

Defining Institutional Diversity

THE AMERICAN SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION has historically exhibited greater levels of diversity of institutional types than any other country. A range of institutional types, from community colleges to liberal arts colleges, research universities, historically Black colleges, and proprietary colleges, exist within the U.S. system. The system contains a vast array of institutions that serve a variety of needs for the nation. Observers of higher education generally acknowledge the necessity of institutional diversity to support a system of colleges and universities that proves flexible, responsive, and adaptable for a range of purposes. The vast educational aims that higher education seeks to address would prove impossible for any single type of institution to achieve. The level of institutional diversity present provides postsecondary options for students seeking programs from career training to advanced research degrees. Students can enter the system from multiple entry points suitable for various student achievements and abilities as well as personal circumstances. Without sufficient institutional diversity, students would be unable to attend a program, degree, and setting that matches their educational abilities and goals.

Colleges and universities with differentiated missions increase the effectiveness and efficiency of higher education (Morphew, 2002). Moreover, the success of individual institutional types shows the importance of encouraging institutional diversity. American research universities serve as a key national resource and dominate higher education globally in terms of research knowledge production and dissemination (Cole, 2009). Community colleges provide tremendous opportunities for students to gain access to higher education

for general and vocational education. Minority-serving institutions offer additional access and a commitment to supporting students traditionally underrepresented in higher education (Gasman, Baez, & Turner, 2008). The ability to successfully achieve the American dream of improving one's social and economic status rests substantially on the attainment of higher education. Different institutional missions and goals within a single system support the demonstrable achievements of American higher education.

American colleges differ in a variety of ways. This diversity provides strength to the system, as no single model of an effective college exists. "The diversity we seek and the future of the nation do require that colleges and universities continue to be able to reach out and make a conscious effort to build healthy and diverse learning environments that are appropriate for their missions" (American Council on Education [ACE] Board of Directors, 2012, p. 2). Within higher education, discussions of diversity typically focus on challenges related to race, ethnicity, gender, class, disability, and sexual orientation, among others. The changing demographics of the country and the evolution of diversity awareness within higher education suggest the significance of these diversity concerns. However, similar to the growth of populations of difference and diversity within institutions, colleges and universities exhibit a variety of characteristics and types that collectively are referred to as institutional diversity.

Higher education researchers and institutional leaders too frequently dismiss the similarities among institutions as well as the overall trend toward homogenization. Huisman, Meek, and Wood (2007) argue for the importance of diversity in terms of similarities as well as differences no matter how fine-grained the details. As in the study of the human body, each person represents a unique individual, yet there are common core elements that make up a person's anatomy and physiology. In the same way, each college, as Clark (1983) contends, represents a unique institution with an institutional culture providing meaning to the various groups on campus (Tierney, 1988). However, researchers can evaluate colleges to compare and contrast their similarity to other institutions and categorize them based on the common elements and disparate ones to improve theory and practice.

Despite numerous scholars examining the issue of institutional diversity, no single commonly accepted definition exists. The challenge of creating a

meaningful measurement of institutional diversity results from the term holding different meanings for different groups (Codling & Meek, 2006). However, my primary goal with this monograph—to better explain external institutional diversity in the context of higher education—requires a working definition of institutional diversity. Over the course of the development of American higher education, institutional diversity as an idea constantly evolved, and many in higher education debated the meaning and significance of the concept (Aldersley, 1995; Huisman, 1995, 1998; Huisman et al., 2007; Huisman & Morphey, 1998; Morphey, 2000, 2002, 2009; Neave, 1979; Riesman, 1956; van Vught, 2009; Zha, 2009).

Institutional diversity represents one of the great and unique features of the American higher education system and serves as an influential foundation of the system's historical success (Trow, 1979). Indeed, many scholars argue that institutional diversity embodies a significant ideological aspect and represents one of the most significant strengths of the U.S. higher education system (Birnbaum, 1983; Morphey, 2009). American society demands a range of requirements for higher education to fulfill from reaching different student populations, providing a variety of academic fields and degrees, and multiple entry points into the system. No single institutional type could possibly meet all these goals. The presence of institutional diversity within higher education provides an adaptive and responsive system to meet these various requirements. However, a steady homogenization or a move toward similarity of types of institutions within higher education over the past 40 years both in the United States and around the world threatens this asset (Birnbaum, 1983; Huisman et al., 2007; Meek, 1991; Morphey, 2009).

Colleges and universities serve a variety of economic, political, social, and, of course, educational purposes. Understanding these interconnected and at times contradictory functions contextualizes institutional diversity trends. Government actors and other stakeholders believe in the importance of diversification (Huisman et al., 2007). States, in particular, seek to regulate or coordinate their higher education institutions to foster diversity and meet broad educational goals. A breadth of colleges and universities allows institutions to focus energy and intensity on fulfilling each school's respective mission (Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973).

The diversity of institutions within American higher education constantly changes as a result of internal and external pressures on institutions. Critically, internal dynamics within colleges and universities determine the level of diversity along with larger environmental and system changes within society, government, and globalization. The growth of online education and for-profit institutions represents one of the areas of greatest growth of colleges in the United States in recent years. The largely unmet educational needs of adult students presented an opportunity for new higher education offerings and institutions to enter the marketplace. New institutions such as the University of Phoenix, DeVry, and ITT began offering a variety of degrees and certificates while capturing the attention of many across higher education (Winston, 1999). Traditional colleges and universities failed to fully address the needs of this population, creating an environmental condition that encouraged the development of new institutional types and led to an increase in institutional diversity in the higher education system. A number of issues within higher education can either expand or contract institutional diversity depending on various stakeholder reactions. For example, declining enrollment as a result of reduced demand may cause program or institutional closures. The need for additional enrollment could instead lead to the implementation of new enrollment management strategies (Holley & Harris, 2010) or the establishment of new programs to reach new students. By the same token, state financial cutbacks might result in reduced program offerings, leading institutions to focus on various niche programs and markets. Institutions may respond by creating programs with self-financing business models or reaching out to student populations that the institution traditionally fails to serve. The responses of campus leaders from administrators to faculty profoundly influence institutional-level dynamics, which in the aggregate influence the institutional diversity of the entire system.

Aspects of Institutional Diversity

The research literature (Birnbaum, 1983; Huisman, 1998) identifies aspects of institutional diversity allowing the delineation of five commonly accepted aspects of institutional diversity in U.S. higher education.

Systemic: Differences in Institutional Type, Size, and Control

Research studies most frequently consider systemic diversity, and these concepts influence many other institutional diversity aspects identified later. The Carnegie Classifications, the most widely referenced classification scheme in higher education, creates a typology using six primary criteria: undergraduate instruction, graduate instruction, enrollment profile, undergraduate profile, size, and setting. Since the first iteration in 1970, the Carnegie Classifications have undergone subtle and more dramatic changes in an attempt to reflect the changes among higher education institutions. Despite the changes, the influence of the classifications remains substantial and results in the importance often being placed on systemic differences. Furthermore, the aspects of systemic diversity may appear separately but frequently occur together. For example, many small colleges are private institutions, while larger universities tend to be under public control. Research universities offer more graduate programs and typically enroll a larger student body with more full-time students. The relationship among the various characteristics of systemic diversity allows a categorizing of institutions that provides an easy shorthand for describing colleges and universities. As an example, if told to imagine what a private liberal arts college looks like, one might think of a small school, located in a rural or suburban area, with a collegial culture and a focus on teaching and student–faculty interactions. Although this would certainly not describe all private liberal arts colleges in the nation, the typical characteristics enable generalizations useful for daily practice.

Programmatic: Diversity of Degree Level, Comprehensiveness, and Range of Disciplines Offered

Programmatic diversity includes five components: degree level, degree area, comprehensiveness, mission, and emphasis. Defining institutions based on their highest degree awarded (associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s, or doctorate) remains one of the most common ways to differentiate among various higher education institutions. By evaluating an institution based on the highest degree awarded, researchers make broad generalizations about an institution and stereotype the characteristics of the school. For example, observers readily recognize an institution where the associate’s degree represents the highest

degree awarded as a community college with programs such as college transfer courses and vocational education to serve a sizable adult and part-time student population. A doctoral-granting institution would lead one to expect an institution with a research emphasis, a broader array of academic offerings, faculty who emphasize research and tenure, and graduate education programs. Certainly, a great variety exists among institutions that offer an associate's degree or those that offer doctorates as their highest offering. However, the use of the highest degree level offered provides a frequently used variable to differentiate and categorize institutions.

Procedural: Differences in How Programs Are Offered

Programmatic diversity refers to the disciplines and academic programs an institution offers, while procedural describes these programs from a policy perspective. This type of institutional diversity refers to modes of study or student policies and constitutes a smaller impact on institutional activity than other areas noted in this section. Despite complaints regarding the inefficiency of face-to-face teaching in the modern technological environment, the typical mode of study remains a faculty member in a room with a group of students. While the primacy of the lecture slowly fades (DeAngelo et al., 2009) with the advent of newer pedagogies such as problem-based learning or service learning (Barkley, Cross, & Major, 2005; Bringle & Hatcher, 2000; Savin-Badden & Major, 2004), the fundamental approach of faculty and students together at the same time and place remains. However, the change in procedural diversity related to the growth of online education embodies one of the most significant changes in all of higher education during the past 10 years. Students, often working adults or others unable, for a variety of reasons, to participate in traditional face-to-face higher education, take advantage of online classes or entire degree programs. Birnbaum (1983) noted that “these atypical approaches to the delivery of education are at such a low level and of such peripheral importance to the institutions’ mission that their presence has almost no impact upon institutional diversity” (p. 43). During the fall 2009 semester, a Sloan Consortium study found that 5.6 million students or nearly 30% of all higher education took at least one course online (I. E. Allen & Seaman, 2010). Surely, the change within this area eclipses any other

aspect of higher education and demonstrates the greatest since the time of Birnbaum's work, with entire institutions—some of the nation's largest in terms of student head count—focused exclusively on these once peripheral distance approaches. The continued expansion of online and other distance classes shows no sign of abating in the coming years (I. E. Allen & Seaman, 2007).

In addition to the changes as the result of the growth of the Internet, the expansion of interdisciplinary programs that students can tailor to their own interests can increase internal diversity by driving internal activity (Holley, 2009). Collectively, these types of internal changes lead to an increase in external diversity as well. For example, the University of Alabama's New College allows students, with faculty oversight, to structure an undergraduate curriculum centered on their own interdisciplinary interests. These types of academic offerings focus “less on fulfilling the requirements for credit hours or course completion and more on structuring a longitudinally designed curriculum that encourages individualized thinking” (Holley, 2009, p. 94). Additional curricular reforms focusing on competency acquisition long used in medicine or the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's work on defining key competencies to measure educational systems (Rychen & Salganik, 2003) holds the potential to increase diversity among campuses. The creation of honors colleges at many institutions across the country represents another type of change in mode of study that influences diversity. Particularly those created at large public institutions, honors colleges typically seek to offer small classes and academic perks that mimic those frequently found at smaller liberal arts colleges (Long, 2002).

While a smaller part of procedural diversity, student policies can also change institutional diversity. For example, a change that requires students to live on campus for their first year might change a traditionally commuter-oriented campus into more of a residential one. This policy in turn could lead to changes in the constitutential diversity of the school as the student body may transition to more traditional-aged students (18 to 22 years old), which over time may change the programmatic interests of students, leading to an alteration of the institution's program offerings. The decision to participate or forgo early admission decisions illustrates another change that could influence

the college broadly enough to change the institution's diversity. As Avery, Fairbanks, and Zeckhauser (2003) illustrate, early admissions decisions advantage high-income students and those who attend private high schools, which impacts the socioeconomic diversity of an institution in potentially dramatic ways. Many student-based and other administrative policies relate only to internal operations with limited impact, perhaps even within the institution. Changes in the dates of the academic calendar or the form for determining faculty annual reviews may not alter the character of the institution in a meaningful way within the broader higher education system. Only those policy changes that result in a broad redefinition of the institution's mode of study or one of the other four aspects of institutional diversity noted in this chapter rises to the level of a change in procedural diversity.

***Constituentia*: Differences in Students' Goals, Preparation, Abilities, Backgrounds, and Demographics**

Changes in the makeup of an institution's student body influences a variety of organizational activities. Constituentia diversity also includes a variety of other institutional constituents such as faculty, staff, trustees, and political and religious interest groups. More concrete than many other aspects of institutional diversity, constituentia diversity can grow into one of the distinguishing features of colleges. Constituentia diversity influences the amount of need-based aid necessary to ensure accessibility, the degree of remediation offered, and the amount of racial and ethnic diversity on campus, to mention a few. With the expansion of participation in higher education, particularly during the latter half of the 19th century and throughout the 20th century, governments and higher education leaders created special interest colleges to serve these new entrants into postsecondary education. Discussed further in the fourth chapter, minority-serving institutions such as tribal colleges or historically Black colleges and universities meet the specific needs of underserved populations. For example, the long-standing track record of historically Black colleges and universities validates the ability of these institutions to produce better educational outcomes among African American students, such as the increased participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields (Perna et al., 2009; Solorzano, 1995) and higher wages

(Constantine, 1994) than African American students from predominantly White institutions.

While the role of religious denominations continues to change within higher education, religion played a historically significant role in the diversification of higher education since the founding of the early colonial colleges (Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2004). The religious influence among these institutions vary tremendously from prominent research universities such as Wake Forest University or the University of Notre Dame to the smaller comprehensive institutions where the religious orientation permeates institutional life located throughout the country.

Prestige: Differences in the Perceived Reputation of Institutions

Also referred to as vertical diversity, prestige and reputation influence much of higher education today despite the lack of concrete empirical support for such claims and the concerns for accessing information (McDonough, Antonio, Walpole, & Perez, 1998). This type of diversity represents the least quantifiable aspect, with perception largely defining reality (Bastedo & Bowman, 2010; Bowman & Bastedo, 2010). In an environment with a lack of consumer information on higher education processes and outcomes (Newman, Couturier, & Scurry, 2004), ranking systems frequently dominate and influence stakeholders' opinions of an institution's prestige (Zemsky, Wegner, & Massy, 2005). The Carnegie Foundation cited concerns regarding how colleges and universities were using their classification scheme as a major rationale to revise their framework. The pursuit of prestige by campus leaders and constant attempts to improve competitive position complicates efforts to classify higher education (Brewer, Gates, & Goldman, 2002).

Diversity Versus Diversification Versus Differentiation

A frequent problem emerges in the scholarly literature on institutional diversity where studies insufficiently delineate clear definitions or descriptions related to institutional diversity, diversification, and differentiation. Moreover, these studies frequently fail to clearly identify their unit of analysis, which can

conflate issues such as the differences related to internal versus external diversity. The measure of diversity often relates to a researcher's ability to identify easily retrievable and concrete variables such as size or control that may or may not sufficiently capture diversity for the study.

