from the past, and a penchant for keeping options open." (p. 18) Brushaber (1982) calls upon small college deans to "play a major role in creating, sustaining, promoting, and recapturing institutional vitality for the school to survive with excellence and integrity in the 1980s." (p. 1)

What is not in the literature is the more practical side of the question of what presidents do and can do to maintain

institutional vitality. The real challenge is not only to be able to detect threats to the fragile fabric of vitality, but also to understand what must be done to develop and to maintain the kind of environment conducive to producing, sustaining, and enhancing the creative energies so necessary to any healthy organization. Peck (1983) says "a door has been left open through which a new group of investigators can move to explore the...practical questions. The... methods by which people work needs further elaboration...Finally, a whole new set of techniques and tools needs to be developed...." (p. 25)

The lack of relevant research coupled with the investigator's long-standing interest in institutional vitality led to the development of this study. The study is endorsed by colleagues who attended the 1979 Siena Heights College Conference on institutional vitality.

#### Purposes of the Study

The purpose of this study is twofold:

1. To identify and describe the practices employed since 1980 by presidents of selected independent, liberal arts colleges in Michigan in order to maintain institutional vitality.
2. To identify the perceptions of presidents and selected administrators regarding the effectiveness of these practices in influencing the level of vitality in their colleges.

### Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is based on the following points:

1. The study should provide a response to a need identified in relevant contemporary research.
2. It is hoped that the study will provide significant data:
  - a. of particular interest to college presidents,
  - b. which may serve as a basis of comparison for other research on the same subject in the public sector of higher education.
3. The study continues research the investigator began eight years ago on institutional vitality in small, liberal arts and it is hoped that it will add to the literature being developed on this topic.
4. While the key decisions facing higher education in the remainder of the century may be economic in nature they will shape both the quality of life and the effectiveness of education in our institutions for a number of years to come. This study will try to provide some insights on how to insure that the quality of life and the effectiveness of education can be maintained in spite of the economic issues pervading institutions of higher education.

### Design

In order to obtain the information needed for this study the researcher has selected the semi-structured interview as the principal data gathering technique. A set of guide questions will be formulated for interviews with three individuals from each institution in the study:

1) president; 2) chief academic officer; and 3) chief business officer.

The set of guide questions will be based on information derived from relevant literature and research, and from knowledge gained by the researcher during his tenure as a professor at four small, liberal arts colleges, dean of two small colleges, and acting president of one small, liberal arts college.

The questions will be pilot tested on two former presidents and deans of Michigan liberal arts colleges for relevance and content validity, to clear up ambiguities of the questions, and to establish a better understanding of the persons who are to answer the questions during the interviews.

The data from the interviews will be analyzed in Chapter IV. Major findings will be reported in descriptive and statistical format. Summary information will also be provided.

Assumptions

The assumptions for this study have been derived from the literature search.

1. Presidents of our nation's colleges and universities are committed to quality education, but economic pressures often force them to deal primarily with non-education issues. Perhaps it can be said that they are committed to quality education even though they are forced to make some decisions which make it appear otherwise, e.g. hiring a part-time faculty member instead of hiring a full-time faculty member when hiring the full-time faculty member would be better from a strictly academic point of view.
2. Presidents play an active and powerful role in the vitality of private, liberal arts colleges. They employ legitimate and accepted techniques, methods, and tactics to maintain institutional vitality.
3. One of the keys to success in maintaining institutional vitality is to be found somewhere in the administrative and leadership practices of presidents.
4. The findings and recommendations regarding the role of Michigan presidents in maintaining institutional vitality may serve as guidelines for other college presidents.

### Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined in accordance with their use and meaning in this study:

Vitality--the capacity of a college to create and sustain the organizational strategies that support the continuing investment of energy by faculty and staff in their own careers and in the realization of the institution's mission (Maher 1982).

President--The chief executive officer of a college appointed by a board of trustees and charged with the overall administration and operation of the institution.

Chief Academic Officer--The person in charge of the academic programs of the college reporting directly to the president, sometimes called Vice President for Academic Affairs, or Academic Dean, or Dean of the College or Provost.

Chief Business Officer--The person in charge of the financial matters of the college reporting directly to the president.

Accredited--Those institutions which are accredited by one of the five regional accrediting associations.

Interviewees--The presidents, chief academic officers, and chief business officers of the small, independent colleges in Michigan who participated in the study by granting the investigator an interview.

Researcher--The individual who originated this study, conducted the research and the interviews, and analyzed the results.

AICUM--The Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Michigan.

### Limitations and Scope of the Study

The limitations of the study are as follows:

1. The study will be limited to nine selected private, liberal arts colleges in Michigan.
2. The selection will be limited to those private liberal arts colleges in Michigan which meet all of the following criteria: a member of AICUM; a private non-profit institution accredited by North Central Association of Colleges and Schools; enrolling at least 500 students; granting the baccalaureate degree in the liberal arts, or the liberal arts and the professions, including teacher preparation; and granting the baccalaureate as the highest degree.
3. The interview instruments will be designed to gather appropriate factual data for the study. Data interpretation will be subject to the limitations generally associated with the use of such data-gathering techniques.
4. The study also will be limited to the degree to which the respondents are able to reflect on their own activities and relate them to the questions asked.

5. The study will be limited by those who respond. Conclusions and findings cannot be accurately generalized beyond those who participate in the interviews.
6. The study will not include a discussion of the role of the president in evaluating the institution.

### Overview of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter I is an introduction to the study. It includes a statement of the problem, the purposes, significance and design, basic assumptions, definition of terms, limitations, and a statement of how the study is organized.

Chapter II is a review of selected relevant literature and research on the role of presidents in maintaining and enhancing vitality.

Chapter III is comprised of the design of the study, methodology, instrumentation, and the collection and treatment of data.

Chapter IV reports the major findings from an analysis of the data.

Chapter V consists of a summary of the study and relates the findings to practical applications for those who require information regarding the role of college presidents. Significant findings are also summarized with recommendations for future studies.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The literature reviewed for this research study centered on writings and research concerning: the climate of higher education in general and the climate of the small private liberal arts college; how the present climate is affecting the quality of the worklife and the quality of education; a definition of institutional vitality; measuring institutional vitality; the role of the president in maintaining institutional vitality, and methods and tactics used by presidents in maintaining institutional vitality.

In addition to the traditional manual search of the literature two other approaches were used. A literature search was conducted through ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) and a dissertation search was made using the comprehensive dissertation research service of Xerox University Microfilms International.

#### Toward A Definition of Institutional Vitality

In the context of Higher Education there seems to be no specific research front associated with the concept of

institutional vitality. Yet the term appears in both titles and texts of widely scattered works dealing with American higher education. Some of the titles are: "Conversations toward a Definition of Institutional Vitality" (Peterson and Loye 1967); "Capturing Institutional Vitality" (Ebben and Maher 1979); Institutional Vitality: Up Against the Eighties (Ebben and Ebben 1981); "Performance and Vitality as Functions of Student-Faculty Fit" (Kirschling 1978); Leadership Vitality (Brown 1979); "Indicators of Institutional Vitality" (Scott 1980); "Institutional Vitality in the 80's" (Lisensky 1981); "Institutional Vitality: The Dean's Role" (Brushaber 1982).

These works have in common at least a basic value orientation. They assume that the presence of institutional vitality is a good thing and that it is an essential characteristic of a successful college (Maher 1982). It is a characteristic that may or may not be present, but its presence is desirable. Mayhew (1979) in his Survey in the Eighties makes a point of the fact that he is looking for factors which relate positively not only to the survival of American colleges and universities, but also to the vitality of these institutions.

The language that is generally used in discussing vitality is descriptive of the institution or individuals within the institution. Gardner (1963) speaks of the vitality of an institution in terms of the institution's ability for continuous innovation, renewal, and rebirth.

Maher (1982) discusses the vitality of an institution in terms of renewal, adaptability, and innovation, but also discusses the vitality of an individual within an institution in terms of good morale and high energy levels. He finds that all language used in discussing vitality whether of an institution or an individual evokes positive connotations.

(p. 3)

In the literature which attempts to define institutional vitality, there is a recognition that vitality is a rather elusive concept. Various approaches have been used to arrive at a working definition.

Maher (1982) tries to provide some insight into the concept by quoting from Lewis Thomas' Lives of a Cell. Thomas is describing an audience leaving a weekly lecture at the Marine Biological Laboratory, and he tries to capture the spirit of the audience.

As the audience flows out, there is the same jubilant descant, the quiet sound of crowded people explaining things to each other as fast as their minds will work. You cannot make out individual words in the mass, except that the recurrent phrase, "But look," keeps bobbing above the surf of language.

Not many institutions can produce this spontaneous music at will, summer after summer, year after year. It takes a special gift and the Marine Biological Laboratory appears to have been born with it. The scale is very small and it is not clear how it works, but it makes a nice thought for a time we can't seem to get anything straight or do anything right.

Another approach to defining institutional vitality is used by Kirschling (1981). He refers to two definitions from the Random House Dictionary of the English Language as a starting point. One of the dictionary definitions he refers to has to do with the vitality of an individual; the other definition relates to the vitality of an institution. In the first, the key terms are "exuberance" and "vigor." In the second, the key term is "meaningful" or "purposeful."

Vitality is:

1. Exuberant physical strength or mental vigor: a person of great vitality.
2. Capacity for survival or the continuation of a meaningful or purposeful existence: the vitality of an institution.

But Kirschling does not go much beyond the Random House definition. He says that the "key question is not what is vitality, but rather from whence it comes; from what wellspring is individual and collective vitality drawn." (p. 17)

Henry (1981) finds it helpful to look at what vitality is not in order to shed some light on what it is. She says "vitality is the opposite of lifelessness, dead, inanimate, static, disengaged, habitual." (p. 32) Gardner (1963) adds to this list the familiar phrase "gone to seed," rigidity and decay. (p. 3) But Henry does not stop with defining what vitality is not. She goes on to say that "vitality implies both life or liveliness and strength, force, durability,

momentum, tension, challenges being accepted and met."

(p. 32) She thinks Maslow's self-actualizing persons exude vitality. "They are persons in progress as it were on the move, risking the unknown beyond what they know, striving to realize some intuited ideal." (p. 32)

Henry gives an additional insight into the concept of vitality when she speaks of institutional vitality as somehow being dependent on a sense of purpose. This aspect is also found in Ebben and Maher (1979) when they suggest that a vital college is one that possesses a clearly defined, shared, and accepted mission.

There have been several attempts to state a working definition of institutional vitality based on the more general descriptions given above. The participants of a conference on Institutional Vitality in the Spring of 1979 agreed to a single statement as a working definition for the conference: Institutional vitality refers to the quality of life of an institution. Out of the conference discussions Ebben defined vitality as consisting of:

1. a clearly defined mission,
2. quality academic programs to fulfill the mission,
3. the enthusiasm for and identification with the mission by all members of the institution, and
4. the extent to which the climate encourages creativity, productivity and personal fulfillment.

A refinement of this definition was made by Ebben and Maher (1979). They defined a vital college as one that:

1. possesses a clearly defined, shared and accepted mission,

2. has attainable proximate goals and programs which enable fulfillment of the mission, and
3. sustains a climate which empowers individuals to be participants in the fulfillment of the mission and to have the sense of being involved in a creative, productive and energizing worklife.

Later Maher (1981) added to this definition a reference to an institution's ability to

provide its members with the proper level of security and respect,

introduce, on a continuous basis, a complementary level of challenge and stimulation to call forth creativity, and

to recognize those who have made significant contributions on its behalf.

From the conference definitions and his later additions, Maher (1982) concludes that in essence "the quest for vitality might be said to focus on the capacity of a college or university to sustain the organizational strategies that support the continuing investment of energy by faculty and staff both in their own causes and in the realization of the institution's mission." (p. 7)

### Threats to Vitality

Since the mid 1970s articles and books began to appear on the unprecedented challenges that the 1980s will offer to higher education in general and the small independent liberal arts colleges in particular. Furness (1973), Adams (1974), Carnegie Foundation (1975), and Kememy (1975) wrote about the budgetary strategies, declining enrollment, shifting student interest, and man power problems which were becoming widely

recognized. In reflecting on the early seventies, Arns (1981) says that much of American higher education had still not recovered from the turmoil of the late 1960s when it was caught unaware by the economic stagnation and accelerated inflation caused by the Arab oil embargo. An educational enterprise that had grown almost without limit since the second World War began to decline. Benezet (1977) said the fiscal constraint had already been felt for 10 years and that higher education at that time could point to few really healthy models.

The small independent liberal arts colleges are to be the hardest hit. There is not much in the literature in the 1970s by way of forecasting that this would be the case, but in fact they were the hardest hit in the 1970s and now there is considerable agreement that before the close of the century the small independent liberal arts college will be most affected by the changing environment.

O'Neill (1983) analyzes the situation of the small college which makes it so sensitive and vulnerable. Most small colleges are highly tuition dependent. Consequently, "the difference between a surplus and a deficit is often determined by a gain or decline in enrollment of as few as 15 to 20 students." Mayhew (1979) calls a drop of 30 students "serious," and a drop of 100 "catastrophic." Millet (1978) found that in a study of five closed colleges, when these drops in students resulted in a deficit, three years of such deficits proved to be the limit. Because most of the

administrators of small colleges would like to believe that they can bend the economic and demographic trends to avoid the difficulties that have been predicted for their schools, they keep pushing their application and acceptance dates closer and closer to the actual start date of classes. While this strategy may have worked most of the time in the past, O'Neill (1983) believes that "the psychological, competitive, and financial climate of the 1980s will differ markedly from that of the 1970s... In the 1980s there will be no such light at the end of the tunnel." (p. 51) Mayhew (1979) also comments that the faith and hope that has carried them through the 70s will not carry them through the 1980s.

A second insight into the vulnerability of the small liberal arts colleges comes from those who examined the changing student interests and public doubts about liberal arts colleges (Levine 1984), (Zammato 1984), (Mayhew 1979). The Carnegie Commission (1980) points out that the less selective liberal arts colleges are among the most vulnerable of all colleges and universities to the change occurring in the environment of higher education. The Commission reports that 39% of liberal arts colleges experienced enrollment decline from 1970-1978 as compared to 29% of all colleges and universities. Hesburgh (1983) adds to these statistics by referring to all colleges and universities in the private sector and stating that today only 20% of all college students are in the private sector.

Looking ahead, the picture doesn't change. West (1982) asks why "independent institutions generally and small colleges in particular have been subjected to a stream of doomsday predictions." He offers three reasons. First, scholars who write articles on the subject are from large research universities and it is easier to predict decline for institutions other than one's own. Second, the scholar-writers undervalue the small private colleges and underestimate their survival capability. Third, those who write off the small independent colleges claim that small colleges are subject to market forces in a way that larger institutions (and almost all state colleges and universities) are not. If a small college is mismanaged, it incurs a deficit; if it does a poor job of teaching or otherwise working with students, it loses enrollment. If those problems continue, the college goes out of business. On the other hand, one seldom hears of a state college running a deficit. If state institutions are mismanaged, the state makes a supplemental appropriation. During the 1970s, only one four-year state college in the entire country closed while fifty-seven four-year independent colleges shut down. Can anyone seriously believe that only one state college had problems as serious as those which forced many independent institutions to close down? Generally, independent institutions are more subject to the vagaries of the market place; they simply do not have the protection of large annual infusions of tax dollars that immunize state schools from the

same threats. Small colleges are more vulnerable than state institutions.

