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What Makes a Higher Education Institution Resilient: An Interpretive Case Study

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Running Head: RESILIENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

What Makes a Higher Education Institution Resilient: An Interpretive Case Study

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

By

Jane W. Canney

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

We certify that we have read this dissertation and approved it as adequate in scope and quality. We have found that it is complete and satisfactory in all respects, and that any and all revisions required by the final examining committee have been made.

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ABSTRACT

Higher education in America is at a crossroads with questions about the value and validity of higher education, shifting markets of students, tumultuous economic times, governmental regulations, demands for increased service and delivery modes, and new for-profit institutions joining the market. This was an interpretive case study seeking to understand what makes an institution of higher education resilient. The study site was Olympic University which is a private, non-profit institution located in the Midwest region of the United States. Interviews were conducted with 19 participants including students, staff, faculty, and administrators at Olympic University. Stories were told by the participants who described a rich history of the institution as well as the profession of the founders. There were four major themes that emerged including the foundations for resilience at Olympic University, success factors which contribute to the resilience at Olympic University, elements that distinguish Olympic University from other institutions of higher education, and the components necessary to sustain current and ensure future resilience at Olympic University. While this may not be applicable to other institutions, this study affirms that higher education institutions are in major flux with competing priorities for limited resources both internally and externally. The need to examine, understand, and support higher education has never been more pressing in the United States. Therefore, the study of resilience will continue to be important. This study provided a glimpse into some of the key issues.

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Chapter One

Introduction and Background

I have always been intrigued by the ability of an organization to be nimble in the face of turbulence, shifting markets, and crises. In fact, in 1978 I wrote my master's thesis about the stories or myths regarding certain leaders in successful organizations. The stories were fascinating insights into various factors contributing to the resilience of the organizations in which these leaders worked. When I was considering a topic for this dissertation, I continued to be drawn to those and other stories about resilient organizations.

Higher education in America is at a crossroads with questions about the value and validity of higher education, shifting markets of students, tumultuous economic times, governmental regulations, demands for increased service and delivery modes, and new for-profit institutions joining the market. Most of my career has consisted of working in colleges and universities; therefore, my particular research interest is how higher education institutions can be nimble despite difficult times. During the years I have worked in higher education, I have become aware that students are arriving on college campuses with ever increasing complex life issues. These issues are demanding additional time, enhanced expertise, and specialized services, thus creating heightened stress for college professionals as well as calling for more agile and visionary leadership in higher education. A wide variety of crises, controversies, and tragedies such as racial tensions, hazing, and student alcohol abuse are pushing institutions into the headlines and media more than ever before. Given these factors, along with declining resources in

higher education (Tarver, Canada, & Lim, 1999) and competing priorities, the pressure on higher education institutions has become immense.

As a senior student affairs officer who has been involved in several high-level difficult campus issues at various higher education institutions throughout my career, I wanted to know more about how higher education institutions respond to different challenges. I have studied and presented about the topic of leadership in challenging times at the local and national level. In my professional role, I continue to encourage my staff to be strategic and visionary as we strive to address present and future student needs. These experiences have contributed to my curiosity about how higher education responds to challenges. In particular, I was interested in what makes some institutions resilient. Keeping these things in mind, I chose to focus this study on the response of a specific private university to the adversities it has encountered over the last several years.

Statement of the Problem

American higher education institutions are experiencing multiple challenges and threats to their existence. These challenges and threats include questions regarding the value and validity of higher education (Archibald & Feldman, 2011); an increase in other stakeholders bringing multiple demands for institutional attention (Kerr, 2001); less student accessibility to state and federal funding (Gilroy, 2010); and students with more challenging life issues such as mental and physical health difficulties than ever before (Levine & Cureton, 1998).

As these issues increase in complexity and number, higher education institutions are seeking solutions that can help them survive and thrive in these chaotic times. The pressures for colleges and universities to succeed are immense, with economic, political, social and demographic trends rapidly changing how institutions can perform their work.

Purpose of the Study and Research Question

The purpose of this interpretive case study was to understand and describe a higher education institution's response to significant adversities encountered in the history of the institution. I thought understanding the experience would help other institutions address these tempestuous times in higher education. My research question was: What makes an institution of higher education resilient?

Significance of the Study

Turbulence in higher education is more substantial than ever before (Crislip & Bush, 2010). Institutions with long histories are closing or being sold to for-profit companies while some institutions are outsourcing the teaching of courses (Tang, 2011). The federal government is launching new regulations dictating the terms of delivery of teaching, financial aid, and loan programs, while students are demanding multiple forms of learning and services with 24/7 access to and response from institutions. Predictions of diminishing numbers of institutions are coming to fruition. Higher education is now part of a marketplace that is new to everyone. Colleges and universities are being compelled to seek new and better ways to deliver learning and increase revenue and services.

I believe the findings in this case study will serve to help leaders in higher education institutions find new and innovative ways to address ever-increasing operational, financial, and marketplace challenges.

Definition of Common Terms

There are a number of key terms that are critical to the understanding of this research. To ensure a conceptual understanding of these terms, the following definitions will be used for this study:

Administrator. In this case study, administrator refers to a group of employees who are in mid- to upper-level leadership roles including vice presidents and deans. Eckel and King (2008) referred to administrators as providing leadership for the institution's various divisions.

Higher Education Institution. The American Council on Education (2012) described higher education institutions as accredited, degree-granting institutions that include community colleges and four-year institutions, private and public universities, and nonprofit and for-profit colleges. For purposes of this study, higher education institution referred to nonprofit, degree-granting private and public colleges and universities.

Resilience. According to Luthans (2002), resilience is defined as a developable capacity to rebound or bounce back from adversity, conflict, failure or even positive events. Crislip and Bush (2010) referred to resilience in higher education as bouncing back, adjusting, and succeeding in response to shifting demographics, political environments, economic markets, as well as increased demand for service.

Staff. Staff refers to an employee group responsible for supporting the academic efforts as well as the co-curricular endeavors (this may refer to such areas as counseling, orientation, and student development) of the higher education institution.

Summary

Higher education in America is being challenged with questions about the value and validity of higher education, shifting markets of students, tumultuous economic times, governmental regulations, demands for increased service and delivery modes, and new for-profit institutions joining the market. The traditional delivery methods used by higher education institutions are being tested with these changes. Colleges and

universities with long histories are closing or looking for other ways to address these challenges and continue to deliver learning opportunities. The research focus on resilience is intended to provide insights to other higher education institutions with decreasing resources available to face increasing challenges.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The initial literature review in an interpretive case study is limited. However, throughout the analysis process and writing of the final dissertation, I revisited and made additions to the literature review. In the literature review process, I used sources including Business Source Premier, Academic Source Premier, Psych INFO, as well as Dissertations and Theses. The search for journal articles and dissertations focused on the following terms: higher education, resilience, colleges, universities, agility, sustainability, and economic turbulence. I was not able to find literature with the combination of terms higher education and resilience. Throughout the study and writing of this dissertation, there were rapid changes in the economic and political landscape as it related to higher education at the state and national level and consequently, the daily sources were helpful in providing current updates as I strived to provide insights into the topics of higher education and resilience.

Initially, there were two main topics to frame the context of the study and offer background for the topic of resilience in higher education. These topics were higher education and resilience.

Higher Education

In the late nineteenth century, there were a variety of higher education institutions in the United States vying for students. Across the country, there were hundreds of small undergraduate colleges established by religious groups and local supporters, fueled with major hopefulness. Many were underfunded and dependent on revenue from secondary schools, which used the colleges' names and campuses (Leslie, 2011). There were also

for-profit proprietary schools that offered medical and law training for students, some of whom did not have an undergraduate degree. At this same time, a third sector of higher education—research-based universities--was beginning to grow (Leslie, 2011).

As of 2010, there were 4,350 accredited degree-granting colleges and universities. More than 1,600 of these institutions are private, nonprofit and over 1,000 are for-profit. Many of the private, nonprofit institutions are lacking substantial endowments and will face challenges preserving their place in higher education (Zumeta & LaSota, 2010). And, while many of the small, private undergraduate institutions remain in existence today, they are fighting to survive. Since 1996, there has been an increase in both closures and sales to for-profit organizations of private nonprofit higher education institutions (Zumeta & LaSota, 2010).

According to a recent report of the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (Crislip & Bush, 2010), with state and national finances in upheaval, American higher education is being pulled in many directions. According to the report, higher education institutions face not only economic strains, but also shifting demographics which are resulting in a decline in the number of traditionally aged students and greater demands from services and modes of delivery. At the same time our political leaders are calling for evidence of results before making additional investments in higher education. Private institutions are affected by these challenges evidenced by declining endowments and applications from prospective students (Zumeta & LaSota, 2010).

In the Midwest region of the United States, the number of high school students is declining which is affecting enrollment rates in higher education institutions. In this

region, private institutions are attempting to attract more students by offering institutional grants to offset the escalating cost of tuition (Biemiller & Brainard, 2011). These phenomenon (the escalating costs of tuition and the decline in institutional endowments) are especially challenging for many institutions as they are heavily dependent on tuition revenue as their main source of funding.

Currently, there are also national debates among higher education leaders about improving student learning. In a recent Pew Research Center survey of higher education presidents, conducted in collaboration with the Chronicle of Higher Education, nearly 40% of presidents of four-year private colleges who responded to the survey said they were concerned about grade inflation (Glenn, 2011). In the same survey but cited in a different article, 38 % of the respondents said that higher education is not going in the right direction (Fischer, 2011).

There is growing concern about the quality of the student learning experience among leaders and members of the higher education community in the United States. According to Hoff (2009), given the many concerns, it is time to step back and review the mission and purpose of higher education. Kezar (2011) suggested that now is the time for institutions to change and is calling for campuses to build that capacity for change.

Resilience

“The need for understanding the development of resilient organizations, leaders and employees—those able to adapt, bounce back, and flourish despite adversity—has never been greater” (Youssef, 2004, p. i.). For purposes of this literature review, given the study topic of resilience in higher education institutions, the focus is on resilient organizations. I was unable to find any journal articles with the specific topic of

resilience in higher education institutions, thus, the focus is on resilient organizations in general.

Before I discuss resilience in organizations, however, it is important to note that much of the earlier research on resilience was within the context of individuals and the ability to be flexible, resourceful, and durable in the midst of adversity (Luthar, Cicchehi, & Becker, 2000). The term resiliency has been referred to as a personal trait or characteristic of an individual whereas resilience refers to a process within an organization (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003). Organizational resilience can be considered the ability of an organization to positively adjust under challenging situations, using internal and external resources, to build capacity to address future adversities (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003). According to Luthans (2002), resilience is defined as a developable capacity to rebound or bounce back from adversity, conflict, failure or even positive events.

Much of the literature regarding resilience in organizations focuses on high risk organizations such as fire departments (Weick, 1993; Weick, 2003; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). In organizations like fire departments, where there are continuous threats of disaster, it has been important to develop effective sense-making, or eliminate ambiguity, in the midst of high pressure situations. The elimination of ambiguity can encourage problem-solving and new behavior patterns which lead to a more resilient organization. This in turn leads to providing people with a clear understanding of what is expected in terms of responsibilities and decision-making in challenging situations while at the same time building a greater capacity for future challenges (Baran & Scott, 2010; Li, 2010; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2007; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). Ambiguity is often prevalent in organizations during crises (Lin, Zhao, Ismail, & Carley, 2006) and

unless an organization can eliminate the ambiguity, the crises can result in disastrous errors (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2007).

This chapter was focused on the initial literature review which was conducted prior to the start of the data collection for the case study. The literature review concentrated primarily on higher education and resilience. There was a surprising lack of literature regarding resilience. According to Sutcliffe and Vogus (2003), given the pressing need for resilience, it is both startling and unfortunate that resiliency literature is scarce, inadequate, and fragmented. Once I began the process of entering the case study site and conducting interviews, I discovered concepts, similar to resilience, that were linked to my findings. These concepts are included in the expanded literature review in chapter five.

Chapter Three

Methodology

This study was guided by the interpretive epistemology. I chose interpretivism as a lens to look at resilience in higher education because within this paradigm a research study seeks to understand something by moving from the person or groups to find meaning. I am a curious person who enjoys learning from others; I am intrigued by people and their stories as I seek to make meaning in my life. I wanted to know more about higher education institutions and how they responded to challenges and adversity while continuing to remain resilient. In pursuing this research, I used an interpretive case study methodology. That is, I studied a higher education institution that has remained nimble and successful despite a history of challenges, with a focus on how the institution remained resilient. The research focused on how one institution responded to difficulties and continued to be resilient while higher education was experiencing increasing turbulence, adversity, and challenges.

Research Design and Its Rationale

An interpretive case study does not have a set design; rather it is determined by the researcher and the focus of the study (Creswell, 2007; Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Stake, 1995; Webster, 2010). I chose an interpretive case study because it offered me an opportunity to study resilience in one institution in depth. I wanted to gain insights about an institution and the institution's ability to succeed using the descriptions and stories from the people at the institution. As I gathered anecdotes, images, and ideas from members of this higher education community, I became more cognizant of what other forms of information I would pursue in this inquiry.

Site of the Study

While looking at various institutions in my search for a study site, I wanted one that had experienced adversity but was successful because it remained agile and able to overcome challenges. I examined institutional histories as well as current enrollment and financial status. The university I chose continually appeared on my lists of potential sites. As I reviewed my notes and thought about my research, it became clear to me that this institution was exactly what I was looking for in a study site. It had a long, rich history of challenges. Yet, despite this history, about 20 years ago the institution reorganized and transitioned from a single-focused college to a multi-dimensional university. As a point of reference throughout the study, I refer to the institution as Olympic University. This is not its real name, but allows me to protect the confidentiality of the institution and the participants in the study.

Olympic University is similar to hundreds of other higher education institutions across the United States that have accumulated rich histories. However, this institution was also celebrating strong enrollments and professional recognition of its graduates which is not typical for all institutions.

I chose Olympic University, a private institution which awards associate, bachelor, and graduate degrees in the Midwest region of the United States, because it has encountered serious challenges over the years. In reviewing the current institutional comparison, I noticed that this institution outpaced several of the private institutions in such areas as endowment, enrollment of undergraduate and graduate students, and financial reserves; despite the difficulties it has encountered.

Gaining entry to site. To gain entry, I contacted a colleague who is the chief student affairs officer at Olympic University to express my interest in studying her institution. She encouraged me to contact the president because he would probably be quite interested in such an opportunity. Next, I wrote an email message to the president of Olympic University to request permission for me to conduct the study. I had conducted a needs analysis for the institution six months earlier as a part of a practicum included in my coursework and I had the opportunity to meet the president at that time. The email message included a brief description of the intended case study (Appendix A). The president of Olympic University agreed to participate in the study and was enthusiastic about the opportunity. I then met with the president and his presidential assembly to introduce myself and the study. (See Appendix B for the document I handed out at this meeting to introduce my study to the presidential assembly.) Meeting the President and his assembly was an affirming experience. At the gathering, one of the administrators proposed a resolution of support of the study which was passed unanimously.

After receiving approval for this dissertation proposal from my dissertation committee, I submitted a proposal for permission to use human subjects to the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board. Once I received approval by the president's assembly at Olympic University, I submitted a proposal to the Institutional Review Board at Olympic University. I received approval from the Institutional Review Boards at both universities.

Participant Selection

Criteria for the selection of participants included the participant's role on campus. I wanted to interview members from all areas of the university community including

faculty, staff, administrators, and students to provide as broad as possible cross section of perspectives.

The president sent a letter to the university community to introduce my work and invited anyone who wanted to talk with me to contact me directly (See Appendix C). Following the introductory letter, I received responses from 12 people at Olympic University who were interested in talking to me about the study. I contacted each of these people and asked to meet with them for 30 minutes to discuss their perspectives on resilience and Olympic University. In addition, as I interviewed various people, I asked for suggestions for other possible participants.

After the president's letter went out, I also contacted several Olympic University community members asking if they would like to participate (See Appendix D).

Finally, the dean of students sent out the same letter on my behalf to students (Appendix E) inviting them to participate. This special email to students was included in recruiting participants because I was scheduling interviews during the end of the term and I had concerns that students may not notice the president's letter of invitation. The letter from the president as well as the letters that were sent by the dean of students explained the intent of the study as well as a plan to protect the confidentiality of participants.

Methods of Data Collection

The goal of this interpretive case study was to gain insight into how an institution of higher education can remain resilient despite major turbulence in the field of higher education. Data collection in interpretive case studies often begins before the study starts with informal impressions before actual methods are selected (Stake, 1995). Given this tendency for developing informal impressions and the importance of remaining respectful

of the privilege I had in entering this institution, I strived to remain careful about not gathering too many impressions before I moved into the data collection stage.