The variety of changes to the Carnegie Classification system over the past 40 years typifies the problematic nature of the defining institutional diversity. More specifically, the Carnegie Classification demonstrates the challenge of simultaneously understanding the similarity and difference between colleges and universities. In 1970, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching created a classification system designed to improve sampling and data issues in higher education, yet the foundation's difficulty in identifying and categorizing colleges reveals the challenge of accomplishing this task. The classification scheme's ever-growing complexity and various changes weaken the user friendliness found in the earlier versions of the classifications. Influential California higher education leader Clark Kerr served as president of the Carnegie Commission during the first creation of the classifications. Not surprisingly, the results of the commission largely conform to Kerr's ideas regarding mission differentiation identified in the California Master Plan for Higher Education. The commission aimed to celebrate the level of institutional diversity in the United States as well as to provide a vehicle for organizing and understanding the diversity present. The Carnegie Classification schema quickly became the primary way for researchers and higher education leaders to understand and examine institutional mission. While recent additions, most notably the 2005 version, better tease out the variation present in higher education by creating a variety of different variables for comparison, the emphasis on differentiation and uniqueness frequently masks the similarities that simultaneously exist. "No classification can be perfectly neutral or objective—it necessarily reflects decisions about what is important and meaningful" (McCormick & Zhao, 2005, p. 56). As McCormick and Zhao further explain, some observers wanted the classifications to represent the hierarchy within higher education, while others saw the scheme as an avenue to disrupt and eventually replace the current hierarchy. The hope of those outside the foundation and the research community to extend the Carnegie Classifications beyond analytic purposes grew with attempts to use

the classifications as rankings, prestige generators, and as a recruiting tool for faculty and students. The recent changes to the system, particularly to create independent and parallel classifying frameworks, attempts to minimize these alternative uses. However, this change also limits the classifications' ability to serve as an easily identifiable and understood way to consider institutional diversity. By essentially disaggregating the classifications across many variables, the scheme no longer provides a quick and easy label to describe individual institutions.

Fundamentally, the study of institutional diversity demands a nuanced assessment and consideration of the significance of similarities and differences among institutions. The behaviors of actors in the higher education system, namely institutions, but also governments, businesses, and students, all influence one another and ultimately the level of diversity present. Beyond the empirical importance of understanding changes in institutional diversity, this field presents an ideal context for conducting organizational studies and, in particular, exploring market and governmental influences among others (Fairweather, 2000; Huisman et al., 2007).

Colleges that insufficiently explain to students about their own institutional strengths and areas of distinctiveness weaken the ideals and benefits of institutional diversity. The result of communicating these types of messages limits a prospective student's ability to ascertain the best fit for their academic, professional, and personal goals. Students and their families need to understand the particular benefits of an institution and how those relate to their own goals and aspirations in order to take advantage of and appreciate a truly diverse higher education system. As Stadtman argued in 1980, "American higher education, which is more diversified than that of any other country in the world, so far has an undistinguished record in providing students with good information and counseling services" (p. 42). Despite the tremendous sums of money spent in university marketing in recent years, little evidence of universities improving on this undistinguished record exists (Harris, 2009b).

One of the many complications for understanding the issue of institutional diversity relates to the origins of the conceptualizations of diversity and differentiation (Huisman, 1995). The research traditions of these concepts started with the disciplines of biology and ecology and the commonly referenced field

TABLE 1
Definition of Terms Related to Higher Education

Differentiation	Process	Leads to an increase in the number of colleges
Diversification	Process	Leads to an increase in the number of institutional types
Diversity	Descriptor	Variety and categorization of colleges across institutional types

of organizational ecology. The third chapter examines organizational ecology and other theoretical explanations in more depth. While a useful starting point to understand the issue of institutional diversity, biology does not apply well to social systems because of the contextual and cultural influences that fundamentally change their character.

The *differentiation* process creates, emerges, or otherwise increases the number of individual entities within the entire system. *Diversification* leads to an increase in the number of types separate from any changes related to the number of entities present. *Diversity* serves simply as a descriptor identifying a system's variety and dispersion of types and entities. Table 1 describes these three related, yet distinct terms.

These distinctions can improve research practice by drawing the related and disparate aspects of the phenomenon under examination. For example, depending on the aspects of a new college or changes to an existing one, researchers can empirically test the influence on diversity. When a college moves in a unique direction, diversity and heterogeneity increases. If the move proves duplicative of an existing type, homogeneity increases and diversity declines. The process of differentiation increases the number of colleges to be considered while diversification increases the number of institutional types present across higher education. The level of diversity characterizes the institutional variety that results from the processes of differentiation and diversification.

Interactions With the Environment

As an "open system," higher education interacts with a variety of stakeholders and environmental factors that influence institutional activity. Students, faculty,

administrators, broader economic trends, state legislators, alumni, federal policy, and demographic changes represent only a few of the inputs into the higher education system. Diversity within higher education creates stability by allowing the system to more effectively respond to the institutional and societal expectations. The large and relatively autonomous components within higher education can respond more adequately and sensitively to stakeholder and environmental changes than could a smaller and more centrally controlled system. The nature of this loosely coupled system as explained by Weick (1976) and others insulates the system from undue external influence as a result of the variety within the system. Different types of institutions vary in their response and dependence on resources and constituencies, making them more or less vulnerable to changes. Therefore, institutional diversity not only serves as a value of the system but as a key protector as well.

In the current environment where accountability, increased scrutiny, financial cutbacks, and escalating costs seem paramount, researchers and practitioners need to critically understand the processes both internal and external to the higher education system that influence institutional diversity. Higher education advocates and political leaders attack colleges and universities for their growth both in size and cost as well as the lack of programmatic focus (Christensen & Eyring, 2011), yet little information exists to explain the various forces responsible for changes in institutional diversity. The tension between standardization and diversity remains underexplored as well. For example, what contextual issues created a fertile ground for online education and for-profit higher education while traditional institutional types such as women's colleges and private 2-year colleges waned? Most observers consider a healthy level of diversity one of the valuable attributes of a higher education system that offers choices for students, multiple entry points and programmatic offerings, and a range of programmatic options (Birnbaum, 1983). For example, a higher education system that possesses research universities and community colleges can provide opportunities for students to engage in academic pursuits as varied as doctoral training to vocational certification. Without a more systemic approach to the research and a broader empirical basis to explain changes in diversity, the policy debate around supporting institutional diversity will continue to struggle with "policies [that] are

ill-informed and run the severe risk of becoming ineffective” (Huisman, Kaiser, & Vossensteyn, 2000, p. 564).

Overview of the Monograph

This monograph reviews the research literature explaining the various ways in which to understand institutional diversity within higher education. The discussion of institutional diversity begins with the premise of the value and importance of institutional diversity in the American context. I believe this work will provide an updated approach to studying the issue and contextualizing institutional diversity within contemporary trends facing colleges and universities today. My main purpose in organizing this work is to (a) review the research literature addressing institutional diversity in a way that improves our understanding of the issue and (b) situate the issue within the larger debate of higher education regarding the role and influence of market forces, regulation, and educational outcomes. I have designed this monograph for researchers and practitioners to help both groups better prepare to confront challenges to preserving institutional diversity through an improved comprehension of the complex issue and the myriad ways changes in diversity impact higher education. This volume should resonate with faculty and administrators, particularly within public higher education struggling with questions of financing, mission, and leading their institutions with an improved understanding of the concept of institutional diversity by understanding the various forms, historical roots, theoretical explanations, and positive and negative implications of institutional diversity. I believe that improved understanding of these issues can help higher education leaders navigate the constantly shifting priorities and competing demands that they face almost daily.

To achieve this end, the monograph is organized to provide context into how researchers have increased our understanding of institutional diversity in higher education. The next chapter, “Historical Context of Institutional Diversity,” traces the development of American higher education and the constant presence of institutional diversity since the earliest founding of the colonial colleges. Following this chapter is “Theoretical Contexts,” which examines the three primary sociological theories used to examine institutional

diversity: population ecology, resource dependency theory, and institutional theory. Particularly important in the theoretical discussion of institutional diversity is how the relationship between higher education institutions and the environment led to changes in diversity.

The following two chapters move away from contextual considerations to an understanding of institutional diversity within current higher education trends, challenges, and opportunities. “Benefits of Institutional Diversity” considers the implications of institutional diversity on the goals of students, institutions, and society. Much of the research literature emphasizes institutional factors, but the chapter considers the interconnected nature of stakeholder desires and goals. The chapter explores both the positive and negative attributes of diversity for each stakeholder group as well. “Causes of Homogenization” studies the sources for the decline of institutional diversity over the past 40 years. A range of institutional and system factors push institutions toward developing similar functions and structures. Academic drift, the most often cited cause for the decline, is examined as well as other significant influences such as the pursuit of prestige and statewide coordination. My argument in this chapter focuses on the relationship among governmental policy, market forces, and institutional decision making as key influencers of the decline of institutional diversity.

The final chapter, “The Future of Institutional Diversity Research and Practice,” expands to consider recommendations for improving research and practice related to institutional diversity. The recommendations are grounded within the context of the history, theory, and current trends discussed in the prior chapters. In my writing of this monograph, I hold an underlying assumption that campus administrators, faculty, political leaders, and society at large must consider how to preserve and strengthen institutional diversity. I believe achieving this end will improve the system by not only supporting access and quality but upholding many of the values we in higher education consider critical. Institutional diversity serves an important and vital role as one of the cornerstones of American higher education.

Historical Context of Institutional Diversity

IN MANY WAYS, THE STORY OF INSTITUTIONAL growth and diversity represents a key theme throughout the history of American higher education. While other international contexts, most notably those in Europe, sought limited systems with a few world-class institutions, the American experiment consisted of a large number of colleges spread throughout the countryside. Institutional diversity results from and is enabled by the incredible growth of the U.S. higher education system. In part, institutional diversity arises from the same forces that push the system toward university creation and even failure (Trow, 1979). These currents proved particularly powerful with upwards of 700 institutions opening and closing during the Revolutionary and Civil wars (Rudolph, 1990). Those colleges that survived exhibited great resilience, with 180 of the approximately 250 colleges that were open during the onset of hostilities at Fort Sumter still in operation today. Noted historian Frederick Rudolph (1990) begins his classic history of American higher education by referring to the “question of some controversy whether the United States needed all the colleges it would spawn in the centuries that followed” (p. 3). Changing student populations, curricular reforms, and new institutional types led to the creation and diversity of U.S. higher education. This chapter will explore how these changes influenced the degree of institutional diversity present and examine the components that most fostered increased diversity.

Growth During the Colonial Period

At the beginning of the Revolutionary War, nine colleges served the American colonies, while England had only Oxford and Cambridge, despite the mother country's much larger population. The creation of denominational colleges served religious and political interests. James Axtell (1974) contends that the colonists sought to create a school upon the hill to mirror their other lofty colonial ideals. The 1600s and early 1700s saw colonial development largely along Protestant denominational lines. With the notable exception of Rhode Island, the various denominations played a central role in the development of the colonies and their colleges. The proliferation of Christian denominations created a substantial diversity even among the relatively small population. While religious freedom is an oft-cited motivation for the colonists to move to America, limited tolerance even among other Protestant groups led to disputes among the colonies and ultimately expansion for higher education. The breakdown of tolerance between the various Protestant denominations fostered the college growth movement, with each denomination seeking to found an institution (Herbst, 1976).

Several important notions from the founding of early colonial colleges, particularly in terms of faculty control, proved foundational in developing the internal dynamics that influence the level of institutional diversity. The colonists chose not to adapt the British model of a self-perpetuating faculty, preferring instead the Scottish model of an external board of trustees to maintain accountability. In an attempt to limit faculty control so dominant at Oxford and Cambridge, the colonial leaders developed a structure that not only allowed external involvement in campus affairs but also institutionalized this role. As external stakeholders grew later in the development of American colleges and universities, the limits on faculty power and external boards provided an entry point for outside stimuli to influence internal activity.

While religion played a substantial role in the founding of early colonial colleges, even prior to the Revolutionary War, "the collegiate mission had already undergone a discernible shift away from religious orthodoxy toward secular learning and leadership" (Thelin, 2004, p. 28). For example, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson suggested plans for higher education

fundamentally different from proponents of the importance of religion in higher education would design. Franklin's plan for the academy that would become the University of Pennsylvania is particularly noteworthy for its support of a variety of academic pursuits that he contends are "most useful and most ornamental, regard being had to the several professions for which they are intended" (Franklin, 1958, p. 41). The religious focus and favoritism towards the status quo among established Protestant denominations helped create an opening for institutions more broadly conceived. Thomas Jefferson famously attempted to reform his alma mater, the College of William and Mary, to expand the college's curricular offerings and transform the college generally. The reform attempts were "a struggle to shape an inherited institution into a form able to serve peculiarly American interests without destroying the institution's capacity to transmit values important to the survival of the western heritage" (Thomson, 1971, p. 188). As with many reform efforts, Jefferson's failed and he would not realize his ideals of a college embracing new fields of study until establishing the University of Virginia years later.

While falling short of modern ideals of religious tolerance, the colonial colleges nevertheless established a foundation of diversity and a concern for public service. The significant contribution of colonial college graduates in shaping the American Revolution suggests the importance of the colleges in creating gentlemen-scholars. The achievement of these institutions placed higher education in a prominent position in colonial society while institutional deficiencies created an opening for the expansion that occurs following the British surrender at Yorktown. Higher education played a significant role in supporting larger societal goals since the earliest days of the first colleges. As American identity expanded, leaders looked to colleges and universities to increasingly provide social and educational training for future generations.

Establishing American Higher Education

At the dawn of the 19th century, 25 colleges dotted the landscape of the new country. Twenty years later, that number increased to 52. This rapid expansion accelerated, and by 1860, 241 higher education institutions existed in

the United States. As Thelin (2004) notes, “the period saw the creation of other diverse kinds of institutions offering formal programs: universities, academies, seminaries, scientific schools, normal schools, institutes” (p. 42). A variety of social, political, and economic factors created the fertile landscape for this massive expansion of American education. Despite the victory over the British, the new nation existed without the nationalism one might expect. Regional rivalries and a broad distrust of the strong federal government resulted in the delegation of many activities, including education, to the states. This decentralization of education policy and control helped lead to greater institutional diversity by allowing multiple forms of institutions to develop and addressing the needs of many different populations across the country.

Failure of the National University Idea

Prior to the spirited debate over the creation of a national university in 1787 at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, a number of distinguished American leaders, philanthropists, and educators supported the establishment of a national institution to be located in the capital city. Although subtle changes occurred to the various proposals for the creation of a national university, several core elements existed. Most proponents conceived a graduate university leaving undergraduate education to the existing colleges located throughout the country. Conducting scientific research was considered a principal function along with the selection of high-quality faculty across a number of disciplinary emphases. The proposals suggested locating the university in the new capital city in order to facilitate working with federal agencies. Furthermore, the national university would provide well-trained civil servants to staff the federal bureaucracy and encourage a unifying educational experience to bring the country together.

Prominent doctor and Revolutionary War leader Benjamin Rush made the first significant proposal for creating a federal university. He received a medical education from the University of Edinburgh, served as a signer of the Declaration of Independence, a member of the Continental Congress, and following the war assisted with the founding of Dickinson College. As a

leading patriot, Rush believed in the notion of American greatness and that “if its destiny was fully to be realized, the youth of the new nation would have to be taught republican duties and principles” (Madsen, 1966, p. 17). In his ideas for education in the new country, Rush’s philosophy focused on the twin pillars of usefulness and patriotism. In the pursuit of these two goals, he advocated for education’s potential to “convert men into Republican machines” (Rush, 1947, p. 92) and even suggested after a period of time, to get the federal university operational, the requirement that all federal officeholders must graduate from the national university.

Rush served as a prominent early proponent of the national university idea; however, he was by no means alone among the founding fathers. At the Constitutional Convention, James Madison listed the creation of a national university as one of the nine specific powers to be granted to Congress. As the Convention came to a close, the establishment of a university was still not included in the Constitution draft. Madison, along with Charles Pinckney of South Carolina, again sought to provide Congress with the authority to “establish a university which no preferences or distinction should be allowed on account of religion” (Hunt, 1903, p. 454). The vote failed with four states favoring the motion; six opposed; and one with its two delegates split. The majority not only voted against creating the institution, but many believed in the argument that specifically enumerating that Congress had the power to create a university was unnecessary and superfluous. Many of the delegates were reluctant to put forward a document for ratification with an extensive list of enumerated congressional powers. The delegates sought to avoid creating this list, preferring instead the general welfare clause that gave Congress unspecified powers of legislation, which presumably included the creation of a university. With the significant opposition to ratification of the Constitution following the convention, the Bill of Rights was added including the 10th Amendment, which reserved all powers to the states not already allocated to the federal government. By not specifically granting the power to create the federal university to Congress, strict constructionists argued for the first half of the 19th century that Congress had no role in postsecondary policymaking. Even James Madison later in his life argued that the creation of a national university would be possible only through constitutional amendment (Madsen, 1966).