Mayhew (1979) says the little known liberal arts college will face the most serious problems during the 1980s. Quehl (1983) says the small independent colleges are particularly endangered and are especially vulnerable to the externally-induced pressures: declining pool of traditional college-age students resulting in increased competition, inflation that increases costs for all institutions, economic recession and high employment, and diminished federal and state financial aid. Keller (1983) predicts that between 10% and 30% of America's 3100 colleges and universities will fold or merge with another institution by 1990 and that the "smaller private colleges will be the worst hit." Baldrige (1980) reports that dozens of small liberal arts colleges have closed their doors, and many others which remain open are plagued by financial problems. Crossland (1980) places all institutions of higher learning into one of six categories, three each in the public and private sector. One of the three in the private sector he calls the non-prestigious liberal arts college. These colleges, according to his statistics, enrolled 75,000 students in 1980 and will enroll only 39,200 students at the lowest point by 1994, a decline of 47.7%.

On the other hand there are those who point out that private colleges are not on their way out. Bowen and Minter (1975) were commissioned by the Association of American Colleges to do a study of independent colleges. They

concluded that their study did not confirm that most private colleges are on the brink of oblivion. Scully (1981) looks back at a paper he wrote in 1968 stating that half the private colleges in America would close their doors by 1980. He says he underestimated the "ingenuity and tenacity" of the private liberal arts college. West (1982) concludes that small colleges face the same problems as do other institutions of higher learning.

Peck (1983) warns us that it would be foolish to ignore the evidence pointing to a difficult future for small independent colleges. He calls them the "invisible colleges of the eighties," borrowing from Astin and Lee (1972) who dubbed 494 institutions, virtually all of them small, as "invisible colleges." (pp. 31-34). Numerous reasons for the difficult times ahead are cited time after time in the literature. Declining birth rates which Keller (1983) calls "birth dearth," and the worsening financial conditions are the two most frequently given for the troublesome times. Breneman (1982) and McConnell and Kaufmann (1984) write extensively about future enrollment declines of 18-21 year olds based on birth rates and interstate migration. Others write more generally about rising costs (Quehl 1983), (Peck 1983), (Keller 1983), double digit inflation (Keller 1983), (Breneman 1981), (Quehl 1983), lack of mobility for faculty (Cheit 1971), (Furniss 1973), (Kanter 1979), (Boyer 1983), tuition that has become too high for values received (Mayhew 1979) and reduced state and federal funding (Quehl 1983),

(Breneman and Finn 1978) as contributing causes of the decline and depression in higher education in general and in small private colleges in particular. Bonham (1983) argues that higher education, although not a dying industry, is now inarguably a severely depressed one. He writes almost poetically about the student decline: "Like some slow but unstoppable tide, the long predicted student decline now sways across the campuses, and it will not reverse itself for fifteen fallow years." (p. 10)

#### Survival With Vitality

In light of these difficulties facing American higher education Hesburgh (1983) says that the only certainty facing the world of higher education as the twentieth century draws to a close is the uncertainty of its future. Peck (1984) notes that the uncertainty is about finances, enrollments and the maintenance of quality. In general, the uncertainty for some is whether or not they will survive. The uncertainty for others is whether or not they will be able to survive as vital institutions of higher learning.

As evidence of the severity of the difficulties, many experts are talking about survival as the major challenge to colleges and universities. Already ten years ago Sabin (1974) ranked survival as the most important challenge for college presidents for the remainder of the century. He believes that a survey of college presidents would find that most of them agree with him on this issue. Bennis (1975) lists survival

as the supreme challenge facing higher education today. Martha Church, president of Hood College, says that every college president must feel that survival is an issue. "If you don't you'd be a little foolish." (Shoemaker 1982) The theme of survival is also discussed by Lyman (1975), Simmons (1975), Harvey and Steward (1975) and Mayhew (1979).

All of the concerns facing higher education tend to focus attention upon the physical survival of the college. Yet, a companion concern which is not usually highlighted is that of the survival of vitality in those institutions which do survive. Can small institutions, operating in an environment of negativism, continue to sustain the energy, the enthusiasm, and the trust that is necessary for a quality educational program?

Maher (1981) fears that because there is such a broad array of negative factors confronting private higher education there is a cause for concern. "Alienation, instability, conflict, bitterness, and uncertainty displace caring, creativity, trust, community, and importantly volunteerism." (p. 3) Johnson (1984) sums it up by saying, "quality is at risk." There are fewer resources to work with and "as a matter of perception, employees and the public think we are not delivering all that we should." (p. 3) Bonham (1983) also emphasizes that the damage is more than just a numbers game. The very quality and character of educational institutions is at stake.

It is difficult to say what tangible evidence is available to know that the quality of education has indeed been affected. However, there has been considerable concern expressed in the literature about the effect that the decline has had on the faculty. And, since faculties are the heart of the institutions (Mayhew 1979), what happens to faculty has an important impact on higher education. Mayhew (1979) says that the "degree to which an institution's faculty in aggregate performs well is related, if not to application rates, certainly to retention rates...An intellectually inert faculty, or one that does not manifest care and concern for students, is a reasonable guarantee of high student dissatisfaction and attrition." (pp. 224-225)

The impact that the decline is having on the faculty is something that definitely must be taken into account by presidents of small colleges. O'Neill and Barnett (1981) found in their study of college closings, for example, a definite shift in emphasis from the medieval model which has the faculty at the heart of the institution to one which focuses on the physical and financial circumstances of the campus. It is not clear from their study what has happened to the faculty of the closed institutions, but it is clear that the faculty were less important than the survival of the physical plant and bank accounts. Kanter (1979) wrote about her concern for the quality of education when faculty are demoralized and administrators feel overused and underappreciated. Furness (1981) claims that the academic

life has lost many of the characteristics that once attracted intelligent, energetic, self-starting, and service oriented persons, and that it is imperative we find ways to improve the plight of faculty.

During the past ten years there has been much written about faculty development, early retirement, faculty exchanges and other activities to restore to the college environment those elements which are supportive of the growth and development of persons. Yet as late as 1980 Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, tells us that American Colleges are no longer the creative institutions they could be. Kanter (1979) incisively examines the lack of opportunity inherent in the structure of colleges and graphically notes the "stuckness" many faculty feel. At the personal level, another thoughtful study completed by Rice (1980) documents the growing disillusionment of a band of academic idealists. These young people, armed with Danforth Fellowships, plunged into teaching careers, determined to open minds and otherwise lead their students toward the idealized goals of liberal education. Having been caught unaware by the current climatic shifts in higher education, they are, at mid-career, literally saying, "Is this all there is?"

Melendez and Guzman (1983) refer to burnout as a significant problem facing contemporary higher education. They relate burnout to the retrenchment occurring in higher education and characterize burnout as a lack of enthusiasm

for work, helplessness and frustration. It is easy to understand these frustrations, according to Brushaber (1982), because mobility is down, retirement ages are up, variety in one's work is harder to come by, and professional development dollars are scarce. National surveys show heightened interest about tension and anxiety found in faculty members who are more and more uncertain about their futures (Ratcliff 1984).

In a book just off the press, Furniss (1984) addresses faculty who are currently successful, "have satisfying jobs, and are not under any immediate threats of retrenchment." Even these faculty do not have a rosy future. Continued success is not guaranteed for them, and it is quite possible that "demographic chasms will open and threaten to engulf them." Furniss notes an important point about faculty, partially explaining why faculty are shaken when the institutions in which they teach are endangered. He has found an "almost complete dependency of faculty members on their institutions for all their professional and many of their personal needs." (p. 6) No wonder then that there is anxiety and tension when the future existence of the institution is uncertain. Peterson (1980) contends that maintaining professional and productive lives and quality education in this kind of environment is extremely difficult.

To maintain vitality, presidents must address the issues concerning faculty on their campuses. Episodes of discontent are not simply localized disturbances in the current landscape

of higher education. More than likely they are symptoms of a larger, ongoing climatic change. Endemic conditions which affect both the institutions and faculty, the iron rule of demographic statistics, and a host of other career-related concerns are tending to erode the bases of morale, or vitality, in a variety of institutions across the nation.

How presidents should deal with these issues is not spelled out clearly in the literature. Melendez and Guzman (1983) suggest that organizational strategies for preventing burnout are implementation of new reward systems, career development programs, informal communication style, and the involvement of faculty in planning and in governance of institutions. Vitality, often called morale, appears to be a function of the levels of energy, the commitment, and the enthusiasm which faculty brings to its teaching, research, and service. Now, many voices are telling us that morale is an endangered species on contemporary campuses.

On the positive side, however, Jonsen (1984) found that even though the environment of small colleges is often characterized as hostile and the goal is survival, there is much evidence that the environment offers challenges and stimulation that can lead to new programs and structures and personal development. West (1982) writes that "small colleges are places where real creativity and innovation occur; where ideas can be tested and possibly institutionalized." After surviving his first year as college president, Levine (1984) writes about all of the

problems facing Bradford College. They are exactly the same problems as every other small liberal arts college is facing. But he is hopeful that through his leadership Bradford College can remain vital. (p. 10)

### The Call For New Leadership

What is needed is strong leadership. Peltason (1981), writing in the Forward of Stauffer's Quality: Higher Education's Principal Challenge, holds out some hope that there can be more than physical survival. Physical survival without vitality would be a hollow victory. His worry is "that academic leaders, administrators, faculty members and trustees alike will become discouraged by the bad news so readily available, and overlook the opportunities and even the good news about higher education's future." (p. IX) To guard against this, Keller (1983) is calling for a new style of leadership that does not yet exist, but is being created chink by chink by the new breed of administrators.

Quehl (1980) believes that never before in the history of American higher education has the quality of presidential leadership been so important. It is central and perhaps even critical to the continued vitality and even survival of small colleges.

Several characteristics of the new leaders began to emerge in the literature. Arns (1981) thinks that the new challenges in colleges require leaders who can find ways "to nurture creative instincts, tap national enthusiasm, and to

build consensus." The Carnegie Report (1980) calls for leaders who can combine compassion and realism. Breneman (1981) and Maher (1981) both emphasize the necessity of leaders preserving collegiality at a time when decision-making will force many painful choices. Keller (1983) and Peck (1983) write about the need for aggressive leadership. Passive administration will no longer be acceptable nor can it be successful in an environment where the competition is keen not only for the best students but even for students who score at or near the median point on college entrance exams.

Of all the characteristics of the proposed new leader mentioned in the literature, the one that seems to be revisited most often has to do with a concern for the growth and development of the persons working in our colleges and universities. Maccoby (1981) attempts to show the emergence of a new type of leader interested in creating an organizational environment supported for its own sake. Maher (1981) and Peck (1984) call for "people-oriented" administrators, where leadership calls forth the best from the various constituencies. Henry (1981) has this in mind when she defines institutional vitality in terms of the effects of this kind of leadership. A vital institution in her opinion "is one in which human values are central to its existence." Individual persons are more important than knowing and adhering to a highly rationalized, articulated pre-determined structure of rules, norms, and procedures.

How will this new leader function at the operational level? The new leader should be aggressive (Keller 1983), interested in creating a growth environment (Maccoby 1981), foster creativity (Melandez 1984), nurture creative instincts (Arns 1981), combine compassion and realism (Carnegie Commission 1980), preserve collegiality (Breneman 1981), and call forth the best from all constituencies (Maher 1981). How will this be done?

### The Role of the President

Riesman (1978) has written that it is difficult to point to any career that prepares one for being a college president. But it is true that there are legitimate and tested techniques of leadership derived from research that can be applicable to the role of president in a college setting. It is especially crucial today when the uncertainties facing all of higher education are threatening the vitality of our colleges and universities that presidents be aware of what they can do to maintain the vitality of their institutions in spite of their critical problems. Presidents are more or less helpless in reversing the trends which have created the situations in which colleges find themselves. For example, tuition and fees cannot be lowered to widen the potential market of students; birth rates cannot be changed; salary and fringe benefit packages cannot be lowered to contract expenses; and, maintenance costs cannot be cut back substantially for a long period of time to reduce

operating budgets. It is the pervasive gloom and inertia caused by these uncontrollable factors that must be offset by activities which are within the power of the presidency. If the demographic analysts are right in pointing to a declining population of high school graduates and if there is no assurance that double-digit increases in the cost of living are behind us, then what can presidents do to maintain vitality in their institutions?

A framework for examining the role of the president is the classical categorization of the management functions. While many different functions have been attributed to the process of management, there is some agreement in basic management textbooks about the list of management functions (Longenecker 1964), (Massie 1964), (Koontz and O'Donnell 1978), (Haimann and Scott 1974). In Handbook for College Administration, Springer and Bergquist (1978) modify the common classification of managerial functions "in order to make it more appropriate to higher education administration." Their classification closely parallels that of Koontz and O'Donnell (1978) and Haimann and Scott (1974), and has five functions of administration: planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and developing. The importance of each of the functions varies at different levels of management.

The role of the president in maintaining institutional vitality will be examined through the framework of these five functions.

## Planning

Keller (1983) argues that the next decade will be a time of great change for America's colleges. To cope with the changes and to lead colleges through the changes with a sense of direction and purpose college presidents will have to engage in strategic planning. Cope (1981) explains that strategic planning is substantially different from what colleges and universities call long-range planning. While "long range planning focuses upon the final blueprint," strategic planning "focuses upon the process." The extent to which Keller believes that the president must actively get involved in the planning is not discussed in his book. However, what is emphasized is the absolute necessity of the president's leadership in making sure the planning is done.

In addition to exercising leadership in establishing the environment for planning, there are two specific presidential roles in the planning process that are often repeated in the literature related to the planning process. First, since colleges must deal with a new array of factors such as the changing environment, the highly competitive student market, and new opportunities for growth, the president needs to be a visionary in approaching the future.

Keller (1983) calls this the "new style of academic management." (p. 73) He believes that without presidents who look ahead, colleges will become prisoners of external forces and surprises, most of them unpleasant. Peck (1983 and 1984) uses the term "future-focused." The president must be the

one to focus attention on a new future. Reinert (1980) puts it succinctly when he explains that the president not only has to have a vision of the future but must "translate it collectively into education practice which reflects fidelity to ideals of quality, consistency with institutional mission, and the realities of contemporary society." This is the imperative for effective presidents in a difficult period.

Secondly, the president's role in the planning process is to get everyone to share in the vision and to work toward it. Hesburgh (1979) calls on the president to provide a vision for the college and to get the best people to share and help achieve it. Boyer (1983) also talks about the need for a commonly shared sense of what the institution is trying to accomplish. While Peters and Waterman (1983) are not talking about colleges in their book on corporate excellence, they make a similar point about the importance of making people feel connected with the mission and purpose of the corporation. In speaking about shared vision, Henry (1981) says that "institutional vitality is traceable to a shared collaborated sense of purposiveness that is still in the process of becoming alive and clear." (p. 40)

### Organizing

To become operational, plans must be translated into role terms. Thus the second major responsibility of a president is providing a structure to accomplish the goals and objectives defined in the plan. Springer and Bergquist (1978) describe organizing as the process involving "the

division of labor, the assignment of tasks to be achieved, and definitions of interrelationships to indicate how each subgroup and division fits into the total effort...It is the process of deciding who is to do what, where it is to be done, and how, and when it is to be completed. Organizing is creating an internal structure--a means to carry out plans and meet objectives." (p. 9)

Although organizational structure is generally thought to be associated with the organization of human resources, the role of the president is to organize, in addition to the human resources, the academic and material resources in such a way as to bring about the institution's mission, goals, and objectives. Therefore, it is important that this function be firmly rooted in and developed out of an understanding of the institution's mission. This ties the organizing process to the planning process.

The literature does not have a definitive statement about how a college should be organized or formally structured. However, Keller (1983) argues that since American higher education has entered a new era, presidents must find new structures to respond to the call for more directed change. (p. 27) Twenty years ago, John Gardner (1964), in his book, Self-Renewal, devoted a whole chapter to the concept of organizing for renewal. Both Keller and Gardner saw clearly the need for educational innovations and the need to organize in a way that will insure that innovations take place. There is more urgency in Keller's

argument because he believes the lack of leadership in bringing about the innovations will lead to the demise of the small college. Gardner argues the more general point that, lack of innovation will take its toll in terms of lower standards, obsolescence, deterioration and decay. In the long run it will also lead to college closings.