The method of data collection for this study was primarily interviews with 19 students, staff, faculty and administrators. Prior to the interviews, I asked each participant to sign a consent form (Appendix F). As I worked through the design of the questions and data collection procedures, I referred to the works of Creswell (2007), Gall, Gall and Borg (2007), McMillan (2008), Merriam (1998), and Stake (1995).

Interviews. I met each of the 19 participants at a location of their choice on the Olympic University campus. The interviews were each 25 to 40 minutes long. Questions were formulated to obtain rich, qualitative data with additional probing questions included to elicit more responses as needed (Wobschall, 2009). My goal was to gather enough information to create a holistic understanding. The interviews followed the interview guide, including the questions, which can be found in Appendix F. My goal throughout the interview process was to give the participants the opportunity to share their stories.

I used the questions in pilot interviews and with focus groups with individuals at different higher education institutions to refine my interview questions. In the process of interviewing, I did refine the questions somewhat depending on the person I was interviewing, in order to better capture stories and opinions. The interviews were recorded electronically to ensure that I gathered as much descriptive material as possible. In addition, I wrote minimal notes while asking questions to keep the interview focused on the topic. I also was concerned that the recording device would malfunction so taking some notes alleviated this concern.

To ensure that I was capturing the participants' perspectives and stories accurately and to reduce mistakes, I would reiterate what I heard and feed back to the interviewee. In addition, while reviewing the themes, I often went back to listen to the recordings or review the transcripts to make sure I understood the meaning behind their answers.

The electronic recordings were uploaded into a secure electronic data collection file site. These files were sent to a professional transcriptionist. Once an interview was transcribed, the transcriptionist sent the transcribed interview document to my secure personal email account. I printed copies of the transcriptions to review and analyze. These copies were kept in my locked office in my home.

Formal observations. When I developed my proposal I had planned to include formal observations in the data collection. I did not conduct any formal observations as I realized that I did not need any additional information beyond my interviews. However, I had a series of informal observations which included the first sight of the campus physical plant when driving up to the campus to meet the president, noticing the office of the president in my initial meeting with him, seeing students studying in the library and gathering in student lounges, and discovering the campus bookstore.

Document and website review. In the process of looking for documents, I came across an article published by a state historical society. While I cannot cite the document as it would identify the institution, the paper discussed the rich history of the institution as well as the adversities the founder and several leaders encountered in establishing and leading the institution. I did use the information from the article to help triangulate the data that I collected in the interviews. In addition, I followed the institutions' websites

throughout the study process to learn about recent institutional happenings and to enrich my interviews with the participants.

During the data collection process, I did strive to keep my mind open to other sources of information. I discovered a recently published book that included a case study about the institution. Reading the book helped me better understand the institutional transition from a college to a university.

Methods of Data Analysis

Data analysis included several reviews of the transcribed recordings from the 19 interviews, as well as document and web site reviews. I used a system of coding by hand to identify common themes and patterns. I also discovered single examples that may contribute to the understanding of the study of resilience in higher education. Reviewing this data by hand rather than using an electronic theme sorter gave me the opportunity to be closer to the data and better familiarize myself with the participants' stories, and thus, themes from the interviews. I initially marked my responses to the discussions noted in the transcripts in the margin. During this time, I made a list, on a separate spreadsheet, of key words from these notes. After reviewing the key words, I went back to the transcripts to make sure that I understood the meanings of the key words and that my groupings of these key words on the spreadsheet made sense. I reviewed the transcripts over and over to ensure that I had culled through the information and had identified the essence of each interview.

Next, I sorted these key words or codes from the spreadsheet to identify any other meanings or consistent themes. The objective of the data analysis was to make inferences based on the various forms of data collected throughout the study. During the course of the analysis, I searched for triangulation of themes to validate the observations and

interpretations. I did several reviews of the interview transcripts and listened to the interview recordings as themes began to emerge. I identified themes and went back through the interviews to affirm redundancy of the themes. As the themes emerged, I would re-shuffle the themes to ensure that they were present across the different interviews and made sense. At times, I needed to refine or even drop themes. After I wrote the notes and reviewed the paper copy of the transcripts by hand, I became very comfortable with the themes; so I developed an outline of the themes to help me see the larger picture that emerged from the data.

I referred to Stake (1995) and Foss and Waters (2007) to help guide me in the theme identification process. Once I identified the themes I created an outline. I cut and pasted the supporting comments from the participant interviews and sorted the comments within the themes. I reviewed these placements and once again I had to redefine some themes as well as re-distribute some of the comments to provide a clearer picture of resilience at Olympic University. During the writing of the findings, I often went back to the original transcripts to affirm my coding and, if necessary, redefine my original coding.

I took precautions to protect the identity of the participants as noted on the consent form and was careful not to advocate for a specific point or points in the interpretation of the data, which could be a conflict for me. In order to do this, I changed the names of the participants and used pseudonyms throughout the writing of the findings.

Researcher's Bias

As a senior student affairs officer in a different higher education institution, I was cautious to ensure that my experiences did not influence the design, data collection, or

data analysis process. While my experience of working in higher education perhaps helped me relate to the study participants and understand the data, (possibly better than someone from outside of higher education), I tried to bracket my experience so that it did not interfere or taint the conclusions. After each interview, I wrote notes to myself about the interview and some of the highlights from the meeting. I would review the notes to prepare for my next interview. I kept notes in a journal used as a method to record my assumptions at the beginning of the data collection and throughout the process as a means of documenting my biases and trying to reduce influencing the study findings.

As I reviewed the notes I wrote after each interview, I realized it was an ongoing struggle to keep my biases from interfering with my data collection. As a student affairs professional, I realize that I always enjoyed my meetings with the student participants, however, I did not always gather as much information from the students as I had anticipated prior to going into the interview.

The notes also helped me to reflect on the findings in terms of possible personal or professional influences. This may have been something as elementary as being critical of a theme coming from an administrator but respecting the theme if it came from a faculty member. If I thought that bias was possible, I reviewed the memos and went back through the transcripts to address changes as needed.

Chapter Four

Findings

The study of the resilience of organizations (and their ability to be successful despite major adversities and trials) has always intrigued and interested me. The purpose of this interpretive case study was to understand and describe a higher education institution's response to significant challenges it encountered. I thought it likely that understanding the experience would assist other institutions dealing with the same challenges during these tempestuous times in higher education. The research question was: What makes an institution of higher education resilient? In this study I examined the themes from interviews of 19 members of a university community that included seven administrators, two faculty, four staff and six students. The higher education institution that I studied I refer to as Olympic University (a pseudonym used to protect the identity of the participants and the institution). The Olympic University is located in the Midwest region of the United States.

Olympic University is in a former junior high school in a suburban setting. On arriving I realized there were three major entrances marked A, B, and C. On my way to an interview, I made the mistake of entering through the wrong door and found myself passing a swimming pool as I walked into a medical clinic. I wondered where the university was located until I realized that Olympic University is located within the former junior high campus. Inside the main entrances I encountered halls and halls of junior high style lockers. As I walked toward the rear of the building, however, I came upon the campus bookstore, passed a large cafeteria, and finally found a library that appeared brand new. Taking the stairway to meet the study participant, I discovered a

student lounge space full of students, trustee meeting rooms, student groups meeting within a government office suite, and a park-like area located outside behind the building. The front of the building was deceiving. It led me to believe that a higher education institution had just been interjected into a junior high facility. The rear of the building, however, offered sights of a bustling university.

Interview Process

The interviews took place at locations throughout the Olympic University campus, depending on the choice of the participant. I met interviewees in the student lounge space, individual private offices, a student government office suite, and in the cafeteria. The 19 participants included students, staff, faculty, and administrators from Olympic University. There was a range of nine months to 35 years in terms of length of time affiliated with the university.

Of the six students interviewed, four were studying in the same college within the university while the other two students each represented a different college within the university. There were three students who had been studying at the university for the last two and one half years, two students who had been at the institution for nearly two years and one student who had been at Olympic University for nine months.

The four staff members who participated in the interviews worked in four separate areas of the university either within a college of the university or in a support service department. The staff represented years of service ranging from three to 22 years.

Each of the two faculty participants represented separate colleges within Olympic University. The range of service as faculty members was from nine to 22 years.

The six administrator participants represented a variety of roles including deans and vice presidents who served in a variety of colleges or departments in mid-level leadership roles. Years of service at the university among the administrators ranged from six months to 35 years.

The following table outlines the description of the participants. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the participants.

Table 1

Profiles of Study Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Years of Service	Role at Olympic
Ana	Female	11	Staff
Kate	Female	9	Faculty
George	Male	2.5	Student
Elizabeth	Female	19	Administrator
Chris	Male	6 months	Administrator
Margaret	Female	22	Staff
Juanita	Female	3	Staff
Seamus	Male	9	Administrator
Adrienne	Female	9 months	Student
Eartha	Female	8	Staff
Hugh	Male	2	Student
Anthony	Male	9	Administrator
Patrick	Male	2	Student
Ricardo	Male	2	Student
Melody	Female	2	Student
Jeff	Male	35	Administrator
David	Male	25	Faculty
Colleen	Female	23	Administrator
Thomas	Male	11	Administrator

Data Analysis Process

The data collected from these interviews were analyzed through a series of steps. I decided not to use an electronic form of coding or analysis in order to have a closer look at the data and provide a clearer sense of the themes from the data. Some themes emerged during the interview process but became more obvious when I reviewed the transcripts (which had been typed by a professional transcriptionist from electronic recordings) and listened to the recordings of the interviews. I was careful to put aside the initial concepts or themes I noted during the interviews, as I wanted to be sure I was not influenced by the personality of the interviewee or what they said and to delve more deeply into the themes that emerged.

At times, I was surprised to identify richer data from some interviews that I had initially perceived as light or rather non-productive. And at other times I was disappointed when reviewing some interview notes that were interviews I had initially perceived as quite enlightening. I read the transcripts over and over marking notes or concepts in the left hand margin. I took these notes and placed them on a theme spreadsheet. I arranged the themes according to the number of times these themes were used by the participants. I also identified some major themes with minor themes or subthemes. After looking at the spreadsheet, I went back to review the notes on the transcripts to make sure I had the correct information. This step led to more changes on themes, eliminating some, creating new titles, and shifting subthemes.

After several reviews of the transcripts, I created a chart outlining the themes as I perceived them. Developing the chart offered me a clearer picture of the issues or components of resilience at Olympic University. Next, I cut from the electronic version

of the transcripts and pasted that data that I had coded under the various themes. Once this was completed, I shifted some themes and refined other theme categories. Then I created developed subthemes within the themes after reading through the results of the supporting quotes from the participants. After these changes, I adjusted the theme model.

Various themes became apparent as a result of discussion of resilience with the interview participants regarding Olympic University. There were four major themes that were most prominent throughout the interviews. These were developed after reviewing the transcripts and listening to the recordings several times. Subthemes within the four major themes also became apparent and supported data for the major themes.

Outline of Themes One Through Four

The first theme could be described as the foundation for resilience at Olympic University. This theme included the history and accounts of institutional and professional challenges, perseverance and responses to adversity and change, and various stories describing some past presidents as well as the current president as visionary leaders.

The second theme focused on primary factors that contributed to resilience at Olympic University. By far, this second theme generated the largest number of responses. I could not ignore the vast array of answers that fit this theme category which I identified as primary factors that contribute to resilience. These factors were expressed loud and clear throughout all of the interviews. These primary factors included faculty and staff dedication and commitment, vision to add new academic disciplines, student contributions, and partnerships with external groups.

The third theme can be described as supporting factors that contribute to resilience at Olympic University. These supporting factors were not as prevalent as the primary factors; however there was enough discussion about the factors to be included as

supporting factors. The subthemes included institutional research priorities and efforts; a sense of internal community or family as described by students, staff, and administrators; the campus facility and amenities offered; and finally, the location of the institution.

The fourth and final theme included components perceived as necessary to sustain current and ensure future resilience at Olympic University. The sustaining components included the ability to continue to be visionary and take risks, enhanced internal communication and working relationships within the Olympic University community, greater focus on the integration of current and future academic disciplines, and efforts to increase external marketing and communications.

Themes and subthemes. Various subthemes were outlined within each major theme category, which enhanced my understanding of institutional resilience as described by the participants. These are noted as follows:

Theme I: Foundations for resilience at Olympic University

1. History of institutional and professional perseverance despite adversity
2. Stories of visionary leaders
3. Response to change and transition

Theme II: Primary factors that contribute to resilience

1. Dedication and commitment of faculty, staff, and administrators
2. Vision to add new academic disciplines
3. Student contributions
4. Partnerships with external groups

Theme III: Supporting factors that contribute to resilience

1. Institutional research priorities and efforts

2. Sense of internal community or family as described by students, staff, and administrators
3. Campus physical plant and amenities
4. Location of institution

Theme IV: Components necessary to sustain current and future resilience

1. Ability to be visionary and take risks
2. Enhanced internal communication and working relationships
3. Greater focus on integration of current and future academic disciplines
4. Increased external marketing and communications

Theme I: Foundations for Resilience at Olympic University

As I analyzed the data, the first major theme that became apparent from the interviews and from reviewing the transcripts, included various segments focused on the foundation for resilience at Olympic University. This theme was first articulated in reference to the career field chosen by the founder, all of the presidents and leaders, as well as the faculty. This chosen profession was not well accepted by people in other professions and, therefore, those who did pursue this profession were often challenged and encountered major adversity. When the institution was founded to educate and train others for this unpopular profession, the people aligned with the institution as well as the institution itself were often tested. The participants talked about how persevering through these difficulties made the institution and the key people involved in the institution, resilient. Included in this theme were stories about many Olympic University leaders including the founder and several presidents. Finally, this major theme includes a segment that describes how people in the organization respond to change and transition.

History of professional and institutional perseverance despite adversity.

Many of the participants discussed the history of institution perseverance through hard times of the early members of the profession for which Olympic University was founded. There were also stories of the struggles in establishing the institution. Thomas, an administrator, talked about the difficulties of the pioneers in the profession and how this translated into the challenges in establishing higher education institutions designed to train the professionals for this field of study. The ability to persevere through these challenges has been linked to the creation of resilience, both at the individual and institutional levels for Olympic University.

Thomas, an administrator, described some of these difficulties and how people became stronger because of the adversities they faced. He said that this resilience has been incorporated into the colleges established to train professionals in the field.

They always struggled for recognition, for survival. I mean the early _____ all used to go to jail for practicing _____ without a license before licensure was across the country. So they were like a strong breed, a “you can’t keep them down” kind of thing, and that has translated into the colleges I think. So you end up with colleges that were . . . I mean, you’d never get this in a liberal arts college. (Thomas)

The concept of professional advancement despite resistance from many forces, including political and economic, was also described by faculty member David. He said that responding to these challenges contributed to the resilience of the professionals as well as to the institution but the tests for the profession and the institution will continue in years ahead.

Oh my goodness, yes. It has to be because we are a unique people and the institution is, of course, a reflection of that. You probably know, historically, the profession has advanced in spite of almost a continuous stream of varying degrees of societal as well as, shall we say, political and economic resistance from a great many sources, or a great many forces if you will. And so, more than ever, I think

our resilience has been tested and will continue to be, we anticipate that. But it's nothing new for us I guess is my salient point here, Jane. This testing has just been a part of our history since our infancy and I think now we would perhaps be considered in our adolescence. (David)

Others described the challenges to the profession as having been very difficult in the past, however, these difficulties were no longer an issue. Jeff, an administrator, referred to some of those past challenges in the profession as being ostracized professionally, while stating that things were no longer as problematic.

We don't have the same degree of ostracism or opposition (as we did in our history), but just buck the establishment – kind of the underdog. Medicine was out to eradicate the _____ . . . I mean they were against everything in early days, including Medicare and the dental profession. But we were on their hit list right up until an anti-trust suit went to the Supreme Court of the United States. I think that _____ history piece described that. It's just a remarkable story and we'd be back . . . they were defendants settling left and right including the _____ Association early on. (Jeff)

There were several interviewees who noted that the history of the profession was closely aligned with the history of accomplishments of the institutions and that there are many aspects of institutional resilience that are still unknown. Thomas stated that the early institutional leaders ran the institution like their practices and this aspect may still be a component or a part of the soul of these institutions.

It was just like . . . they ran these institutions almost like their practices. So the soul of that is probably still here to some extent and when you get to . . . but now, we have this interesting transition toward a real university and it will be interesting to see how resilient these schools remain in the year 2030 or so when they've had 30 years of legitimate university status under their belt, whether that is maintained and continues when you get faculty who are more activist. (Thomas)

Ana, a staff member, talked about how tenacious people had to be to keep the institution going even through several tough economic times. She referred to the

institution as a train in a popular children's nursery story that had to climb many major hills in order to succeed and reach its destination.