Despite the failure of the national university idea during the debates of the Constitutional Convention, the first four presidents of the United States all advocated for its creation. George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison all believed in the necessity of a federal institution to provide research instruction to benefit the federal government. A general uneasiness along with the practical consideration of continuing to send a significant number of the nation's youth abroad to Europe to attend higher education existed during this time. Perhaps most significantly, proponents viewed a federal university as a vehicle for deterring sectionalism and promoting national unity. In his last message to Congress, President Washington made his strongest appeal for the creation of a national university to diminish the increased sectionalism that would ultimately drive the country toward civil war:

Our Country, much to its honor, contains many Seminaries of learning highly respectable and useful; but the funds upon which they rest, are too narrow, to command the ablest Professors, in the different departments of liberal knowledge, for the Institution contemplated, though they would be excellent auxiliaries. Amongst the motives to such an Institution, the assimilation of the principles, opinions, and manners of our Country men, but the common education of a portion of our Youth from every quarter, well deserves attention. The more homogenous our Citizens can be made in these particulars, the greater will be our prospect of permanent Union; and a primary object of such a National Institution should be the education of our Youth in the science of Government. (Washington, 1796)

In the end, Washington and the other proponents of the national university were unable to find sufficient backing for the idea. A vote in the U.S. House of Representatives proved the closest the federal university idea would come to fruition (Thelin, 2004). Each of the various proposals to create this institution faced three primary obstacles even among the ardent advocates. These issues centered on the primary mission of the institution, the source of financial support, and the governance and control of the institution (Madsen,

1966). The lack of consensus around these issues was sufficient to result in the failure of the idea in both Congress and the national consciousness.

One may question the significance of discussing an idea that, despite prominent supporters, never came particularly close to implementation. However, a comparison to other countries demonstrates the significance of the American system not possessing a strong federal university. The absence of a federal university encouraged institution building and developed a higher level of institutional diversity within American higher education. Additionally, the limited role and involvement of the federal government enabled institutions to follow more heterogeneous paths. As noted later in this chapter, the federal government does become more involved in higher education, but not until after the foundational elements of the system are largely entrenched.

Institution Building

With higher education left to the domain of the states, institution building demonstrated the growing appeal of higher education throughout the country. Particularly notable in the South, the creation of public universities typified the newest trend in the evolution of institutional types within the country. The founding of the University of North Carolina as the first public university began the trend of state universities serving the postsecondary needs of their respective states. These institutions served a similar purpose as the early colonial colleges did as a source of local pride and in providing local educational alternatives. More substantial was the need for Republican education and the development of virtuous citizens necessary for leading the new nation. With the embrace of Enlightenment thinking, the American colleges sought to support scientific thought and reason.

Concurrently, colleges in New England developed, which provided geographic accessibility and surprisingly affordable local college alternatives. Despite the trend to establish state institutions, the influence of religious denominations in college building remained a significant trend. With limited governmental support from either the federal or state level, denominations proved vital in funding early 19th-century colleges. Methodist and Baptist

interests joined the traditional higher education building denominations, Congregationalists, Anglicans, and Presbyterians (Thelin, 2004). As a result, small colleges grew in many small towns. With limited enrollments and financing, these institutions served moderate-income students throughout their local areas. This expansion significantly increased the number of colleges in the nation and formed the foundation of the strong private higher education system found in the United States.

The Changing Curriculum

The early colonial curriculum largely focused on the ancient Latin and Greek languages. As the Revolutionary War approached, the curriculum remained focused on ancient languages, yet introduced Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke. Religion remained an overriding influence even as institutions struggled to incorporate Enlightenment philosophies. This tension remained through the early years of the new country, with Enlightenment ideals playing an increasingly greater role. Due to a lack of established faculty to teach the subjects, student unrest, and broader societal concerns, institutions slowly sought to reestablish the classical curriculum, moving away from the trend to increase professional education that started to occur in the early 1800s.

Reform efforts by George Ticknor at Harvard and Thomas Jefferson's plan for the University of Virginia pushed defenders of the classical curriculum to reassert the supremacy of their views culminating in the greatest defense of the classical college—the Yale Report of 1828. In the report, Yale's faculty clearly defined the purpose of collegiate education as “to lay the foundation of the superior education” (Yale Report, 1961, p. 278). The development of the discipline and furniture of the mind were best achieved through the classical curriculum. The Yale faculty argued that other forms of education such as professional training should be left to the work of other types of institutions. The Yale Report's defense of the classical curriculum dominates curriculum discussions until the post-Civil War period. The emphasis on liberal education focused higher education on serving the limited, largely wealthy student population best suited to take advantage of this educational offering. The continuing emphasis on the value of liberal education remains a lasting

impact of the Yale Report. Undergraduate education, particularly in elite higher education settings, focuses on liberal education eschewing vocational training. The emphasis on classical education serves as a significant counterweight to critics arguing for concentration solely on career and vocational training. As each college and university finds the balance between these competing goals in line with their mission and student populations, a diverse array of curricular programs develop, which increases the level of institutional diversity present.

The Yale Report's supremacy lasted until the Civil War and the enactment of the First Morrill Act creating land-grant colleges. While not calling for the exclusion of classical studies, the land-grant focus on agricultural and mechanical arts transitioned the debate toward the utility of practical education. Significant for long-term institutional diversity trends, the inclusion of traditional liberal education with practical fields of study within a single institution proves important in the development of American universities. In comparison, European institutions traditionally focus on either a classical liberal education or polytechnic studies (Trow, 1987). While the ascendancy of the American university would not occur until close to the turn of the century, the legacy of the Morrill Act sets the foundation for the complex "relationship between advanced learning or graduate education, and the American college" (Geiger, 2011, p. 51). Fundamentally, the second half of the 19th century saw American higher education institutions responding to the challenges presented by evolving social and economic contexts. The addition of new students and academic offerings augmented the traditional approach of higher education while laying the groundwork for the university building and emphasis on research that was about to begin.

Rise of the Research University

The time frame from 1865 to 1910 saw substantial formation of the American university recognizable today. According to Thelin (2004):

In terms of intellectual and curricular movements, several conceptions of higher learning coexisted with varying degrees of conflict

and cooperation. “Piety and discipline,” “liberal culture,” “utility,” and “research” were some of the traditions invoked by academic missionaries and entrepreneurs. Within each emergent University, these disparate, often conflicting, notions took on varying configurations. (p. 116)

Critical to understanding how the university influenced institutional diversity are the common administrative and structural arrangements that developed during this time. These core elements of what Edwin Slosson, an influential journalist in the early 1900s, called the Standard American University occurred in response to larger challenges and trends as opposed to elaborate institutional planning. As Daniel Coit Gilman recalled about the founding of Johns Hopkins, “The founder made no effort to unfold the plan. He simply used one word,—UNIVERSITY,—and he left it to his successors to declare its meaning in the light of the past, in the hope of the future” (Gilman, 1961, p. 643).

One aspect of higher education that has changed little since 1900 are the country’s most premier and prestigious institutions. Of the 14 founding members of the Association of American Universities (AAU), all but three can be found in the “Top 25” of the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings. And with the University of Michigan falling just outside this group, the top echelon of institutions has remained largely unchanged over the past century. By the early 1900s, a clear definition of the university emerged. Admitted students were high school graduates who pursued two years of general education followed by two years of specialized courses. Most universities offered the PhD across several fields and possessed at least one professional school. As a result, universities “were the most powerful force in generating standards for the rest of higher education, chiefly by defining academic knowledge and the academic profession” (Geiger, 2011, p. 53). As a result, several key developments tied to the growth of the Standard American University proved highly influential to the future development of higher education impacting and influencing institutional diversity. The first substantial trend was the changing role of the faculty and teaching, with the professionalization of faculty as experts in their fields of study. With the resulting growth of disciplinary

organizations, national academic journals, rank and promotion, tenure, and academic freedom, the university professor developed standards, protocols, and an ethos. Along with the transition of faculty, pedagogy changed from the traditional recitation to the lecture, befitting the faculty's newly established expertise, and the seminar to discuss research and serve advanced students. The establishment of graduate education to develop the next generation of faculty experts further encouraged institutions to focus on growing libraries and laboratories.

Commensurate with the emphasis on graduate education, the faculty exerted great influence on the undergraduate curriculum. The elective system as advocated by Harvard's Charles Eliot continued to move away from Yale's fixed classical curriculum toward one of specialization and majors. Eliot proved particularly influential with a clear belief in the future direction of higher education and the curriculum. "Many subjects taught at a university involve other subjects, which must therefore be studied first," Eliot argued. "There is a prevailing tendency on the part of every competent student to carry far any congenial subject once entered upon. To repress this most fortunate tendency is to make real scholarship impossible" (Eliot, 1961, pp. 707–708). The ability for students to study general and specialized areas of inquiry directly influences programmatic diversity and the overall future development of programs across various types of colleges and universities.

Public research universities also adapted to the changes occurring throughout higher education. President Edward Kidder Graham of the University of North Carolina argued that the boundaries of the university should be coterminous with the boundaries of the state (Snider, 1992). The University of Wisconsin serves as a prime example of the evolution of state colleges to state universities during this period. The "Wisconsin idea" distinguished the university as producing high-quality innovative research while also serving the needs of the state. The University of Wisconsin, thanks in large measure to the proximity of the state capital in Madison, created educated civil servants across a range of fields to serve throughout state government. The ability of public flagships to engage in high-quality academic pursuits within the framework of a state university proves a lasting legacy of the Wisconsin ideal (Thelin, 2004). The evolution of the university and

several decades of a push toward standardization provided greater definition to higher education, even while the system largely appeared fairly decentralized and possessed significant levels of institutional diversity. By the First World War, standards existed regarding admissions, academic offerings, and structures. For example, the student credit hour expanded as a standard unit to measure instruction and influenced a variety of academic and administrative decisions throughout higher education (Heffernan, 1973; Shedd, 2003). The major differences were largely a result of the number of resources available that would only expand the hierarchy of higher education following the two world wars.

Transition From Elite to Mass Higher Education

With the massive enrollment growth during the 1920s, higher education began the transition from elite to mass higher education (Trow, 1974). The traditional elite student identified as full-time, residential student focused on liberal education with the goal of achieving success in high-status professions started to change. The differentiation between the historically prestigious and well-funded institutions and those serving a mass education role expanded the perceptual hierarchy among colleges and universities. Mass higher education offered opportunities for part-time, older students and those seeking technical and vocational education. In particular, the growth of junior colleges and the evolution of normal schools into teachers' colleges provided a major expansion of the mass higher education sector.

The growth of junior colleges during the early 20th century represents one of the most remarkable growths of any institutional type throughout the history of American higher education. The first junior colleges, as 2-year institutions were known during that time, multiplied during 1920s. By 1940, nearly 11% of all college students enrolled in junior colleges. Although many of the institutions were tied to local high schools, the junior college movement affected both the purposes and structure of American higher education (Geiger, 2011). The value of the community college movement rests largely in the sector's emphasis on providing postsecondary opportunities to local communities and businesses. A uniquely American invention, 2-year

institutions provided general education or vocational classes enabling students to later transfer to a 4-year campus or enter the workforce.

The original transfer function of the community college was frequently superseded by the technical and vocational curriculum. The University of California encouraged the state's community colleges to focus more on vocational education, joined by the California state education establishment, who also strongly advocated for vocational training programs. These government and policy leaders supported the vocational emphasis through their ideology of supporting the "social value of aiding business" (Dougherty, 1994, p. 242). The local influence of junior colleges challenged the presence of the state universities. With new institutions outside of the control of the established higher education system in any given state, public university leaders often pushed junior colleges away from providing the first 2 years of college instruction and toward terminal technical and vocational programming. A goal of the state university leaders was to integrate junior colleges into the system, thereby also preserving the hierarchy and influence of the state flagship institutions.

As impressive as the growth of junior colleges was during their first few decades of existence, this pales in comparison to the growth that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s, with many college enrollments increasing more than fivefold to over 2 million students. Estimates of community college growth suggest a new community college campus opened each week during the 1960s. Junior colleges served two primary student populations: (a) students interested in transferring to a 4-year institution and (b) students seeking terminal vocational degrees. Junior colleges continued to expand these missions and evolved into "community colleges." With courses from traditional general education to short-term training programs and certificate offerings to community education classes such as photography or computer training, community colleges expanded to a nearly impossible mission, with detractors often criticizing the attempt to be all things to all people. The complex and even competing origins and functions present challenges for the sector, particularly in light of the declining numbers of students transferring from community colleges (Dougherty, 1994; Grubb, 1991). Despite the criticisms of the institutions because of mission expansion and from those who call for a

reemphasis on transfer or vocational programs, the community college movement profoundly expanded the massification of higher education, particularly within the public sector. Despite uneven resources and pushback from other public institutions, higher education would be profoundly less diverse without the institutional type of the community college. With over 1,100 institutions nationally, community colleges represent one of the most diverse areas within all of higher education, serving students and offering programs often inaccessible at other institutions for academic, financial, or geographic reasons.

In addition to community colleges, the rise of normal schools, founded to standardize teacher training, and their transition into teachers' colleges significantly grew postsecondary opportunity. Many of these institutions later became comprehensive colleges, greatly expanding the public higher education sector and accelerating the nation's move toward mass higher education:

Normal schools, rather than the land grant universities, were the pioneers of higher education for the people. Almost everywhere the state universities and agricultural and mechanical colleges were developed at a central location or state capital, whereas the normal schools were scattered to the small country towns across the prairies. (Herbst, 1980, p. 227)

Unlike the traditionally prestigious private institutions and public flagships, normal schools exhibited much greater diversity, particularly related to gender. These institutions not only enrolled what today we would call "nontraditional" students but also served their financial and student services needs (Ogren, 2005). The dramatic growth of teacher education was the most substantial in a professional field in terms of both enrollment and educational outcomes.

As with many higher education institutions, normal schools faced pressures to attract students by adjusting their academic offerings to suit student desires. While the historical purpose of preparing professionally trained teachers remained, students were concerned about such an exclusive professional focus. Students "did not want to be trapped in a single-purpose school that

provided them with a narrow vocational education” (Labaree, 2004, p. 26). As a result, normal schools expanded to offer a wide range of programs attractive to students and thus increased the social mobility of graduates.

The Postwar Period

The 30 years following the conclusion of the Second World War presented unique challenges. A tremendous influx of students as a result of the opportunity provided by the G.I. Bill for returning veterans and the continued expansion of the community college sector represented the largest percentage growth throughout the history of higher education in the United States. The percentage of students attending college tripled from 1940 to 1970 completing the transition toward mass higher education. Teachers’ colleges transformed into comprehensive colleges by expanding academic offerings and serving regional populations. Additionally, the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision banning segregation in education and the 1964 Civil Rights Act began the process of desegregation in higher education.