So even though there are not definitive statements as to how colleges should be organized, presidents must organize their colleges in ways to cope with the new era in higher education.

### Staffing

Presidents are responsible not only for planning and organizing but also for hiring people with the appropriate skills for the tasks to be done. Some believe that choosing people is the most important task presidents do (Peck 1983 and 1984).

Springer and Bergquist (1978) explain that staffing has to do with the identification, selection, training, and encouragement of faculty and staff to achieve the objectives of the college. For small colleges these functions are crucial to what Keller (1983) calls shaping one's destiny rather than await the fate that will come to institutions without an aggressive effort to manage, to lead, and to govern. A high quality faculty and staff is an essential requirement for survival in today's climate. He argues that "presidents themselves must take an interest in all key appointments," (p. 187) and quotes from Alfred P. Sloan who

shaped an almost bankrupt automobile company into General Motors. Sloan wrote, "An administration may also be measured by the caliber of men brought in or retained by it." There is no question that small colleges survive because they receive a higher degree of energy investment from individuals. The president must insure that there are sufficient number of individuals who can invest such energy.

If the president is successful in securing such a staff, the college will have the building blocks of institutional vitality. However, Maher (1984) observes that hiring is "a weak link in our effort to enhance institutional vitality, as the dreary statistics about bad appointments and turnover indicates." (p. 13)

### Leadership

The 1980 Carnegie report on the next 20 years for higher education lists leadership as one of the major challenges to higher education approaching the millenium. In commenting on this report, Hesburgh (1983) says that we are in a period where we need excellent leadership but cannot readily attract the ablest leadership because the tasks are grinding ones, the victories are compromises where we cut our losses, and the various constituencies are more comfortable doing nothing than something. Cooley (1980) states that "too few college presidents of today seem to be leaders." (p. 69) Keller (1983) says there is a leadership crisis, and Fisher (1984) predicts that leadership "will be a greater problem during the 1980s than inflation, increasing expenses,

declining government support, curriculum rebuilding, or declining enrollments." (p. 16) Yet maintaining institutional vitality demands strong leadership.

Springer and Bergquist (1978) define academic leadership as "the ability to mold the priorities and goals of the institution to those of the faculty and staff. Institutional missions are achieved by people, and it is the administrative leadership that coordinates the functions necessary to reach the mission and its related goals." (p. 205)

#### Development

Just as staffing is seen by some to be the most important role of a president, providing them with appropriate professional growth opportunities and helping them to assume new responsibilities is equally important to others. Park (1984) points to bad morale as a major problem at many institutions. Higher education is experiencing pressures from several directions which have altered the assumed advantage of working in colleges and universities. Park says that "people are staring at their shoelaces. They're glum, and they don't know how to get out of that stuck place they find themselves in as individuals." (p. 1)

Springer and Bergquist (1978) note that the "people-developing function has traditionally been given minimal attention in colleges and universities, but it has become increasingly important under conditions of steady-state economies and staffing and the declining numbers of traditional students." (p. 10)

Maier (1982) believes that the most important idea that has emerged in recent years pertaining to institutional vitality is what he calls opportunity structure. He refers to a work by Kanter (1979) in which she helps us think about ways in which opportunity and power related to jobs and organizations are critical to motivation and effectiveness. Kanter also uses the term "stuck" to refer to faculty whose promotional paths are fuzzy and whose career ladders are extremely short. These faculty, according to Furniss (1984), have almost complete dependency on their institutions for all their professional and many of their personal needs. Furniss also builds upon the concerns about career stagnation, creeping cynicism, and eventual disengagement in academic careers in an earlier work (1981).

Presidents must concern themselves with the quality of life of those who work in their institutions, and therefore for the quality and productivity of their institutions. They do this by providing for the professional and personal growth and development of all their employees.

### CHAPTER III

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

##### Introduction

In Chapter I the purposes of the study were presented along with an explanation of the significance of the research. This chapter includes a description of the setting for the study, a detailed explanation and description of the population, the research propositions, the development and use of the research instrument, the data collection procedures, and the plan for presenting and analyzing the data.

##### Setting of the Study

Michigan's independent colleges did not escape, and in all probability will not escape, the specter that is haunting higher education. There are fifty-seven (57) independent colleges and universities in Michigan. Fifty percent are located in the Detroit area and ten percent are in the Grand Rapids area. Ninety percent are in the lower third of the state. One independent college closed its doors within the last three years, four have closed within the last ten years.

Enrollment in Michigan independent colleges and universities ranges from 44 to 6230. During the last three years (1980-1983) their enrollment increased 10.5%. However, in a recent report on the state of higher education in Michigan, the Lansing based Public Sector Consultants, Inc. observed that the increase is deceptive because the growth can be accounted for by a few junior business colleges (Public Sector Consultants, Inc., 1984). Most liberal arts colleges reported a decrease in enrollment.

Michigan's demographics are not favorable. Breneman (1982) reports that the size of the 18-year-old group in Michigan is even smaller than the regional and national averages.

In addition to the outlook for the sizes of the high school graduating classes, the Michigan Department of Management and Budget reports that from April 1980 to July 1983 the state estimates more than 315,000 people moved out of Michigan. Approximately 110,000 moved out in the year ending July 1983. Even though there were twice as many births as deaths during this three year period the total state population dropped 1.15%, from 9.262 million to 9.155 million.

Other factors affecting the climate of higher education in Michigan and the enrollment patterns in the independent colleges and universities are: the state of the economy, the rate of increase in college prices and tuition relative to the general rate of inflation, and the growth of the family

income. First in regard to the state of the economy, Michigan can best be described as in a state of transition, moving from a heavy auto dependent industry toward a broad-based and diversified economy. In the meantime, unemployment rates in Michigan are 46% higher than the national average. The national average for February 1984 was 7.8%. Michigan's February 1984 rate was 11.4.

Secondly, the higher education price index is rising faster than the CPI. The higher education price index has increased an average of 9.1% in each of the last three years. During the same period the CPI rose to an average rate of 6.5% each year. The resultant rise of tuition at independent colleges is significant. Tuition increases at Michigan's independent colleges averaged 28% from 1981 to 1983, and 155% from 1973 to 1983. Tuition in 1983-84 ranged from \$1970 to \$6922. At the same time state support for students attending independent colleges through tuition assistance or other funding hasn't changed much and averages only \$701.52 per student in FY 1983-84.

Finally, the growth of family income in Michigan has not even kept pace with inflation, much less with the faster rising higher education tuition.

#### Description of the Study Population

The purpose of this study is to determine how presidents are maintaining institutional vitality on their campuses in an unfavorable economic climate. The economic climate is

causing some decline in higher education and it is widely expected that smaller private colleges will be hardest hit (Keller 1982). These colleges will have to work the hardest to maintain their vitality, not only for survival, but for survival with quality. Therefore the focus of this study is the small private college. For general purposes the study is confined to the private, four-year, liberal arts colleges of Michigan. In order to have a reasonable degree of consistency and homogeneity in the population the following criteria will be used in the selection of the specific colleges for the study:

1. Member of AICUM (Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Michigan)
2. Accredited by North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
3. Four-year undergraduate institutions offering the baccalaureate as the highest degree
4. Offering programs in the Liberal Arts or Liberal Arts and Teacher Preparation
5. Minimum enrollment of 500

The colleges fitting the description are: Adrian, Albion, Alma, Concordia, Hope, Kalamazoo, Nazareth, Olivet, and Spring Arbor. These colleges are located in the southern part of Michigan and easily accessible for collecting the necessary data. Since the semi-structured interview was selected as the most appropriate data collection tool, it was

economical and convenient to choose colleges which could be visited within a day's time.

Tuition at the colleges in this study ranges from \$3149 to \$6922 for the 1983-84 academic year. The average tuition is \$5286. Enrollment ranges from 529 to 2519 with an average enrollment of 1146.

Six of the nine institutions have had a decrease in enrollment from Fall 1980 to Fall 1983. The total decrease was 583 students (5.3%).

All of the colleges are located in counties which experienced a greater migration out of the county than into the county. The average outmigration from 1980-1983 was 2339 (2%). However, only five of the nine counties experienced a decline in population during the same period.

#### Design of the Study

The research technique to be used in this study to acquire the data needed to respond to the research questions is the semi-structured interview. This technique is basically a conversation between the researcher and an interviewee with a definite purpose of obtaining certain information (Mouly 1963). It has the same purpose and must subscribe to the same criteria for validity and reliability as other scientific techniques. Because the semi-structured interview is basically a planned sequence of questions asked by a researcher of a respondent in a face-to-face meeting, it can be described as an oral questionnaire.

Jackson and Rothey (1961) note that the semi-structured interview is generally most appropriate for studies in education because it provides a desirable combination of objectivity and depth and often permits gathering valuable data that cannot be obtained successfully by any other approach. More specifically the advantages of the semi-structured interview are: 1) the interviewer can ask for an elaboration of an answer which the interviewee has not made clear or has partially avoided; 2) the interviewee can ask for a clarification of a question which is unclear or misunderstood; 3) the interviewer can pursue leads that appear fruitful during the interview; 4) because of the complexity of the subject more complete and valid answers can be elicited through an exchange between the interviewer and interviewee than would be possible by a mailed questionnaire; and 5) since the sample is small, the interview technique will virtually guarantee responses from all of the subjects.

The researcher has taken the necessary precautions to guard against the weakness usually associated with the interview technique. First of all, a set of guide questions was prepared so the interviewer was able to skillfully guide the interviewee to answer the research questions. Secondly, the questions were put in the desired sequence in which they will be asked during the interview. Thirdly, all questions were phrased in a way to avoid asking leading questions. Finally, the researcher pilot tested the questionnaire in order to get some experience in conducting the interviews.

Care was taken in developing the questions to be asked during the interviews so that the interview techniques would yield the desired information. The comprehensive and systematic development of the questions was based on an extensive literature search and the advice of experts working in the field of institutional vitality. The questions were piloted tested with presidents of institutions not used in the study.

### Research Questions

The framework which was chosen for the interview questions is that which was suggested by Mayhew (1979) and Peck (1984). Mayhew contends that institutional vitality depends on the "timely interaction of established and tested procedures and processes, wise human skills and abilities, and fortunate vagaries of history." (p. 27) In delineating the various steps toward maintaining institutional vitality he refers to the basic management functions found in most textbooks on management theory. Peck (1984) also looks at the nature of administration in higher education in his discussions of the characteristics of successful small college administration.

Using the basic management functions as guideposts, six areas for investigation were formulated in order to elicit information from the interviewees on how college presidents maintain institutional vitality.

A set of guide questions to be used in the interviews was developed for each area. (See Appendix A and B) The questions are not intended to be research hypotheses to be tested but rather represent central themes that occur throughout the literature on institutional vitality. Each of the areas will be investigated in terms of the role of presidents in maintaining institutional vitality.

The six areas for investigation are:

1. Nature of Institutional Vitality. The interview questions in this area attempt to obtain information from presidents and key administrators about how they view the problem of vitality, and in general, how they are dealing with it.
2. Planning. The interview questions in this area focus on the specific role of the president in the planning process, and how the president handles specific elements of the planning process.
3. Staffing. The interview questions in this area attempt to get information from the presidents and key administrators as to how the presidents view the hiring process and what specific role is reserved for the president.
4. Organizing. The major focus of the interview questions in this area is the way the presidents have structured the college in order to keep in touch with the internal and external environments of their respective institutions; and secondly,

how the structure facilitates the achievement of institutional mission.

5. Leadership. The interview questions in this area attempt to elicit information regarding the way in which presidents and key administrators perceive the leadership role of the president.
6. Developing. An attempt will be made in this area to look at the role of the president as it relates to the professional development of faculty and staff.

Two experts were used to determine whether the guide questions in each area are indicative of the issues expressed in the literature and of the issues felt on campuses. The experts confirmed the content of the questions and offered some suggestions to improve the wording and the order of the questions.

A pilot study was conducted in order to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the questions and to improve the interview techniques. After the pilot test the respondents were asked to criticize the delivery, content, and clarity of the interview. Their comments were used to make appropriate changes.

#### Data Collection Procedures

The interviewees on each of the campuses are the presidents, the chief academic officers, and the chief business officers. Each interviewee will be contacted by

telephone explaining the nature of the study and asking them to participate in the study. Their participation will consist of a 45-minute interview in his/her office. Confidentiality will be assured.

A follow-up letter (See Appendix C and D) will be sent to each of these individuals confirming the appointment and providing them with a set of guide questions which will be covered in the interview.

The interviews will be tape recorded to allow for the data to be more thoroughly studied than if the data is limited to notes taken during the interview. The tape recorded data will also make it possible for the researcher to have another person evaluate and classify the responses as a check for reliability. Borg (1976) notes that reliability estimates can be made by comparing interviewer evaluations with evaluations of another research worker using the tape only or "by comparing initial interviewer evaluation and evaluations made by the same interviewer at a later date based on playback of the taped interview." (p. 216)

#### Data Analysis

After all of the interviews have been completed the tapes will be transcribed and the results will be codified into narrative form. The codified data will be checked for objectivity and accuracy by asking an expert in the field of institutional vitality to listen to three interviews and independently codify the data.

Marginal tabulations will be made on how each group of presidents, chief academic officers, and chief business officers have responded to each set of questions. Comparisons will be drawn between the data from each of the groups.

Secondly, the information obtained from the interviews will be compiled for each of the areas investigated during the interviews and combined into principal findings for the research study.

#### Summary

In summary, this chapter provided a description of the setting of the study, a description of the study population, the technique to be used to collect the data, the research questions, the data collection procedures, and the data analysis.

A questionnaire was designed and administered using a semi-structured interview technique. The instrument was designed for the purpose of determining what practices presidents employ to maintain institutional vitality. The questions used in the instrument were based on an extensive literature search and advice of experts working in the field of institutional vitality. The instrument was field tested to improve both the instrument and the researcher's interview techniques.

The population consisted of nine liberal arts colleges from Michigan. Data from the population was codified from taped interviews.

Chapter IV presents and analyzes the data.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

This chapter contains a presentation and analysis of the data gathered from twenty-seven interviews with college presidents, chief academic officers, and chief business officers from nine private colleges in Michigan during June and July 1984. The presidents were asked to respond to questions about their role in maintaining institutional vitality. Chief academic officers and chief business officers were asked to respond to questions about the role of their president in maintaining institutional vitality. Where appropriate, the major findings are presented in statistical, descriptive, and tabular form.

This chapter is divided into four sections:

1. Review of the Procedures
2. Profile of the Presidents in the Study
3. Institutional Vitality
4. The Role of the President in Maintaining Institutional Vitality

The section on institutional vitality provides an analysis of the responses to a proposed definition of institutional vitality, an analysis of the responses regarding the level of institutional vitality present in the colleges in the study, and an analysis of what the

interviewees considered barriers to institutional vitality and how their institutions were counteracting the barriers.

The section on the role of the president in maintaining institutional vitality provides an analysis of the responses to questions related to how presidents maintained institutional vitality through their managerial functions: planning, staffing, organization, leadership, and faculty development.

#### Review of Procedures

The study population consisted of selected small, private colleges in Michigan. Interviews were conducted with the presidents, chief academic officers and chief business officers of each of the institutions. Each interviewee was mailed a list of guide questions prior to the interview. The interviews were taped and lasted approximately one hour.

A semi-structured interview method was chosen to collect the data needed for the study. The guide questions for the interviews were designed to address the areas of management responsibility usually associated with the office of president of a small, private college. In addition to an opening set of questions related to a proposed definition of institutional vitality, there were five sets of questions organized around these management responsibilities.