But I think just because of the tenacity of the people who were working there it just kept going. We went through some difficult times in the early . . . well, 2004-2005, because of the economy, 2007 also. But I just think – we just kept going. I keep thinking we're the . . . you know, the little train that could, that keeps going. So yes, I do think we are resilient. (Ana)

Many talked about the history of perseverance that helped to develop resilience at Olympic University, while others said that a history of resilience at Olympic University continues to help the institution through current transitions.

So we're in a transition right now, it's a very interesting time. It's been resilient so far and it continues to be resilient – Olympic University has carried that spirit forward. (Thomas)

Stories of visionary leaders. Throughout the interviews, I encountered rich stories of visionary leaders including the founding president and subsequent presidents, as well as the current president, which are noted in this subtheme. Some presidents apparently made more contributions than others. In an effort to protect the identity of the leaders and the institution, the presidents are referred to as Dr. A (the founding president), Dr. C (the third president), Dr. D (the fourth president), and Dr. E (the current president).

Adrienne, a student, attributed success at Olympic University to be a result of strong leadership providing a clear path and articulating the mission of the institution.

She noted her appreciation for this leadership because she feels supported as a student.

I think they are very successful. I think there is strong leadership here that has a clear path . . . I mean the mission is written on the walls all over the school and I think that that unites us all in what we're doing here every day and I think that that kind of a clear leadership really filters down to the faculty and the faculty communicate that and embody that for the students and model that, and I think . . . I just really appreciate that kind of clear leadership and communication and I

think people here are just so genuine in wanting to see the student succeed.
(Adrienne)

The founding president (referred to here as Dr. A) was in the position as president for about 50 years, something that is very unusual for college presidents. Jeff, an administrator, noted that Dr. A endured obstacles and opposition while founding the institution that later became known as Olympic University.

Dr. A, who was president for many, many years and the founding president, ran this institution and did it admirably against all kinds of obstacles and opposition. It was in the heyday of tension between the _____ and the medical profession. It was a small institution and 110% tuition dependent and he kept it alive. And that legacy led to two moves – first from _____ Avenue in _____. (Jeff)

Thomas, an administrator, noted that in the early years most schools, like Olympic University, tended to reflect the personality of the founding president.

The old _____ schools were almost all based on the personality of the president. Dr. A. was the founder and the president for like 50. (Thomas)

There were several stories about the third president, Dr. C. He was referred to as hard working. Thomas told the story of how Dr. C worked long days for little pay and then cleaned up after school events.

Dr. C, our president in the 1990s and I guess the third president of the university, and he's elderly now and he was, "Oh, I remember the times when I used to teach for 12 hours a week for \$2.00/hour and we used to clean up after functions like this." (Thomas)

Many respondents recognized Dr. C as a visionary leader who introduced the strategy to expand academic programs and to reorganize from a college to a university. Jeff, an administrator, credited Dr. C as launching the major change and expansion plan.

But anyway, what I'm trying to get at is that that was kind of a breakthrough and it was at a point where we were following that movement here at _____, specifically Dr. C. who was president at the time, and we knew what was going on in health care. And he had a vision that there would be much more integration in clinical practice, he was really a visionary in that regard. And so we were

looking to expand, but it was timed perfectly because there was interest in a fairly . . . I wouldn't say exploding interest, but a rapid interest in these other therapies. (Jeff)

Ana, a staff member, said that Dr. C had the vision to expand and he put together the university plan. This was developed at an essential time during concerns for survival of the school.

Well, I think first of all it was a vision of Dr. C, our president...I credit him with being the one who knew that we needed to expand if we were going to – the College of _____ had to expand if we were going to survive. He's the one that really put together the university plan. (Ana)

Stories continued about Dr. C as the visionary to diversity the programs. Colleen, an administrator, attributed Dr. C's action as critical to the future of the institution.

And I think it stems back to the vision that I know Dr. C, the former president . . . former, former president, had this vision that we needed to diversify in our offerings and move from a single purpose institution to a university. And so I think the vision of that was absolutely appropriate and proper and led to us being able to sustain ourselves. (Colleen)

The next president, Dr. D, was lauded for taking Dr. C's organizational vision and moving it to the next level. Colleen said that Dr. D worked closely with her to launch the university student senate, which was an essential step to becoming a university. He went with her to every single class to take the message to students in order to implement the student government program.

I created the University Student Senate in 2002, along with the student senate president at the time, and that was a huge deal. We had, the president at the time, Dr. D, president of the student senate, and me, and we went to every single class on campus and had them vote for it after we had this committee of multiple students create the bylaws and the vision for it. And everyone that has come through, the accreditation teams and whatever, have seen that as a pivotal time in basically transitioning to this university culture. (Colleen)

Staff member Ana credited Dr. D with continuing Dr. C's vision but also helping to enhance relationships and create a sense of community.

And then Dr. D, who took his place, just continued that vision and was so open...Dr. D was a lovely person who was the perfect person to come in and meld these groups together – personality-wise, vision-wise, and unfortunately he became ill, or I think the strain got to him and he just decided life was too short. (Ana)

Margaret, a staff member, also recognized Dr. D for his relationship building and creating a feeling of family throughout the institution.

Dr. D when he was here was fantastic at that (creating community). He instilled such a sense of, “We’re all a family.” (Margaret)

The current president, Dr. E, was noted for working to continue the early vision of adding new academic programs and reorganizing as a university developed by Dr. C and partially implemented by Dr. D. Ana, staff member, cited Dr. E for his efforts.

You know, so then Dr. E is here now and continuing that vision. (Ana)

Ricardo, a student, expounded further about Dr. E and his business acumen as a community leader.

Dr. E is a great individual by having this school as a business, having an identity other than just academic flow. He is showing the community that this place is a business on the terms that we can actually profit and we can actually make a difference in the time of a recession. (Ricardo)

Adrienne was a transfer student who had the experience of working with a different president while studying at a previous institution that eventually closed. She compared the president of the previous institution with the current Olympic University president; Dr. E. Adrienne said that Dr. E offers an example of open leadership while creating a team environment.

There are no egos here. I can walk into Dr. E’s office and sit down with him and chat and I think that this is kind of open door policy with all of the professors and all of the faculty at Olympic University, nobody thinks they’re better than you here. Our president at the old school used to be tight, you know, it was like I just wanted to go up and loosen his tie a little bit, it was just like he wasn’t a human being and his door was constantly closed and after he announced the school was

closing, he actually was accompanied by two armed guards at all times. So we weren't even allowed to enter his office to even talk to him about the school closing or anything. I wanted to ask him for letter of recommendation, I thought I had a pretty good chance and I was basically like stopped by two armed guards and that was just like so, "Whoa." And then a week later I was at a conference and I was having dinner with Dr. E and his wife and we were discussing all sorts of things and they were asking what are my ideas were about things. I was like, "Whoa, you want to hear what I have to say?" I don't know many other presidents of universities, but, I went hang gliding with the president of this university. That, to me, is like open leadership right there. And that's the kind of attitude that I think really creates a team environment, especially when you're talking about higher education. (Adrienne)

This second subtheme, under foundations for resilience at Olympic University, explored the stories from participants regarding past and present leaders. Most of these stories were about presidents who were recognized for their ability to be visionary in order to lead a growing and changing academic institution.

Response to change and transition. All organizations experience change and transition; how people within the organization respond to these movements is essential to the resilience of the organization. For purposes of this work, change is described as an alteration in policies, employees, or the way things happen in an organization. In addition, transition is described as an evolution or movement such as progressing from a small college with one academic focus to a growing university with multiple academic disciplines. Change and transition can be difficult for some people while others are energized by and embrace the new opportunities.

This subtheme explores the descriptions by interviewees regarding responses to change and transition in the institution. There were a variety of perspectives on this issue of change and transition. Adrienne, a student, referred to innovation at Olympic University. She said she feels the institution is constantly changing which makes it a better institution.

I think the big thing is innovation. I just feel like it's constantly changing and improving. They're not so rigid to, "This is how it's always been done." It's more, "Do you think we can do it better? Cool, tell me how, let's make this happen." It's more of a fluid institution than others that I've seen. (Adrienne)

Hugh, a student, thought that because Olympic has not remained stagnant, it has been able to diversify and attract students. He stated that staying within a traditional mindset is not really healthy for an institution.

I think Olympic University has been able to diversify and attract students because it's not stagnating. It is willing to change with times – that's kind of vague. But a lot of people, especially in the _____ profession, they want to stay in the more traditional mindset and that's not really healthy. (Hugh)

Elizabeth, an administrator, said that the foundation for resilience was the result of many individuals who fought tenaciously hard to make things move forward.

It's just been individual, hard-working people just driving stuff forward and being tenacious. . . I honestly think we've gotten to where we're at with the individual programs because individuals have taken – have had an idea, they've taken charge, and they've just gone forward and have really driven the process. So I think there have been like . . . certain people have, it's been the culmination or the perfect storm of somebody has had an idea, they've gotten support at some level and they've kind of forged ahead (Elizabeth)

There were certain participants, like staff member Juanita, who noted that while change is good, it can take time. She was not the only respondent who referred to the issue of time. Others felt that change was moving too fast.

Change is good . . .but any time you're implementing something new it's going to take a couple of years to gain momentum. (Juanita)

Many interviewees referred to the history of the institution as a series of challenging times while moving through change and transition, which added to the resilience and success of the Olympic University. Ana, staff member, noted that Olympic University was a single focus college for several years that has gone through several transitions and made many in the past ten years.

But it's a long history – they went from 1941 to 2001 as a College of _____, 60 years. So we're making lots of transitions, we're making lots of changes in these past 10 years. (Ana)

Change can be challenging and difficult according to many participants, however, after going through difficulties, organizations can be stronger because of those challenges. David, a faculty member, noted that Olympic University has had bumpy times but it is even stronger than ever because of these challenges.

Like every group we have the bumps that we have to address but overall the resiliency and the determination and the passion, I don't think I've ever felt it stronger. Honestly, I genuinely believe it is because we're making major breakthroughs. (David)

The first major theme highlighted the foundation for resilience at Olympic University. The components for this foundation were described as having an institutional and professional history of perseverance despite adversity; passing on stories of visionary leaders throughout the history of the institution; and a focus on responses to change and transition within the institution.

Theme II: Primary Factors That Contribute to Resilience

I identified the second major theme as primary factors that contribute to the resilience of Olympic University. These factors were discussed by many participants as reasons why Olympic University has been successful. When analyzing the themes, this theme came up loud and clear from the participants. It was unmistakable as having major significance by the participants. Everyone spoke about this theme in some regard. It is represented in four subthemes including dedication and commitment of faculty staff and administrators leading to success; vision to add new academic disciplines to create a university from a single-focus college; student contributions to success; and partnerships with external groups as enhancing resilience.

Dedication and commitment of faculty, staff, and administrators. Throughout the interviews there was a prevalent message from faculty, staff, and administrators regarding their dedication and commitment to the institution, to each other, and to the success of students. In this case study, staff refers to an employee group responsible for supporting the academic efforts as well as the co-curricular endeavors (this may refer to such areas as counseling, orientation, and student development) of the institution. Also, administrator refers to a separate employee group who are in middle level leadership roles at Olympic University.

The dedication and commitment of the employees were expressed in different ways by individual respondents; however, it was clearly a driving force for many. Some participants saw faculty, staff, and administrators as dedicated and committed; others just recognized only faculty or staff; and finally, only one respondent recognized the contributions of administrators. The students also expressed their awareness of the allegiance and support they received from the faculty, staff, and administrators.

Anthony, an administrator, stated that the dedication of the employees was essential to the success of Olympic University. He said this dedication can make or break the school.

It's pretty much all about the people. This institution makes it or breaks it on the dedication of the staff and faculty and the administrators. (Anthony)

Staff member Ana said that the essence of resilience at Olympic University is based on the work of the staff and faculty who take much pride in the students.

So the resiliency really has to be the staff and faculty members who, like you say, take so much pride in the students and who like the students. (Ana)

Ana later described success at Olympic University as being based on dedicated individuals at all levels of the institution; however, she said success was primarily due to long-term staff and faculty.

It has to be the dedication of the staff and faculty, the employees. It's amazing. It's amazing. We are in education, we're all here knowing that we're not going to get rich working here, or pretty much in education itself, so there's a dedication – we are often short staffed, you probably have that at your school, and yet people just keep doing things and they keep taking on things because it's important.
(Ana)

Ana went on to say that the staff members keep Olympic University running so that the quality faculty can do their work. She said that the faculty members are amazing.

The staff really keeps the place running so that the faculty can do the job that they do and it is an amazing faculty, they are amazing – in every program. There is a . . . in every college and in every program, I am amazed at the quality of the faculty. It's just amazing. (Ana)

Margaret, a staff member, expressed it in a different way when she talked about how people worked together to help get things done in support of the students because they care about the students. She did not think that this practice of working together in support and care of the students was necessarily a practice in other organizations.

I had so many people pitching in and helping but I don't think you get that someplace else and I think that's probably one of the biggest things that has made us as successful as we have been, is because we do care about those students.
(Margaret)

Hugh, a student, said that both faculty and staff are supportive of students. This support includes helping students get involved in the professions for which they are training, attending student sponsored events, and donating time and money.

The faculty here and the staff here are very supportive of the students getting involved in the _____ profession while they are students and not just . . . I guess they're interested in the students not just sitting here and studying but getting involved in the profession before they become _____. So faculty and the administration – faculty are very supportive of the students. They come to a lot of

functions that students put on, they donate very generously to the different organizations both with their time and their money, and they're very flexible when it comes to scheduling. (Hugh)

Anthony, an administrator, said that institutional success has been based primarily on the dedication of long-term staff and faculty. He went on to note that there is employee loyalty to the institution as well as loyalty of the institution to employees.

I think the success has been based on dedicated individuals at all levels but principally long-term staff and faculty. When you get hired on here, as long as you do your work, for the most part, there's a lot of loyalty – I think there is institutional loyalty from the institution to the faculty and vice versa. (Anthony)

Faculty member Kate, said that both faculty and staff are great. She went on to state that these employees are very committed to the organization. Throughout this subtheme, longevity on the part of both staff and faculty was noted as an example of employee commitment.

Well I think we have a great faculty and a great staff. I think the people who work here are very committed to the organization and typically there is a great deal of longevity, once people get hired here they stay, I think it's an area where people have a passion towards it and they stay. (Kate)

The dedication and commitment of employees continued to be a common theme among various participants. Margaret, a staff member, cited both faculty and staff as committed to support students. She also said that this commitment has rewards for employees especially when students return as alumni to visit.

I think we have a faculty base that truly care and I think that we have staff members that have gone over and above the call of duty so many times for these kids and I think that they see it. Because it's like they come back for Homecoming, which is our homecoming without a football team, they get continuing education credits and that's a fun time and I mean . . . it's fun because you kind of see some of the students that have graduated and they come back and there are certain departments they go to and ours is always one of them. (Margaret)

There were several important success factors articulated by Seamus, an administrator, that helped Olympic University be competitive. Included in these factors are the work of the staff and the quality of the faculty.

But if we look at (similar) schools in the region, the resources available are just nothing like Olympic University, other schools just can't compete. I mean, student affairs department and counseling and the library, the facility again, the faculty – the quality of the faculty.... (Seamus)

In her response, staff member Eartha said that the faculty members are focused and passionate, but she also cited one administrator as doing a phenomenal job with few people even being aware of his contributions.

Well, our faculty – they're focused and they're passionate about _____ so that's a plus and that's what their reputation is about too. I think _____, an administrator, does a phenomenal job of just doing what he does – he does a lot of stuff behind closed doors that people don't know and then . . . he could brag a lot more but he doesn't. (Eartha)

Some respondents spoke mainly of the contributions of the faculty. In previous comments, administrator Seamus said that the commitment of both staff and faculty was important. He later focused on the dedication of the faculty and their commitment to recruiting, retaining, and successfully graduating students.

I mean, in general, there's just tremendous dedication on the part of the faculty. They're committed to the success of the students and the institution, and that really comes through when students come and visit and go through the program. I mean, consistently we get comments about how the faculty – they care, they're committed, they're well qualified, well educated, and are continually trying to make things better for the students. That, I think, comes through during Discovery Days, where we have potential students come on campus and they visit with faculty. I mean, they just can tell right away that there is a level of commitment there that they not see elsewhere. And then to current students, all the way through alumni, they see that the faculty members are genuinely committed to their success. I think that goes a long way to helping the institution be successful. It recruits more students, hopefully, and gives them . . . when they leave they've got that positive impression of the faculty and the institution in general and their education and that message, hopefully, gets carried out to the community at large. (Seamus)

Adrienne, a student, said that the faculty members are committed to the success of students. She mentioned professors who have open door policies and others who are committed to the learning process.