Along with the expansion of undergraduate education, a tremendous growth of graduate education and the research enterprise occurred thanks to substantial federal support. With the Soviet launch of *Sputnik* in the fall of 1957, the federal government increasingly relied on a research relationship with higher education. The period immediately following World War II saw the federal government emphasize defense-related research during the buildup of the Cold War. Following *Sputnik*, however, academic science expanded across a number of new fields and through a plethora of federal agencies, most notably the National Science Foundation, the National Aeronautical and Space Administration, and the National Institutes of Health. This federal support enabled institutions to dramatically expand laboratory facilities, support increasing numbers of graduate students, and develop science programs across a variety of disciplines. The National Defense Education Act (NDEA) expanded federal involvement in education at all levels by providing funding and student loans to improve science education in the country. Also notable for the first time, the NDEA legislation provided direct financial support for educational services including instruction in the sciences (Urban, 2010).

Federal research funding helped lead to the creation of what Clark Kerr termed the multiversity, a large institution serving a variety of institutional missions, yet with an immense focus on research output. Kerr argued, quite convincingly, that the university as historically conceived and articulated by John Henry Newman as a community of scholars examining knowledge for its own sake was disappearing. Abraham Flexner's notion of the university as well as the German model came to dominant. This emphasis increased the privilege of the research sciences over the arts and humanities. For Kerr (2001), the multiversity consists of multiple communities:

The community of the undergraduate and the community of the graduate; the community of the humanist, the community of the social scientist, and the community of the scientist; the communities of the professional schools; the community of all the non-academic personnel; the community of the administrators. (p. 14)

The growth of graduate programs in specialized areas of academic knowledge began to change the institutional focus of higher education and what Jencks and Riesman (1968) term the *academic revolution*. The growth and indeed idealism from this period would eventually lead to the unrest and dissatisfaction of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Student movements typified by the free speech movement at the University of California at Berkeley began to change the relationship of higher education to both students and society. The transition, which modified many relationships both internal and external to higher education, sets the stage for many of the trends that influence institutional diversity that are discussed later in the fifth chapter.

Throughout the history of higher education, the role of the faculty as the disseminators and later creators of knowledge remained largely beyond reproach. The rise of the consumerism paradigm among students and governments led to the eventual decline of faculty power (Riesman, 1998). Two critical trends developed during the 1960s and 1970s that influenced the degree of institutional diversity present in American higher education today. The student counterculture movement expanded student access and participation and the idea of what fields higher education should study. Enrollment

among female and minority students continued to increase, as well as the need to include gender and ethnic studies as part of an expanding curriculum. The continued evolution toward mass higher education represents one of the strengths of U.S. colleges and universities.

The changing role of the federal government since the 1970s serves as the final significant historical trend important in understanding institutional diversity. In the postwar period, the federal government played a significant role in funding research and development operations and increased the funds used to support student financial aid. With the 1972 Higher Education Act, Congress increased the federal government's role in higher education both as a funder and chief regulator. Title IX represented perhaps the most significant aspect for legally enforcing the diversity gains of the 1960s. The federal government's involvement in financing higher education over the past 40 years has led to a number of changes in how students pay for college and in the resources available to various types of institutions. The Middle Income Student Assistance Act of 1978 created the student loan culture, which increasingly transferred the cost of higher education from society to students. The availability of colleges and universities to raise tuition revenue again pushed the cost of higher education to students and their families (Zumeta, Breneman, Callan, & Finney, 2012). The increased use of financial aid as a competitive weapon in recruiting (McPherson & Schapiro, 1998) accelerated demand for selective colleges and universities, and the growing economic return of a college education drove the demand for higher education.

The result for American higher education was an increased stratification, particularly financially. Declining state appropriations weakened the public sector, especially smaller regional and community college campuses, while public research institutions proved better able to adapt and follow their private college competitors. Private colleges and universities "enjoyed unparalleled prosperity" (Geiger, 2011, p. 63), with the most prestigious and wealthiest institutions enjoying particularly unrivaled success. The separation between the public and private sectors, increased privatization within the public research sector, and the growing stratification across higher education presents tremendous challenges for preserving institutional diversity and in protecting the historical mission and values of American higher education.

One of the most understudied, yet profound changes within higher education over the last century is the growth of the administrative bureaucracy. With the expansion and increased complexity of the higher education enterprise, the administrative lattice fills the need to operate the institution professionally, which satisfies demands of both internal and external constituencies (Zemsky, 1990). The degree to which administrative decisions gain short-term competitive advantage, reducing the level of institutional diversity, remains a concern for higher education and those concerned with preserving the institutional diversity inherently necessary and valuable to the U.S. system.

Academic and administrative functions on campus increasingly struggled for additional resources “while professional staff proudly boast of their own ability to perform tasks with managerial efficiency typically found in businesses” (Harris, 2009a, p. 98). The increased professionalization among administrative staff of the institution in many ways mirrored the activities typically associated to faculty. For example, national conferences and professional organizations expanded tremendously during the 1960s and 1970s. Increased government regulations, along with the expansion of administrative oversight responsibilities, created and expanded the administrative lattice. The increased competition for students in recent years only compounds the self-described need for expensive administrative operations. The desire to recruit better students, open new programs, and successfully compete against peer institutions suggests the need for short-term and rapid response, which often limits the role of faculty decision-making.

The growth of proprietary institutions, often with limited faculty decision making (Tierney & Hentschke, 2007), illustrates the last great expansion of institutional diversity within American higher education. While for-profit schools existed throughout the history of higher education in the United States, the rise of these institutions in recent years remains quite remarkable. The expansion of federal financial aid eligibility and accrediting bodies for proprietary colleges played a substantial role in the growth in enrollments (Morey, 2004). As a result, for-profit colleges provide significant training and retraining in entry-level and vocational skills. The sector continued to expand with major players such as the Apollo Group to offer academic degrees from associate through doctoral levels. As national franchises saw opportunities

within higher education, online offerings and local campuses expanded, enrolling hundreds of thousands of students and collecting billions of dollars in tuition. Revolutions in technology from health care to communications stimulated job opportunities, while educational technology changes allowed greater numbers of students access to higher education. While institutional diversity declined in many sectors of higher education, the substantial growth in proprietary and distance education proved counter to this trend.

Conclusion

This chapter described the historical trends related to the development of institutional diversity within the American higher education system. Since the earliest founding of colleges in America, a variety of influences encouraged the development of numerous institutions exhibiting a range of characteristics. The resilience and responsiveness of colleges in responding to changes in the social, political, and economic circumstances of the nation fostered the growth of institutional types. In particular, shifts in student population, curriculum reforms, and new institutional types all supported the rise of institutional diversity in the country. Initially open only to wealthy sons of landowners, colleges slowly opened to underrepresented minorities, women, and later adult students. With the increased diversity in students participating in higher education, colleges and universities adapted to provide better academic and cocurricular opportunities for these groups.

Tensions and debates regarding the degree of vocationalism within the curriculum occur throughout the history of higher education. Individual institutions attempt to balance classical or liberal arts education with applied or vocational training. Colleges and their faculty answer this question differently for their institutions and students, which creates a variety of approaches to undergraduate and graduate education, leading to greater institutional diversity. The various curricular offerings and targeted student populations produces new institutional types that emerge as part of the evolution of American higher education. From the rise of public colleges to research universities to community colleges, the higher education system frequently responds and adapts in ways that increase the diversity of the overall system.

Theoretical Contexts

HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARS frequently use institutional sociology-based theoretical lenses to explore the issue of institutional diversity (Morphew & Huisman, 2002). While other disciplines look at similar issues and hold utility in aiding the study of higher education, the sociological approach appears most frequently and proves helpful in understanding the relationship between higher education and the environment as well as how this relationship influences institutional diversity. This chapter provides an overview of three existing theories for those unfamiliar with them or their application in examining institutional diversity: population ecology, resource dependency theory, and institutional theory. The theoretical background presented here provides higher education scholars and practitioners with a strong foundation to understand the construct of institutional diversity within American higher education.

Population Ecology

Most notably used by Birnbaum (1983) in his seminal study of the subject, researchers frequently applied population ecology theory to early studies of institutional diversity. The theory mirrors Charles Darwin's work on the evolutionary process and suggests that natural selection also applies to organizations. Population ecology contends that organizations succeed as a result of natural selection within the organizational field, with the environment

seeking organizations that fill a need (Hannan & Freeman, 1989). Colleges and universities operate in an environment of limited resources and compete with one another for the finite resources available. Each organizational niche varies in the carrying capacity or the number of institutions that can be sufficiently supported (Bess & Dee, 2008). The niche serves as “the focal point at which concerns with environments and concerns with organizational events meet” (Hannan & Freeman, 1989, p. 334). Thus, Darwin’s notion of the survival of the fittest applies as those institutions best able to respond to environmental needs and challenges are selected by the environment to succeed and continue.

Population ecology theory encourages attention on the competition within the environment while also considering the complex relationships that directly and indirectly affect higher education institutions. This perspective focuses organizational studies on the larger population issues and organizational change over time largely missing from the research literature prior to this type of analysis (Hannan & Freeman, 1989). Researchers differ on the degree to which they believe institutions possess the ability to control the process of natural selection. Put simply, can an institution take proactive steps to improve the ability to compete by changing or moving to a better-suited niche? Lenz and Engledow (1986) argue that institutions can engage in steps to improve their position relative to their competition. Institutions use strategic activities to better address the environment’s needs and effectively compete against other institutions. Responsiveness improves an organization’s chances of being selected for survival within the organizational field. In contrast, Dutton and Freedman (1985) suggest that institutions possess limited ability to effectively mitigate long-term environmental decisions. Short-term changes present a better opportunity than long-term surveillance that the environment’s choices eventually will overcome.

In order to understand why one institution thrives and another struggles, one should consider the college and competitors along with the various environments in which the institution operates. The dramatic decline of single-gender colleges and universities serves as a notable case of how changes within niche and the higher education environment influence institutions (Gueverra, 2001). The example of Rosemont College in suburban Philadelphia illustrates

how environmental natural selection can impact an institution. Founded in 1921 as an all-female Catholic institution, Rosemont faced several years of declining enrollment and ended the spring 2008 semester with a projected \$1 million deficit in its \$20 million annual budget. The institution conducted a survey of high school females in the greater Philadelphia region and found that fewer than 1% were interested in an all-female Catholic college experience. Across the country, the number of women's colleges declined dramatically from the late 1960s and early 1970s from nearly 300 to about 50. Catholic colleges make up approximately one third of these institutions. Two of Rosemont's closest peers and competitors, Immaculata University and Chestnut Hill College, transitioned into coeducational colleges, with both realizing significant enrollment gains as a result. The environment clearly signaled that Rosemont could no longer continue as a single-gender Catholic institution. In order to survive, the college would need to make moves similar to Immaculata or Chestnut Hill's coeducational change or merge with a larger, more successful nearby institution such as Villanova University. The Rosemont College board of trustees voted in the summer of 2008 to admit male undergraduate students. In a statement after the vote, the board chair explained the decision:

We all have been great proponents of the undergraduate women's college and we know, understand, and value the merits of an all-women's education; however, through our analysis, research, and evaluation we learned that Rosemont cannot continue to be viable as a Catholic single-sex college at the undergraduate level. (Snyder, 2008, p. 1)

As a result of the transition, no Catholic all-female institutions exist in the Philadelphia area. The environmental changes evidenced by the decline of women interested in all-female or Catholic higher education meant only the strongest institutions nationally were able to survive within the niche. Those institutions with less prestige or limited financial standing, such as Rosemont, faced the prospect of continuing to operate in a deficit and confront the real possibility of closure or transition to a different market niche. Population

ecology theory and the natural selection concept clearly suggest that Rosemont faced few other alternatives. Additionally, this type of change encourages or even forces institutions to move to another environment or market niche reducing the amount of institutional diversity within the U.S. higher education system.

Birnbaum (1983) posits that despite the growth of higher education occurring during the 1960s and 1970s, the broader environment discouraged a growth in institutional diversity. His study found that the number of institutions grew without a concurrent growth in diversity, and the period may even exhibit less diversity. He argued that population ecology would predict the outcome of declining institutional diversity and suggested that environmental factors such as competition for resources or government relations could drive institutions toward isomorphic tendencies and thus reduce institutional diversity. Population ecology suggests “the expansion of the resources available for organizing will often lead both to growth of individual organizations and to growth in the populations of organizations using those resources” (Hannan & Freeman, 1989, p. 338).

Proponents of population ecology hold several underlying assumptions worth noting. First, population ecology explains macro or population issues and trends, not micro or individual ones limiting the theory’s ability to explain individual decisions and responses. Additionally, the theory assumes that the environment “selects” institutions that survive with total determination. Notably, this argument suggests a substantive limit on the role of institutional leaders despite the research on managerialism in higher education currently established in the literature (Birnbaum, 1988; Deem & Brehony, 2005). Additionally, the theory assumes that selection by the environment and survival determines an organization’s effectiveness. Finally, population ecology identifies the foundational principle that a niche possesses only enough resources to provide for a finite number of organizations, also known as the carrying capacity of the niche. Homogenization occurs when the environment selects the various institutional traits deemed most worthy, thus leading to the survival or failure of institutional types.

As noted in Figure 1, a number of variations within a population of organizations will exist either through intentional action or historical

FIGURE 1
Population Ecology Explanation of Organizational Change



accident. Population ecology theory explains that some of these variations better suit the environment than others. The environment selects organizations with the right variations, while other institutions either change to meet the environment’s expectations or fail. This process results in a new population of organizations, selected by the environment, that share “common size requirements for efficiency, technologies, and control systems” (Robbins, 1990, p. 227). Within higher education, strategies adapting to the environment lead to colleges and universities that largely possess similar structures and practices.

While population ecology can prove useful for understanding broad trends and historical developments that lead to the present challenges confronting institutions, population ecology faces several significant critiques, particularly regarding the concept of environmental selection (Bess & Dee, 2008; Robbins, 1990). The evolutionary notion of survival of the fittest suggests that broad objective environmental forces determine an organization’s ultimate success (Reed & Hughes, 1992). Within higher education, however, specific social or political factors may influence an institution’s ability to survive in spite of the organizational environment selection. For example, a prominent public institution with political ties to powerful state policymakers may ensure continued support regardless of the environmental need for that institution. Colleges can exert control on their environment as the primary supplier of postsecondary education, meaning environment constituencies—such as students, businesses, and governments—rely on higher education institutions to create a degree of insulation. Moreover, the population ecology argument assumes that the environment demonstrates “a kind of reason that may or may not be present within higher education” (Morphew, 2009, p. 245), with the environment selecting organizations and their adaptive strategies. These critiques substantially limit the efficacy of population ecology and have curtailed the theory’s use in recent years.

Resource Dependency Theory

Resource dependency theory considers an institution's external environment and how organizations depend on the environment for resources. Organizations rely on external forces due to their inability to create all the necessary resources needed internally. As a result, organizations face pressure to conform to environmental desires and develop structures readily identifiable as legitimate with value to the environment in order to increase the likelihood of obtaining resources. Resource dependency theory assumes that institutions can effectively pursue strategic action to secure resources from the environment. In return, the environment influences whether organizations receive the necessary resources and how institutions may use them. For example, funding from the federal government or private gifts often include limitations on the spending of funds. In this case, the government or donor not only determines if the college receives the funding but how the college uses the monies. Under the resource dependency framework, organizations face a differentiated environment where various types of institutions confront different expectations (Tolbert, 1985). Public institutions, as an example, face the expectation of responding to policymakers and the public at large, whereas private universities may focus on a narrower constituency (Duderstadt & Womack, 2003).

The degree to which the college depends on external entities varies based on the availability of other potential sources of a resource and how critical the resource is to the operations of the institution. To successfully compete, resource dependency theory contends that institutions adapt internally and develop strategic relationships with the natural environment. Institutions proactively engage to secure resources, which helps define the relationship between the organization and environment. Institutions typically approach the environment using one of three strategies: dependency reduction, external linkages, and creating a new environment (Bess & Dee, 2008; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The three strategies are detailed in Table 2.