At the completion of the interviews the researcher listened to the tapes of each interview and tabulated and codified the responses. To validate the researcher's

codification of the interviews an experienced college administrator was asked to check three of the interviews against the codified data to assure consistency and objectivity.

### Profile of Presidents in the Study

The personal profile of the presidents in the study provides some interesting data about the persons whose role the researcher is considering as it relates to maintaining institutional vitality. The profile consists of selected factors: education level, presidential tenure, and previous experience as a college president.

#### Education

All of the presidents in the study had an earned doctorate degree. Five of the nine (55%) earned a doctorate in an academic discipline. Four (45%) earned a doctorate in educational administration.

#### Presidential Tenure

Table 4.1 presents the frequencies of presidential tenure by years in current position. The mean tenure for the presidents in this study was 4.4 years. Presidential tenure ranged from one year or less to 12 years. Those who were in their current position for five or fewer years accounted for 67% of the total. Only one (11%) was in his present position for more than ten years.

Table 4.1 Presidential Tenure by Years in Current Position.

Years in Office	Frequencies
1 or less	3
2	0
3	1
4	1
5	1
6	1
7	1
12	1
Total	9

Note: Mean Tenure = 4.44

#### Previous Experience as a President

None of the presidents in this study had previous experience as a college president.

#### Institutional Vitality

This section provides an analysis of the responses to a proposed definition of institutional vitality, an analysis of the responses regarding the level of institutional vitality present in the colleges in the study, and an analysis of what the interviewees considered barriers to institutional vitality and how their institutions were counteracting the barriers.

#### Definition of Institutional Vitality

Prior to interviews each of the interviewees received a proposed definition of institutional vitality. The proposed definition was as follows:

Institutional Vitality is the capacity of a college to create and sustain the continuing investment of energy by

faculty and staff in their own careers  
and in the realization of the college's  
mission.

This definition, taken from the literature on institutional vitality, evolved over several years out of dialogue and correspondence in which the researcher was personally involved. Each interviewee was asked whether he/she agreed with the definition.

Table 4.2 is a presentation of the frequencies of the responses to this question. Twenty-four (89%) of the interviewees said they agreed with the proposed definition of institutional vitality. Of the three (11%) who disagreed, all were chief business officers. They said they disagreed because they believed institutional vitality must be regarded in economic terms.

Table 4.2 Responses to the Proposed Definition of Institutional Vitality.

Responses	P	A	B	Frequencies
Agree	9	9	6	24
Disagree	0	0	3	3
	9	9	9	27

P = President                      A = Chief Academic Officers  
B = Chief Business Officers

The others believed that although economic health is at the heart of any vital organization, economic health does not guarantee the vitality of an institution. One of the interviewees referred to Aristotle's treatise on happiness to

explain how he understood the issue. Just as Aristotle argued that happiness is not attained by possession of knowledge, having numerous friends, virtuous living, wealth, and so forth, so institutional vitality is not attained by having a balanced budget, positive cash flow, good retention of students, a large endowment, no deferred maintenance, and so forth. Aristotle believed that happiness is a state which is the end or the aim of everything we do. According to his theory happiness may require having external goods, but having external goods is not a sufficient condition for happiness. By comparison, institutional vitality may require economic health, for it would be impossible or at least difficult to have vitality without financial health, but financial health does not constitute vitality.

The chief business officers who disagreed with the definition spoke of institutional vitality in financial terms: balanced budget, gift income, cash flow, return on endowment, expenditures per student, and number of student applications. By contrast, the others used terms such as good morale, job satisfaction, high energy levels, spirit of cooperation, and openness to new ideas.

After the interviewees expressed agreement or disagreement with the proposed definition, they were asked to make suggestions for improving the definition. Table 4.3 lists a variety of responses and the frequency with which each response was articulated.

Table 4.3 Suggestions for Improving the Proposed Definition of Institutional Vitality.

Responses	P	A	B	Frequencies	%
Definition should also refer to students, alumni, trustees and donors	1	0	3	4	15%
Definition should make explicit that investing energy in the mission of the college is more important than investing energy in one's own career development	7	4	7	18	67%
Definition should specify that a vital institution is one that has a climate which allows the individuals who are participants in the institution to be creative, productive, personally fulfilled and renewed	1	2	0	3	11%
Definition should emphasize the importance of the psychological well-being of all the individuals in the institution	2	4	0	6	22%
Definition should state that vitality depends on the institution's ability to respond to the real needs of students and society	1	0	0	1	4%
No Comment	2	1	2	5	18%
Totals	14*	11*	12*	37*	

\*Some respondents made more than one suggestion.

P = Presidents    A = Chief Academic Officers  
B = Chief Business Officers

Twenty-two (81%) of the interviewees offered some suggestions for improving the definition.

First, eighteen (67%) of the interviewees suggested that the definition should make explicit that investing energy in the mission of the college is more important than the investment of energy by faculty and staff in their own careers. An equal number of the presidents (seven, 77%) as chief business officers (seven, 77%) expressed this view. Four chief academic officers (44%) articulated the same position.

Secondly, one (4%) interviewee was of the opinion that the vitality of an institution depends on the institution's ability to respond to the real needs of students and society. Therefore, he suggested that the definition of vitality make some reference to the degree of responsiveness and adaptability of an institution to these needs.

Thirdly, four interviewees (15%) thought the definition should include some reference to college constituencies in addition to faculty and staff. Students, alumni, trustees and donors can be an enthusiastic and valuable source of vitality for an institution. Unless they have the same sense of excitement and commitment to the institution as the faculty and staff, the potential vitality will not be realized. Institutional vitality, they believe, is the collective vitality of all these constituencies. Therefore, they were of the opinion that all should be included in the definition.

Fourthly, three (11%) of the interviewees indicated that the definition should include some reference to the link between the climate of the institution and the developmental growth of all its members. They believe the climate should allow these individuals to be creative, productive, personally fulfilled, and renewed.

Lastly, six interviewees (22%) expressed the opinion that the definition of vitality should make some reference to the psychological well-being of all the individuals in the institution. In the words of one interviewee, "Vitality is doing what we ought to be about and being happy doing it; having the freedom and resources to do it." If, for example, faculty are distracted from their primary responsibility of interacting with students by worry about whether their compensation is high enough, or whether there are sufficient resources for them to do their job, then the vitality at its most important center will fail.

#### Level of Institutional Vitality

After commenting on the proposed definition of institutional vitality all interviewees were asked to place their institution on a scale of one-ten indicating the level of vitality of their institution. (One was very low, ten was very high.) The purpose of this question was to determine how the interviewees perceived the level of vitality of their institution. Responses to this question (Table 4.4) revealed minimal variance of opinion among the interviewees. All of them rated their institution high on the scale. The mean

score was 7.9. Only one of the 27 interviewees (4%) rated his institution lower than seven. The modal response for presidents and chief academic officers was eight. The modal response for chief business officers was seven.

Table 4.4 Level of Institutional Vitality.

Rank	P	A	B	Frequencies	%
1 (Very Low)	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	0	0
3	0	0	0	0	0
4	0	0	0	0	0
5	0	0	0	0	0
6	1	0	0	1	4%
7	1	1	5	7	26%
8	4	5	3	12	44%
9	3	3	1	7	26%
10 (Very High)	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	9	9	9	27	100%
Mean Scores	8	8.2	7.6	7.9	

P = Presidents      A = Chief Academic Officers  
B = Chief Business Officers

The perceptions of the interviewees regarding the levels of vitality of their institutions were based on several indicators. These indicators and the frequencies of the responses for each are listed in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Indicators Used to Assess the Level of Vitality.

Responses	P	A	B	Frequencies
Level of Annual Giving	4	1	2	7
Number & Quality of Faculty Publications	1	5	0	6
Tuition Income	0	0	2	2
Cash Flow	0	0	5	5
Number of Student Applications	5	2	3	10
Student Retention	0	6	3	9
Faculty Turnover	1	3	0	4
Number of New Programs	5	3	0	8
Performance Against Inflation	1	1	4	6
Donors' Attitude Toward College	3	1	2	6
Level of Volunteerism	0	2	0	2

P = Presidents      A = Chief Academic Officers  
 B = Chief Business Officers

Hereafter in the tables, P will stand for Presidents, A will stand for Chief Academic Officers, and B will stand for Chief Business Officers

It is interesting to note that the indicators presidents said they used to assess the level of vitality of their institutions were different from the indicators which the chief academic officers and chief business officers said their presidents used. A majority of presidents said they based their judgment on the number of student applications and the number of new programs at their colleges in the last

few years. A majority of chief academic officers reported that their presidents assessed the level of vitality by the number and quality of faculty publications and the percentage of returning students. On the other hand, a majority of chief business officers said their presidents used cash flow and performance against inflation to judge the level of vitality.

The literature suggested that the vitality of an institution might be judged by such signs as the cohesiveness of work groups, the level of volunteerism among the faculty and staff, the level of instructional experimentation, faculty turnover and reasons for it, and the nature of the issues discussed by the faculty. Only two of these were cited during the interviews. Faculty turnover was mentioned by 14% of the interviewees and the level of volunteerism was mentioned by 7%.

During the discussions of the responses regarding the indicators used to assess the level of vitality, the chief academic officers and chief business officers reported that their presidents' time is taken up more with fiscal matters than with the social and psychological dimensions of the college community. Out of the eleven different indicators cited only three were not directly related to finances: the number and quality of faculty publications, faculty turnover, and the level of volunteerism.

### Barriers to Institutional Vitality

Table 4.6 is a presentation by frequencies of responses by presidents, chief academic officers, and chief business officers of what they perceived to be the two principal barriers to institutional vitality endemic to small, private colleges.

Table 4.6 Principal Barriers to Institutional Vitality.

Responses	P	A	B	Frequencies
Poor Communications	4	9	5	18
Scarce Financial Resources	5	1	1	7
Competition Among Departments for Scarce Resources	2	2	3	7
Lack of Ownership of the College's Mission	2	1	4	7
Unwillingness to Adapt to Changing Times	3	1	5	9
Lack of Opportunities for Personal and Professional Renewal	2	4	0	6
Totals	18	18	18	54

The barrier to institutional vitality cited most frequently by all the interviewees was poor communication. Two-thirds of all the interviewees said poor communication is a principal barrier to institutional vitality.

The barrier with the second highest number of reponses was an institutional unwillingness to adapt to changing

times. Thirty percent of all the interviewees listed this as a principal barrier.

There was not much difference in terms of the total number of responses among the other four barriers. Scarce resources, competition among departments for the scarce resources, and lack of appreciation for and ownership of the college's mission all were cited by 25% of the interviewees as principal barriers. Lack of opportunity for personal and professional renewal was reported by 22% of the interviewees.

More important than the number of responses was the source of the responses. Only one (11%) chief academic officer and one (11%) chief business officer said that scarce resources is a barrier to vitality. Even though the chief business officers thought that vitality should be defined in economic terms, they did not see scarce resources as a barrier. One business manager expressed the opinion that belt-tightening can be beneficial to the vitality of an institution. He said scarce resources at his institution resulted in greater efficiency, increased productivity and a cohesiveness among the faculty and staff. Chief academic officers also didn't think that scarce resources was a barrier, but were concerned about some of the long term effects of scarce resources, such as less money for travel and professional development and fewer opportunities for professional interchange, as harmful to the vitality of an institution.

The majority of presidents (55%) on the other hand, were of the opinion that scarce resources is a definite barrier to vitality. They expressed concern that their expenditures were consistently expanding more rapidly than revenues. Because of the lack of dollars, they constantly had to say no to requests that they agreed with in principle, that were educationally sound, and that they thought would increase the vitality of their institutions.

Lack of appreciation for and ownership of the college's mission as a barrier to vitality was articulated by two (22%) presidents, one (11%) chief academic officer, and four (44%) of the chief business officers. There were no appreciable differences among these three groups of interviewees as they discussed this barrier; however, more chief business officers than either presidents or chief academic officers expressed concern about the discordance created by the lack of appreciation for and ownership of the college's mission. All three groups stressed the importance of everyone at the institution working together for the common good of the institution, and believed that cohesiveness comes from a commitment to a mission.

Some minor differences existed between the way the two presidents viewed the lack of ownership of the college's mission and the way the chief academic officer and the four chief business officers did. The two presidents were concerned that without everyone "owning" the mission there would not be consistency in the message sent out to the

various constituencies of what the college was doing and why. The chief academic officer and the four chief business officers focused their discussions on the internal disruptions coming from a multiplicity of personal missions. The chief academic officer explained that faculty who do not own the mission of the college are often more committed to their disciplines than to the college, and consequently, their teaching and research do not reflect the mission of the college. The four chief business officers were not as explicit as the chief academic officer. They spoke of everyone going off and doing their own thing. One chief business officer explained the possible discordance coming from the lack of ownership of the college's mission in terms of an orchestra whose members are not aware of the significance of the score in front of them. They play their notes as individuals rather than as members of a team. When this happens the conductor fails to mold the group into a perfectly coordinated body. In the same way when faculty and staff get caught up in the detail and the mechanics of what they are doing, the mission of the college is forgotten. In some cases individuals or groups of individuals are isolated in such a way that they appear to be operating apart from the institution, undermining even the best conceived efforts to create vitality.

Competition among departments for scarce resources was also identified as a barrier by seven of the participants: two (22%) presidents, two (22%) chief academic officers, and

three (33%) chief business officers. They expressed the opinion that competition for students, faculty members, and annual operating funds have been the cause of alienation and hostility among members of academic divisions. They reported that faculty understandably are concerned about their job security as scarce resources are allocated. Consequently, adversarial relationships among members of competing departments develop. The two chief academic officers who cited scarce resources as a barrier were concerned that these trends would worsen as resources become even more scarce, and that the competition would militate against open communication and trust among faculty.

The last of the six barriers identified during the interviews is the lack of opportunities for personal and professional renewal. It is interesting to note that none of the chief business officers and only two (22%) of the presidents articulated this as a barrier to institutional vitality. On the other hand, four (44%) of the chief academic officers listed the lack of opportunities for personal and professional renewal as a barrier to vitality. The two presidents who cited lack of opportunity as a barrier expressed concern that faculty in the absence of such opportunities would not keep abreast in their fields and consequently their teaching and research would be affected. The four chief academic officers focused on another dimension of the problem. They said that it was affecting faculty morale.

### Countermeasures to the Barriers

As was already stated, all the interviewees reported a high level of institutional vitality but at the same time cited several barriers that could pose a real threat to this vitality. To eliminate or lessen the effects of these barriers, the interviewees reported several countermeasures used by their institutions. Table 4.7 is a grouping of their responses.

Table 4.7: Countermeasures to Eliminate or Reduce the Effects of the Barriers to Vitality.

Responses	P	A	B	Frequencies
Effective Communications	8	7	8	23
Clearly Stated and Understood Institutional Mission	7	6	7	20
Enrollment Management	9	6	9	24
Creating New Faculty/ Staff Development Opportunities	3	8	3	14

A majority of the interviewees reported that their institutions were employing strategies to promote effective communications, understanding and acceptance of the college mission statement, and optimal enrollment.

While a majority of chief academic officers also reported that their institutions were creating new faculty development opportunities, only a minority of presidents and chief business officers reported the same.

Effective Communications. Eight of the nine presidents in the study reported that they placed a high priority on effective communications. Seven of the nine chief academic officers and eight of nine chief business officers concurred with their presidents on this point.

During the discussions of the responses regarding effective communications notable differences became apparent among the three groups of interviewees. The presidents reported that they placed as much importance on communications with internal constituencies (faculty, staff, students, clerical and maintenance personnel) as with external constituencies (trustees, alumni, church, corporate leaders, and governmental officials). Chief academic officers and chief business officers, however, reported that their presidents placed more importance on communicating with external constituencies. They based their judgment on the amount of planning time, financial resources, and general concern about whether communications with external constituencies were effective.