Oh my gosh, they're (the faculty) the greatest. I think they're just . . . they just genuinely want people to succeed so much. Like I said, it's an open door policy. If you go in and you're like, "Hey, I'm just really not understanding this." It's like, "All right, let's sit down, I'll teach it to you again." It's like, "No problem, thanks for coming in – thank you so much for wanting to learn this." Whoa. Not like, "Why didn't you do well on this test?" It's not like that at all. I think they're not just professors, they're teachers and they take that role very seriously. Also, I mean, just talking about setting people up for success. (Adrienne)

A recurring concept was the commitment of faculty to students, including seeing students as future colleagues and professionals in the career field. Elizabeth, student, spoke of this faculty commitment to students that has helped students through difficult personal times.

They expect the students to respect them as they should but yet they care about them as a future colleague and students can come to me, come to a faculty member and just explain – tell their problems. Like, you know, "My mom is ill and having trouble." And the faculty care and they really work to support that student so that they can get through whatever exam or just the term or point them in the right direction. (Elizabeth)

Several students, including George, spoke of their first positive impressions of professors at special recruiting events. George said that he was enthralled with the opportunity to meet several faculty members at a recruiting event that helped him commit to Olympic University.

One of the big key factors for me deciding to come here was the day where they invite you and you come on campus on a Saturday and you get to have a little slice of time with four or five different professors and then talk to the students and everything like that, and that really helps you get the feel for what to experience and they do a very good job of picking the professors who are in those slots, Dr. _____ being one of them – one of whom I connected with very much. But I've heard from each student saying, "Wow," they make comments on this. (George)

George, a student, went on to say that the professors continued to make a difference for him when he enrolled as a student at Olympic University. He was impressed with their willingness to help without looking down on people.

I would say I don't know much about other institutions, in comparison to Olympic, but from my experiences, the professors absolutely (make a difference). They're always there for you and whether that distinguishes it differently from other schools I'm not sure, but this is what I know and I've touched on it before is the professors. Their willingness to help you, they don't look down upon you, rather they look at the same level as you and help you . . . you know what I mean? That's huge. (George)

Administrator Jeff referred to a higher than average level of dedication by faculty as well as to a major investment and commitment they demonstrate as faculty members.

I think the best way to describe that is I think we have a higher than average level of dedication (from faculty)...But we've got a very committed bunch here and I know the vast majority of them very, very well and they're deeply invested. (Jeff)

Comments from students about the commitment of faculty to students continued throughout the interviews. Patrick, student, referred to contributions from faculty members as enhancing his experience.

Faculty have contributed to my experience excellently, there is a huge contribution. I've talked to some other students in the undergrad program that have picked up some of these classes over at _____ (local community college) or _____ (state university) wherever, but there is a massive difference between a teaching class or a teaching teacher and a weeding teacher. If your intent is to weed, anybody can do that – that's super simple. (Patrick)

In addition to acknowledging the commitment and dedication provided by faculty, participants often recognized staff members for their work. Patrick, student, went on to say that staff members have done an excellent job and there is a high degree of respect for their contribution.

Staff members have done an excellent job. Across the board whether it's the financial aid office or it's the physical plant people or the people that work in the clinics – I mean everybody treats you with . . . there is a high degree of respect

here, I think, across the board, because it does pick up a lot of different folks with lots of different ideas and some powerful ideas of how to live this life. So there is a high degree of respect. (Patrick)

Administrator Elizabeth referred to the work of a staff counselor and other student services staff as important in the effort to support students.

I think _____, our counselor, does a fantastic job with the students. I send students to her all the time and the reports I get from students who say that they've seen her are just that they feel incredible support from her so I think that that's really huge – that our student services is there for them. Again, that's not unique to us but I think that _____ is such that she does a really good job of it. (Elizabeth)

Dedication and commitment contributed by administrators is recognized as a legacy of the success of Olympic University from the perspective of Jeff, administrator. He said that the administrators wear many hats, or play many roles, working long hours to ensure success.

Well, I think overall it's a legacy of success that's based on a lot of dedication, commitment, just plain hard work. We're a lot like a community college in this regard. Most of us, at least in the administrative area, do a lot of things – we wear a lot of hats. It's hard to get trained to do any of the stuff we do. And we have this legacy or this history of a lot of people just very focused and dedicated and just put in a lot of long hours and aren't afraid to . . . (Jeff)

This first subtheme is within the second major theme referred to as primary factors that contribute to the resilience of Olympic University. The focus of the subtheme was the dedication of faculty, staff, and administrators, a common thread throughout the interviews. Students said that they feel the dedication and commitment of the employees and that it enhances their student experiences.

Vision to add new academic disciplines. For over 60 years, Olympic University was a college focused on only one academic discipline. Sometime later, it was decided to add two new major academic programs to the curriculum and to reorganize as a

university. Several study participants referred to this transition as a major turning point in the history of the institution that eventually led to more success for the institution. This subtheme, under the major theme of primary factors contributing to the resilience of Olympic University, refers to the vision to make this strategic move of adding two new academic disciplines and reorganizing as a university. This plan was approved by the institution's board of trustees and continued to be implemented by many.

Faculty member Kate noted that the vision to become a university and add a wider range of academic programs was proactive and a resilient move. She said that people have worked hard to create these new programs.

I think the fact that they actually had the foresight to become Olympic University and to diversify the offerings and the student base, I think that was a very proactive and resilient move. I think they've also worked very hard to develop some of the new programs such as the undergraduate and the master's level programs. So that takes a great deal of time and effort and energy on the part of people to keep moving . . . to not just be stagnant. (Kate)

Administrator Thomas understood that, while the transition was to address short term issues such as a decline in enrollment, it was a good move for the future of the institution. As a result, there is a commitment to the success of the new areas of curriculum.

So it was probably out of necessity, or perceived necessity at that point, to bolster declining enrollment but it turned out to be a pretty good move actually. And now we're committed to these other schools, it's kind of colored the way we go forward now, obviously. It's actually a bit of foresight on the basis of our board and the leadership at that time. (Thomas)

Some participants saw the move to add additional academic programs as very important and applauded the board for recognizing the importance of this change.

Administrator Elizabeth was pleased about the recognition of importance.

I think that over the last, well, decade or more since we became a university but probably in a more accelerated fashion over the last 3-4 years, the board, I guess, the upper administration has recognized the importance of putting attention and resources toward other diversifying programs. (Elizabeth)

Colleen, an administrator, said that the change was not just about adding programs but actually creating a new model for the profession.

I think, again, the champions that we had at the time looking at this, realized that integrative _____ care – it wasn't just about adding on a couple programs, it was about actually having a model for integrative _____ care. (Colleen)

This new model for the profession was cited as visionary and an important move for the future of the professional field contributing to the resilience of the field within the market. Student Adrienne said that the move was not financially driven but actually about the future of the profession.

I think at Olympic University they are truly trying to foster integration amongst different _____ care providers and so they put the resources and the faculty behind actually developing the programs. They don't look at it as a money-making effort, they look at it about as improving _____ care. I think it is vision driven rather than being . . . it's mission and vision driven rather than bank account driven. (Adrienne)

While many participants applauded the decision to add more academic programs, there were some who expressed concerns that the integration of the new academic programs have not been fully realized within the institution. Administrator Seamus said that the ability to integrate has been a struggle.

We've struggled with how to do that. On the education side - the classroom, didactic settings, it's very hard to integrate because of different prerequisite requirements and then, theoretically students and the programs are at completely different levels. So, clinical environments are where we are looking to focus on integrating – you know, getting them practicing, working, talking together and we have a few settings where that's happening. Ironically . . . well, maybe it's not ironic, I don't know, but the settings where we're having the most success with that are those that are – the further removed we get from the institution and the formalized clinic settings, the easier it happens, the better it happens. (Seamus)

The second subtheme, under the major theme of primary factors contributing to resilience at Olympic University, referred to the change in the strategic direction by adding two new academic programs and transitioning from a college to a university as a critical change and transition that will enable the institution to be more resilient. Participants including students, staff, and administrators referred to these movements as important tactical directions, however, some respondents noted that some work is still necessary in order to fully integrate these two additions into the institution.

Student contributions. The third subtheme, under the major theme of primary factors that contribute to resilience, is focused on contributions by students as a success factor. These contributions included commitment to the integration of the academic programs within the institution, student leader community service initiatives which have the secondary effect of uniting students from the different academic disciplines, and efforts by students to engage and support each other with a focus on the future as active professionals.

George, a student, noted that Olympic University is resilient because it attracts students who are leaders and become actively involved in the institution.

The school is resilient in the fact that somehow these students that end up here are very active – some are, some aren't naturally, but the ones that are (active) are very good leaders and want to create things and make the environment positive and supportive and all of these things that would make something resilient.
(George)

Staff member Ana talked about how she is always impressed by the talents students demonstrate and went on to say that students make their work worthwhile. She credits the students for working together outside the classroom.

We are always struck by how talented these young people are. The students make it worthwhile to work here. We credit the students for working together beyond

the classroom despite the fact that they represent their different disciplines, they do get to know each other here – they're in clubs together, they're in _____ together. (Ana)

Seamus, an administrator, said that students have helped lead the way in the efforts to integrate students from different disciplines. He said the student senate served as a role model for faculty and staff to strive to become more integrated.

I guess I would reference the student leadership structure here, the student senate. They've really led the way in terms of integration of the student body. I mean that's something we point to from years back, when the student senate first formed, that they really were ahead of the faculty and administration in showing us how to come together and work together in a leadership structure. So the student senate and the student leaders in general, I think, have . . . by the example of the structure they've set up, but also the things that they've done. They've played a big role in the success of the major community service project in which Olympic University is involved, for example. (Seamus)

Colleen, an administrator, affirmed the important role of the students helping to integrate the academic programs in the institution. She said the student senate has worked hard to make this a reality.

Socially I think our student body is striving for integration, with the student senate they do a ton of stuff and they make sure it's university wide – they stress that. (Colleen)

Seamus, an administrator, later stated that not only have students contributed to the integration of academic programs but students are also willing to organize for volunteer service. This volunteer service often has a bonus side effect of bringing students together from the different academic programs.

And just [the students] have been very willing to give of their time and energy and resources to make the school successful. I've just had a few students come in in the past couple of days that are graduating and they asked if they could . . . I mentioned this pilot project that we're doing in the _____ to try and integrate the professions. I had a few students come in and say, "You know what? We understand that we only had one or two students sign up for this particular shift that's focused on integration of _____ and _____." And they said, "That initiative is so important to us and we want

to see that succeed, that we want to come back and volunteer to practice down there and to work with _____, the faculty member, to make that happen, to see the success of that.” And so we’re going to make that happen. So that’s just an example, I guess, of . . . it’s not every student certainly, but there’s enough of them that get involved in student senate and volunteer for things like that and extra shifts at _____, that really kind of elevate . . . up the ante a little bit of the culture, the idea of giving back and contributing to the university. (Seamus)

Faculty member Kate acknowledged that students often get involved in community service both on and off campus. These efforts may be managed by the institution or by the students.

The university has a great commitment to service in the community and I see students stepping up for that, and a wide variety of other things; if they get involved it happens both here on campus or during our student appreciation day – like the local food shelf. (Kate)

Some students talked about the importance of the student actions to get other students involved and support students in difficult times. Student Melody compared Olympic University to the school where she did her undergraduate studies. She said that other students helped her get engaged at Olympic University.

Same thing with the _____, it’s so easy to get lost in the woodwork (where I did my undergrad work) as compared to coming here and actually getting involved in the senate and some other clubs, it feels really nice to be engaged and to know people – to know other students and to know the faculty. (Melody)

Student Melody talked about the role of students and how they were so helpful to the family of another student when that student tragically died.

I feel that the students, in particular the students on the student senate, play a fairly decent role. I’ve been on the senate since I started and there’s a lot of things that we’ve done. There’s always a handful of celebrations and parties but there’s also things – for example, one of our students, back in October, tragically died and she left behind a two-year-old daughter and we set up a scholarship fund for her daughter so people could make contributions and the student senate made a contribution. And then, we’ve done other things where we get people involved and do volunteer opportunities. For example, we do the Feed My Starving Children. (Melody)

Finally, administrator Jeff spoke about the quality of the students and how many leave Olympic University and play major leadership roles in their profession.

They are remarkable. Many of them, they may not know how many of them, after they leave here, end up in leadership positions in their professions – and I know that...And, we'd like to do more to give them an early experience in doing that and how to do it, but they do get some experience or opportunities to lead. Many of the things that _____ (dean of students) does are remarkable in that regard, and I think we have a very impressive percentage of students...who are from Olympic and are leading at the state or national level. And that speaks to the quality of their education, the quality of the institution. (Jeff)

This third subtheme, under the primary factors that contribute to the resilience of the institution, was focused on the contributions of students. These contributions ranged from commitment to the integration of the academic programs within the institution, student-organized community service initiatives that have the secondary effect of uniting students from the different academic disciplines, efforts by students to engage and support each other, and also a focus on the future of students as active professionals.

Partnerships with external groups. A fourth subtheme, noted within the major theme of primary factors that contribute to the resilience of Olympic University, concerned the external partnerships that were developed with groups or organizations outside of the University. These partnerships included collaborating with another institution to offer community service centers, relationship agreements with international schools to provide study abroad opportunities for students, and business partnerships which serve to enhance revenue income.

Staff member Juanita said the vision was collaborative and working within the community contributed to Olympic University's leadership status.

I think that's a big part of why Olympic sits above a lot of the other industry institutions, other _____ colleges, because of their vision to be collaborative... moving...out into the community and having connections. (Juanita)

Jeff, an administrator, noted that the move to integrate the academic programs helped to enhance opportunities for external partnerships. He said that these various relationships and partnerships have successfully added to the student experience and enhanced the clinical learning of students.

Well, that transition led to, or gave us an opportunity to be much more engaged with community partners and this occurred at a time, or just before and absolutely at the time when I was _____ for about six or seven years, we had overtures from all over the state that led to connections with _____ Center, agencies like the _____ in _____ which serves _____ – all of this is on our website. (Jeff)

Jeff, an administrator, went on to note that the initial Olympic University external partnerships made them more attractive additional external groups.

You put that together with _____ and all of a sudden _____ were interested in us, _____ systems, non-profit social service agencies, and so it really put us on a trajectory where we came more much widely known throughout the _____. (Jeff)

Ana, a staff member, affirmed the importance of the external partnerships that have led to internships and fellowships for students.

Our school, several years ago, started partnering with _____ and with organizations to have internships. That is our strength, we are becoming nationally known for our internships. So we have people, we probably have at least eight of our graduates now who work for _____ in _____. We had the first fellowship in the United States at _____, and again that started with an internship, became a two-year fellowship and they've now hired that young man on their staff and he works in their _____ department. We have interns there now, two a term, so six a year. We have interns at _____, and _____. I just got a call yesterday asking if we would consider in summer sending three interns to the _____ – we're so excited. The students don't even know that yet, we're so excited. (Ana)

Finally, Anthony, an administrator, said that expanding these external partnerships is critical to the organization. He said that the current partnerships are recognized as trendsetting for the academic field.

I think what we're doing now is really expanding our collaborative partnerships is huge. I think that will be absolutely essential. Our strategy within this college is to offer as much _____ collaboration as possible. We're actually one of the few _____ schools that have collaborations and I think we probably have more of them than anyone else. (Anthony)

The second area of external partnerships was discussed by Melody, student. She said the opportunity to study abroad in China, based on an institutional agreement with a Chinese college, was very attractive to her. She was excited about the opportunities offered through the relationship with the Chinese college as a way to enhance her learning.

I know that they have a solid – just in terms of the _____ program, they have a solid relationship with one of the major _____ colleges in China, in Tianjin, that's like our sister college and so we have like a study abroad opportunity with that specific university in China along with, once we become alumni, we can continue to go over there and learn and mentor. And so I feel like there is a really strong connection, so that's where they draw upon a lot of their professors – they're alumni from that school that come over here. It seems like they do a really good job at recruiting. (Melody)

The third area of external relationships, discussed by participants, focused on a business partnership that had been a boon to increasing revenues. Anthony, administrator, talked about one endeavor that had been quite profitable.

So _____ partnership has been very lucrative in the last five years. There was an initial investment on our part, as a minority stakeholder in that partnership which has generated quite a bit of revenue. (Anthony)

The second major theme was about the primary factors that have been attributed to enhancing resilience at Olympic University. It was discussed by all 19 of the participants. Within these primary factors, there were four that were most prominent: dedication and commitment of faculty, staff, and administrators' to the institution, to the students, and to each other; the vision to add new academic disciplines or programs; student contributions which included commitment to the integration of the academic

programs within the institution, student leader-organized community service initiatives that have had the secondary effect of uniting students from the different academic disciplines, and efforts by students to engage and support each other, and a focus on the future as active professionals; and finally, the fourth subtheme of primary factors concerned the external partnerships developed with groups or organizations outside of the University. These partnerships included collaborating with another institution to offer community clinics and internships, relationship agreements with international schools to provide study abroad opportunities for students, and business partnerships that enhance revenue income.