In an effort to limit institutional reliance on any single resource, leaders move to minimize susceptibility to a decline of a resource. In recent years, public institutions illustrate this approach by seeking alternative sources of revenue in light of the dramatic decline in state appropriations. Public universities look to strategically manage enrollment to augment the bottom line

TABLE 2
Managing Resource Dependency

Reducing dependency	Diversify suppliers Diversify consumers
Developing linkages	Create partnerships and joint programs with other organizations Create formal policies that link organizations
Enacting new environments	Marketing Lobbying Forming coalitions Merging Creating consortium

Adapted from Bess and Dee (2008).

through increased tuition revenue (Barnes & Harris, 2010). Resource dependency theory and dependency reduction also provides an explanation of the changes Rosemont College undertook. As a tuition-dependent private institution, Rosemont, as discussed earlier in this chapter, saw a decline in the tuition revenue from students interested in the all-female, Catholic experience. In order to reduce their reliance on this resource, Rosemont diversified their potential student population, allowing men to enroll in the undergraduate program. In his examination of the research literature, Hearn (2003) describes several strategies that colleges and universities pursue to gain new revenue streams such as new instructional programs, research activities, development and fundraising, auxiliary enterprises and real estate, pricing strategies, and financial decision making and management. As a result of this diversification, substantial changes and the decline of one aspect of the market within higher education no longer threatens the viability of the college.

Managing a relationship with the external environment to increase the dependence of other organizations on the college provides a second avenue for institutions. A steady stream of contacts and resources will follow as an institution's importance grows. The increase in workforce development programs and contract training offered by community colleges provides a great example of this strategy. Local governments and businesses begin to rely substantially on the training of future employees by community colleges. This means that the broader success of the economy relies on the success of the

community college. As a result, local governments and businesses advocate and provide additional resources and funding for the 2-year sector. The approach presents risks, however, as many institutions become increasingly focused on expanding their linkages with the environment. The result can lead to mission drift and an institution's jumping at any potential opportunity (Balderston, 1995). Additionally, colleges must take care to ensure that external linkages do not leave the institution solely reliant on their success, leaving the institution even more dependent.

A third technique for managing the environment involves creating a new environment more hospitable to providing resources to the organization. This strategy assumes a dynamic environment that institutional leaders can influence to improve the flow of resources. Through marketing activities or lobbying efforts, colleges can improve their position and how the environment views the organization. With the increasingly prominent role of the federal government in both funding and regulating higher education as noted in the second chapter, colleges and universities increased their lobbying efforts in Washington, D.C. (Brainard, 2004). Colleges also attempt to build coalitions and relationships with influential members of the environment and community (Jongbloed, Enders, & Salerno, 2008). Private institutions frequently appoint these individuals to their board of trustees or other institutional boards to build support and secure resources.

The environment presents only limited constraints on institutions as evidenced by the strategies utilized to change the number of resources gained. In contrast, population ecology contends that choices by the environment control the institution. While resource dependency theory explains some actions that institutions take that ultimately reduce the amount of institutional diversity evident in the higher education system, the theory insufficiently addresses how these constraints directly impact institutions.

Institutional Theory

Population ecology and resource dependency theory propose ways in which organizations can respond distinctively to environmental cues. Institutional theorists contend that an organization's legitimacy explains survival. "A school

succeeds if everyone agrees it is a school; it fails if no one believes that it is a school regardless of its success in instruction or socialization” (Meyer, Scott, & Deal, 1981, p. 59). Institutional theory aids our understanding of the pressures for institutions to become more similar, which decreases institutional diversity. Organizations attempt to conform to easily recognizable and acceptable standards within the organizational field, which helps foster the organization’s legitimacy. Institutional theory describes how both deliberate and accidental choices lead institutions to mirror the norms, values, and ideologies of the organizational field. As a result, organizations that meet the environment’s expected characteristics receive legitimacy and prove worthy of resources by society and the broader environment (Toma, Dubrow, & Hartley, 2005). When an institution moves past these expectations, the environment views the characteristics as deviant and less likely to receive resources. The environment within an institutional theory framework limits the discretion of institutions to engage in certain strategic activities and pressures institutions toward conformity. Institutional theory emphasizes the normative impact of the environment on organizational activity. Colleges and universities exist within an institutional environment in which external stakeholders determine in part the expectations for organizational behavior and practices. As a result, institutional theory argues that the environment determines organizational options and limits discretion in the choices available for campus leaders. External pressure for conformity drive the range of decisions available for institutions.

The substantial body of work on institutional theory derives from the research literature on institutional sociology (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott, 1987). Institutional theorists describe two types of organizations: technical and institutional. Technical institutions follow well-defined technologies (such as manufacturing) with easily identifiable and measured outputs. Technical institutions achieve success from efficiently producing high-quality outcomes. In contrast, institutional organizations use ambiguous technologies (such as teaching or research) to produce outputs (new knowledge) where quality and efficiency proves difficult to determine (Morphew & Huisman, 2002). In this case, instead of efficiency, the institution strives to develop activities and structures identifiable both internally and externally as legitimate (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott, 1987). Colleges and

universities operate within an organizational field where a variety of external constituencies suggest how institutions should operate, defining them as institutional organizations. For example, government agencies, accreditation bodies, and disciplinary associations all attempt to manage the activities of colleges and universities. When institutions operate within the guidelines and accepted notions, external constituents view the college as a legitimate actor within the higher education field. The environment then rewards legitimacy with additional support in terms of funding, quality faculty, and interested students. As a result, the broader environment with normative expectations provides both positive and negative reinforcement that shapes institutional behavior. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) describe these expectations and pressures on the organization as the “iron cage,” which pushes colleges toward isomorphism or the implementation of actions and strategies that resemble others within higher education. Colleges engage in isomorphic tendencies when following the characteristics of other institutions considered successful within their particular niche or higher education more generally.

In explaining the processes related to isomorphism, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) suggest three types of isomorphic processes: coercive, mimetic, and normative. Each of these types leads to an increased homogenization within a given organizational field. Coercive isomorphism occurs when other organizations on which the institution depends apply pressure such as government regulations or new accreditation standards. Accreditation agencies require standards of academic and financial quality and force institutions to adapt to maintain their accreditation. In contrast, mimetic isomorphism arises from unclear technologies for goals that lead less prestigious or less resourced institutions to model and emulate those considered as leaders within the organizational field. A nearby college may upgrade its campus recreation facilities, leading other surrounding institutions to update their own campus recreation offerings in order to remain competitive. Finally, normative isomorphism occurs as a result of increased professionalization as networks grow and increased communication takes place, with “best practices” encouraging a homogenization of institutional activity. External expectations and higher education norms influence university activity such as the expectation that doctoral degrees require dissertations or courses are offered on a semester basis.

Postsecondary innovation often occurs from institutions that can afford to take risks due to their environmental position or by those institutions with limited market position to risk (Bess & Dee, 2008). Institutional theory helps explain the issue of deviance by suggesting that those institutions with sufficient resources can afford to risk some of those resources in the pursuit of change and innovation. Thus, stronger institutions may move outside of environmental expectations in an attempt to successfully ignore normative pressures. Leaders within the organizational field may take these chances and thus in the end become even more well known and well resourced. For institutions in the middle, however, moving beyond the normal expectations would take them outside the accepted bounds and lead to external constituencies' considering them too outside the mainstream. While Stanford, Caltech, or MIT might be able to create new and innovative approaches to teaching in the STEM fields and have these innovations adapted throughout higher education, a small regional public institution would less likely succeed in innovating in this way or have its innovations accepted by others due to its reputational endowment within the environment.

Neo-institutional theory examines how institutions and their environments can have multidirectional effects on one another (Ruef & Scott, 1998). Not only does the environment determine the normative expectations for higher education, as noted earlier, but colleges and universities also help shape the perceptions and expectations of the environment. As in the preceding example, Stanford's instituting new curricular or pedagogical approaches can change what the environment expects when teaching in the STEM fields. State college leaders may work with members of the legislature to alter rules and regulations. University presidents, particularly within the public sector, can serve as leaders shaping society's views on the role and purpose of higher education. Institutions escape the "iron cage" restrictions on their organizational behavior when successfully modifying or changing the environmental expectations. The result of these activities is that the environment holds a less deterministic role and organizational leaders' choices increase options available to colleges.

While researchers in recent years turned to institutional theory to explain changes in institutional diversity (Morphew, 2009; Morphew & Huisman, 2002), the theory fails to fully explain the range of empirical findings in the

literature and presents several limitations. For example, institutional theory suggests a “presumed unidirectional coercive effect of laws and regulations” (Morphew & Huisman, 2002, p. 498) that may increase or decrease institutional diversity. Furthermore, Oliver (1988) suggests some of the problematic implications of isomorphism by comparing institutional theory with strategic choice and population ecology theories. She concludes that neither population ecology nor institutional theory sufficiently explained isomorphism within organizational fields. Her work suggests that institutions may have a great deal of latitude in determining their internal structures and activities while other aspects of institutions may prove more or less resistant to these pressures.

Conclusion

Most empirical research in the field draws upon a single theoretical approach to explain organizational behavior, structure, and relationship to environment. Organizations demonstrate substantial complexity proving difficult for any single theoretical approach to explain. In the case of a particular institutional activity and behavior, institutional diversity, each of the primary theories discussed in this chapter attempt to explain institutional behavior related to changes in diversity. While researchers in recent years point to the advantages of institutional theory (Huisman, 1998; Morphew, 2009; Morphew & Huisman, 2002), each of the approaches advances understanding of the complex relationships involved in changing the level of diversity in higher education. Population ecology theory suggests the importance of the environment in shaping institutional variation and institutional success in light of environmental conditions, and resource dependency explains internal variation in the pursuit of a stable resource base. Institutional theory explains the need for legitimacy and the normative influence from within the organizational field of higher education over the past 40 years. Researchers and practitioners will benefit by understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each of these theoretical approaches in order to understand the contemporary dynamics influencing changes in institutional diversity and anticipating future changes before they occur.

Benefits of Institutional Diversity

THE BENEFITS OF INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY enable the American higher education system to achieve a variety of student, institutional, and societal goals. No single institution or institutional type could possibly possess the attributes to meet all of the expectations placed on higher education. Changing student demographics require institutions that offer a range of academic offerings that also consider cultural differences. The variation within the system supports increased effectiveness and provides alternative models for institutions considering potential reforms. Within a democracy, the creation and dissemination of knowledge free from inappropriate influence supports a free society. A diverse system of higher education limits the ability of external influences to exercise control and protects academic freedom. Additionally, the economic context of the country demands that higher education provide an opportunity for social mobility and the ability to improve one's economic and social status. Specialized minority-serving institutions play a pivotal role in achieving this goal by ensuring the access and public-good missions of colleges and universities. In this chapter, I will explore the benefits offered by institutional diversity, considering the implications for students, institutions, and society.

Meeting the Needs of All Types of Students

The ability to meet the diverse range of postsecondary needs of American students is one of the most frequently mentioned, principal benefits of

institutional diversity. The higher education system delivers a broad range of programs, from career training to advanced research degrees. Colleges and universities vary not only in their academic focus but also in their selectivity, size, and target student population, to name a few of the variables. The system provides multiple entry points, catering to a compendium of student achievement in an attempt to provide broad opportunities to postsecondary education. As a result of the diversity of students' needs, higher education institutions respond by providing a variety of models and academic offerings. While some students may be attracted to a religious institution or one with a great athletic program, many others desire quite the opposite. For the number of institutions that seek to enroll the valedictorian of a high school graduating class, many more offer retraining opportunities for a laid-off manufacturing worker. In many ways, the diversity of colleges and universities present in the American system allows students to select the program, degree, and setting that matches their educational goals and abilities.

The sheer range of educational aims that higher education attempts to address is vast. While some common indicators of student success are quite well known (Braxton, 2000; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2010; Tinto, 1994), the reality that students thrive in many different settings places great strain on our system to attempt to provide for all of the desires and goals and achieve the "best fit" for students in American higher education. The example of community colleges highlights the challenge and inability of any single institutional type to meet the goals for all students. Community colleges offer programs for transferring to 4-year institutions as well as career and technical programs. Without even mentioning the other functions of the community college, most institutions struggle to even meet these two academic goals and in practice tend to focus on one or the other (Bahr, 2012).

The success of historically Black colleges and universities highlights how an institutional type can serve one specific population well. Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) provide open and welcoming environments for African American students (W. R. Allen, 1992; Kim, 2004), with examples of mentoring and increased postgraduate success (Kim & Conrad, 2006). Similarly, female students thrive in the single-sex women's colleges, many of which boast a similar track record of student success as HBCUs

(Riordan, 1994). These examples are just two of institutional types that demonstrate achievement with their target population. Quite obviously, however, these institutions are not a fit for every African American student or woman in higher education. These institutional types provide a niche for those interested in a particular kind of postsecondary experience. As noted in the third chapter, population ecology theory suggests that the environment directly influences organizational activity and institutional offerings. The ways that special interest colleges serve specific postsecondary needs in the environment demonstrates the ways this influence occurs. Colleges and universities serve many niches, most notably geographic ones, and this range of higher education options frequently receives praise as a great strength of the U.S. higher education system.

Increased Institutional Effectiveness

In order to meet the enormous range of student needs for higher education, colleges and universities engage in a variety of important functions. In addition, higher education serves key functions as part of a larger societal role such as preparing students for citizenship and the creation of new knowledge. This results in “structures, personnel, resources, and traditions that are essential preconditions for effectively performing one of these functions . . . are quite different from those required for successfully performing another and equally important function” (Birnbaum, 1983, p. 5). Strong institutional practices and effectiveness necessitates the need to focus on and emphasize specific missions. Indeed, many of the institutional practices and activities tied to one set of goals and priorities may not fit or prove contradictory to another. For example, in recent years, the privatization of public flagships typifies this challenge. In light of declining state revenue and the desire for deregulation, public research universities and flagships moved toward a private model of higher education emphasizing increased tuition revenue and greater selectivity instead of historical missions such as public service and access (Morphew & Eckel, 2009). The belief among university presidents and trustees was that if allowed to compete in the marketplace, public flagships could hold their own against their private university competitors. To this end, these

institutions instituted a range of new administrative practices largely modeled on successful private universities and other prestige-seeking public universities. Particularly notable was a change in recruiting practices with the growth of regional admissions officers, recruiters located far from campus in an attempt to attract students and long a mainstay of elite private universities, and the attention paid to net tuition revenue (Hoover, 2010). The focus on competition, rankings, and prestige maximization may have provided some short-term successes in terms of financial positioning. However, these gains can distract or limit other institutional practices, notably the teaching and public service missions. Many of the new revenues were poured back into the “admissions arms race” (Zemsky et al., 2005) and financial aid budgets strategically focused on merit aid instead of need-based aid (McPherson & Schapiro, 1998). As resource dependency theory suggests, colleges and universities substantially relied on the short-term advantages of the prestige-seeking strategies as a stable stream of resources. However, the reliance on this revenue comes with negative consequences as the availability and opportunity of elite public higher education for low-income students was threatened by these changes. The emphasis on achieving success in one aspect of institutional practice (i.e., recruiting and financial stability) limited the ability to maintain historical missions (i.e., access for low-income students to public higher education).