While the chief business officers said their presidents should place more importance on external communications, the chief academic officers said their presidents should place more importance on internal communications. The chief academic officers said their presidents were spending too much time off-campus with external constituencies and not keeping the campus community informed and integrated into the decision making process.

Institutional Mission. As reported in Table 4.7, another countermeasure employed by institutions in this study to eliminate or lessen the effects of barriers to vitality was a clearly stated and understood institutional mission. Seven of the nine presidents reported that they were directly involved in activities leading to this goal. Six (67%) chief academic officers and seven (77%) chief business officers concurred with their presidents on this point.

The specific activities employed varied according to the president's perceptions of the institution's needs. One president, for example, reported that when he came to the institution the college had no clear identity or mission. He appointed a task force to write a mission statement, personally wrote a discussion paper on the institution's mission, and held campus debates focusing on the identity and mission of the college. It was only after several years of talking and writing that the college community developed some ownership for a college mission. Other activities cited by at least three presidents were: talks to service clubs, personal letters to alumni and friends, luncheons with faculty and staff, faculty retreats, staff retreats, and retreats for administrators. All of these activities were aimed at a clarification of and an identification with mission.

Enrollment Management. All nine presidents reported enrollment management is essential to maintaining a vital institution. Nine (100%) chief business officers and six

(67%) chief academic officers supported their presidents on this point.

Managing the enrollment for two of the presidents meant increasing enrollment. This was attempted through adding new programs and reaching out to new student markets such as prisons and military installations.

For five of the presidents enrollment management involved keeping enrollment at the present level. To accomplish this they were involved in or had recently completed research for adding new programs to prepare students for careers in areas such as nursing, computer science, graphic arts and radio and television. They believed that these programs would assist in keeping the total enrollment stable by offsetting the loss of students in the traditional liberal arts majors in disciplines such as English, history, and philosophy.

Three chief academic officers from institutions which were introducing new programs to attract new students expressed concern that care was not taken to insure that the programs were in keeping with the mission and purposes of the college. They feared that the programs were decreasing the level of vitality because faculty were dissatisfied with the quality of students and with what the changes were doing to the identity of the institution.

New Opportunities for Faculty Development. Although lack of professional development opportunities was identified as a barrier to vitality, only three (33%) presidents and

three (33%) chief business officers cited the creation of new opportunities for personal and professional renewal as a countermeasure to this barrier. However, eight (88%) chief academic officers said it was a countermeasure.

The three presidents who reported it as a countermeasure said they were either directly or indirectly involved in promoting development opportunities. Fundraising, allocating operating funds, and attending campus based development activities were among the specific activities cited.

#### The Role of the President in Maintaining Institutional Vitality

After opening the interviews with questions focusing on a proposed definition of institutional vitality, the institutional vitality level, barriers to institutional vitality, and countermeasures to the barriers, the researcher raised questions regarding the role of the president in maintaining institutional vitality by examining the administrative functions generally recognized as the managerial responsibilities of a college president. These functions include planning, organizing, staffing, leadership, and faculty development.

#### Planning for Institutional Vitality

The interviewer began with the question: How important is planning to the vitality of an institution? Table 4.8 is a presentation of the frequencies of responses to this question. Eight (88%) presidents said that planning is very important to the vitality of an institution. One (11%) said

it is not important. The chief academic officers, however, were more divided in their responses on this issue. Three (33%) said that planning is very important to the vitality of an institution; four (44%) said planning is moderately important; and two (22%) said it is not important. Seven (77%) chief business officers said that planning is not important to the vitality of an institution.

Table 4.8 Importance of Planning to Institutional Vitality.

Respondents	Very Important	Moderately Important	Not Important
Presidents	8	0	1
Chief Academic Officers	3	4	2
Chief Business Officers	0	2	7

In general, the chief business officers were not enthusiastic about planning. They were of the opinion that planning was just dreaming and usually not realistic. In contrast, the eight presidents emphasized that they could not lead their institution very well without planning. They said the impetus for planning was coming largely from the external environment: changing demographics, intensified competition for students, several years of high inflation, and the rapid growth of electronic technology. These presidents said that institutional planning is absolutely essential in order to deal adequately with this environment.

Planning Process. Because presidents reported that planning is very important to the vitality of an institution, it is not surprising that seven (77%) of the colleges in the study had an institutionalized planning process. Of the two (22%) presidents who reported they did not have an institutionalized planning process, one was in his first year as president and he was preparing to establish a process. The other president believed that an institutionalized planning process was too constraining for his institution which was required to respond to a changing environment at a rapid pace. Table 4.9 is a presentation of the frequencies of responses to the question concerning an institutionalized planning process.

Table 4.9 Institutions Having an Institutionalized Planning Process.

Respondents	Yes	No
Presidents	7	2
Chief Academic Officers	7	2
Chief Business Officers	7	2

In the response to the question: "Who initiated the planning process?" some differences are found among those reported by presidents, chief academic officers, and chief business officers. Of the presidents who reported that their institutions had a planning process, six (86%) said they had initiated the process. At the same time four (57%) of the

chief academic officers and only two (29%) of the chief business officers said their presidents initiated the process. Others who were identified as having initiated the process were the trustees and the chief academic officer. Table 4.10 is a presentation of these responses.

Table 4.10 Planning Process Initiator.

Responses	P	A	B	Frequencies
President	6	4	2	12
Chief Academic Officer	0	2	2	4
Trustee	1	1	2	4
Don't Know	0	0	1	1
Does Not Apply	2	2	2	6

First year presidents reported that initiating a planning process was one of their most important responsibilities. Presidents who had been in the position longer than one year spoke with the same urgency about planning as the others, but thought of their task more in terms of sustaining the planning process than in terms of initiating it. Several of the first year presidents commented that getting started by a new president is easier than sustaining the effort because new presidents are expected to make changes and an institutionalized planning process seems to be an accepted way of getting the college community involved in the changes. Sustaining the planning

process after the honeymoon period was thought to be more difficult.

All of the institutions having an institutionalized planning process reported a central planning committee. Although the name of the committee varied from campus to campus, all the committees had representative membership from the college constituencies and reported to the president or directly to the trustees. Table 4.11 is a presentation of the responses regarding the description of the planning process.

Table 4.11 Description of the Planning Process.

Planning Process	P	A	B
Central Planning Committee	7	7	7
Representative Membership	7	7	7
Committee Reports to President	4	4	4
Committee Reports to Trustees	3	3	3
Committee Receives its Charge from the President	7	7	7

The Chair of the Planning Committee. The president chaired the planning committee in only two (28%) of the institutions. Those who did not chair the committee regarded the committee as an advisory group to the president, and therefore, they believed that they could be much more critical and objective in responding to committee recommendations if they did not chair the committee. At

three (42%) of the institutions the president was a member of the committee but did not chair the committee. In the other two (28%) institutions in the study which had a central planning committee the presidents neither chaired nor served on the committee. When the president did not chair the committee, either a trustee, the chief academic officer, or the executive vice-president chaired the committee. Table 4.12 shows who chaired the committees at the seven institutions in the study which had a central planning committee.

Table 4.12 The Chair of the Planning Committee.

Institution	President	Chief Acad. Officer	Trustee	Other
#1	X			
#2				X
#3	X			
#4		X		
#5		X		
#6			X	
#7		X		
#8	NA	NA	NA	NA
#9	NA	NA	NA	NA

Seven (77%) chief academic officers said presidents should not chair the planning committee because by chairing the committee presidents intimidate the committee members and discourage them from debating openly and candidly the planning issues. In contrast eight (88%) chief business officers said presidents should chair the planning committee because by not chairing the committee the presidents give up the power they need to control the direction of their

institutions. In the words of one chief business officer, "if the president does not chair the planning committee, the sacred cows will go unquestioned and major problems will go unchallenged."

The Role of the President in Planning. The next question in the series of questions on planning asked about the specific role of the president in the planning process. As reported above, six of the seven presidents in institutions where there was a planning process said that they had initiated the process. Secondly, five of the seven either chaired the committee or served on the committee in some other capacity. In addition to these roles, the interviewer asked the presidents to describe how they perceived their role in the planning process. The interviewer asked the chief academic officers and chief business officers how they perceived the role of the president in the planning process. Table 4.13 presents the responses to these questions.

Table 4.13 The Role of the President in the Planning Process.

Role of the President	P	A	B	Frequencies
Taskmaster	7	5	8	20 (74%)
Organizer	3	8	7	18 (67%)
Consensus Maker	5	2	1	8 (30%)
Monitor	1	2	2	5 (19%)
Gadfly	2	1	0	3 (11%)

Two of the responses were articulated by more than 50% of the interviewees. First, the role of the president as taskmaster was identified by 74% of the interviewees. They explained that as taskmaster they meant the president has the responsibility to make sure planning takes place, that the process keeps moving, and that there is an outcome. One president said simply "my task is to make it work and to come up with an outcome, because the failure of most planning processes is nothing comes of them." Secondly, the president as organizer of the planning process was identified by 67% of the interviewees. They described the organizer role as much more involved in the mechanics of planning than the taskmaster role. They included in the organizer role choosing a planning model appropriate to the institution, choosing the people with good insights to serve on the committee, setting the agenda and the planning parameters and determining the calendar for meetings and deadlines for the various tasks.

These two planning roles are not mutually exclusive roles. It is conceivable that a president who takes the role of taskmaster might also take the role of organizer. But, it is also possible for the taskmaster to get someone else to plan the process to get the job done.

A third role of the president in the planning process identified by 30% of the respondents was consensus maker. The president in this role is more political than in the first two. The president makes sure a process is followed so

that the plans will be accepted by those who will be affected by them and by those who must implement them.

Finally, two other terms were used by the respondents to describe the role of the president in the planning process. Five (19%) described the president's role as a monitor of the planning process, and three (11%) described the president's role as a gadfly. Both of these roles were more passive than the roles described by the majority of interviewees. The role of monitor was described as checking in occasionally to find out how the planning is progressing. The gadfly role had the president asking stimulating questions of those who were involved in the planning.

Effectiveness of Planning Process. As already noted 62% of all interviewees said that planning is either very important or moderately important to the vitality of an institution. The majority (77%) of the institutions in the study had an institutionalized planning process. The presidents of these institutions had an active role in initiating the process and providing the impetus for keeping the process alive. The next question was: Is the planning process effective?

When the interviewees were asked this question there was a mixed response from presidents, chief academic officers, and chief business officers. Table 4.14 is a presentation of their responses.

Table 4.14 Effectiveness of the Planning Process in Maintaining Institutional Vitality.

Respondents	Very Effect.	Effect.	Ineffect.	Very Ineffect.	NA
Presidents	1	6	0	0	2
Chief Academic Officers	0	5	2	0	2
Chief Business Officers	0	3	4	0	2

All of the presidents of institutions in the study which had a planning process reported that their planning process was either very effective or effective. None of them reported that the process was ineffective. Chief academic officers were split on their responses: five (55%) said the planning process was effective; two (22%) said it was ineffective; two (22%) said it didn't apply. There were more chief business officers (44%) who reported the process to be ineffective than those who reported the process to be effective (33%).

In responding to the question about the effectiveness of the planning process, the presidents revealed a great sense of optimism about and an enthusiasm for planning. One president said: "Before we were just drifting; now there is a greater awareness of our mission and a general understanding and acceptance of what we are trying to do." Another president said: "Our planning has a large number of people feeling good about their involvement in some major issues. We could not have accomplished as much as we have,

with so much support, without a planning committee with representatives from the various areas of the college." The presidents conveyed that one of their messages to the planning committee was that everyone must face up to the hard issues, not just the president nor just the administrators. They believed that what resulted from such participation was ownership of the ideas and quality of performance by those who had to implement the ideas.

At the other extreme were the chief business officers who found the planning process ineffective. Four of them conveyed a sense of frustration at having to spend so much time in meetings. One chief business officer said: "Our planning committee spent months on enrollment projections and budget projections which I could have done in a week if I wouldn't be pulled out of my office to waste my time at meetings." According to three chief business officers the college's resources were more or less locked in so it was a waste of time to put together comprehensive plans to spend money which wasn't available.

The chief academic officers were somewhere between these two views. On the one hand they found planning helpful for making the tough decisions which faced them, such as cutting marginal programs and reducing the number of faculty in some areas. On the other hand, the meetings were viewed as too time-consuming and unnecessary for the few measurable outcomes they were able to identify.

Staffing for Institutional Vitality

The institutions in this study did not have a centralized personnel office through which all or most of the employees were hired. The responsibility for hiring was spread throughout the institution and usually rested with the personnel in each administrative unit. The set of interview questions on staffing asked about the president's relationship to these units in terms of the hiring, and specifically about the president's role in the hiring process as it relates to institutional vitality.

All of the presidents in this study were only marginally involved in the hiring of employees other than the top administrators and the faculty and professional staff. The hiring of clerical personnel, secretaries, maintenance and custodial personnel, and the support staff in each of the units was the sole responsibility of the persons to whom these positions reported.

Role of the President in Hiring Faculty. The focus of this section of the interview was the president's role in maintaining institutional vitality as it relates to hiring faculty. Presidents were asked how they perceived their role in the process. The chief academic officers and the chief business officers were asked how they perceived the role of the president in the process. Their responses have been organized in seven categories. Table 4.15 is a presentation of all the responses of each of the interviewees. Since some interviewees articulated more roles than others, the numbers

in each column do not have the same totals. Each of the responses had the potential of being articulated nine times by each group of interviewees.

Table 4.15 The President's Role in the Hiring Process.

Roles	P	A	B	Frequencies
Formulates Job Specifications	7	2	1	10
Interviews Candidates	9	7	6	22
Makes Final Decision	1	2	7	10
Exercises Veto Power	1	3	5	9
Sells Candidates on the Job	1	2	4	7
Gives Feedback to the Administrator in Charge	6	7	2	15
Totals	25	23	25	73

The interviews revealed very little difference between some of the perceptions that chief academic officers and chief business officers had of their president's role in hiring and what was reported by presidents as their role in the hiring process. However, there were also some large differences between what was reported by presidents and what was reported by chief academic officers and chief business officers. First, all the presidents reported that they interviewed all the candidates for faculty positions. Seven (77%) chief academic officers and six (66%) chief business officers also reported that their presidents interviewed all

the candidates. In the discussions with those who differed from their presidents, they explained that ideally their presidents would like to interview all candidates, but in practice they did not because of their frequent absence from campus. One chief academic officer reported that his working relationship with the president was developed over a long period of time and his president trusted his judgment of candidates to the point where the president felt he didn't need to interview all the candidates. Second, six (67%) presidents and seven (77%) chief academic officers agreed that the president's role is to give feedback to the administrator who is doing the hiring. Six (67%) presidents reported that after the interviews they discuss the candidates in terms of their characteristics appropriate to the job. Seven (77%) chief academic officers reported the same. However, only two (22%) chief business officers reported that the president's role is to give feedback to the administrator doing the hiring. Other chief business officers thought presidents should make the decision based on feedback from the administrator. One president said, "I don't make the decisions. If I feel strongly that someone should not be hired, I will tell the chief academic officer or the chief business officer, but if he insists on hiring the person, I then tell him that the ball is in his court and if things don't work, he is the one who has to handle the situation."

Only one (11%) president said that the president's role is to make the final decision on hiring. Two (22%) chief academic officers said the president's role is to make the final decision. On the other hand, seven (77%) chief business officers said the role of the president is to make the final decision.

Another area in which there was a large difference between what the presidents responded and what chief academic officers and chief business officers responded was the formulation of job specifications. Seven (77%) presidents said that their role in hiring is to help formulate job specifications for a vacant position. Only two (22%) chief academic officers and one (11%) chief business officer articulated the same role for the president. Seven chief academic officers said that they and faculty colleagues determine the job specifications.