Theme III: Supporting Factors That Contribute to Resilience

The third major theme focused on the supporting factors that contribute to resilience at Olympic University. While the supporting factors may seem similar to the primary factors noted in Theme II, the supporting factors were not as apparent as the primary factors. Many of the participants referred to the supporting factors, but not as often or as clearly as the primary factors. These supporting factors were described as contributing to a positive profile for the University as compared to competing institutions thereby enhancing the attractiveness of Olympic University for prospective students, staff, faculty, and administrators. Within these supporting factors, there were responses that referred to the institutional commitment to research; several employees and even students described a strong sense of community or family within employees and students at Olympic University; an attractive campus physical plant and amenities; and finally, the location of the institution.

Institutional research priorities and efforts. This first subtheme, within the supporting factors, concentrated on Olympic University's efforts to establish, fund, and

expand research functions within the institution. Certain participants stated that these research efforts distinguish Olympic University as an institution that has become more progressive in a science-based field compared to similar institutions that have remained stagnant and continue to focus on old philosophical aspects of the profession. In particular, various interviewees used the term evidence-based research.

Adrienne, a student, believed that Olympic University's emphasis on evidence based work creates a more scientific institution and enhances the school's reputation as a trend setter with a proud history. As a student she appreciates this emphasis.

I think that the fact there is a lot of emphasis on evidence based makes it a very scientific institution and based on trends as they emerge, I think it's kind of the type of institution that will always remain on the cusp of what's new and we're going to be the trend setters. I think that's true of this university. I think we appreciate our history but we are not living in the past. (Adrienne)

Melody, a student, said that the clinical research opportunities attracted her to Olympic University. It was one of many schools that she had explored as options in her search.

I think a good way to look at it from a student's perspective is . . . the program that I'm in for _____, another reason that helped determine if I was going to come here, is that they have a lot of clinical research opportunities, different off-site rotations, it's not just here that we're going to be learning. (Melody)

Anthony, an administrator, named creation of the clinical studies center at Olympic University as an innovative move for the institution. He said that it is an important commitment for the school. According to him, it was launched in the early 1990s.

I think the innovation comes from the creation of the _____ for Clinic Studies in the early 1990s, that's pretty progressive to put in a research program and be subsidizing research as an institution. (Anthony)

He went on to note that the institution has been awarded various federal grants that have underwritten portions of the cost of research. According to Anthony, the investment in research has added legitimacy and served to draw students.

We have a lot of federal grants, over \$20 million in federal grants, but research, no matter what they say, research costs the institution so we subsidize that beyond the amount of grants. So the institution is investing in the research as, you know, I think legitimizing somewhat what we do as a legitimized university; also to draw students that are interested – so there are a lot of reasons. (Anthony)

Hugh, a student, said that the science-based, evidence-based focus has served Olympic University well because strong students are attracted to this learning opportunity to prepare themselves for their profession. He believed that it exhibits a commitment to the profession on the part of the institution by pursuing research. Hugh and others noted the importance of this emphasis as a distinguishing factor for the organization.

I think a lot of up and coming students are more into the science-based, evidence-based – they kind of know what's going to be needed for the profession to keep going and I think Olympic is doing a good job of keeping up with that and showing their students that they're keeping up with that. (Hugh)

Jeff, an administrator, talked about the growth of the research program and what a success story it has created for the institution. Despite the unusual profile for the University: free standing, small and non-profit, Jeff said that the research initiative has done well, perhaps even better than a local university that has a national profile.

Our research program was expanding, federal funding, and all within a very small non-traditional institution – really a success story and unusual. We've got this kind of funky situation where we've got an enrollment of about ____ students, we're free standing, we're not-for-profit, and we manage at any point in time between \$2.5 and \$3 million of federal research funding. Not even ____ University has that. (Jeff)

Kate, a faculty member, talked about the research department as contributing to the success of the organization. She said that Olympic University has received several National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants.

I think another thing that has contributed to our success is we have a very strong research department. And they received numerous NIH grants and I think the research that they're doing is helping to verify the effectiveness of _____ education and _____ health care. Yeah, because without those – I mean, I think that's what a lot of people say is, "Well, you don't have anything to verify that this is effective, you're just going on your own prejudice or whatever, your own experience which isn't enough. Give us some research data." And so I think the fact that we do have a very strong research department helps that. (Kate)

Faculty member David stated that the clinical research program is vibrant with a research facility that is world class. In comparison to similar schools, Olympic University has received the most NIH funding.

I think our leadership has been there...to embrace the need for clinical research. We've got a vibrant program in regard to our size and our resources, we have a resource facility that is world class, we have 30 full-time staff working on our research, we've been the recipient of more NIH funding than any _____ school in the country. (David)

This first subtheme of supporting elements focused on Olympic University's efforts to establish, fund, and expand research. Respondents noted this institutional support of research distinguishes the University from other schools in the Olympic University market that are more philosophically based. According to many, the research initiatives are an important difference as it attracts serious students and prepares students well for their careers.

Sense of internal community or family as described by students, staff, and administrators. This second subtheme within supporting factors that contribute to resilience focused on the participants' sense of community or family they say exists within the employees and even students at Olympic University. Several staff,

administrators, and students talked about this sense of community or family. Although some were not sure how to describe it, they noted that it attracts students and makes people feel welcome. And, while the sense of community may be attributed to the small size of the school, it makes for a great place to work and makes the place feel warm.

Elizabeth, an administrator, said that while she had not been to many other campuses, she believes that Olympic University distinguishes itself from others by the sense of community on campus. Elizabeth said that it is an element that attracts student to the University.

I guess I haven't been to a lot of other campuses but I hear from people when they come for tours, that the community feeling is one thing that really stands out to them. So there are probably other institutions that are the same but I hear, time and time again, that people feel just the community when they are on campus. When students come for our Discovery Days and meet faculty and meet me, they can just tell that the faculty get along. (Elizabeth)

Seamus, an administrator, said that employees work hard, creating a positive energy, and that people love the institution which leads to a community that attracts students.

Everyone shows up to work and works hard and that creates this positive energy and everybody loves the place and away we go...I think we have a strong sense of community here that attracts students. We are all committed and we all love this place and that sort of generates its own . . . it generates a lot of . . . I don't know how you would say it, but just momentum and encourages students to come here (Seamus)

The feeling of being welcome attracted George, student, to Olympic University.

He said that he felt the welcome when he first attended a special recruiting event.

Wow, I really enjoyed this professor on the Discovery Day and that's really what made me want to come here. And I think that's something that attracts students. . . .it's almost like you feel very welcomed and naturally when you feel welcome you're more apt to gravitate towards something like that. I think that's the largest, one of the most important things that I can tell why Olympic would be successful – or is successful. (George)

Chris, who was a new administrator at Olympic University, also talked about how he felt a strong sense of welcome when he started his new job. He appreciated how colleagues are open to discussing new strategies and ways to improve the school.

I think people have a very positive attitude at the school; I've been very impressed by that. I think people are truly interested in the students, which is appropriate and helpful and that will help guide us for the future. From a newbie perspective, people I think have been overly welcoming – well not overly but very welcoming, and I appreciate that. And for the most part, they are pretty open. Open with me and open with ideas and willing to discuss strategy, willing to discuss how we can collectively get to Point A within two years or Point B within five years. (Chris)

Margaret, a staff member, attributed the sense of community to the fact that Olympic University is a small institution. She expressed some concerns that, as the institution grows, this feeling of community may dissipate.

But I think that's been one of the things is we are smaller and I think that the students get to know each other, they get to know the faculty, they get to know the staff, and I think that makes a big difference (in creating a sense of community), I really do. (Margaret)

Ana, a staff member, discussed the fact that the college in which she works had grown and while she had concerns, she said that she loved the school. She has developed many friends and feels that that she is blessed to work at Olympic University. She said that it was a new culture for her as she had never worked in higher education before.

And the college has gotten bigger, we now have two Associate Deans and a Dean and so it's evolved – it's evolved, but I love it. I love it. Oh, they're just wonderful people. I am so blessed, truly blessed, to have gotten to know colleagues here, to have gotten to work here and gotten to know this culture that I didn't know anything about, never had any contact. And, oh these employees, they're just wonderful. Some of them have become dear friends, I'm so lucky. (Ana)

Elizabeth, an administrator, said that faculty, administrators, and students feel support from each other and that it is a good place to work. She said that there were

minor things that have been difficult in terms of relationships but mainly people really pull together.

I mean just the personal relationships on campus between faculty, between faculty and administration, we have really a close group, it's a very good place to work. It's successful in that students feel supported by faculty, students and faculty get along, faculty get along, faculty and administration get along, and administrators get along. I mean, of course, there are individual little things here and there but really, for the most part, this is a place where people really pull together. I feel incredible support from faculty. (Elizabeth)

While he cannot really describe what it is or why it is, administrator Thomas said that when he first walked into the building at Olympic University he felt warm.

Compared to other organizations there is a good mood or feeling. He said that people are nice and it is a small, close group of people.

But the other part of it, the good part of it, is that when I very, very first walked in here, before I had the job, it just felt warm to me – this building. I don't understand why, whether it was the people . . . our old president, Dr. D, used to call it the community of caring. And so when I heard that I guess I took it to heart . . . and it's partly (because) people are nice and partly (because) we're a small, close knit group I guess compared to big organizations, but there is kind of a good mood or feeling. We've had challenges to that for a number of reasons but . . . But there is still kind of a nice warm feeling to the place. I can't put my finger on it any more than that really. (Thomas)

This second subtheme, under supporting factors that contribute to resilience, explored the perspective that Olympic University has a strong internal community and sense of family. Several staff, administrators, and students talked about this sense of community or family. While some were not sure how to describe it, this sense of community was credited for attracting students and making people feel welcome. Some thought it may be attributed to the small size of the school that it makes for a great place to work and finally, while having difficulty articulating why or how it happens, it does make the building feel warm.

Campus physical plant and amenities. The third supporting factor that contributes to the resilience of Olympic University was about the attractiveness of the campus physical plant and the amenities it offered. People talked about this factor as making the institution more attractive for students and for the people who work at the University. The supporting factors noted included a new library, bookstore, pool, and gym.

Faculty member Kate talked about the construction of a new addition to the original building that included a state-of-the-art library.

There was a recent, relatively recent, building of the new wing and I think, in some respects, that has also helped to distinguish Olympic University with other schools. The library is a state of the art library; there are a lot of amenities that came along with that build out. (Kate)

When Melody, a student, was looking at schools, as a student, she was attracted to the campus and the way it was presented.

And so just the campus, the way they present everything here, it just had a nicer package and so that helped me determine this is the college I wanted to go to. (Melody)

The university setting which included the bookstore, cafeteria, office space for student organizations, and a gym were attractive to Eartha, staff, as she looked for a school to attend. She said that it distinguished Olympic University from other schools and said that you just do not usually find this caliber of a campus.

And that we're different in that we have a university setting. You're not taking classes in a strip mall, you're taking classes in a university with a bookstore and a cafeteria and student organizations and a pool and a gym – you know, you don't get those at other _____ schools. (Eartha)

Thomas, an administrator, said that compared to other institutions, Olympic University has so much to offer students. He also included the library and bookstore, like other participants. In addition, Thomas noted that there are 35 acres of campus available.

I can only go from my view on this and it may not be shared by new students coming in here, but I still think that if you had a choice – if you wanted to be a _____, you can go to a school that has 200 students in Texas and doesn't even have a bookstore on campus or you can come to a university that's got 35 acres and other programs and a beautiful library and all the other features that we offer, and we want to offer even more of them. (Thomas)

Administrator Seamus said there are many things that attract students including the physical facility. He also said that the campus location is another distinguishing element.

There's a lot of things about Olympic, I think, that make it an attractive place for students to come. One is the facility itself and location, I guess, if we want to get more general about that. But the institution itself, the building itself, and everything about the facility I think draws people in. (Seamus)

Among the supporting factors contributing to the resilience of Olympic University was the physical campus and amenities offered. This referred to such aspects as the newer wing on the building that includes a new library and student organization office space. Other features discussed included the campus bookstore, cafeteria, and surrounding 35 acres of land.

Location of institution. The fourth and final subtheme of the supporting factors that contribute to the resilience of Olympic University concerned the location of the institution. The campus location was discussed in several different ways. Some participants discussed the actual geographic location of the physical campus facility as convenient or in an attractive community; others referred to the location as offering options for professional collaborations with external organizations located near the

campus; and, finally, a participant noted that the state in which the University is located offers a receptive political environment.

Patrick, a student, said that the geographic location of the campus is important for him and his family. He said he would not have moved his family to attend the school.

For me personally, it had everything to do with location. My family is here and I would not have moved for this – I don't think, maybe I would have, I don't know. But that was a big driver for me. (Patrick)

An administrator, Seamus, said that the campus is physically located in a very attractive city and state, despite the climate.

I mean, _____ and the _____ in general, this a fabulous place to live in spite of the, you know, the _____ weather is what everybody jokes about. (Seamus)

According to staff member Vanessa, the campus location offers extensive opportunities for professional partnerships with several organizations in the same area as Olympic University.

So, being where we are in such a hub of health care, I think that's a huge advantage. And just even the state where Olympic University sits in how they value health and how the health care systems we have here are...you know... advanced. (Juanita)

Finally, staff member Margaret said that the political climate in the state where the University is located is positive for Olympic University and receptive to the vision for the institution.

I think they've been able to diversify because it's in _____. I think _____ is a little bit more liberal. (Margaret)

Theme IV: Components Necessary to Sustain Current and Ensure Future Resilience

The last major theme is focused on the components necessary to sustain the current status of resilience, as well as mechanisms needed to ensure future opportunities for resilience at Olympic University. There were four subthemes within this theme. These

subthemes include the ability to continue to be visionary and take risks; enhanced internal communications and working relationships within the Olympic University community; greater focus on the integration of current and future academic programs and disciplines; and increased external marketing and communications.

Ability to be visionary and take risks. A common message in the interviews regarding sustaining current resilience and enhancing future resilience was the ability to be visionary and to take risks. This can be painful for organizations as there are not usually road maps to follow when looking to the future. Remaining flexible and open to new opportunities while maintaining the ability to offer high quality educational experiences is important.

Colleen, an administrator, discussed the challenge of being open to new ventures without knowing what those new ventures may be and creating a plan for where the ventures need to lead. She used the example of hockey player Wayne Gretzky and his ability to skate where the puck was going to be after it was hit.

They don't know what they need until they see it, until we produce it. And we talked about that a lot at the Leadership Institute too and the tagline for that was, "Wayne Gretzky was one of the greatest hockey players because he skated to where the puck will be." He didn't skate to where the puck was or where it is, but he skated to where he knew it was going to be and that's what we need to do in our plans – anticipate. (Colleen)

In discussing academic program expansion plans, faculty member Kate said it can be painful to pursue such plans, however it is important for Olympic University to be able to do so. Successful implementation of expansion plans contribute to the University's resilience.

I think they're planning to expand that and I think that's also a move that shows some resiliency and flexibility. We're not without growing pains in the process. I know we're also looking at some master's degree programs and some diploma

programs and I know there's one in _____ and I think there's one in _____. I think there have been some challenges in getting both the undergraduate and those master's programs started but I think the ability to do so speaks towards Olympic University's resiliency. (Kate)

Colleen, an administrator, talked more about the challenge of adding the new academic programs and the time it has taken to integrate these programs into the culture of the institution. She went on to say that Olympic University has been a leader in their market by making major changes several years ago compared to similar institutions that are now trying to diversify their academic programs.

So that cultural shift, as you know, takes a while, but I think that we're moving in that direction and I think that's where we set ourselves apart from other institutions who have just added on other programs to diversify their offerings. We've actually said, "We're not only adding them on but we want them to be part of each other and we want to be a leader in that." (Colleen)

A shift to becoming a university can be risky because it calls for more rigorous academic scholarship. The reorganization of Olympic to become a university continues to call for rigor but also for more shared scholarly work. This can be threatening to scholars who have worked in solo efforts. According to administrator Thomas, it is important for Olympic University faculty to strive to develop new academic relationships with colleagues at similar and also different institutions. He looks forward to a future with an increase in such activities.