Colleges and universities today face pressure from policy makers and the public to prove their efficiency and judicious use of funds. The normative pressures from the organizational field described by institutional theory prove particularly influential in this area. Many institutions engage in extensive planning and fulfill a number of regulatory requests to demonstrate efficiency as well as effectiveness. New budget systems and information technologies are utilized to provide an accurate picture of institutional finances and productivity. National professional associations and think tanks such as the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) developed measures for understanding expenditures. Performance indicators, report cards, and indexes are the order of the day. With the publication of tomes touting the failure of higher education such as *Higher Education? How*

Colleges Are Wasting Our Money and Failing Our Kids—And What We Can Do About It (Hacker & Dreifus, 2011) and *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses* (Arum & Roksa, 2011) following the tradition of *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (Bloom, 1987), the national conversation around these issues include academics in addition to financial matters. The push for student learning outcomes, rubrics, and other supposedly objective measures of student learning and achievement extend from the testing-driven culture of K–12 education and received encouragement from the regional accreditation agencies (Wellman, 2000). Perhaps no two institutions have faced more pressure in terms of accountability and productivity than the University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M. Conservative Governor Rick Perry and his political allies frequently use the two universities as whipping posts and examples of bloated higher education institutions failing in their duty to the state to keep costs low and graduate more students. This rhetoric persists despite evidence that both universities compare quite favorably to peers outside of Texas, as noted in a recent policy report (McLendon, 2012). In many cases, Governor Perry and his supporters blamed faculty as a leading cause of waste (and thus rising tuition costs) due to their time spent conducting frivolous research and avoiding the classroom. This debate culminated in the publishing of an extensive database of all faculty at the universities. For each faculty member, productivity measures were included, such as grant funding awarded and student credit hours produced (Barrett, 2011). Many campus leaders decried the measures as fundamentally flawed (Powers, 2011) and responded with what the university considered better data as well as analysis (Jaschik, 2011). Research on faculty productivity also shows the limited value and myth of such measures and a monetary evaluation of faculty work (Fairweather, 2002; Middaugh, 2001).

One of the successes of the for-profit sector cited by researchers is how the institutions are not bogged down by traditional ways of offering higher education (Tierney & Hentschke, 2007). As a result, for-profits and particularly online universities attempt to achieve efficiencies that brick-and-mortar institutions prove unable to realize. For-profits have proved particularly adept at enrolling higher numbers of adult learners, women, and minorities. As online

education providers grew, colleges and universities felt compelled to engage in distance education and other programs to attempt to maintain student enrollments. Innovations in online education provided models that many other institutions sought to implement to increase efficiency, although the results of these efforts frequently appear mixed as a result of abuses and unfulfilled promises in both the for-profit and nonprofit sectors (Wilson, 2010).

The success of the American higher education system in achieving the broad range of postsecondary outcomes can largely be attributed to the diversity present in the system. The ability to provide access for both traditional and nontraditional students and all levels of academic achievement represents an American success unseen in virtually any other nation. At the same time, U.S. higher education serves as a key national resource as well as holding a place of international preeminence in terms of scientific research and development (Cole, 2009). The variety in differentiation of goals, constituencies, missions, structures, funding, and technologies enabled the system to achieve these successes. If every college or university exhibited the same characteristics, it seems highly unlikely, if not impossible, to imagine successes across a range of the aspects as currently supported within American higher education.

Provide Models

As noted in organizational theory, higher education exhibits ambiguous goals and technologies as an institutional organization. As a result, colleges and universities look to other organizations within the organizational field in an effort to evaluate the potential success of new or changing processes. The diversity within the higher education system provides examples for institutions to benchmark and consider when making their own decisions about creating new academic programs or changing administrative structures. The ability to conduct this environmental scanning increases the likelihood of successful decision making and changes. Within the various organizational niches that make up higher education, colleges can look to a variety of institutional examples for ideas on how to respond to different circumstances. For example, colleges facing financial pressure can explore the strategies used by institutions confronted by the same issues to help ascertain the best course of action. Additionally,

other institutions face a variety of internal and external pressures influencing their potential success. Campus leaders can evaluate the circumstances, goals, mission, and success of colleges when considering their own initiatives.

As colleges and universities consider the changes under way at peer institutions, Birnbaum (1983) argues, “diverse institutions’ ability to establish individually new programs or policies significantly lowers the risk of change for the entire system” (p. 7). However, within higher education, the trend of academic drift presents real challenges and likely increases the overall risk to the system. As noted later in the fifth chapter, colleges and universities frequently seek to emulate the most prestigious and successful models nationally. This tendency has privileged the research university model and other elite university practices despite the differential missions, student populations, and finances of the majority of colleges in the United States. While institutional diversity has the potential to lower the risk of changes and innovation by demonstrating many alternatives, many colleges and universities continue to follow a narrowly defined model of higher education. As a result, a single model of academic and administrative work dominates despite the diversity of institutions in the system. Although highly touted and respected as a result of the prestige held by leading research universities, the singular focus fails to account for diversity and increases the risk of poor decision making given the local context. As an illustration, a campus that traditionally provided low-cost, accessible higher education would lose that focus by engaging in strategies used by well-resourced institutions that pursue prestige and rankings. An institution might emulate a strategy to recruit a high-caliber research scientist to increase sponsored grant activity but with insufficient laboratory space or graduate students would fail to attract extramural funds. In this way, as institutions become more diverse and different from the research university ideal, the search for alternative models and environmental scanning becomes more important to find innovative approaches that take into account local circumstances.

Support Reform Through Competition

Throughout the history of American higher education, colleges and universities frequently have been forced to compete over limited resources. The result

of this competition is that institutional success and indeed survival often rested on the ability to meet the demands of society and various stakeholders. With the competition and changes in higher education,

Colleges were forced to make crucial decisions about how to use their generally meager resources to achieve a mix of offerings that would meet the needs of sponsors, traditional constituencies, potential new students, and their own treasuries. (Geiger, 2000, p. 128)

In many ways, the diversity present within American higher education is reflected by the varied institutional responses to competitive pressures. The differences in institutional diversity around areas such as student population served, prestige, mission, and finances flow from competitive responses. As noted in the second chapter, the history of higher education reveals numerous examples of how institutions responded to broaden curricular offerings or student populations in order to remain viable and successful. The expansion of the curricula within teachers' colleges and the adaptations during the two world wars demonstrated this type of institutional response.

Higher education has shown remarkable durability and flexibility in changing programs and missions to remain competitive economically, politically, and academically. Colleges and universities increased recruiting efforts and increasingly catered to the "newly discovered" nontraditional student. For-profit institutions as well as online learning advances escalated this pursuit and competition for largely undeveloped student population. This competitive growth drove institutions toward new delivery systems and student populations that historically would have been ignored altogether or receive limited attention. The success in enrolling nontraditional students, particularly working adults, proved successful in that the students now make up the majority of all those enrolled in postsecondary education in the United States (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002).

The hypercompetitive environment in higher education today exhibits both positive and negative trends. Given the largely deregulated environment in higher education (Dill, 1997), colleges were largely left to their own devices to succeed within the marketplace. Perhaps no institution in the country better illustrates the ways competition and deregulation can change institutional

focus and mission than Troy University in rural Southeast Alabama. Originally created as a state normal school, Troy as an institution was established to meet the need for trained teachers in that part of the state. Similar to other normal schools, the institution expanded beyond the teachers' college mission to serve as a regional public university. Under the leadership of an aggressive president, Chancellor Jack Hawkins, Troy was unsatisfied serving a limited regional role in recent years. The university has made aggressive steps to expand its reach, opening campuses and offering online degree programs at more than 60 sites across the United States and in 11 countries. On the main campus, in order to pursue the dream of athletic championships and competing with neighboring athletic powerhouses the University of Alabama and Auburn University, the university moved to play Division I athletics (Jaffe, 1992). The competitive interest of Troy extended from the classroom to the global online learning environment to the football field. However, one must question whether the expansive growth and competition beyond the university's traditional role and mission in the state proves a wise investment for the state of Alabama in the broader state system of higher education. And, certainly, Troy is by no means alone as many institutions across the country seek to expand and improve their competitive position versus peer institutions.

While many are rightly concerned about the competition currently occurring within the higher education marketplace, competition throughout the history of higher education has created hardy institutions able to survive political and financial challenges. The need to compete for resources against other postsecondary institutions, K-12 education, and other social services has led to innovations both academically and administratively in higher education. Given the degree to which institutional theory explains institutional behavior in higher education, the changes described here that occur as a result of competition influence both those that implement the change and others within the organizational field. These types of changes lead to important reforms and innovations that serve to strengthen and expand institutional diversity.

Serve the Political Needs of Interest Groups

The growth of institutions during the early 19th century laid the foundation of institutional diversity for the American system of higher education. Rather

than an intentional design of the system, this useful growth was largely related to the desire of interest groups for colleges that would meet their own unique goals and values. Early in the history of U.S. higher education, groups as varied as religious denominations and state governments all sought the development of a college that would serve their particular religious, geographical, ethnic, or social group. “Visibility and legitimacy, as well as economic advantage” (Birnbaum, 1983, p. 13) played significant roles in the development of colleges. As noted in the second chapter, local boosterism and civic pride also drove the desire and need for colleges. The diversity of the groups looking to found and support colleges encourages the growth of institutional diversity as only a diverse system can achieve the economic, social, and political goals of these interest groups.

From a system standpoint, the diversity of institutions catering to a range of interest groups supports a variety of educational missions and philosophies. The benefit of institutional diversity is that institutions can address a variety of purposes without the need for extensive debate or restriction of offerings. Without the degree of diversity present in the American system, the goals of certain groups would largely remain unaddressed or require extensive change and thus alienate other groups. The value proposition of institutional diversity is that institutions in various ways serve the needs and desires of students and interest groups instead of forcing them into a unitary model that would marginalize the minority. Simply put, institutional diversity supports the long-standing values of our pluralistic society and protection of the minority valued since the founding of the nation.

Protect Academic Freedom and Autonomy

The preservation of academic freedom and safeguards for free inquiry and discourse prove one of the most sacred values in all of American higher education. The university’s role in conducting research and creating knowledge without undue influence is a cornerstone not only of higher education, but the country generally. To foster this, colleges and universities develop a variety of structures and processes—most notably the awarding of tenure to faculty. American society relies on higher education to pursue teaching and research

for the common good essential for a free society. As the American Association of University Professors (1940) argues in the *1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure*:

Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interest of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition. Academic freedom is essential to these purposes and applies to both teaching and research. Freedom in research is fundamental to the advancement of truth. Academic freedom in its teaching aspect is fundamental for the protection of the rights of the teacher in teaching and of the student to freedom in learning. (p. 1)

As noted by Birnbaum (1983), the relationship between institutional diversity and academic freedom, “while indirect, is quite strong” (p. 9). Despite the successes of elite public research universities during the 20th century, he continues by arguing that private universities are best able to protect academic freedom. “The fear of offending a state legislator or governor is infinitely greater,” Riesman (1975) also concurred, “than the fear of offending a particularly wealthy donor in the major private institutions” (p. 471). While public universities face challenges from governors and legislators that their private counterparts do not face, the recent record demonstrates the continued success of public research universities in pursuing free inquiry and knowledge. Indeed, the protections of academic freedom include not only inappropriate influence by governmental actors, but also the values the institution supports. The concern of undue sway by public as well as private sources raises issues at every postsecondary institution in the nation.

Perhaps the largest external event in recent years challenging the value of academic freedom arose in the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks. The nation’s raw emotional state and some ill-advised comments by faculty around the country led many to question what type of institution would support statements from those who blamed the United States and American foreign policy for the attacks. The contrast between President

George W. Bush's rhetoric of "Dead or Alive" and "You're either with us or against us" proved a great contrast to some rhetoric within higher education. These sentiments came to a head in the case of the University of North Carolina, the nation's oldest public university.

As part of the university's annual freshman orientation, UNC regularly assigned a common book experience. In 2002, a selection committee of faculty, administrators, and students identified *Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelations* by Michael Sells (1999). The book explores Islamic scripture through an academic approach. The committee's goal was to select a book that would examine Islam without focusing on terrorism. The university was hit from both sides of the political and religious spectrum as the American Civil Liberties Union was concerned about a violation of church and state while the Family Policy Network, a Christian group, argued the university was attempting to paint Islam in a positive light. Three incoming students filed suit in federal court seeking an injunction to stop the book discussion, but were denied. Conservative state legislators threatened to cut off funding. The leaders of the university seemed to almost relish the challenges appearing frequently on national media outlets. On ABC's *Good Morning America*, Chancellor James Moeser exclaimed, "The controversy in fact validated the purposes of the assignment. And we succeeded beyond our wildest dreams." While the common book experience was optional, UNC's freshmen participated in record numbers.

The University of North Carolina was not alone in fighting for free inquiry as many institutions faced similar concerns and faculty feared the formation of a new McCarthy era. However, research exploring the most controversial events in the post-September 11 landscape showed the preservation of academic freedom (Gerstmann & Streb, 2006). Institutions of all types faced challenges to academic freedom, and while no sector can claim the mantle of protector, the overall system has managed to preserve freedom and discourse in a hyperpoliticized environment. In many ways, academic freedom cases of the 2000s are not substantively different from the 1980s or 1990s except for the public scrutiny and 24-hour news cycle.

In a diverse system of higher education, the pressures on institutions vary in such a way that no single trend or influence impacts all or even the

majority of institutions simultaneously (Birnbaum, 1983). Government policymakers, interests groups, and the public may pursue, intentionally or not, institutions to take action contrary to the values of academic freedom. The strength of a diverse higher education system is that colleges and universities are impacted differentially, allowing the opportunity to identify and argue against inappropriate influence. The system's level of diversity fosters the capacity to mitigate threats to the unobstructed pursuit of truth and free expression and ultimately protects students, faculty, institutions, and the nation. Although less noticed, institutional diversity presents a significant benefit to higher education by providing stability to the system. As open systems, colleges and universities acquire goals and purposes in part from external stimuli (Daft & Weick, 1984). Diversity shields the system by limiting the ability of a single external influence to drive all or even a majority of institutions toward identical and potentially unproductive actions. This helps protect key institutional and system values from damaging external trends.

Support Elite and Mass Higher Education

Institutional diversity in American higher education increases the range of activities and models of teaching and research performed by colleges and universities. The diversity present within the system of higher education in the United States supports the ability of colleges and universities to serve a role in providing both elite and mass higher education (Trow, 2005). Serving both of these, at times, competing values within a single institutional type would prove almost impossible. However, with a diverse array of colleges within a single national system, both access and quality can be achieved. Within a standardized system lacking sufficient diversity, the ability to serve multiple functions proves difficult. As Clark (1976) contends, "mass systems must be more differentiated than elite ones as they absorb a more heterogeneous clientele, respond to new demands from the labor market, and attempt to cover a wider range of knowledge" (p. 33). The U.S. system of higher education supports the dual goals of elite and mass higher education primarily through a level of sustained institutional diversity.

In describing mass and elite higher education, I use the terms as does Martin Trow (1979) to describe the forms and functions of colleges and universities. In this framing, elite higher education focuses not on the exclusivity in social background of students, but rather on “the forms of education and the level of intensity and complexity to which subjects are pursued” (Trow, 1979, p. 277). Colleges and universities in this tradition increase the ambitions of students by developing their personal and intellectual capacities. In contrast, mass higher education focuses on conveying the knowledge and skills necessary for success particularly within the workforce, both blue and white collar. Trow places an emphasis on the degree to which elite higher education encourages student ambition for making a difference in the world. This leads to postsecondary training that emphasizes socialization as opposed to practical training. The specialization within elite higher education presents challenges of cost, time, and energy that often exclude students who do not fit a traditional, residential, 18- to 22-year-old student model.