In explaining their responses as presented in Table 4.15, a majority of presidents said that they worked in and through their administrators in the selection of new personnel. This explanation can best be summarized by saying that they presided over the hiring process as well as participated in the process. They did not see themselves as making the hiring decisions.

All of the presidents recognized that in the hierarchy of authority they had the right to make the final decision or veto the choice of their administrator. They also recognized that from an organizational point of view it was important to

have a good working relationship with their administrators. Therefore, they defined their role in the hiring process in terms of building trust and mutual respect for those with whom they worked. Their motivation in defining their role as they did was to build trust even if it meant allowing their administrators the freedom to make mistakes.

A majority of chief business officers emphasized the hierarchy of authority in explaining the role of the president in the hiring process. In contrast to the position of the presidents, these chief business officers did not refer to the human relations aspect of college administration when they discussed the role of the president.

Selection Factors in Hiring Faculty. The presidents, chief academic officers, and chief business officers of the colleges in this study were asked to name the three most important personal characteristics they looked for in hiring new faculty. Table 4.16 is a presentation of their responses.

Table 4.16 Selection Factors in Hiring Faculty.

Selection Factors	P	A	B	Frequencies
Interpersonal Skills	1	2	1	4
Personal Integrity	2	0	7	9
Organizational Compatibility	8	4	4	16
Scholarship	1	7	0	8
Teaching Ability	2	8	2	12
Commitment to Christian Principles	5	1	7	13
Willingness to Invest Energy in the Realization of the College's Mission	8	5	6	19
Totals	27	27	27	81

Two of the factors were articulated by eight (88%) presidents: compatibility with the institution and a willingness to work to achieve the mission of the college. Commitment to Christian principles was cited by five (55%) presidents.

A majority of the chief academic officers also reported that a selection factor was willingness to invest energy in the mission of the college. Four (44%) of them said that organizational compatibility was a selection factor. However, scholarship and teaching ability received the higher number of responses from the chief academic officers. Seven (77%) chief academic officers said that scholarship was a selection factor and eight (88%) said that teaching ability

was a selection factor. They explained that these two characteristics were the best indicators for them of whether a candidate will be successful in an academic environment.

Some of the responses of the chief business officers were the same as the president's responses. Six (66%) said that willingness to invest in the realization of the college's mission was an important consideration, and four (44%) stated that organizational compatibility was important. The two factors receiving the highest number of responses by chief business officers were personal integrity and commitment to Christian principles. Both of these were articulated by seven (77%) of the chief business officers.

A majority of the presidents expressed the opinion that central to the endeavor to maintain institutional vitality through hiring is to create a tightly knit campus community who identify with the ethos of the campus and who work together to achieve the mission of the college. The chief academic officers and chief business officers showed some support for this position.

Hiring as it Relates to College Mission. As reported above, all the presidents in this study were only marginally involved in the hiring of personnel other than faculty and professional staff. They did not think their involvement was any less critical for the hiring of secretaries, clerical personnel and the like, but they reported that they did not have time to be involved. Also, they believed their administrators were in a better position than they were to

know the needs of the institution and to assess the capabilities and personal characteristics of the candidates. The presidents were keenly interested in locating the responsibility for this type of decision as close to the information sources as possible. But at the time the presidents said they had to insure that these decisions were made in the best interest of the college.

Table 4.17 is a list of four strategies reported by a majority of all interviewees. They are employed by the president to get those involved in hiring to relate their decisions to the mission of the college.

Table 4.17 Strategies to Relate Hiring to College Mission.

Strategies	P	A	B
Clear and Regular Communication about the Mission	7	8	3
Institutional Compatibility a Priority in Hiring	8	4	4
Well-defined Hiring Process	6	8	8
Correct Mistakes Immediately	7	5	8

Effectiveness of the Hiring Process. Table 4.18 is a presentation of the responses regarding the effectiveness of the hiring process. Presidents were unanimous in their judgment that their hiring process was effective. Six (66%) of the chief academic officers said their hiring process was effective. Only four (44%) of the chief business officers

said their hiring process was effective. As proof that their hiring process is effective both presidents and chief academic officers spoke about their willingness to close a search without hiring anyone if they could not find the right person for their institutions. In fact, four presidents reported that in the past year they either had to reopen a search because the first time through they did not find someone who would be compatible with their institution; or they decided not to reopen but keep the vacancy for a year. Presidents and chief academic officers also pointed to many success stories of their new hires in the past several years. On the other hand, cases were also cited where the process had failed. However, 70% of all the interviewees said their hiring process is effective.

Table 4.18 Effectiveness of the Hiring Process.

Respondents	Very Effect.	Effect.	Ineffect.	Very Ineffect.	NA
Presidents	0	9	0	0	0
Chief Academic Officers	0	6	2	0	1
Chief Business Officers	0	4	3	0	2

#### Organizing for Institutional Vitality.

The nine colleges in the study had an organizational structure typical of small, private colleges. The presidents reported to a board of trustees whose legal authority came through a charter granted by the state. The trustees, in

turn, passed some of their authority on to the presidents. The authority of the presidents was exercised through an administrative structure and committee structure.

Several questions in this study addressed the issue of organizational structure as it relates to the president's role of maintaining institutional vitality. How does the structure facilitate the presidents in their efforts to maintain vitality? How does the structure hinder the presidents in their efforts to maintain vitality? Did the structure enable presidents to have an effective decision making process? In general, was the structure effective for maintaining vitality?

Effects of Organizational Structure on Vitality. Tables 4.19 and 4.20 are presentations of responses to questions related to how the organizational structure helps and hinders the president in the role of maintaining institutional vitality. A majority of presidents and chief academic officers reported that their organizational structure was effective for maintaining institutional vitality. A majority of chief business officers reported that their organizational structure was ineffective and hindered the presidents in their efforts to maintain vitality.

Table 4.19 Ways Organizational Structure Helps to Maintain Institutional Vitality.

Responses	P	A	B	Frequencies
Increases Sense of Ownership of Decisions	6	4	1	11
Personalizes Decision Making	6	4	0	10
Promotes Collaboration in an Organizational Setting	8	5	1	14
Enhances Creative Problem Solving	4	6	1	11
Improves the Quality of Decisions	5	5	0	10

Table 4.20 Ways Organizational Structure Hinders Institutional Vitality

Responses	P	A	B	Frequencies
Undermines Authority of the Administrators	1	1	6	8
Reduces the Quality of Decisions	1	0	4	5
Provides Authority Without Accountability	2	2	5	9
Stifles Communication	3	2	2	7
Consumes an inordinate amount of time for decision making	4	4	6	14

Eight (88%) of the presidents and five (55%) of the chief academic officers said that the organizational structure promoted collaboration especially among faculty and sometimes among faculty and academic staff on issues relating to academic matters. By contrast, only one (11%) chief

business officer articulated that the organizational structure promoted collaboration. Six (66%) presidents and four (44%) chief academic officers reported that the organizational structure personalized decision-making by encouraging the participation of many members of the college community in the decision-making process. Over 60% of the presidents and 40% of the chief academic officers also pointed out that the organizational structure increased the sense of ownership that people felt about the decisions, and over 50% of both groups said it improved the quality of the decisions. Six (66%) of the chief academic officers also reported that creative problem solving was enhanced by the structure.

Some of the presidents and chief academic officers also pointed out ways in which the organizational structure hinders institutional vitality. For example, four (40%) presidents and four (40%) chief academic officers talked about the substantial amounts of faculty time devoted to lengthy committee meetings, taking faculty away from their central function in the learning process. Even though they believed certain economies of time could be realized, they also believed that by its very nature the process of making decisions through the committee structure is very time-consuming. Another way a minority of presidents and chief academic officers believed the organizational structure hinders institutional vitality is that it provides authority for making decisions without assigning accountability.

In contrast to the responses by presidents and chief academic officers, almost all of the responses by the chief business officers are to ways the organizational structure hinders institutional vitality. A majority of chief business officers reported that the organizational structure hinders the vitality of their institutions by: undermining the authority of administrators, providing authority without accountability, and consuming an inordinate amount of time for decision making.

Four chief business officers also reported that the organizational structure hinders institutional vitality by reducing the quality of decisions. They said that decisions made by committees are beyond the professional competence of those on the committees making the decisions. Thus the administrators who are trained and educated for decision making in their areas of expertise are at the mercy of those who serve on committees.

Effectiveness of the Organizational Structure. Table 4.21 is a presentation of the responses concerning the effectiveness of the organizational structure in maintaining institutional vitality.

Table 4.21 Effectiveness of the Organizational Structure  
in Maintaining Institutional Vitality.

Respondents	Yes	No
Presidents	9	0
Chief Academic Officers	7	2
Chief Business Officers	3	6

All (100%) of the presidents and seven (77%) chief academic officers reported that their organizational structure is effective for the president in maintaining institutional vitality. Sixty-seven percent of the chief business officers reported that the organizational structure was not effective for the president in maintaining institutional vitality.

#### Leadership for Institutional Vitality

The purpose of the questions regarding leadership was fourfold: 1) to establish whether presidents are successful leaders; 2) to establish how presidents perceived themselves in the leadership role and how chief academic officers and chief business officers perceived their presidents in the leadership role; 3) to establish what traits the presidents had that were associated with their leadership success; and 4) to establish the communication strategies of presidents both for keeping informed about the college and for communicating with the various college constituencies.

Leadership Success. There was a difference between how presidents perceived themselves in terms of successful leadership and how they were perceived by their chief academic and business officers. Table 4.22 is a presentation of their responses.

Table 4.22 Leadership Success.

Respondents	Very Successful	Moderately Successful	Not Successful
Presidents	7	2	0
Chief Academic Officers	2	6	1
Chief Business Officers	1	5	3

As can be seen from the table approximately 85% of all the responses say that the presidents are either very successful or moderately successful. While 77% of the presidents think they are very successful only 22% of the chief academic officers and 11% of the chief business officers think their presidents are very successful. Only one chief academic officer and three chief business officers reported that their presidents are not successful leaders.

Leadership Styles. Table 4.23 is a presentation of responses regarding how presidents perceived themselves in a leadership role and how the chief academic officers and chief business officers perceived their presidents. Seven (77%) presidents said their leadership can be described in terms of having a high degree of trust and confidence in faculty and

staff and especially in their chief administrative officers. They identified this trust as a strength of their leadership; and because of this trust they were able to let others make decisions without feeling that they were jeopardizing the good of the institution.

Table 4.23 Leadership Style of President.

Leadership Style	P	A	B	Frequencies
President's relationship to subordinates characterized by high level of trust; shared decision making	7	7	6	20
President has no trust in subordinates; president rarely involves others in decision making	1	0	1	2
President has some trust in subordinates; president involves others in some decisions, but reserves the major decisions for himself	1	2	2	5

Seven (77%) chief academic officers and six (66%) chief business officers described their presidents in the same way. They characterized their own relationship with their presidents and their presidents' relationship with the rest of the college community as built on this high level of trust.

It is interesting to note that those who described their presidents as successful leaders were the same ones who characterized their presidents as having a high level of trust in their subordinates. However, one chief academic officer said his president was moderately successful without showing the high level of trust.

One president described himself as authoritarian, having no confidence in his administrators and rarely involving them in decisions. He was uncertain whether making decisions himself resulted from a distrust in others or simply from a desire to do things quickly. Although one chief business officer also described his president as authoritarian, he was describing a different president than the one who described himself as authoritarian.

Those who described their presidents as having a high level of trust reported that this made a difference in terms of how they felt about themselves and about their institutions. They also said they believed it had a positive effect on the vitality of their institutions.

Leadership Traits. The interview question regarding the leadership traits of the president was intended to elicit responses concerning traits which enhance the effectiveness of presidents in their leadership role. From the responses in Table 4.24 we can see that presidents, chief academic officers and chief business officers all differed, with one exception, on the leadership traits of the president. A majority of presidents reported that the traits which

enhanced their effectiveness as president were good communication skills and problem-solving ability; a majority of chief academic officers reported selfless dedication and personal interest in others; and a majority of chief business officers cited problem-solving and supervisory ability.

Table 4.24 Leadership Traits of President.

Leadership Traits	P	A	B	Frequencies
Trust in Others	7	2	1	10
Selfless Dedication	0	7	2	9
Personal Interest in each Individual in the Institution	2	7	2	11
Problem-Solving Ability	8	1	6	15
Supervisory Ability	1	1	7	9

Although a majority of presidents and a majority of chief business officers both said that problem-solving ability enhanced the effectiveness of the president, there was a difference in their responses in that the chief business officers cited the president's personal ability to solve problems and the presidents spoke about the need for speed and thoroughness in being alerted to problems and getting a fast institutional response through relevant data gathering, analysis and decisions. This difference may be important if it portrays a fundamental difference between how the chief business officers and the presidents perceive the role of the president. The chief business managers

continually alluded to the ultimate authority of the president to get things done. The presidents, on the other hand, spoke of their concern about getting things done through other people and the need, therefore, to balance humanistic values with attention to the mission of the college. The focus for the presidents is on leadership, while the focus for the chief business officers is authority.

Communication. As reported above, poor communication is a barrier to institutional vitality. Effective communication is necessary both for receiving relevant information for decision making and for sending information so others can act responsibly. The purpose of the questions on communication as it relates to the leadership function was twofold: 1) to elicit the forms of communication presidents find most effective when they communicate with the various constituencies of the college, and 2) to identify how presidents get the information they need to lead their institutions.

Table 4.25 is a presentation of responses relative to the first point. Presidents reported unanimously that face-to-face communication is their most effective and most preferred form of communication. They used it almost exclusively for communicating with their chief administrative officers, and whenever time permitted for communicating with the other constituencies of the college. The time needed for face-to-face communication was sometimes prohibitive. Because face-to-face communication was considered the most

effective and preferred form of communication, three presidents reported that they designed their administrative offices to facilitate such communication. Six (66%) of the colleges in the study had all of the major administrative offices located in the same building, usually in very close proximity to each other.

Table 4.25 Most Effective Form of Communication Presidents Used When Communicating with Their Chief Administrative Officers.

Form of Communication	P	A	B	Frequencies
Face to Face	9	7	6	22
Memo	0	2	3	5

The responses of the chief academic officers and chief business officers were similar to those of the presidents except they were not unanimous. Two chief academic officers and three chief business officers said the memo is the most effective form of communication.

The other area of interest related to communication was how presidents received the information they needed to lead their institutions. Table 4.26 is a presentation of the responses.

Table 4.26 Principal Source of Information for Presidents.

Sources of Information	P	A	B	Frequencies
Grapevine	1	2	0	3
Administrative Officers	7	5	4	16
Students	0	1	1	2
Confidants	1	1	3	5
Don't Know	0	0	1	1

The responses are concentrated on administrative officers. A majority of the presidents and chief academic officers and slightly less than a majority of the chief business officers reported that presidents get the information they need from the administrative officers. It is interesting to note that three (33%) of the chief business officers cited confidants as the principal source of information for presidents. The grapevine and students were also reported by some as principal sources of information.

#### Faculty Development for Institutional Vitality

The literature points out that colleges in the 80s are not automatically providing an environment of opportunity for professional growth, and concludes that colleges are required to work harder to create these opportunities. The focus of the questions in the area of faculty development was to explore whether colleges are indeed creating new opportunities for faculty development and what the role of the president is.

Faculty Development Programs. All the colleges in the study claimed to have some type of faculty development program. The origin of some of the programs reached back into the last century with the beginning of a sabbatical leave program, but it wasn't until the 1970s and later that these colleges began programs with a greater variety of development activities. Also, in the 1970s the encouragement of faculty members to participate in the faculty development program represented a change.

A variety of faculty development activities were reported on each of the campuses. The most common opportunities available were sabbatical leaves, financial support for attendance at professional meetings and small grants (\$1,000 - \$2,000) allocated on the basis of competitive proposals for such things as summer study and involvement in a research project. The amount of money available for faculty development varied from campus to campus.