I'm desperate to see faculty become more scholarly oriented where they wish to not just do their stuff in isolation but share their experiences with others, which is the beginnings of the scholarly approach and network with their colleagues at other universities, not just _____ and _____ schools but within the legitimate university system and become a part of that population and instead of me having to push them all the time, they can start pushing me, they can start making demands of me for more resources for scholarship and so on. I'd love to see that happen. (Thomas)

This subtheme, of the main theme focused on the components necessary to sustain current resilience and ensure future resilience at Olympic University, was the ability to be visionary and to take risks. The institution has had a history of taking risks to the point that it has been seen as a leader in the market. Being visionary means taking risks and that can be painful for organizations. Some of the pain expressed was around diversifying the academic programs and some of the pain continues to be about the scholarship necessary to achieve a university level academic status for faculty by networking and collaborating with others in the field and beyond.

Enhanced internal communication and working relationships. The second subtheme of components necessary to sustain current and ensure future resilience is enhanced internal communication and working relationships. The data kept referring to the importance of keeping people within the organization informed and creating partners as the organization creates new plans for change and transition. This internal audience included faculty, staff, students, and administrators.

Discussing the status of the University, student George said the University could be enhanced if everyone was informed about the mission and goals of the institution. He said students would be partners in the changes if they were informed about the plans.

It's in a good place right now. I feel communication could make it even better. We have, you know, the aspects of the students and the teachers and we communicate very well. Now if the whole community, the alumni and everything like that, we're all doing our thing but if we have communication between each and know kind of, "This is the mission for the school, this is what we want to accomplish." If the students know that and if everyone knows that, then that's something we could work for as a group instead of, "Well administration is going to do this, this, and alumni is doing this, and they're doing that." (George)

Administrator Elizabeth said that communications about the institutional commitment to success needs to come from the top down, starting with the president. She

said this message can be shared with leaders who bring it to their work groups to be effective in moving into the future.

I think that message about commitment to success comes from the highest level. I think that the tone of a university is set by the president and then all the way down. Everybody who is in a leadership position and overseeing any group of body, any group of people, sets the tone for that group. I mean, so the president sets the overall tone for the university and it's all about speaking the positive message of, "This is where we're going, this is how we're going to get there, we can do it." (Elizabeth)

The subject of sharing plans within the institutional community was also linked to effective change by staff member Margaret. She said that while change can be painful, if people know the plan and the reason for the change, they can partner in implementing change.

And I think we have to realize that none of us likes change, it doesn't mean that it's good or it's bad. "We've always done it this way, why are you making us change?" And I think that's what a lot of people feel but I think if people feel like they're part of the process then they're more willing . . . maybe to understand it. Maybe it's more if they understand the need for the change and why we're doing it, they feel like they're more a part of it then. It can go both ways. Yeah. And I think that's what people need to feel is partnership and I'm not too sure that they're feeling that right now. (Margaret)

Another student, Hugh, also advocated for communicating with students, faculty, and administrators about decisions so everyone can understand the decision making process.

I think keeping open channels between the administration and the faculty and students. Making sure that the students . . . that everyone understands the decisions that are being made and why they're being made (Hugh)

Elizabeth, an administrator, also advocated for communication and involvement with faculty to ensure understanding and buy in for long range plans on the part of faculty. She said faculty involvement would trickle down to students as the faculty would be offering the message to students that the institution is a great place to be.

I think the key to that is really making sure that you have buy-in at every level and that the faculty really understand the long-range plan. I think it's just really important to make sure they understand the broad picture, the long-range goal and that the College of _____ really would be stronger, better, more able to do exactly what it wants to do if we can make it through this little phase and get other programs performing and being successful. If the faculty members are saying this is a great place to be and here's where we're going and you're all going to be fine, then the students start having that feeling and then pretty soon they believe it and you manifest what you believe. And so, you just . . . it's all about just staying on message and being positive. And I don't mean that we don't address problems, you don't air them in inappropriate places and you don't focus on negative. (Elizabeth)

Another concept regarding enhanced internal communications and relationships fostering resilience came from Anthony, an administrator, who suggested there be a safe place for a sort of think tank to enhance the generation of creative ideas.

So I think the other thing that would actually help the resilience is if there is some mechanism for creative ideas to come to the surface. This institution, everybody in here knows exactly what needs to happen but there is no sandbox in which you can play to get that to the point where people feel trustworthy enough to share some of those . . . because some things are pretty challenging, they would have a big impact on specific individuals. So getting that information that was . . . it's tough. (Anthony)

Enhanced internal communications and working relationships could be helped by offering leadership training and development according to staff member Juanita. She said this would be a way to connect internal community members with a focus on the mission. Juanita also advocated for heightened communication to bring people together focused on the mission.

I think that and training and really putting, like giving employees the opportunity to have this leadership and development training, things that really empower them, that's where I feel like there is a big disconnect. So we do all this great stuff, but it's like just connecting it all so that everybody is really living and working out that mission. Yeah, so modern communication and then if there would be a way to really get everybody on the same page and living and breathing the mission of what we're doing here. It's just going to be stronger when it's in the community. (Juanita)

Finally, staff member Ana said she had concerns about the dedication and the work ethic of older staff being communicated or transmitted to younger as the older staff make plans to retire.

So, a lot of us who are getting ready to retire grew up with that feeling of dedication and work ethic that I'm not sure is there – and I'm not sure that it's all bad, because . . . I don't know. We look around and hope that we can begin to train our younger co-employees to have that same feeling of dedication that we have. I don't know if you feel it, that it is different – the work ethic that for my generation. (Ana)

This subtheme was about different aspects of enhanced internal communication and working relationships. The primary focus was about communications among staff, faculty, administrators, and students to ensure partnership on strategic directions for the institution. Some advocated for including more people in the decision-making process about the future directions while others advocated just including the internal community so that they can understand the plans and become partners in the implementation of the plans.

Another area of internal communication was about offering a safe location for the generation of creative ideas to be offered regarding the future of the institution. Leadership training and development was suggested to bring people together focused on the institutional mission. And, finally, someone advocated for the communication or transmission of the work ethic and commitment of senior staff before they retire.

Greater focus on integration of current and future academic disciplines.

Throughout the data, there was much discussion about past expansion of academic disciplines or programs at Olympic University as well as the transition from a college to a university. These strategic actions were applauded by most participants. However, it was often noted that more work is necessary to ensure resilience in the future. This includes

the integration of learning opportunities including the classroom, clinics, and research. The respondents who spoke about the integration of academic programs included students, faculty, and administrators. In addition, the topic of the metamorphosis from a college to a university was discussed by an administrator.

Seamus, an administrator, discussed the integration of the academic programs issue as a challenge due to the infrastructure of the institution which obstructs collaboration.

We're challenged to integrate them but we're challenged because of our own restrictions – it's our structured setting, which is necessary for other reasons but it does make that true collaboration and integration of the professions, of the students in a clinical setting, difficult. (Seamus)

Seamus went on to say that clinical settings may be the best options in pulling students together from separate disciplines or programs. He said that at some sites this is already happening and they have a goal to create more in the future.

We haven't done as good a job as we need to in terms of getting the students learning together and practicing together... So, clinical environments are where we are looking to focus on integrating – you know, getting them practicing, working, talking together and we have a few settings where that's happening. (Seamus)

Concerns about integrating academic programs were on the mind of Melody, a student who said she was attracted to the University because of the integration opportunities. She was not pleased with what she has been offered in terms of integration at this point. Melody advocated for more work in this area.

I think really, honestly, I think there needs to be more focus on fulfilling the integration of disciplines part of the mission statement is _____. But as a student, at least as a _____ student, we only have one class with _____. It's a research class and we get to discuss certain things, but it's still two separate worlds. We each have our own vernacular, we each have our own lingo, we each have our own way we look at disease and health. If they're really going to focus on integrative medicine or merging the two disciplines, I think there still needs to

be more work in that aspect because sometimes you kind of . . . both parties develop their own bias and then they don't really want to work together even though we're in the same institution and we have the same goals. I think there needs to be a lot more work to kind of break down those barriers and assumptions that we each have about each other. It's like, "Oh, the _____, they're like this" or, "The _____, they're just like this." It's like you're creating walls before you even graduate so how do you expect to go work with someone if you already have that bias. (Melody)

Administrator Chris called for a closer look at the issue of integrating programs and the application of additional resources to address the needs. He said that, while it may take some time, it is important for progress to happen.

I think we need to really . . . we need to look at the _____ programs and we need to appropriately resource those programs in terms of faculty, in terms of financial dollars, and the ability to, you know, for lack of a better word, suck it up for two or three years to launch these programs and support them. So financially it's going to be hard for us, but we have to move ahead here. (Chris)

Thomas, an administrator, talked about the challenges moving forward as a university after a long history as a single-focus college. He talked about adapting the original soul of the college into a university.

In fact, I think that's one of our biggest challenges going forward is that we're going to have to adapt this soul of the _____ school to a multi-purpose university and I hope it will help it, I hope it will still be a part of it. (Thomas)

Thomas went on to say that Olympic University cannot stand isolated but must be aligned with other universities that offer academic programs beyond the scope of Olympic. These organizational relationships will enhance the resilience of the institution while offering legitimacy to the professions.

I think that we can't be isolated as an institution. We have to have strong integration with other institutions, particularly U of _____. The identification of us with the U of _____, and we'll add the cultural authority and cultural perspective . . . well what's the word? Cultural authority I guess is the word – that will cause people to continue to seek careers in these fields. If they're seen as isolated or odd-ball fields, they're going to die out and so I think it's important for us that we continue to develop as a legitimate university. (Thomas)

This subtheme focused on the data regarding the Olympic University past expansion of academic disciplines or programs as well as the transition from a college to a university. The respondents who spoke about the integration of academic programs included students, faculty, staff, and administrators. It was often noted that more work is necessary. In addition, the topic of the transformation from a college to a university was discussed.

Increased external marketing and communications. In reviewing the transcripts, I noticed the issue of the sustainability of resilience at Olympic University was often linked to calls for increased external marketing and communications. Not everyone was sure how the marketing might be defined but many people called for increased marketing as well as communications within the organization. Some suggested marketing research; others asked for billboards, radio, and television advertising. The recent launching of a new website for the University was applauded, however.

Rather than rely on anecdotal information, administrator Chris called for market research to assess the true markets for Olympic University. He stated that the current universe for the University is too small and that marketing can help identify growth opportunities.

What we need to do, however, we cannot rely upon anecdotal information. We need to go out and do some true market research, engage an outside resource, because right now our universe is too small and we're having a tough time figuring out, you know, what are the growth areas, where are the opportunities. (Chris)

The issue of marketing the strategic initiatives was advocated by Seamus, administrator. He said there are currently no external marketing efforts such as billboards, radio, and television advertising.

I think what we're lacking and what would really help us push through to the next level, whatever that is, the strategic things or initiatives, that we haven't had a good handle on in the past. I mean, we don't market. We don't market anything. We don't have a billboard, we don't have a radio ad, we don't do TV, and we're so proud of the fact that people come here because of word of mouth, well that's nice but that's not a reason not to do some strategic marketing here. (Seamus)

The opportunity to be seen as a leader, attractive to more students, and distinguished from similar institutions was administrator Colleen's vision for marketing. She said Olympic University is planning to engage in more external marketing as there is currently no institutional marketing department.

We want to be a leader, we want to be seen as a leader, we want students to understand that that's what different about Olympic and makes them want to be a graduate of here, makes them want to come here to school. We're not marketing it very well right now because we don't have a marketing department but we're working on it. (Colleen)

Colleen also talked about the importance of preparing students to be successful in the job market which would add to the attraction of Olympic University to prospective students.

It was about basically it being relevant in the marketplace. What are we doing to ensure that our students can be successful when they graduate from here? It's not just about getting them in and getting them out, it's like what are we doing to set them up for success and are we relevant in the marketplace? (Colleen)

The concept that students play an important role in marketing the institution was also noted by administrator Jeff. He said it is critical for students to have a quality experience at Olympic University as students are essential in marketing the institution to prospective students including family and friends.

We are dependent upon their satisfaction with their experience while they're here, the support we can provide after so that they refer their sons and daughters and relatives and other friends to Olympic – it's no different than Notre Dame, no different than the University of _____. (Jeff)

This idea that students and alumni are crucial in marketing to prospective students was also noted by Colleen, an administrator. She went on to talk about the importance of practitioners in marketing Olympic University. Colleen said that there are many more things to be done to increase these marketing opportunities.

I know that alumni refer students to us, so they help with enrollment. And I know that many students come to our professions because they've had an experience with that kind of a practitioner and then they ask the practitioner, "Oh, where did you go to school and would you recommend it?" So they could play a really key role in our resiliency and our ability to be financially viable. But there's so much more we can do with fostering those relationships. We've got big homecoming events that they come back and get continuing education for and whatever. Homecoming is different here, obviously, than it would be at a traditional school with football games and all that. We're looking at how to do an alumni ambassador program, that they would be helpful in the recruitment of students. Also an alumni referral program, how can we incentivize or reward alumni who refer students to us. I think we could do more for them in promoting their professions and connecting them to each other, to the institution, lobbying for insurance reimbursements, things like that – and telling them about it. You know, "We're still working for you even though you've graduated from our institution." (Colleen)

Finally, the issue of knowing market trends was supported by Jeff, administrator. These market trends are all a part of being visionary for the future as well as offering good student services. Thus, he advocated for conducting market research as well as offering quality student services with a focus on future marketing by satisfied students.

Not being satisfied, you know, with what we're doing today. Good leadership – it will focus on a shared vision and all of that I think we have. Making sure that we're tuned in to trends in health care and trends in higher education. We have to know what's happening and be able to not just react but be more proactive and serve students very well. And looking for opportunities to have their (students) experience be more than what they expected it would be. (Jeff)

The last major theme was about the components necessary to sustain the current status of resilience as well as mechanisms that are necessary to ensure future opportunities for resilience at Olympic University. There were several data points within

this theme. I referred to four subthemes that included the ability to continue to be visionary and take risks, enhanced internal communications and working relationships within the Olympic University community, greater focus on the integration of current and future academic programs and disciplines, and increased external marketing and communications efforts.

Summary

While writing this chapter, I continued to see more details from the interviews and to refine the definition of the major themes. There were four major themes that became obvious over the course of the data analysis. Within the four major themes, various subthemes were identified that supported and helped to define the four major themes.

The first major theme highlighted the foundations for the manifestation of resilience at Olympic University. There were three subthemes that supported this concept including the history of institutional and professional perseverance despite adversity; stories about visionary leaders over the years; and discussions of responses to change and transitions.

The second major theme was about the primary factors that contributed to resilience at Olympic University. Every participant I interviewed spoke about these primary factors in some form. It was clear these were more prominent factors than the supporting factors in the third major theme. There were four subthemes within this second major theme including examples of the dedication and commitment of the faculty, staff, and administrators; a focus on the vision to add new academic disciplines to the curriculum; examples of ways that students contribute to the resilience at Olympic University; and external partnerships that the institution has engaged in that have enhanced the school.

The third major theme outlined the supporting factors that contributed to resilience at Olympic University. While these may be similar to the primary factors noted in the second major theme, these supporting factors were not mentioned as often or with as much enthusiasm as the primary factors. There were four subthemes supporting this theme. These subthemes included institutional research priorities and efforts; an enhanced sense of internal community or feeling of family among the employees and students at the University; the campus physical plant and amenities; and the location of the campus.

The fourth and final major theme offered the components necessary to sustain current and ensure future resilience at Olympic University. The four subthemes included the ability to remain visionary and continue to take risks; enhanced internal communication and working relationships; a greater focus on the integration of the current and future academic disciplines both inside and outside the classroom; and increased external marketing and communications.

Table 2

Themes and Subthemes

Major Themes	Foundations for Resilience	Primary Factors that Contribute to Resilience	Supporting Factors that Contribute to Resilience	Components Necessary to Sustain Current and to Ensure Future Resilience
Subthemes	<p>History of institutional and professional perseverance despite adversity</p> <p>Stories of visionary leaders</p> <p>Responses to change and transition</p>	<p>Dedication and commitment of faculty and staff</p> <p>Vision to add new academic disciplines</p> <p>Student contributions</p> <p>Partnerships with external groups</p>	<p>Institutional research priorities and efforts</p> <p>Sense of community or family as described by students, staff, and administrators</p> <p>Campus physical plant</p> <p>Location of institution</p>	<p>Ability to be visionary and take risks</p> <p>Enhanced internal communication and working relationships</p> <p>Greater focus on integration of current and future academic disciplines</p> <p>Increase external marketing and communications</p>

Chapter Five

Discussion

I was interested in understanding how an institution of higher education can remain resilient despite facing many difficult issues including changing markets, challenging enrollment trends, questions about the value of a higher education, concerns about academic rigor in course offerings, and declining financial aid options. These combined challenges and my role as a higher education leader and as a student of organization development led me to pursue this case study topic. The purpose of this study was to understand and describe a higher education institution's response to significant challenges encountered by the institution. I thought that understanding the experience would assist other institutions facing the same or similar higher education challenges.