A strong benefit of institutional diversity in American higher education is the mobility of students and faculty to move between institutions that offer both elite and mass education. This trend is largely possible as a result of most institutions, demonstrating some values of each trend. The variability in the degree to which each individual institution and the American system manages the inherent tension between elite and mass education contributes to the institutional diversity present. Without the tension and the necessary grappling of the competing ideals within institutions, the education system would likely fail to serve the needs of the diverse constituencies that rely on higher education. Elite and mass higher education rely on one another and would prove politically, economically, and socially unsound without the existence of the other and the resulting institutional diversity.

Improve Social Mobility

A frequently espoused mission of the American higher education system is to provide access and improve the social mobility of students. The ability to fulfill the American dream of improving one’s social and economic status largely relies on higher education. The ability of successive generations to

change classes prevents a caste system and rigid social barriers. Institutional diversity fosters increased social mobility by offering a variety of entry points and types of postsecondary education. Students with limited means, family obligations, and varied academic backgrounds can all find higher education opportunities from attending a local community college, a regional public institution, or a selective liberal arts college. The open access mission of community colleges provides an entry to any American who holds a high school diploma or at least an equivalent. A variety of institutions focus on a range of student populations to support social mobility.

In contrast to other nations with significant tracking of students and a limited range of institutional offerings, the U.S. system of higher education ensures that students are offered many opportunities for academic success. Regardless of the students' past academic record, there is an institution available to pursue postsecondary education. As David Riesman (1975) argued so persuasively:

The United States is a country of second chances and even third chances. Poorly guided, perhaps poorly motivated, perhaps lacking a sufficient horizon on one's own interests and on the world, a young person may make a start in a college of low academic and intellectual caliber and then transfer as, for example, is virtually impossible in the United Kingdom, to a college of higher quality. (p. 481)

Institutional diversity provides opportunities for students to transfer across a variety of institutional options. For example, an expressed purpose of community colleges allows students to complete the first 2 years of their undergraduate education before transferring to a 4-year institution. In addition to this, a number of students engage in "reverse transfer" (Townsend, 2001), which occurs when 4-year students enroll in community colleges to receive specialized career training or simply to complete an associate's degree. The ability of students to enroll in a wide range of institutional types also leads to increasing the chance of students finding a better fit academically or socially at their college. The system also provides a "cooling out" function (Clark,

1960), which may include students transferring from a college transfer program to one more vocationally and career focused. Providing a place for students to consider their future education and career plans serves an important and useful function for the economy and society. Allowing students the ability to move in a direction that better suits their interests and aspirations maximizes the long-term socioeconomic success of students continuing to support their social mobility.

Minority-Serving Institutions

The establishment of minority-serving institutions (MSIs) illustrates one of the strong benefits of institutional diversity in American higher education. MSIs serve a key role in providing access and supporting the public-good notion of higher education through their commitment to historically underrepresented groups in higher education (Gasman et al., 2008). As MSIs, these colleges and universities as a group enroll a high proportion of African American, American Indian, and Hispanic students. Three types of institutions are formally designated as minority-serving institutions: historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), tribal colleges and universities (TCUs), and Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs).

In light of the changing demographics of the nation, MSIs will continue to play a critical function within the higher education system by providing access to the growing minority student population. Population projections suggest that by 2050 the United States will be majority minority, and higher education minority enrollment that currently stands around one third will surely grow as well (Smith, 2011). MSIs provide great value by meeting the special needs of minority students. Each population and even subgroups differ, but several key characteristics exist across these groups. Minority students are more likely to struggle academically with accompanying rates of high school and college dropout (Chen, 2012; Perna & Thomas, 2006). The risk of academic failure follows from ongoing segregation that exists within the primary and secondary educational systems. As a result, minority students often attend schools with limited resources and high poverty rates (Frankenberg & Orfield, 2012; Orfield, Kucsera, & Siegel-Hawley, 2012). In

addition to these challenges, minority students are more likely to be first-generation college students and must navigate institutional processes and infrastructure while battling fears of failure and cultural separation (Rendon, Jalomo, & Nora, 2000). Minority-serving colleges and universities demonstrate success in achieving engagement with students (Bridges, Kinzie, Nelson Laird, & Kuh, 2008) and improving graduation rates. Institutions that recognize the unique educational challenges of minority students are best prepared to help meet the needs of this population to facilitate postsecondary success. The following sections describe the three types of MSIs and their contributions to the higher education system.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Among MSIs, historically Black colleges and universities have the longest history and are the most studied (Gasman & Tudico, 2008). Since the founding of the Institute for Colored Youth (now Cheyney University) in 1837, HBCUs have faced skepticism and scrutiny from many policymakers and society at large. Questions of purpose and whether an ongoing need for the mission of HBCUs exists today confront supporters of the institutional type (W. R. Allen & Jewell, 2002; Ricard & Brown, 2008). In response to these challenges and to increase our empirical understanding of HBCUs, scholars have explored a variety of aspects including faculty (Foster, 2001; Johnson, 2001), students (Freeman, 2002; Harper, 2004), and governance (Minor, 2005). A complicating factor in this discussion is the assumption that all HBCUs fulfill the same mission despite the inherent variety within the institutional type in regards to variables such as size, control, and the academic preparation of students (M. C. Brown, 2003).

Although HBCUs generally struggle for resources and represent only about 3% of colleges nationwide, the success of the institutional type remains quite impressive. HBCUs enroll over a quarter of all Black students in higher education and grant a sizeable number of degrees awarded to African Americans (over 25% of baccalaureates, 15% of master's and professional degrees, and 10% of PhDs) (W. R. Allen & Jewell, 2002; Nettles & Perna, 1997). Additionally, historically Black colleges play a significant role in producing graduate education in the STEM fields (Solorzano, 1995). The land-grant

mission plays an important role in the curricula of many HBCUs harking back to the days of Booker T. Washington and vocational training. The important historical role of the land-grant mission receives support from faculty at HBCUs that demonstrate a commitment to teaching and establishing strong mentor relationships with students (Taylor & Palmer, 2013). HBCUs provide access and opportunity vital for fulfilling the promise of the higher education system (Gasman, Lundy-Wagner, Ransom, & Bowman, 2010). The unique mission and successful student outcomes illustrate how different institutional types can benefit underrepresented minorities and the nation.

Tribal Colleges and Universities

Unlike the long history of HBCUs, tribal colleges are a recent concept, with most established in the 1970s (Wright & Tierney, 1991). The need for TCUs arose from the limited access and success of American Indian students in traditional higher education institutions. TCUs are a unique institutional type chartered by local tribes and their trustees are predominantly American Indians (Stein, 1992). The institutions receive little funding from the local community or state, and instead rely largely on the federal government for financial support. “Ideally, tribal colleges combine the preservation of tribal history, culture, and traditions with academic preparation, vocational training, and basic adult education” (D. Brown, 2003, p. 36). TCUs have reached remarkable success in improving the participation and graduation rates of American Indian students by offering postsecondary education in a culturally sensitive and relevant manner (Boyer, 1997; Guillory & Ward, 2008; Martin, 2005). Enrollment in TCUs has grown tremendously in recent years and exceeds 30,000 students (American Indian College Fund, 2003). American Indian students face a number of barriers to higher education attainment, including poor academic preparation, cultural differences, and limited financial means. The ability of TCUs to adapt their academic programs and delivery models to the needs of American Indian students created an environment for students to succeed where traditional colleges and universities failed. The institutional diversity of American higher education supported the development of tribal colleges and facilitated the success of this relatively new institutional type.

Hispanic-Serving Institutions

Hispanic-serving institutions differ from HBCUs and TCUs because their founding was not for the expressed purpose of meeting the postsecondary needs of Hispanic students (O'Brien & Zudak, 1998). Rather, HSIs evolved over the course of the past 40 years as a result of their geographic proximity to large Hispanic populations. The dramatic growth of Hispanic students resulted in the recognition of over 200 HSIs enrolling approximately two thirds of all Hispanics in higher education (Hurtado, 2002). This development "has conferred on [HSIs] ad hoc missions to better address the education needs of this population" (Laden, 2001, p. 75). The commonly accepted definition for a Hispanic-serving institution is a college or university with 25% or more Hispanic undergraduate full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment (Benitez, 1998). Hispanic students commonly face barriers to higher education as a result of the high percentage that are first-generation students. As the Hispanic population continues to grow, HSIs provide culturally sensitive postsecondary education and work with students at a greater risk for not completing college (Nunez, Sparks, & Hernandez, 2011). The role of community colleges proves vital to serving this population with 54.7% of HSIs that are 2-year institutions (Laden, 2001). Despite the tremendous growth in the U.S. Hispanic population, educational progress continues to lag relative to other groups. To further complicate a discussion of Hispanic students, educational attainment rates vary drastically among ethnic groups. For example, Cuban Americans are 4 times more likely than Mexican Americans to attend college. The gap among recent immigrants and first-generation students is more prevalent than students from families who have lived in the United States longer (Hurtado, 2002). The need for improved economic benefits for Hispanics and greater social integration suggests that the role of HSIs will continue to grow in the coming years.

Conclusion

Institutional diversity serves a variety of student, institutional, and societal goals. The majority of the research literature focuses on the institutional aspects despite the interconnected nature of the three. Diversity is required to

satisfy the number of niche markets within U.S. higher education. Diverse needs demand a variety of institutional responses as no single institution or institutional type possesses the ability to do everything well (Birnbaum, 1983). In addition to the well-acknowledged strengths that institutional diversity brings to the higher education system, as discussed in this chapter, a diverse system also presents challenges. A range of baccalaureate options, for example, may provide opportunity and access, but also presents difficulties for students seeking to transfer between institutions and reduces students' ability to migrate within the system. Additionally, a diverse array of institutional types causes difficulties in measuring quality and establishing standards throughout the system despite calls to improve assessment and accountability. As identified throughout this chapter, the strong benefits American higher education receives from institutional diversity enables the system to achieve the goals and expectations placed on colleges and universities.

Causes of Homogenization

ALTHOUGH OBSERVERS OF AMERICAN higher education agree that institutional diversity has decreased over the past 40 years (Morphew, 2009), the causes of the decline appear less clear. “Powerful forces tending toward . . . centralization and homogenization” persistently influence colleges and universities (Trow, 1979, p. 271). Understanding the push toward homogenization helps provide a view of the dynamics at play in leading to the reduction of institutional diversity. A variety of institutional and system factors encourage institutions to engage in activities and to develop structures similar to other colleges and universities. This chapter explores the dynamics of homogenization, highlighting the key causes as identified in the research literature. I start by discussing academic drift, the most frequently cited cause of the decline of institutional diversity. Then, I consider related topics influencing colleges such as the desire to increase institutional prestige and rankings. The chapter concludes with a discussion of statewide coordination, which provides context to the question of homogenization with researchers divided on whether coordination increases or decreases diversity. The relationship between governmental policy, market forces, and institutional decision making proves particularly important in understanding the role of homogenization and how these trends influence institutional diversity. Each of the major topics addressed in this chapter demonstrates varying degrees in which these three forces encourage homogenization and cause changes in institutional diversity.

Academic Drift

David Riesman's (1956) seminal work on academic drift describes the concept as a pattern of imitation where less prestigious and less resourced colleges follow the lead of more successful and high-status ones. His use of the snake metaphor describes the tendency of universities at the "tail" attempting to model themselves after those at the "head." Academic drift occurs as less prestigious "tail" institutions follow the strategic direction laid down by institutions with the reputational and political capital to engage in innovative activity. As institutions seek to follow the lead of "head" universities, institutional diversity declines as the "snakelike procession causes a convergence upon a single organizational model" (Morphew, 2000, p. 57).

Researchers often cite academic drift as "the greatest threat to institutional diversity" (Morphew, 2009, p. 246), substantially due to the widely held belief that diversity within the higher education system declines as colleges and universities pursue policies in line with drift. Both domestically and internationally, scholars examine the ways that institutional decisions and actions lead institutions toward academic drift and homogeneity within both state and national systems (Birnbaum, 1983; Huisman & Morphew, 1998; Neave, 1979). This results from "institutions mov[ing] away from their original mission toward norms of achievement, competence, and judgment, typical for the academic values of national elite institutions" (Huisman, 1998, p. 89). The act of imitation, referred to as academic drift (Neave, 1979), mission creep (Aldersley, 1995) or vertical extension (Schultz & Stickler, 1965), creates pressures for institutions to behave normatively, increasing uniformity and decreasing institutional diversity. Colleges and universities engage in academic drift in order to move up the "pecking order" described by McConnell (1962) as research universities at the top of the pyramid followed by regional institutions and less selective comprehensive colleges.

The research literature points to a number of causes for academic drift. This lack of consensus likely occurs as a result of the identified causes operating together and holding different levels of influence at various points in time (Morphew & Huisman, 2002). Additionally, studies of academic drift approach the topic from different theoretical bases such as those described in

the third chapter of this volume. The lack of clear and consistent conceptualizations of the primary aspects of academic drift as well as measurement issues proves problematic as well (Huisman, 1998). A continued effort on the part of scholars to clarify the concepts involved in the study of academic drift and institutional diversity more generally would aid our understanding of the dynamics involved.

Research on academic drift has occurred for more than 50 years, with the studies frequently focusing on systems of higher education and changes within these systems (Aldersley, 1995; Birnbaum, 1983; Morphew, 2000, 2002; Neave, 1979; Riesman, 1956). Despite evidence of the ongoing prevalence of academic drift, limited research since the 1960s, other than that by Morphew (2000, 2002, 2009), addresses the causes and implications in American higher education. In contrast, international researchers developed a significant body of empirical work (Huisman, 1995, 1998; Meek, 1991; Neave, 1979; van Vught, 2009). The research literature would benefit from a consideration of the current dynamics in U.S. higher education and understanding the lessons from postsecondary systems across the globe to preserve and protect institutional diversity.

Given the current dialogue in policy and higher education circles emphasizing increased efficiency and accountability (McLendon, Hearn, & Deaton, 2006), mission creep appears particularly problematic. Academic drift intensifies inefficiency within state and national higher education systems by increasing unnecessary duplication and competition. As state funding declines, or at best maintains existing levels, a focus on mission-central activities proves paramount and the resources wasted through gratuitous overlap and infighting within a system hinders the ability of colleges and universities to achieve their goals and missions. Higher education struggles too greatly to secure resources to waste them on unnecessary duplication in the face of current economic, political, and social pressures.

While institutions seek to expand to reach new student markets during economic downturns (Holley & Harris, 2010), a tenuous link exists between student demand and academic drift with researchers arguing that programs created as a result of mission creep often serve few students (Birnbaum, 1983; Morphew, 2000). In fact, research suggests that student demand for programs

does not impact academic drift and an inverse relationship may even exist between the two (Schultz & Stickler, 1965). Changes within higher education that expand particular institutional types and increase homogenization occur even during periods when financial resources and student enrollments increase (Birnbaum, 1983; Huisman & Morphew, 1998). As the knowledge economy grows and student needs for education change, institutional diversity provides a variety of higher education opportunities to meet new necessities and offers a comprehensive approach to postsecondary education. Academic drift often occurs through the growth of graduate programs, particularly doctoral programs located at universities where the doctorate was not traditionally considered part of the institution's role or mission. As an example, in 2005, the California State University system received permission to begin offering doctorates in education (Hebel, 2005). Historically, the University of California system held the sole authority to offer doctorates with Cal State focused baccalaureate production. This change expanded the academic focus of Cal State allowing the system to move toward the research university model increasing doctoral production and an emphasis on research. Undergraduate education may suffer from neglect as resources and attention focus elsewhere (Lachs, 1965; McConnell, 1962). Higher education institutions have yet to demonstrate a substantial commitment to undergraduate education in light of the pursuit of graduate studies and other activities believed to grow institutional prestige (Harris, 2006; Shils, 1962). The needs of students and the economy, however, suggest that higher education can no longer afford such distractions to develop the workforce needed for the 21st century (Lumina, 2012).