Objectives of Faculty Development Programs. The objectives of faculty development programs at the colleges in this study varied in terms of how they were reported by the presidents, chief academic officers, and chief business officers. Table 4.27 lists four objectives which the researcher used to categorize the responses. Two of the objectives relate to the personal and professional renewal of faculty members as individuals and as professionals; one of

the objectives relates to student learning and services; and one relates to institutional renewal.

Table 4.27 Objectives of Faculty Development Programs.

Objectives of Faculty Development Programs	P	A	B
To provide opportunities for faculty to renew their intellectual vitality to further their personal and professional growth	5	8	4
To give faculty an opportunity to prepare for career change	2	6	2
To improve student learning and services	4	2	6
To prepare for the future vitality and viability of the college	7	4	2

Preparing for career change is an objective for only two (22%) of the presidents and the same for chief business officers. The literature points out that it is important for faculty to have opportunities for exploring career change so they don't feel trapped in their current position. However, six (66%) chief academic officers listed preparing for career change as an objective.

The responses of the presidents, chief academic officers, and chief business officers differed in that a majority of presidents listed institutional renewal and personal and professional growth as objectives; a majority of chief academic officers cited personal and professional growth as well as preparing for career change; and a majority

of chief business officers reported improving student learning and services. It is difficult to say what these differences mean other than the fact that they are different is significant.

Those presidents who reported that professional growth is an objective of their faculty development programs said that faculty are an integral part of any plan for vitality. Whatever is done by way of changing or adding programs, for example, must be done by faculty. In order to do these things well faculty must stay at the cutting edge of their disciplines, and faculty development programs can help them.

The Role of the President in Faculty Development Programs. The data does not give a clear indication of the role of the president in faculty development programs. In Table 4.28 we can see that a large majority of all the interviewees reported that the president delegates responsibility for the faculty development program to the chief academic officer.

Table 4.28 President's Role in Faculty Development.

Respondent	P	A	B	Frequencies
Raises Funds	3	3	3	9
Attends Functions	4	3	1	8
Allocates Funds	5	3	2	10
Seeks Opportunities for Faculty Development	1	0	0	1
Creates a Climate Where Faculty Development is Encouraged	2	4	0	6
Delegates Responsibility	8	9	7	24

One president said that his role is simply to bring in the resources. Another reported that he is supportive of the program and plays a role in making sure resources are allocated during the budgeting process. Another kind of support, articulated by four of the presidents, is taking the time to attend sessions where faculty are gathered to discuss ideas. Four chief academic officers reported that at best their presidents accepted responsibility for creating a climate where faculty were encouraged to do intellectually stimulating things. Financial support, of course, was important, but even more important was having the sense that development activities were valued and expected and perhaps even rewarded.

Effectiveness of Faculty Development Programs. What is surprising is that neither presidents, chief academic officers, nor chief business officers reported any attempt to

measure the effectiveness of their faculty development programs. All but two of them reported that their faculty development programs were very important or important (see Table 4.29) and that their programs were successful based on the number of participants. All of them reported that they would like to have more money for their programs so they could do more of what they are already doing.

Table 4.29 Importance of Having a Faculty Development Program.

Respondents	Very Important	Important	Not Important
Presidents	7	2	0
Chief Academic Officers	9	0	0
Chief Business Officers	2	5	2

Just as the data does not give a clear indication of the role of the president in faculty development programs, the data does not give a clear indication of how effective these institutions were in creating new growth opportunities for their faculty and how what they are doing relates to the vitality of their institutions.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY OF THE STUDY AND MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is divided into five sections:

1. Summary of the Study
2. Summary of the Major Findings
3. Observations, Discussions, and Conclusions
4. Recommendations for Further Research
5. Recommendations for College Presidents

#### Summary of the Study

##### Development of the Research Project

The recent literature on higher education reveals that colleges and universities are facing difficult economic times. Some experts predict that between 10% and 30% of America's 3100 colleges and universities will close their doors or merge with other institutions by 1995. The literature suggests that this economic climate is affecting the vitality of all institutions of higher education.

In response to this reality the literature calls for new leadership to create and maintain the vitality of our colleges and universities. Most of the research focuses on the characteristics new leaders must have to be successful in

the current climate and on the charges to the new leaders. What is not in the literature is the more practical side of the question of what presidents must do to maintain institutional vitality.

The investigator's long-standing interest in the vitality of small private colleges and the paucity of relevant literature and research on this subject led to the development and definition of this research study.

#### Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study defined in Chapter I were:

1. To identify and describe the practices employed by presidents of selected independent, liberal arts colleges in Michigan in order to maintain institutional vitality.
2. To identify the perceptions of presidents and selected administrators regarding the effectiveness of these practices in influencing the level of vitality of their colleges.

#### Design of the Study

To provide a basic framework for the study, the researcher proposed a definition of institutional vitality and formulated five sets of research questions based on the typical managerial responsibilities of presidents of small liberal arts colleges.

The questions were not intended to be research hypotheses to be tested but rather as representing central themes that occur throughout the literature on institutional

vitality. Each of the areas was investigated in terms of the role of the president in maintaining institutional vitality.

Data on each of the questions was collected by means of a semi-structured interview with the presidents, chief academic officers, and chief business officers of each institution in the study.

#### Study Population

The study population consisted of nine private, four-year, liberal arts colleges in Michigan. The criteria used in their selection were: member of AICUM, accredited by North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, four-year undergraduate institution offering the baccalaureate as the highest degree, minimum enrollment of 500.

#### Data Collection

The research technique used in the study was the semi-structured interview. A set of guide questions was pilot tested prior to the interviews with four experienced college administrators. The guide questions were then mailed to all the interviewees.

The interviews were conducted in the offices of the interviewees and took approximately one hour. All of the interviews were tape recorded.

The data consisted of the responses from 27 personal interviews conducted by the researcher. The researcher's codification of the responses was validated by the expert judgment of an experienced college administrator.

### Summary of the Major Findings

The findings presented in this chapter are organized according to the two principal areas addressed in the interviews:

1. The Nature of Institutional Vitality
2. The Role of the President in Maintaining Institutional Vitality

#### The Nature of Institutional Vitality

The research on the nature of institutional vitality was divided into four sections: definition of institutional vitality, the level of institutional vitality present in the colleges in the study, barriers to institutional vitality, and goals to counteract the barriers.

##### A. Definition of Institutional Vitality.

Institutional vitality was understood by presidents and chief academic officers, and to some extent by chief business officers, as conceptually related to the social-psychological well-being and enhancement of individuals. Terms and phrases used frequently during the interviews were good morale, high energy, job satisfaction, creative ideas and openness to innovation. They accepted the following as a working definition:

Institutional vitality is the capacity of a college to create and maintain the continuing investment of energy by faculty and staff in their own careers and in the realization of the college's mission.

Disagreement came only from three chief business officers who believed that a definition of vitality must be stated in economic terms because vitality, in their view,

depends on the economic health of the institution. According to them institutional vitality should be defined in terms of performance against inflation, cash flow, return on endowment, money set aside for maintenance, number of student applications relative to enrollment, expenditures per student and the like.

B. Level of Institutional Vitality. In spite of the economic climate in Michigan and its impact on private, liberal arts colleges there was unanimous agreement among all those interviewed at the nine institutions that the level of vitality at their institutions was high. The mean score on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high) was 7.9.

The indicators presidents used to assess the level of institutional vitality as reported by presidents were different from those reported by chief academic officers and chief business officers. A majority of presidents said they based their judgment on the number of student applications and the number of new programs at their colleges in the last few years. A majority of the chief academic officers reported that their presidents judged the level of vitality by the number and quality of faculty publications and the rate of student retention. On the other hand, a majority of chief business officers said their presidents used cash flow and performance against inflation to judge the level of vitality.

C. Barriers to Institutional Vitality. Even though all the interviewees said the level of vitality at their

institution was high, they all reported some barriers to vitality endemic to small colleges. Six barriers were cited:

1. poor communication,
2. scarce financial resources,
3. competition between departments for scarce revenues,
4. lack of ownership of college's mission,
5. unwillingness to adapt to changing times, and
6. lack of opportunities for personal and professional renewal.

Among these, poor communications was cited by two-thirds as the principal barrier to vitality.

D. Countermeasures to the Barriers. In response to the barriers to institutional vitality reported by the interviewees, the study identified four countermeasures to the barriers employed by some or all of the colleges in the study:

1. effective communications with internal and external constituencies,
2. a clearly stated college mission,
3. an effective enrollment management plan, and
4. increased opportunities for faculty and staff development.

#### The Role of the President in Maintaining Institutional Vitality

The study examined ways the president maintained institutional vitality through the managerial function usually associated with the position of president in a small college: planning, staffing, organization, leadership, and development. There are several major findings in each of these areas.

A. Planning. There are five major findings from the research on how presidents maintained institutional vitality through planning.

1. Planning was considered essential or moderately important to the vitality of an institution by a majority of the interviewees.

2. A majority of institutions in the study had an institutionalized planning process including a central planning committee.

3. The president's role in relation to the planning committee varied from institution to institution. Two chaired the committee, three served on the committee, and two had no role on the committee.

4. The president's role in the planning process was described by a majority of the interviewees as taskmaster and organizer. Other terms used to describe the president's role were consensus-maker, monitor and gadfly.

5. A majority of the presidents and chief academic officers in the study reported that their planning process was effective. A majority of the chief business officers disagreed, conveying a sense of frustration at the amount of time spent in meetings without seeing any outcomes.

B. Staffing. There are four major findings from the research on how presidents maintained institutional vitality through staffing.

1. Presidents were involved only marginally in the hiring of all employees except top administrators, faculty

and professional staff. The reasons for their limited involvement in hiring clerical personnel, receptionists, secretaries, maintenance and custodial personnel and support staff were reported as lack of time for more extensive involvement and confidence in their administrators.

2. The president's role in the hiring process varied somewhat as it was reported by presidents, chief academic officers and chief business officers. A majority of each of the groups of interviewees said the president's role is to interview the candidates.

3. There were some major differences but also some similarities between the personal characteristics presidents said they looked for in hiring new faculty and those that chief academic officers and chief business officers said their presidents looked for in hiring new faculty. A majority of presidents said they looked for organizational compatibility, commitment to Christian principles, and willingness to invest energy in the realization of the college's mission; a majority of chief academic officers cited scholarship and teaching ability; and a majority of chief business officers cited personal integrity, commitment to Christian principles, and willingness to invest energy in the realization of the college's mission.

4. Seventy percent of the interviewees reported that their hiring process was effective in the selection of personnel who could contribute to the vitality of their institution.

C. Organizational Structure. There are three major findings from the research on how presidents maintained institutional vitality through organizational structure.

1. All the colleges in the study had an organizational structure typical of small, private colleges. The president reported to a board of trustees whose legal authority came through a charter granted by the state. The trustees passed some of their authority on to the president. The authority of the president was exercised through an administrative structure and committee structure.

2. A majority of presidents and chief academic officers believed that the organizational structure was effective for maintaining institutional vitality; a majority of chief business officers did not believe it was effective.

3. The presidents and chief academic officers believed the organizational structure was effective for maintaining institutional vitality for the following reasons:

- a. it increases the sense of ownership of decisions,
- b. it promotes collaboration on issues among individuals and among constituencies,
- c. it enhances creative problem solving, and
- d. it improves the quality of decisions.

The chief business officers claimed it was not effective for the following reasons:

- a. it undermines the authority of the administrators,

- b. it provides authority to committees without accountability,
- c. it reduces the quality of decisions, and
- d. it consumes an inordinate amount of time for decision making.

D. Leadership. There are four major findings from the research on how presidents maintained institutional vitality through their leadership.

1. The president's style of leadership was described similarly by presidents, chief academic officers, and chief business officers. A majority of the interviewees characterized the president's leadership style as follows:

- a. strong and assertive,
- b. has a high degree of confidence in self and in others, and
- c. involves others in decision making but takes responsibility for final decisions.

2. Presidents, chief academic officers, and chief business officers did not agree on the leadership traits of their presidents. A majority of presidents described themselves as having good communication skills and problem-solving ability; a majority of chief academic officers said the prominent leadership traits of their president are selfless dedication to the job and a personal interest in all employees; a majority of chief business officers cited supervisory ability and problem-solving ability.

3. Face-to-face communication was unanimously cited as the most effective and the most preferred form of communications.

4. The official channels as defined by the administrative structure provided the most useful and reliable data for presidents to respond to when they acted to maintain institutional vitality. Presidents also received information about the college by regularly walking the college campus, attending college events, occasionally having lunch with faculty and the grapevine.

E. Faculty Development. There are five major findings from the research on how presidents maintain institutional vitality through faculty development.

1. All the colleges in the study have some type of faculty development program, but the extent of the program varied from institution to institution in terms of financial support and the variety of activities available to faculty.

2. A majority of the programs were established primarily to provide opportunities for faculty to renew their intellectual vitality and to further their personal and professional growth. Other objectives reported were: to prepare for career changes, to improve services to students, and to develop skills useful in temporary assignments.

3. The most common faculty development opportunities available on the campuses in the study were sabbatical leaves, attendance at professional meetings, and summer study and research.

4. In all cases but one the president delegated the responsibility for faculty development to the chief academic officer. The president's role was defined by a majority of interviewees as securing funds for the program and making sure that money was appropriated. Moral support in terms of attending campus based activities and sending notes to recognize successful participation were among the other presidential practices reported by the interviewees.

5. No attempt was made at any of the institutions to measure the effectiveness of the faculty development program, but the success of the program was defined in terms of the number of participants.

#### Observations, Discussion, and Conclusions

1. The recent literature on higher education paints a very dismal picture of higher education in general and private liberal arts education in particular. Rising costs, declining enrollments, faculty immobility, less demand for degrees in the liberal arts and greater demand for degrees in business and the professions have all contributed to the impression of a bleak present and an uncertain future for colleges and universities. The researcher did not find this to be the case in the liberal arts colleges in this study. All of the interviewees reported that the level of vitality at their institutions was very high and that they were anticipating a bright future. The interviewees were not ignorant of the environmental conditions affecting their

institutions but reported that they were successfully coping with them. Since the interviewees were among the top administrators of the colleges, it is appropriate to ask whether they were accurately describing their campus climate or portraying a bright and favorable situation so it would reflect well on their administration. Would the message have been the same if the researcher had interviewed faculty and students?

2. The researcher encountered a high level of interest and enthusiasm among the interviewees in the concept of institutional vitality. With few exceptions the interviewees agreed that research to illuminate the concept constitutes a worthwhile endeavor. At the same time they recognized how difficult it is to offer a precise description or definition of institutional vitality. And even if the essential ingredients of vitality can be captured from one campus setting, it is not clear whether they can be used and transferred from one institution to another.

There are two points here. One is that the concept of institutional vitality is abstract and illusive. The second is that even if we succeed in capturing it in a definition, we may not know how to create the conditions on a college campus to get the desired results.

The reason institutional vitality is difficult to define is that it refers in part to the lived experiences of those who are working at the institution. What may appear to an outsider to be a vital institution may not be one at all.

Without living there one might not know any more than what appear to be vital signs such as a beautiful physical plant, large endowment, growing enrollment, expanding programs, high retention, etc. But what about the lived experiences of the workers? Is their morale good? Is there a high level of job satisfaction? Does the institution enable faculty and staff to continue to invest their energies in the mission of the college and in their own careers? Does the institution promote creative thinking? Answers to these questions might offer some insights into the nature and quality of the lived experiences at a given institution.

Although the researcher found that college administrators had an interest in the above questions, there was no evidence that they were raising these questions on their campuses in an effort to learn about their level of institutional vitality. In all but a few instances the measures they reported using were economic measures such as cash flow, tuition income, and level of annual giving.