My research question was: What makes an institution of higher education resilient? As a means of answering this question, I conducted an interpretive case study at an institution of higher education located in the Midwest region of the United States. Throughout this document, I referred to the institution as Olympic University in an effort to protect the identity of the participants as well as the institution. I interviewed 19 members of the Olympic University community which included staff, faculty, students, and administrators. This final chapter includes a discussion of the major findings, limitations of the study, suggestions for further research, implications for leaders and OD practitioners, and personal reflections.

Overview of Major Themes

There were four major themes surrounding the essence of resilience at Olympic University that became obvious to me as I analyzed the 19 interviews of staff, faculty, students, and administrators. These four major themes were:

- foundations for resilience at Olympic University;
- primary factors that contribute to resilience;
- supporting factors that contribute to resilience;
- components necessary to sustain current and ensure future resilience.

In the following section, I will highlight some of my findings by describing my literature review as linked to the findings and themes noted above. In chapter two, I noted that I had a limited literature review which is common in an interpretive case study. It was also limited because I was unable to find much literature which focused on higher education and resilience. Later, while conducting the interviews and reviewing my findings, I was able to find new, interesting links to the findings which were not apparent at the onset. These new literature notes are included in the following discussion along with some of the original literature review.

Foundations for resilience. The first major theme focused on the foundations for resilience at Olympic University. Participant interviews revealed three subthemes supporting this major theme. The three subthemes concerned the history of institutional and professional perseverance despite adversity, stories of visionary leaders, and responses to change and transition.

This first subtheme referenced the original career field chosen by the founder and supported by all of the presidents and leaders as well as the faculty. Through participant interviews, I learned that this chosen profession was not well accepted by people in other professions and that those who did pursue this profession were often challenged and often encountered major adversity. According to the participants, when the institution was founded to educate and train others for this profession, leaders aligned with the institution were often challenged. The stories I heard about the establishment of the institution described the difficulties of dealing with external groups, including higher education accreditation, funding agencies, and health care groups. The participants talked about how persevering through these difficulties made the institution and the key people involved in the institution, resilient. According to Luthans and Avolio (2003), when groups or organizations “experienced economic or moral/ethical setbacks, resiliency as a positive psychological capacity takes on added importance” (p. 255). I heard clearly that the founders and leaders of the institution were persecuted for their beliefs in their profession. As I look at the history of Olympic University, I see persecution as a factor in binding the group together to develop enough resilience to launch the institution.

While my initial literature review did not identify this topic, I did find an article published by a state historical society that went into great detail about the adversities encountered by early leaders in the field, as well as the trials met while establishing this institution. Unfortunately, I cannot cite this article as it would identify the case study site. However, it did help me to triangulate and support my findings in this subtheme.

The second subtheme, which included stories about visionary leaders, was intriguing to me. I heard stories from students, staff, faculty, and administrators that were

primarily focused on past and current presidents of the university. Although I was not surprised by the stories, it was gratifying to hear the details of these accounts as well as the passion the participants demonstrated when they were sharing their stories. I found that the common thread throughout these chronicles were the poignant details about Olympic University's transition from a college that offered only one academic program to a university with multiple academic programs. I detected a sense of pride from the story tellers about being affiliated with an institution that had such visionary leaders.

According to Ashforth, Harrison, and Corley (2008), when individuals in a constantly changing complex organization align or identify themselves with the organization's leaders, they develop a commitment and a willingness to devote increased effort to support the organization. Therefore, I see sharing the stories of the visionary university leaders as a positive strategy to help the institution develop a commitment from students, staff, faculty, and administrators, which in turn can enhance institutional resilience.

Finally, in reference to the stories about visionary leaders, I read a recently published book on resilience in higher education (MacTaggart, 2011) that lauded several higher education institutions, including this particular institution, for effectively managing major transitions, primarily due to the leadership of the president and the support of the governing board.

The third subtheme that emerged under the foundations for resilience at Olympic University addressed responses to change and transitions. All organizations experience periods of change and transition, however responding to change in a positive way is essential to the resilience of the organization. I described change as an alteration in

policies, employees, or the way things happen within an organization. I referred to transition as an evolution or movement such as progressing from a small college with one academic focus to an expanded, growing multidimensional university. I heard a variety of perspectives on this issue of change and transition. Some reported they believe the institution is constantly changing which makes it a better institution.

I realize that change and transition can be difficult for some people while others are energized by and embrace the new opportunities. Change is challenging, however, and according to MacTaggart (2011), it is necessary for higher education institutions to exist. MacTaggart said it cannot be just sporadic change at the margins but rather it is necessary to have ongoing change that can raise the impact of the institution. The future of higher education institutions depends upon the institution's ability to change (Christensen & Eyring, 2011). While organizations change all of the time, according to Burke (2008), planned organization change which that are major overhauls are revolutionary change. I think that the energy generated by facing adversity can enhance an institution's ability to be resilient and move forward positively through change.

To have effective change, the kind of change that will enhance the resilience of the higher education institution, double-loop learning must take place throughout the organization (Argyris, 2000). This means people cannot just go through change for the sake of change, but rather the institutional leaders must be sure that all of the people affected by the change (students, staff, faculty, and administrators) have been involved in constructive dialogue, connected the change through valid information about the need for change, understood what the underlying values were in creating the change, have been offered opportunities to change their defensive behaviors, and have helped to develop

new organizational norms and cultures that reinforce the changes (Argyris). It was evident in the case study that Olympic University had not completed the double-loop learning process with everyone. In my conversations with the participants, it was obvious to me that some of them had experienced double-loop learning as they talked about how they understood the need for change and appreciated the vision for the change. However, I spoke with other participants who had noticeably only gone through single-loop learning, if at all, as they said they did not understand the need for change and they resented the steps that had been taken to implement the changes.

Primary factors that contribute to resilience. This second major theme was discussed by all of the 19 participants as essential factors contributing to the resilience of Olympic University. I heard the largest set of responses tied to this theme as compared to the other three major themes. The subthemes within the primary factors, which I included, are dedication and commitment of faculty, staff, and administrators; vision to add new academic disciplines; student contributions; and partnerships with external groups. The dedication and commitment of faculty, staff, and administrators was noted by most of the participants. I was impressed by the stories and passion that described this subtheme. I had several pages of responses focused on this topic. Commitment to the organization and the employees within the organizations, according to Youssef (2004), is an essential ingredient for resilience in an organization. I see this subtheme as a good example of the commitment noted by Youssef.

I identified the second subtheme, within the primary factors, as vision to add new academic disciplines. Some of the participants cited this as an important resilience factor for Olympic University. The original college had one academic major; the expansion to a

university with the addition of new academic programs was applauded by some participants as a visionary move for the institution. Christensen and Eyring (2011) noted that competition in higher education markets calls for many institutions to undergo major changes to their DNA and expand or change from their early academic mission. Olympic University administrators talked to me about the importance of moving beyond the one academic program as an essential contributor to resilience for the school.

The third subtheme I found was focused on the contributions of students. Faculty, staff, and administrators told me of the importance of the work of students in helping create a more integrated university after the organization became a university. Some said that students were more adept in crossing boundaries between the academic disciplines and thus integrating the various disciplines. The students cited for their contributions were noted particularly for their roles as student leaders at Olympic University. I have read studies for years that have noted that student engagement contributes positively to student learning and development (Bowman & Seifert, 2011; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). After reviewing the comments and the literature, I see student contributions as supporting resilience in two possible ways: first, as positive contributions to the resilience of Olympic University; and second, as supporting individual student resilience by contributing to the learning and development of the students.

Supporting factors that contribute to resilience. I refer to the third major theme as supporting factors that contribute to resilience. These are supporting rather than primary because I heard references to these topics, however, not to the degree the primary factors were discussed. The first subtheme I identified as institutional research priorities and efforts. Students, faculty, and administrators told me that Olympic University's focus

on research and the ability to obtain federal grants contributed to the institution's resilience. Some participants said that it affirmed the academic profile of the school and distinguished Olympic University from other similar institutions. I saw this as people perceiving the research endeavors as a way to strengthen the university and enhance resilience.

The second subtheme within the supporting factors, which some participants told me exists, is about the sense of community or family within the employees and some students. I heard this reference from students, staff, and administrators. When reviewing my notes, I realized that faculty did not express any sentiments regarding this topic. I am not sure why there were no faculty responses related to this topic, however, I thought it was interesting to note. The participants who discussed this area with me talked about a sense of welcome and attraction to Olympic University as a place to work or study. When I found nothing in the resilience or higher education literature, I looked to Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998). They refer to some organizations that are focused on groups rather than individuals as communitarian. In a communitarian organization, people are often motivated by recognition and support from their colleagues rather than money (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). I wondered if this was a phenomenon at Olympic University. Furthermore, if this was an aspect of the institutional culture, I wondered if it would continue to enhance resilience as the organization changes and hires new employees.

The third subtheme within the supporting factors for resilience was about the campus physical plant and amenities. Students, faculty, and staff talked about this factor as making the institution more appealing for students and employees. It was obvious from

the participants, and my own informal observations, that extensive improvements had been made to the physical plant which included a state-of-the-art library, student lounges, and student organization meeting spaces. Strange and Banning (2001) discussed the importance of creating campus physical environments that enhance educational success. As an administrator who has designed and built campus buildings to engage students, I appreciated the extensive planning that had taken place in order to create an environment that appeared welcoming and engaging.

The fourth subtheme was discussed by some participants and I refer to it as location of the institution. Some participants described the physical location as attractive and contributing to resilience. One participant told me that the political environment in the state in which Olympic University is located has contributed to the resilience. She said that because the state is more progressive and liberal than some other states, Olympic University has been more supported by state legislation than similar institutions in more conservative states.

Components necessary to sustain current and ensure future resilience. The other major theme I thought warranted additional exploration was the theme about the components necessary to sustain current and ensure future resilience at Olympic University. The subthemes included the ability to be visionary and take risks, enhanced internal communications and working relationships, greater focus on integrations of current and future academic disciplines, and increased external marketing and communications. These components, while not unexpected, offer insights for organization development practitioners and higher education professionals as discussed below.

As I noted earlier, according to Crislip and Bush (2010), turbulence in higher education is more substantial than ever before. Tang (2011) noted that institutions with long histories are closing or being sold to for-profit companies, while some institutions are outsourcing the teaching of courses. Now is the time for institutions to change. Kezar (2011) stated that campuses have to build capacity to make the important changes. I noted this major theme as the appeal for Olympic University to come to terms with current practices as well as determine actions that will ensure future resilience. I believe it is time for each college or university to assess their current practices that enhance or stunt resilience and to develop strategies for the future.

The first subtheme was the ability to be visionary and take risks. Several participants believed the institution needed to continue certain practices as well as create new practices to enhance this ability. I have found it can be painful for organizations to be visionary and take risks at the same time as there are not usually road maps to follow when looking to the future. As an educator, I know it is important to remain flexible and

open to new opportunities while staying grounded in order to offer high quality educational experiences to students. This subtheme is consistent with existing research. Youssef (2004) stated that the need for organizational leaders and members to be able to take risks, “adapt, bounce back and flourish despite adversity has never been greater” (p. i).

Throughout the interviews, I often heard factors discussed regarding the second subtheme which called for greater internal communication and enhanced working relationships. For any organization to survive and thrive, I believe there must be an understanding that all members of the organization need to have the opportunity to know something about the shared values and future plans for the organization in order to contribute to the success of the institution. Earlier, I discussed findings regarding resiliency in high risk organizations. Much of the literature regarding resilience in organizations, which I found earlier, was about high risk organizations including fire departments (Weick, 1993; Weick, 2003; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). In these organizations, where there were continuous threats of disaster, it was important for individuals to eliminate ambiguity, especially in the midst of high pressure situations. These studies concluded that elimination of ambiguity can encourage problem-solving and new behavior patterns that lead to a more resilient organization.

Finally, in another reference to better internal communications, if people see and connect to the shared values within the higher education institution, are stimulated and understand their role, with the right conditions created through better communications, people can be motivated to move into the flow of being major contributors to the success of the organization (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003).

The third subtheme in this section calls for greater integration of current and future academic disciplines. I often heard that, while participants applauded the transition from a single-focused college to a multidimensional university, they had many concerns about better integration of the new disciplines within the fabric of the institution. While no one seemed to offer a feasible strategy to address this need for better integration. I suggest this must remain a top priority for the institution to enable it to eliminate uncertainty about the competing resources which include people and finances within the organization. Should the organization pursue new academic disciplines, I would side with Christensen and Eyring (2011) who suggested that while higher education institutions must challenge themselves to build a stronger future, they must also be clear about their past achievements and how they can and should be used to create a foundation for future growth.

As higher education institutions and other organizations strive to be resilient and take on new initiatives or programs, it is important that members of the organization be helped through the process of letting go of the old organization. This process begins by acknowledging the change and then moving into a neutral zone where people can address their discomfort and grieve the change. After the discomfort is recognized and addressed, the transition process continues as people embrace the changes as the new organization faces the ongoing challenges of remaining resilient (Bridges, 2009).

Essence of the Study

When I look back at my findings, I have a few questions about my discoveries. When I view this work, I see it as a large puzzle and my findings are just some of the pieces that contribute to the larger picture of what makes an institution resilient. I wonder

what other factors or puzzle pieces may contribute to institutional resilience that I did not uncover. I also wonder whether a different institution with the same factors or attributes, would be resilient. I think that conditions such as financial support, location of the institution, and leadership are essential to the resilience puzzle. What are other contributing conditions that may affect the resilience?

The Olympic University founders and leaders experienced persecution throughout the history of the institution. I wonder if a different institution would be resilient without encountering the persecution or did the persecution drive the people to work harder in order in order to establish and grow the institution. For example, throughout the ages, religious persecution has resulted in very strong religious groups all over the globe. Another piece of the puzzle may be about the DNA of the institution. Certain institutions have within the fabric of the organization, the capacity to be resilient. I wonder, however, if other institutions can develop this capacity. These are all questions for which I do not have answers, and perhaps the future research will be able to answer these questions.

Limitations

The limitations of every study pertain both to research design and the way the study was conducted. For this interpretive case study, limitations of the research design have to do with a single case set in the Midwest region of the United States. This design limited the opportunities for exploring the subject to only one institution which may not offer applications to any other institutions in the Midwest region or beyond.

The study limitations that stem from the way in which the study was conducted have to do with data gathering. I interviewed 19 participants and the lengths of interviews were 30- 45 minutes each. While I tried to involve more participants across the institution, I think if I had additional participants I may have had a larger set of results.

The findings were based on self-reported perspectives of the participants. While self-reporting offered me the view of reality as constructed by the individual interviewee, enhancement of reality by the participant is always a limitation.

Another limitation regarding the size of the participant pool is that, in addition to people interviewed, I had specific individuals in mind with whom I wanted to talk but for a variety of reasons they were not available to be interviewed. These people may have supported or disputed the findings I had gathered from the 19 interviewees. Or, perhaps these people, who did not participate in interviews, may have offered different perspectives, ideas, themes, or concepts.

Finally, the Midwest is culturally different than any other region in the United States. In my experience, people in the Midwest tend to say nice things and not to be vocal with unpleasant things, especially when they talk to people from outside of their organization or institution. The demographic background of the participants was somewhat limited. The responses I gathered may have been different if I had been able to interview a more ethnically diverse group of participants. For example, the reported sense of community or family within the University from many participants may have not been shared by people whom I did not interview.

Suggestions for Future Research

In exploring possibilities for future studies of resilience in higher education, I have developed some questions and options to include. This was a single case interpretive research study. An interpretive case study is within the social constructionist ontology or nature of reality. That is, through human groups the researcher creates meaning. Using interpretivism, or way of knowing, the researcher moves from a person or group to find the meaning of the person or group. I used the interpretive case study to find meaning

about resilience by researching one institution in the Midwest region of the United States. My questions about future research are based on five different approaches to the exploration of resilience in higher education.

First, I suggest a future study could use the same interpretive case study design but in another region of the United States. Would a different region offer institutions different funding sources or structures? Would there be a different set of students in that market? There were some suggestions by a few of my participants that the region was more liberal and therefore more supportive of the academic programs offered at my case study site. Thus, I suggest exploring whether a different region with a different political profile would be as supportive of an institution to the point of affecting the institution's ability to be resilient. Would others discover similar findings regarding resilience in a different region using the same methodology?

Second, I suggest using the interpretive case study in institutions that are not considered resilient. Would the researchers get the same results? What would be the outcomes of such a study? Would others find new descriptions or norms of what it means to be resilient in a higher education institution in such studies?

Third, I suggest research using the same interpretive case study methodology to study a big public university. Would the institution experience similar challenges in trying to be resilient? Would the public nature of the institution affect the financial stability of the organization? Would there be a stronger infrastructure to assist the institution through difficult times? Would the researcher learn something different about the plausible causes of resilience?

Fourth, I suggest that conducting a series of positivistic case studies would offer different views of resilience in higher education institutions. Using a positivistic case study methodology, researchers could develop a theory about resilience in higher education based on my findings and then test it in many different institutions. Would they discover similarities in the results? What would be different? Would there be applications to the case study site I examined?

Finally, I suggest that a grounded theory study of leaders at several higher education institutions could generate a theory about factors that contribute to resilience of a higher education institution. If leaders were selected from different institutions across the country that would provide some interesting insights and address one of the limitations of this study.

Implications for Leaders and Organization Development Practitioners

There are several implications from this study for organizational leaders and organization development practitioners in general and higher education in particular, especially given the demand for continuous change in organizations. For organizational leaders, particularly higher education leaders, it is important to remember the need for greater communication within the institution. In spite of the fact that many understand the power of communications, there is still much work that has to be done to maintain two-way, honest, and meaningful communication, especially when it comes to communicating about change. If people understand the need and the reasoning behind the change, leaders can have greater buy-in from members of the organization. Messages that came directly from senior leaders were especially appreciated by my study participants. If people understand the change (through the facilitating efforts of organization development practitioners perhaps) and have involvement in decisions about the change,

there can be greater buy-in by members of the organization. External consultants can assess the communication needs with the organization members and help to facilitate or bridge the gap between current practices and the need for enhanced communication.

External consultants who work with colleges and universities should not underestimate the power of storytelling and may use the sharing of organizational stories to unite employees in change interventions. The legacy of institutional leaders conveyed in stories may help build pride in belonging to the institution and therefore create critical mass to move through change.

Finally, in order for an institution to be resilient, it takes a combination of factors and the right people who could respond to change in a timely and flexible manner. Neither of the factors alone, as described in my findings, would make the institution resilient. Rather, it was the combination of factors that made the institution not only survive but grow and thrive. This reflects system functioning and this system thinking has to be part of any change work and any organization growth and development efforts.

Personal Reflections

My interest in this topic dates back to my Master's degree work in industrial relations. At that time, I was also interested in how organizations worked and what kept organizations focused and nimble through difficult times. As a component of this graduate degree, I studied the saga or stories of leaders in successful organizations as a way of trying to understand what makes organizations tick. While pursuing my Master's in industrial relations, I was also working in higher education as an admissions recruiter for a large, public, land-grant university. A common topic among my colleagues, back those 30 years ago, was the speculation that there were too many colleges and universities in the region to survive the competition for the growing limitations on financial resources.

The idea of disappearing colleges and universities stayed with me. I did not want to invest my career in a field that was going to be declining. The Master's in industrial relations was my second Master's level degree. My first was in education. I later realized that I was already preparing to move out of higher education.

As I look back over my professional career, I realize I really took the prediction of closing higher education institutions to heart. After completing the degree in industrial relations, I left higher education and worked in a series of positions in the corporate, non-profit, and government sectors. I continued to watch the higher education arena, however, because I liked the college environment and also because I did not see the prediction of higher education institutions closing coming to fruition. After observing the industry, I returned to higher education as a leader in student affairs about 15 years ago. I was happy to be back although it was at a time that resources such as state and federal financial aid were beginning to decline. My new work in higher education was to respond to the declining resources while providing quality leadership for student affairs staff and delivering enhanced student experiences. It was difficult to cut the budgets, but I enjoyed the challenges of working with a staff team to re-imagine current programs in the process of creating new and less costly programs that better met the changing needs of students. I also noticed, at this time, that colleges and universities were beginning to close. The predictions were finally being realized.

When I was offered the opportunity to enter a doctoral program, I realized I needed to study organization development so I could understand how to be nimble as a leader and as an organization in perplexing times for higher education. The topic of what makes a higher education institution resilient was always at the top of my list of possible

dissertation study topics. The process of conducting the study excited me. I relished the opportunity to talk with people who worked at an institution so different from mine. I appreciated meeting with participants and hearing their stories and insights. I realized that, while they may be offering different academic credentials at their institution, their work was about addressing student needs as well as driving the organization through changing times, remaking what the institution offers along the way but keeping quality academic and experiential learning for students as a top priority. These priorities are very similar to those in my work and the challenges the institution faces are similar to those my institution must continue to grapple with to be resilient.

Higher education institutions may continue to struggle for some time, however, I believe it takes a visionary group of people, like my participants, who are dedicated to responding to changing markets, competing priorities, and declining resources as well as the thoughtful involvement of faculty, staff, administrators, and students. I am intrigued by this puzzle about how to create resilience in higher education; I like the demands of remaining nimble despite shifting tides and hope to continue to play a significant role in the field of higher education for many years.

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Appendix A

Email Communication to Olympic University President

November 13, 2011

Dear President E:

Colleen said that she spoke with you about my interest in working with Olympic University for my dissertation research which is focused on resiliency in higher education, hoping to understand what makes a higher education institution successful during such turbulent times. I would like to conduct a case study of Olympic University as a university which has remained nimble and visionary. As I research colleges and universities, I continue to remain impressed with the success that Olympic University has attained while developing and growing over these past few years.

I am asking for your approval to conduct a case study at Olympic University using the following methods: doing 30 minute individual interviews with administrators, faculty, staff and students (total number of participants would be 20-25 individuals); undertaking observations on campus; and reviewing appropriate materials that you are comfortable in sharing which would help tell the story of Olympic University. The information collected in the case study would be held confidential and used in a manner that would protect the privacy and identity of the participants and Olympic University. The final dissertation will not identify Olympic University in any way. I have received approval to conduct a case study from the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board.

So, Dr. E, if you decide that you would be willing to support this study, I would be asking the following of you:

- Meet with me for 30 minutes to clarify any questions which you may have
- Send out a communication introducing the study and inviting members of the Olympic University community to meet with me (attached is a draft of such a message which could be emailed or posted on an internal communication vehicle)
- Allow me to meet with interested participants on campus at a location of their choice and at a time which is mutually agreed upon.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Jane W. Canney, Doctoral Candidate

University of St. Thomas

Appendix B

Handout to Olympic University President's Assembly

What Makes a Higher Education Institution Resilient?

An Interpretive Case Study

Issue: These are tempestuous times for colleges and universities. Higher education in America is at a cross with questions about the value and validity of higher education, shifting markets of students, tumultuous economic times, governmental regulations, demands for increased service and delivery modes, and new for-profit institutions joining the market. The traditional delivery of higher education is being tested with these changes. Colleges and universities which have long histories are closing or looking for other ways to deliver learning opportunities.

Focus: This interpretive case study is focused on understanding what makes an institution of higher education resilient, nimble and successful as needs and markets shift continuously. I have chosen to study Olympic University as an example of an institution which has responded to changing markets and remained successful. As an instrumental case study, my focus is on the topic of resilience while examining how one institution has responded successfully to challenges and adversities. This study is significant as every higher education institution across the country is facing various forms of adversity with few new formulas being discovered.

Process: I am looking for 20 staff, faculty, administrators or students who are affiliated with Olympic University who would be willing to participate in a 30 minute interview. Participation in the study would be completely voluntary.

Purpose: To understand and describe a higher education institution's response to significant challenges encountered in the history of the institution as the focus of a doctoral study and dissertation.

Confidentiality: The identity of the institution and all participants will be kept confidential. Information that is collected as a part of the study will also be confidential. In my dissertation and in any follow up reports that I publish, I will not include information that will make it possible to identify Olympic University or any of the participants.

Contact:

Jane Canney
Doctoral Candidate
University of St. Thomas
Department of Organization Learning and Development
College of Applied Professional Studies
651.308.2708

jwcanney@msn.com

Advisor: Dr. Alla Heorhiadi, 651.962.4457

Appendix C

Recruitment Letter to Olympic University Community from President

Dear member of the Olympic University community:

I hope this letter finds you well and enjoying the lovely fall term.

As we all know, higher education is at a major crossroads given the many challenges to colleges and universities across the country. Changing economic times, concerns about the value of higher education degrees and federal regulations are just a few of the many factors which affect higher education. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study which is focused on the issue of resilience in higher education; that is, how some institutions survive and thrive despite adversities.

I have given Jane Canney, a doctoral student at the University of St. Thomas, approval to conduct research in support of her dissertation at Olympic University. Her doctorate is in organizational development and her research focuses on higher education and agility. The purpose of her study is to describe and understand what makes a higher institution resilient and nimble in these turbulent times.

She would like to interview Olympic University faculty, staff, students, and administrators who are interested in the topic and willing to participate in a 30 minute interview. Participation is completely voluntary and the identification of participants and the institution will be kept confidential by her. Information that is collected as a part of the study will be confidential and will be used in a manner that protects your privacy and identity.

If you are interested in learning more about the study or participating, please contact Ms. Canney directly at jwcanney@msn.com. She will be interviewing on campus at a location of your choice in the next few weeks.

While there will be no financial reward for participating, I believe that this is an exciting opportunity for Olympic University as we move forward with our bold vision to be the University of Choice while offering first-rate educational experiences for students. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

President of Olympic University

Appendix D

Email Recruitment to Participants from Researcher

Dear (name),

My name is Jane Canney and I am a doctoral student at the University of St. Thomas conducting my dissertation research on resilience in higher education. You have been suggested to me as someone who is affiliated with Olympic University and would be interested in talking about how Olympic University has remained resilient despite adversities.

As someone who is involved in higher education you know that these are tempestuous times for colleges and universities. Higher education in America is at a crossroads with questions about the value and validity of higher education, shifting markets of students, tumultuous economic times, governmental regulations, demands for increased service and delivery modes, and new for-profit institutions joining the market. The traditional delivery of higher education is being tested with these changes. Colleges and universities which have long histories are closing or looking for other ways to deliver learning opportunities.

This case study is focused on understanding what makes an institution of higher education resilient, nimble and successful as needs and markets shift continuously. I have chosen to study Olympic University as an example of an institution which has responded to changing markets and remained successful. As an instrumental case study, my focus is on the topic of resilience while examining how one institution has responded successfully to challenges and adversities. This study is significant as every higher education institution across the country is facing various forms of adversity with few new formulas being discovered.

I am looking for people who are affiliated with Olympic University who would be willing to participate in a 30 minute interview or focus group. Participation in the study is completely voluntary. There are no financial benefits. I would sincerely appreciate your consideration to participate.

The identity of all participants and the institution will be kept confidential. Information that is collected as a part of the study will be confidential and will be used in a manner that protects your privacy and identify. In my dissertation and in any follow up reports that I publish, I will not include information that will make it possible to identify you in any way.

Please give some thought to participating in this study. The next step would be to simply return an email to me at jwcanney@msn.com. If you want to participate in an interview or a focus group, we can talk further either by email or telephone about consent forms

and setting up convenient times and locations to meet. If you have questions about participating, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Jane Canney
Doctoral Candidate
University of St. Thomas
Organization Learning and Development
651.308.2708
jwcanney@msn.com

Appendix E

Recruitment Letter to Students from Dean of Students

Dear Students:

I hope this letter finds you well and enjoying the lovely fall term.

As we all know, higher education is at a major crossroads given the many challenges to colleges and universities across the country. Changing economic times, concerns about the value of higher education degrees and federal regulations are just a few of the many factors which affect higher education. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study which is focused on the issue of resilience in higher education; that is, how some institutions survive and thrive despite adversities.

Jane Canney, a doctoral student at the University of St. Thomas, has been given approval to conduct research in support of her dissertation at Olympic University. Her doctorate is in organizational development and her research focuses on higher education and agility. The purpose of her study is to describe and understand what makes a higher institution resilient and nimble in these turbulent times.

She would like to interview Olympic University faculty, staff, students, and administrators who are interested in the topic and willing to participate in a 30 minute interview. She is particularly interested in interviewing students. Participation is completely voluntary and the identification of participants and the institution will be kept confidential by her. Information that is collected as a part of the study will be confidential and will be used in a manner that protects your privacy and identity..

If you are interested in learning more about the study or participating, please contact Ms. Canney directly at jwcanney@msn.com. She will be interviewing on campus at a location of your choice in the next few weeks.

While there will be no financial reward for participating, I believe that this is an exciting opportunity for Olympic University as we move forward with our bold vision to be the University of Choice while offering first-rate educational experiences for students. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dean of Students, Olympic University

Appendix F

Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS**What makes a higher education institution resilient: An interpretive case study**

[(IRB #B11-363-03)]

I am conducting a study of Olympic University as a way to learn more about how an institution can be resilient and even successful despite adversities. I invite you to participate in this study. Your participation is voluntary. You were selected as a possible participant because you are affiliated with Olympic University. Please read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to participate in this research endeavor.

This study is being conducted by me, Jane Canney, Doctoral Candidate of Organization, Learning and Development, University of St. Thomas. My research advisor is Dr. Alla Heorhiadi, Professor in the College of Applied Professional Studies, University of St. Thomas.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to understand and describe a higher education institution's successful response to significant challenges encountered in the history of the institution. The goal is to understand the experience as a way to help other institutions during this tempestuous time in higher education. The research question is: What makes an institution of higher education resilient?

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following: (a) Participate in a 30 minute interview. (b) Be available to possibly review the general findings of the study to determine if they are consistent with your experience.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:

The study has some potential risks. Information will be gathered about your perspectives regarding the resilience of your institution. Your answers will be kept confidential and you will be given a pseudonym to protect your identity. All data will be kept confidential and secure in locked files or a password-protected media file. In the event that a transcriber is employed, she will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. In addition, you will have the opportunity to review the preliminary findings to determine if anything is included that may make it possible to identify you; if so, these statements will be removed or modified.

There is no financial compensation for participating in this study.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. I will not be sharing the information that I collect with you, nor anyone else. In any sort of report or article I publish, I will not include information that will make it possible to identify you in any way. Audio tapes or printed copies of transcriptions will be kept in a locked file in my home. Voice recordings will be erased and or destroyed within one month of the end of the study when my dissertation is approved for publication, which is anticipated to be June 2012. Electronic copies of the transcription will be saved on a password protected personal computer. Your identify will be protected by use of a code known only to myself. All materials will be destroyed following the completion of my successful doctoral dissertation.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of St. Thomas. If you decide to participate, you can choose to “skip” or not answer any of the interview questions. You are free to withdraw at any time without penalty. Should you decide to withdraw, data collected about you will not be used in this study.

Contacts and Questions:

My name is Jane Canney. You may ask any questions that you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact me at 651.308.2708. My advisor at the University of St. Thomas is Dr. Alla Heorhiadi and she can be contacted at 651.962.4457. You may also contact the University of St. Thomas Institutional Review Board at 651.962.5341 with any questions or concerns. In addition, Dr. _____, Olympic University Institutional Review Board, is available at _____.

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent to participate in this study and to be audio-taped during interviews or focus groups. I am at least 18 years of age.

Signature of Study Participant

Date

Printed Name of Participant

Signature of Researcher

Date

Appendix G

Interview Guide

Process will include the following:

- Thank you for the opportunity to discuss my research with me.
- How long have you worked (studied) at Olympic University?
- Review the focus of the study: what makes a higher education institution resilient? (i.e. difficult in all colleges and universities to recruit and retain students, keep tuition at appropriate levels with rising costs of running institutions...resiliency: difficulties, adapts easily to changes and is more successful)
- Focus is on Olympic University as it has had several challenges and appears resilient.
- Review the consent form, ask for questions and signatures.
- Explain the recording technology, reason for recording (efficiency in capturing all of the information) and reiterate the confidentiality plan.
- Ask the questions.
- Thank the participants, ask if there is any additional information which they would like to share, and explain the approximate timeframe for the publication of the dissertation.
- Let them know that they can withdraw at any time during interview, and if they withdraw, nothing from interview will be used.
- Confidentiality means that I will not be sharing your responses with the president or anyone else.

The questions are:

- I am studying the resilience of higher education institutions. Do you think that Olympic University is resilient or not?
- Olympic University has done well with enrollment of students as well as creating and maintaining diversity in the variety of programs and degrees offered in comparison to other similar institutions. From the outside looking in, these factors make it appear that Olympic University is successful. From your perspective, why has Olympic University been able to diversify and attract students?
- Do you think that your Olympic University is successful or not? Why?

IF AGREE IT HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL ASK:

- What do you think distinguishes your institution from others?
- How have faculty (administrators, staff, students, alumni) contributed to the success of your institution? What will help sustain this success?
- Is there anything else about Olympic University and resilience that you want to share with me?

Backup questions or questions to keep people telling stories included:

- Why?

- Why do you think that?
- Can you tell me more about this?
- Why do you think they feel that way?
- Can you give me some examples?
- Can you point out some situations