3. Some of the data suggests that institutional changes made by presidents in order to maintain the vitality of their institution in fact had a deleterious effect on their institution's vitality. For example, some institutions faced with possible or real enrollment declines made changes in admissions standards, added new programs, and even took academic programs to new student markets such as prisons and military establishments. These changes were not always fully accepted by those who had to implement them or by those who

were affected by the changes. Consequently, the changes brought about a deterioration of morale and a drop in the energy output by those teaching in the new programs. This is just the opposite effect of what was intended. Some chief academic officers said the sharpest criticism leveled against changes like these came from faculty concerned with the academic reputation of the college as well as with an overabundance of students who were not interested in a classical education and likely to need remedial education.

It is worthwhile noting that adding new programs, accepting new types of students, and taking academic programs to prisons and military establishments did not necessarily result in lower faculty morale. The fact is that such changes may have a substantial bearing on the nature of the institution. Whether the changes fit into the campus culture, whether the changes can be justified by the mission of the college, whether the mission of the college can be changed, and how the changes will affect the teaching and learning process with current students are important questions to raise before undertaking new programs and services.

4. The interviews revealed that presidents are only marginally involved in the hiring of clerical personnel, secretaries, receptionists, maintenance and custodial workers, and support staff. Two reasons cited for limiting their involvement in hiring personnel in these areas are lack of time to be more fully involved and confidence in other administrators to do a good job in hiring. Since, according

to the literature, judicious personnel selection is one of the keys to maintaining institutional vitality, one might ask whether presidents are making a statement about who is more important to the vitality of an institution by choosing to be involved in the hiring of some personnel and not in the hiring of others. Certainly a case can be made for the importance of secretaries, clerical personnel and receptionists to the vitality of an institution. Many times they are the first and only ones whom campus visitors meet. They are the link that many students have with their institutions.

Experiences at the transactional level are multiplied many times on college campuses every day. Whether they are positive or negative experiences for students and others depends to a large extent on the degree of warmth and friendliness and care communicated by the secretaries, receptionists, and clerical personnel of the institution. The importance of these people to the vitality of an institution cannot be overestimated.

5. The literature calls for strong directive leadership for colleges and universities. The data in the study suggests that college administrators agree with this position. For example, a majority of the interviews characterize the president's leadership style as strong and assertive. However, there is also some evidence that presidents and chief business officers differ in how they interpret strong and assertive leadership. The responses of

chief business officers indicate that they favor an authoritarian president who personally sets and enforces policy. The responses of the presidents indicate that they believe in involving others in the decision making process but at the same time being influential and guiding the college with a sense of direction and purpose.

6. One of the conclusions drawn from this study regarding the role of the president in maintaining institutional vitality is that the president's role is conditioned by the realities of a particular campus. The president must know what the prevailing situation is and respond accordingly. This conclusion is based on the comments of the interviewees which could not be placed into one of the constructed response categories. Their comments were made as a preface to their answers to the interview questions. For example, one of the presidents prefaced all of his answers with the following: "In order to understand my role in maintaining institutional vitality at this institution you must know my predecessor. Much of what I did in my first year as president was done because of the type of person I followed as president."

7. The role of the president in maintaining institutional vitality through effective communications was cited frequently during the interviews as a key to institutional vitality. Poor communication was cited by 67% of the interviewees as a barrier to institutional vitality,

and 86% of the interviewees listed effective communications as a high institutional priority.

The most effective and preferred form of communication was face-to-face communication, but because of time pressures all the presidents reported that they did not use face-to-face communication as often as they would like to use it.

While there was agreement among the interviewees that effective communication is important to maintaining institutional vitality, there was disagreement between presidents on the one hand, and chief academic officers and chief business officers on the other, regarding the time the president spends on communication with the internal and external constituencies of the college. The presidents reported that they spent an equal amount of time communicating with the internal and external constituencies. The chief business officers and the chief academic officers reported that their presidents spent more time communicating with the external constituencies. Although the chief business officers said this was an acceptable practice because the college relies on the external constituencies for a part of the operating budget, the chief academic officers pointed to potential morale problems among the internal constituencies caused by presidents who are frequently off campus spending time with external constituencies.

8. The data suggests that presidents have a more active role in planning, organization, and leadership than in

staffing and faculty development. Although the presidents in the study reported they were involved in the hiring of faculty and academic staff, chief academic officers and chief business officers reported that chief academic officers have a more crucial role than their presidents. The role of the presidents in the study often consisted in agreeing before the search on the type of person who should be hired and after the search in signing the contract.

9. The study confirms what is found in the literature regarding the fact that financial issues take up much of the time and energy of the president. Reducing expenses and increasing income while maintaining quality was repeated over and over during the interviews as one of the institution's planning goals. The study does not confirm, however, that the more abstract issues dealing with community, opportunity, security, and the quality of worklife were entirely neglected. These issues were more likely to come up during the interviews with presidents and chief academic officers than during the interviews with chief business officers.

10. The literature points out that colleges in the 80s are not automatically providing an environment of opportunity for professional growth. Colleges, therefore, are required to work harder to create these opportunities and to do so with fewer resources. In this study a majority of chief academic officers reported that their colleges were making efforts in this regard. In contrast, only a minority of chief business officers and presidents reported the same.

Either presidents and chief business officers were not aware of the development opportunities or chief academic officers were not accurately reporting the case. In either event there is not sufficient effort on the part of all the top administrators to provide an environment of opportunity for professional growth.

11. Neither chief academic officers nor chief business officers seemed to have the same insights and perspectives as their presidents regarding the value of the planning process. Quite apart from the numerous excellent ideas generated by those who were involved in the planning process the presidents saw the good will and the self-esteem which were generated in the participants and the far-reaching effects that these had on the institution as a whole. The planning process as viewed by the presidents encouraged universal participation in key decisions, heightened awareness of the college mission and how this mission could be used to give the institution a central focus, and improved faculty and staff self-worth resulting in greater commitment to and excitement about implementing plans. Neither the chief academic officers nor the chief business officers expressed the same appreciation the presidents had for these outcomes of the planning process.

12. One fundamental difference between the position of the president and chief academic officers on the one hand and chief business officers on the other was in the way they viewed the use of authority by the president. The presidents

and chief academic officers strongly believed that use of authority, although legitimate, is not an appropriate means for obtaining commitment to the college's mission. If vitality is related to the investment of energy by faculty and staff in the realization of the college's mission, they did not believe the exercise of authority alone would suffice to maintain vitality. By contrast, the chief business officers continually emphasized the need for the president to exercise authority delegated to him by the Board as a way to solve problems.

Many of the responses by presidents and chief academic officers reflected the perspective of the collegiate tradition in which significant institutional decisions are made by committees. Following this tradition assisted presidents in their efforts to maintain institutional vitality by increasing the faculty and staff's sense of ownership of decisions, personalizing decision making, promoting collaboration among those to be affected by decisions, and improving the quality of decisions.

Many of the responses of the chief business officers reflected the perspective of superior-subordinate relationships within an organizational structure. If the president wants something done, he/she simply orders it to be done.

Recommendations for Further Research

A study of this nature brings to the surface a host of other questions. Much more research must be done on the role of the president in maintaining institutional vitality and how to apply what is learned to college campuses whose institutional dynamics seem to be so drastically different from one another. As a result of the major findings of this study, the investigator proposes the following areas for further research.

1. Social and psychological components make up one of the dimensions of institutional vitality. Research should be directed toward socio-psychological indicators that can serve as reliable signs of this dimension. These indicators could serve as monitoring devices for determining the vitality of an institution.

2. All of the presidents in this study were in their first job as a college president. Does this fact make a significant difference in the research results? An extension of this study should include some colleges whose presidents are in their second or third college presidency.

3. Despite what the literature on higher education said about the campus climate, all of the colleges in this study reported a high level of vitality. Since only presidents, chief academic officers, and chief business officers were interviewed, it is appropriate to ask whether the results would be different if faculty and students were

included among the interviewees. Additional research might be conducted on the role of the president in maintaining institutional vitality using faculty and students among the interviewees.

4. One of the most pronounced differences between the responses of presidents and chief academic officers on the one hand, and chief business officers on the other was in the area of presidential leadership. All three groups expressed a need for strong assertive presidential leadership. Only the presidents and chief academic officers expressed a need for collaboration with faculty and staff in the management of the institution. The chief business officers were of the opinion that collaboration with faculty and staff weakened the position of the president. Further research is needed on the impact that this major difference has on the vitality of an institution.

5. In this study three chief academic officers expressed concern that the addition of some new programs on their campuses, instead of increasing the level of institutional vitality as intended, was decreasing the level of vitality because the faculty were dissatisfied with the quality of students who were enrolled in the new programs. This raises an interesting question concerning the relationship of the levels of vitality to the quality of students. The researcher suggests as a possible question for further research: How much does institutional vitality depend on the quality of students?

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRESIDENTS

APPENDIX A  
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRESIDENTS

A. Nature of Institutional Vitality

1. I define "institutional vitality" as the capacity of a college to create and sustain the continuing investment of energy by faculty and staff in their own careers and in the realization of the college's mission.

Do you agree with this definition?

2. How would you improve the definition?
3. On a scale of 1-10 (ten is high) rate the level of vitality of your institution.
4. What indicators do you use (or would use) in judging the vitality level of your college?
5. What are the two principal barriers to institutional vitality endemic to small, private colleges?
6. What countermeasures do you use to eliminate or reduce the effects of these barriers?

B. Planning

1. How important is planning to your institution?
2. Do you have an institutionalized planning process?
3. Who initiated the process?
4. Describe your planning process.
5. What is your role in the planning process?
6. How effective is your planning process in maintaining institutional vitality?

C. Staffing

1. What is your role in the hiring process?
2. What are the three most important personal characteristics you look for in hiring faculty?
3. How do you get everyone to relate hiring decisions to the mission of the college?
4. How effective is your hiring process in maintaining institutional vitality?

D. Organizing

1. Describe your organizational structure.
2. In what ways does your organizational structure help you to maintain institutional vitality?  
In what ways does it hinder the efforts?
3. How effective is your organizational structure in maintaining institutional vitality?

E. Leadership

1. Do you think you are a successful leader?
2. Describe your leadership style.
3. Name two of your traits which enhance your effectiveness as a leader.
4. What form(s) of communication do you think is most effective for communicating with the various constituencies of the college?
5. What is your principal source for the information you need to lead effectively?

F. Faculty Development

1. Do you have a faculty development program?
2. What professional development activities are available to faculty?
3. What are the objectives of the faculty development program?
4. What is your role in the faculty development program?
5. How effective is your faculty development program?

## **APPENDIX B**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICERS AND CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICERS**

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE  
FOR CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICERS AND  
CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICERS

A. Nature of Institutional Vitality

1. I define "institutional vitality" as the capacity of a college to create and sustain the continuing investment of energy by faculty and staff in their own careers and in the realization of the college's mission.

Do you agree with this definition?

2. How would you improve the definition?
3. On a scale of 1-10 (ten is high) rate the level of vitality of your institution.
4. What indicators do you think your president uses (or would use) in judging the vitality level of your college?
5. What are the two principal barriers to institutional vitality endemic to small, private colleges?
6. What countermeasures do you use to eliminate or reduce the effects of these barriers?

B. Planning

1. How important is planning to your institution?
2. Do you have an institutionalized planning process?
3. Who initiated the process?
4. Describe your planning process.
5. What is your president's role in the planning process?
6. How effective is your planning process in maintaining institutional vitality?

C. Staffing

1. What is your president's role in the hiring process?
2. What are the three most important personal characteristics you look for in hiring faculty?
3. How does your president get everyone to relate hiring decisions to the mission of the college?
4. How effective is your hiring process in maintaining institutional vitality?

D. Organizing

1. Describe your organizational structure.
2. In what ways does your organizational structure help your president to maintain institutional vitality? In what ways does it hinder the efforts?
3. How effective is your organizational structure in maintaining institutional vitality?

E. Leadership

1. Do you think your president is a successful leader?
2. Describe the leadership style of your president.
3. Name two traits of your president which enhance his/her effectiveness as a leader.
4. What form(s) of communication does your president think is most effective for communicating with the various constituencies of the college?
5. What is your president's principal source for the information he/she needs to lead effectively?

F. Faculty Development

1. Do you have a faculty development program?
2. What professional development activities are available to faculty?
3. What are the objectives of the faculty development program?
4. What is the role of the president in the faculty program?
5. How effective is your faculty development program?

APPENDIX C

COVERING LETTER TO PRESIDENTS

APPENDIX C  
COVERING LETTER TO PRESIDENTS

I appreciate your willingness to take part in the data collection phase of my dissertation. For a long time I have been interested in the vitality of small colleges and, specifically, in the role of presidents in maintaining institutional vitality. My dissertation will focus on the president's role in maintaining institutional vitality.

I am enclosing a set of guide questions that we will use in the interview. In responding to the questions, I would like you to think about the role that the president has in each of the areas included on the questionnaire. For example, under leadership, I am interested in how you would describe your leadership style as president of \_\_\_\_\_.

Your answers will be held in strictest confidence and you will remain anonymous.

I will see you about 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, June 20. The interview should take about 45 minutes. Thank you for taking part in this very important topic.

Sincerely,

James A. Ebben

mg

Enclosure

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE OF COVERING LETTER  
TO CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICERS AND  
CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICERS

APPENDIX D

COVERING LETTER TO  
CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICERS AND  
CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICERS

I appreciate your willingness to take part in the data collection phase of my dissertation. For a long time I have been interested in the vitality of small colleges and, specifically, in the role of presidents in maintaining institutional vitality. My dissertation will focus on the president's role in maintaining institutional vitality.

I am enclosing a set of guide questions that we will use in the interview. In responding to the questions, I would like you to think about the role that the president has in each of the areas included on the questionnaire. For example, under leadership, I am interested in how you would describe the leadership style of your president.

Your answers will be held in strictest confidence and you will remain anonymous.

I will see you about 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, June 20. The interview should take about 45 minutes. Thank you for taking part in this very important topic.

Sincerely,

James A. Ebben

mg

Enclosure

APPENDIX E

LETTER OF APPROVAL FOR RESEARCH  
FROM UCRIHS

## APPENDIX E

### LETTER OF APPROVAL FOR RESEARCH FROM UCRIHS

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH INVOLVING  
HUMAN SUBJECTS (UCRIHS)  
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August 7, 1984

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1247 East Siena Heights Drive  
Siena Heights College  
Adrian, Michigan 49221-1796

Dear Mr. Ebben:

Subject: Proposal Entitled, "The Role of the President in Maintaining  
Institutional Vitality in Selected Private, Liberal Arts  
Colleges in Michigan in the Early 1980s"

UCRIHS review of the above referenced project has now been completed. I am pleased to advise that the rights and welfare of the human subjects appear to be adequately protected and the Committee, therefore, approved this project at its meeting on August 6, 1984.

You are reminded that UCRIHS approval is valid for one calendar year. If you plan to continue this project beyond one year, please make provisions for obtaining appropriate UCRIHS approval prior to August 6, 1985.

Any changes in procedures involving human subjects must be reviewed by the UCRIHS prior to initiation of the change. UCRIHS must also be notified promptly of any problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects during the course of the work.

Thank you for bringing this project to our attention. If we can be of any future help, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Sincerely,

Henry E. Bredeck  
Chairman, UCRIHS

HEB/jms

cc: Dr. Eldon Nonnamaker

## APPENDIX F

### LIST OF COLLEGES IN STUDY

APPENDIX F  
LIST OF COLLEGES IN STUDY

Adrian College  
Albion College  
Alma College  
Concordia College  
Hope College  
Kalamazoo College  
Nazareth College  
Olivet College  
Spring Arbor College

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