Studies of academic drift frequently focus on organizational variables describing the responses of institutions to expand beyond their missions (Huisman, 1995). The emphasis on the institution, however, masks the influence of the role that faculty play in guiding university behavior (Clark, 1983; Rhoades, 1990). The question remains as to what extent academic drift follows as a result of administrative and institutional decisions "or, are faculty members asserting their own values within their institutions?" (Morphew, 2000, p. 56). While the research literature fails to identify a single cause of mission drift, faculty behavior, training, and rewards often receive blame. The

training of faculty members at research universities contributes to academic drift as faculty seek to recreate their prior experiences and doctoral institution at their current university. By developing organizational structures and degree programs that mirror their own doctoral experience, faculty members transform their institution along research university norms regardless of the institutional mission and values of their current department or university. The increased specialization of faculty and disciplines is the heart of the blame of the faculty role in fostering academic drift. The creation of “cosmopolitan faculty” (Birnbaum, 1983; Riesman, 1956) divides faculty as they align more closely to their academic discipline and field of study than their department or institution.

Faculty reward structures further this trend supporting faculty activity recognized nationally by peers in the academic field. These faculty contribute as members of their “academic tribe” (Becher & Trowler, 2001) receiving their status and achievements from sources external to their home institution. Faculty evaluation systems augment these external validations by valuing research over teaching (Rhoades, 1990). The emphasis on research pushes institutions traditionally focused on teaching into the research model rather than a form best suited for their historical aims and mission. Fairweather (2000) examines faculty salaries at a variety of institutional types to consider how they may exhibit different reward structures. For example, one might expect liberal arts colleges to reward teaching quality and research universities to reward success in publishing and grantsmanship. However, his study found that faculty salaries were primarily based on research productivity across all institutional types. These results suggest that faculty throughout higher education face pressures to engage in research activity regardless of the mission of their institution. This push for faculty to perform as research faculty likely leads to behaviors and activities at both the individual and institutional level that results in academic drift.

Prestige-Maximizing Activities

Institutions engaged in prestige-maximizing activities principally focus on the pursuit of *U.S. News & World Report* rankings or other external ranking

systems. The goal of growing institutional prestige relates to many of the strategies described within academic drift. While businesses typically gauge success through the generation of profit, colleges and universities focus on prestige-maximizing structures and activities to improve their standing. As noted in the prior section, faculty behaviors, activities, and institutional reward structures can lead to an attempt to expand prestige-maximizing activity. As Toma (2012) notes:

Despite the impressive diversity of institution types, the relative autonomy of individual universities and colleges, and the vast differences in perspective resources available to them, higher education institutions in the United States tend to arrive at a common aspiration. They are eerily similar in vision, in fact, seemingly obsessed with “moving to the next level.” (p. 118)

From an institutional theory perspective, these institutions seek legitimacy within their organizational field (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Ruef & Scott, 1998) with the goal of enhanced prestige as the means to this end. The study of rankings and how they shape organizational strategy, decision making, and identity remain understudied in higher education (Bastedo & Bowman, 2010).

Ranking systems such as *U.S. News* prove problematic in their ability to truly evaluate the quality of an institution. The rankings substantially rely on the characteristics of incoming students with SAT/ACT scores as the most influential variable in determining an institution's ranking (Kuh & Pascarella, 2004). As Ehrlich (2004) poignantly described, “No one would choose a hospital based on the health of patients coming into the hospital, and no one should choose a college based primarily on the grades and test scores of incoming students” (p. 1). Few of the changes in the *U.S. News* rankings relate to actual quality changes in the institution (Dichev, 2001). Despite a limited ability to measure quality, the rankings profoundly influence student choice and institutional resources (Bastedo & Bowman, 2011; Bowman & Bastedo, 2009).

Students struggle to make an informed decision about institutional fit and selecting the best college largely due to the lack of readily available, clear,

and comparable information to base the decision (Zemsky et al., 2005). In 1995, over 40% of students considered college rankings important in their college choice process (McDonough et al., 1998). Since that time, interest in college rankings has exploded, with the role of rankings growing as part of the marketing and admissions enterprise. The rise of corporate marketing and a rankings industry leads students to question the messages they receive from colleges and rely on other sources such as friends or online discussion sites (Dupaul & Harris, 2012). As institutions desire increased sources of revenue in the midst of government funding cuts, the importance of marketing and recruiting students expands and escalates attempts to increase prestige and rankings (Barnes & Harris, 2010). The attempts by colleges and universities to secure new sources of revenue relates to the resource dependency theoretical perspective and explains these behaviors.

In addition to the significance of rankings as part of the student college choice process, the pursuit of rankings and prestige also impacts organizational identity and decision making (Bastedo & Bowman, 2010). External drivers of certification and evaluation of institutions prove particularly powerful within an organizational field (Dornbusch & Scott, 1975; Sauder, 2008; Sauder & Espeland, 2009). Despite calls from college presidents deriding the value of rankings (Marklein, 2007), unless of course their institution ranks highly, the rankings convey legitimacy and drive strategic direction especially at elite universities. Institutions strategically position for prestige and seek to increase academic quality and selectivity. These strategies include growing revenue from new markets, expanding administrative control, treating students as consumers, and increasing costs (Geiger, 2004; Harris, 2009a; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Zemsky, 1990; Zemsky & Massy, 1995; Zemsky et al., 2005).

In their study of higher education institutional strategy, Brewer et al. (2002) described three types of colleges and universities: prestigious, prestige seeking, and reputation building. Prestigious institutions include those at the top of the academic hierarchy with tremendous resources and that seek to maintain their prestige with their acquired resources. In the middle, prestige-seeking colleges actively engage in the pursuit of prestige with investments in athletics, faculty research, or merit scholarships (Brewer et al., 2002). As

heavily tuition dependent institutions, reputation-building institutions seek to follow market trends to meet current and emerging student interests. Relevant to concerns regarding a decline in institutional diversity, the strategies undertaken by both prestige-seeking and reputation-building institutions remain particularly important. These striving institutions engage in behaviors to achieve aspirational goals that result in isomorphic strategies by leveraging available resources and engaging in strategic planning to grow prestige irrespective of the college's historical mission or role within the larger higher education system.

“Striving” institutions, as O’Meara (2007) identifies those universities seeking to increase prestige, engage in strategies that presuppose greater prestige leads to better resources. In addition to their aspirational aims, the strategies employed to maximize prestige also play an important organizational purpose. The process and implementation of strategy enables institutions to set a direction, focus activities, and reduce uncertainty, thus providing a sense of stability and order for organizational members (Milliken, 1990). Within higher education, strategy grounds an institution with an understanding of the environment and a focus on the future direction of the college (Keller, 1983). The values of a university including historical missions and future aspirations provide complexity to strategic efforts. Chafee (1985) suggests strategy also includes the organizational environment involving both content and process at many levels within the university. For higher education, institutional strategy often includes aspirational goals, and ambition can dominate strategic planning. Striving colleges remarkably utilize “strategy as aspirations, such as heightening legitimacy and enhancing autonomy through moving to the ‘next level,’ as well as the actual approaches toward positioning for greater prestige” (Toma, 2012, pp. 121–122).

Research suggests that prestige-seeking strategies impact a variety of internal constituencies and the interaction between groups. For example, Blau (1994) found that high-quality faculty attract talented students, while others suggest the interaction between great faculty and students lead to changes in admissions outcomes and institutional prestige (Meredith, 2004; Volkwein & Sweitzer, 2006). Faculty may benefit from higher quality students, yet face pressure in striving institutions with changing expectations,

rewards, and reward structures (O'Meara & Bloomgarden, 2011). Furthermore, faculty play a role in driving the prestige arms race with their own experiences and normative expectations. Additional empirical research should examine the interplay of these changes and faculty agency in the process to better understand the dynamics at work in prestige-seeking universities.

While the strategies used to gain prestige may vary across different types of institutions, the competition within the higher education market suggests few institutions will prove immune to these aspirational pressures. While virtually all colleges face pressure, liberal arts colleges as an institutional type seem particularly vulnerable due to their size and curricular focus (Massy & Zemsky, 1994; Morphew, 2002; Schultz & Stickler, 1965). The dichotomy of an institutional mission focused on teaching and student engagement creates tension with disciplinary expectations of research productivity. Comprehensive colleges and their faculty, positioned within the middle of the academic hierarchy (Clark, 1987), struggle “between a rock and a hard place” (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006). These universities frequently started as teacher colleges or liberal arts institutions and typically offered undergraduate degrees and some master's degrees. Morphew and Huisman (2002) suggest these types of universities often created new duplicative academic programs particularly at the graduate level. As noted in the second chapter, comprehensive colleges play a pivotal role in furthering the ideals of mass higher education in the United States, and changes in this institutional type dramatically impact the overall accessibility and availability of higher education.

Although typically possessing better resources than other institutions in a state, flagship and research university campuses also engage in prestige-maximizing behaviors. Historically, state research universities looked to success in the higher education marketplace as valuable currency in furthering institutional and research-oriented goals (Geiger, 2004). The institutions sought better students; high-quality, research-active faculty; and autonomy to achieve their aspirations. Presidents of these institutions lobbied legislatures across the country to provide autonomy and relief from a variety of state regulations (Newman et al., 2004; Zemsky et al., 2005). Autonomy and flexibility served as the watchwords for presidents and other institutional leaders who sought

to take advantage of the rise of conservative legislatures in order to freely compete in the higher education market (Harris, 2009a).

The conflict surrounding the University of Wisconsin at Madison's attempt to break away from the University of Wisconsin system exemplifies this trend (Durhams, 2011). Partnering with controversial Republican Governor Scott Walker, Chancellor Biddy Martin backed a plan that would provide regulatory relief and sever the Madison campus from the UW system. The hope was that the plan would create flexibility, particularly for revenue generation and fiscal planning. Critics contended that the plan would lead to an escalation of tuition, dramatically increase nonresident enrollment, and leave other system campuses in a weaker position. Ultimately, the plan failed to gain sufficient support among the board of regents or the legislature, and Chancellor Martin subsequently left Madison to assume the presidency of Amherst College. Regardless of the plan's failure, the fact that the institution home to the "Wisconsin Idea" and service to the state could come so close to breaking away to pursue market and prestige success shows the power of the pressures facing higher education institutions.

These trends combine with others facing public research universities leading to increased privatization. Well documented in the research literature and national policy debate, public funding plays a smaller role in institutional financing both in constant dollars and as a percentage of the university budget (Eckel & Morphey, 2009; Heller, 2006). A focus on privatization also changes the organizational structure of universities increasing the number and significance of research centers and institutes on campuses (Clark, 2004; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). The creation of new structures influences internal dynamics shifting power and decision making in favor of those best able to generate revenue and increase prestige. As the environment rewards prestige-maximizing behaviors through resources and perception, colleges and universities may eschew traditional forms, functions, and missions in favor of these new pursuits leading to a decrease in institutional diversity. While state-wide coordination holds the potential to limit the ability of institutions to engage in these strategies, the research literature presents uneven evidence of the likelihood or potential success of coordination to preserve and protect institutional diversity in American higher education.

Statewide Coordination

Since the 1950s, much of the research on state governance in higher education focuses on the role and influence of coordination and autonomy (Hearn & McLendon, 2012). The balance “sought is delicate, and equilibrium may only exist in theory” (Halstead, 1974, p. 11) presenting challenges for institutions and state systems (Millett, 1984). Strong arguments exist in favor of both autonomy and coordination depending on the state’s values, system design, and mission for higher education (Richardson, Bracco, Callan, & Finney, 1999). On one hand, institutions require autonomy to successfully compete and remain separate from inappropriate political and financial intrusion (Moos & Rourke, 1959). Others call for greater state coordination and planning to effectively guide a growing number of institutions and prevent the domination of public flagship interests over larger societal or system interests (Glenny, 1959).

With the locus of control of higher education at the state level in the United States, a number of models exist regarding the organization of state higher education systems. The systems also vary on the degree to which the private higher education sector factors into the system, which directly impacts the overall higher education system within a state. In describing a taxonomy of the state structures of higher education, Richardson et al. (1999) identify the three commonly accepted types of designs: consolidated governing boards, coordinating boards, and planning agencies. A consolidated governing board consists of a single board with management and control over all public colleges and universities in a state. Some states include community colleges under the same consolidated board, while others place the sector under a different structure. Under a coordinating board, a state agency holds the responsibility for some or all of the major functions for higher education such as planning, academic program review, budgetary processes, or policy analysis. The strength and policy reach of coordinating boards varies with some holding regulatory authority over their higher education systems with others serving only an advisory function. Planning agencies hold the least influence with no single agency or board with authority beyond voluntary planning responsibilities. To reiterate, these three forms are simply a

general typology with many states operating with various boards and agencies operating at various higher education levels. For example, in California, the boards of the University of California and the California State University systems hold governance and policy responsibility over their respective institutions. Given the variations among states, evaluating systems proves difficult although McGuinness (1994) suggests considering factors such as avoiding political intrusion, supporting presidents, focusing on system mission, and tackling public policy issues.

Statewide coordination often appears as a key aspect of arguments around the cause of homogenization in American higher education. Birnbaum (1983) suggests that increased regulation of higher education likely led to the decline of institutional diversity. He concluded that pressure to adapt to changes in the state and federal regulatory environment pushed colleges toward similar organizational forms. As a result, he argued for statewide planning through advisory councils rather than coordinating and governing boards to better allow institutions to maintain diversity in form and function. In support of this argument, other scholars contend that public colleges appear less likely than private institutions to engage in academic program changes that increase the institutional diversity in the higher education system (El-Khawas, 1976; Grant & Riesman, 1978).

However, in recent years, researchers argue that increasing state regulation and coordination holds the potential to increase institutional diversity. Berdahl (1985) submits that academic drift and increased homogenization played a primary role in forcing the creation of statewide coordinating boards. Protecting institutional diversity and preserving traditional institutional missions should serve as a foundational purpose of statewide coordination. Empirical research supports the claims of policy centralization to demonstrate higher levels of innovation. Particularly noteworthy, Hearn and Griswold (1994) found that centralized governance structures fostered innovation in the academic policy aspects of colleges and universities, which prove crucial for maintaining diversity. Centralized governance structures and strong statewide coordination may possess the ability to maintain or increase levels of

institutional diversity in higher education systems (Morphew & Huisman, 2002).

The size, complexity, and decentralized nature of state systems create great difficulty in implementing policy goals. The issues of control, information sharing, and goal setting present challenges typical in any centralized or bureaucratic process (Bergquist, 1993; Helgesen, 1995; Weber, 1924). The research literature, however, demonstrates that systems have been effective in achieving some of the public purposes of higher education including limiting costs, increasing access, and supporting public service (Kaplan, 2009, p. 124). Although many state lawmakers support deregulation and decentralization, these trends decrease the larger purposes of the institution and limit the state's ability to impact the outcomes of public higher education. Moreover, state-wide coordination serves values such as access or public service, but fails to effectively support other prized activities such as research productivity and addressing the variety of student needs. State systems also struggle to nimbly respond to sudden changes in the local economy or policy environment. Strong higher education reforms and policymaking must endeavor to strike a balance that supports high quality teaching, research, and service with little overlap or an efficient use of resources.

In order to understand the conflicting conclusions regarding the role of coordination to promote institutional diversity, the conflicting strategies and policies implemented by states may prove helpful. Despite the concerns among many constituencies, few states exhibit the capacity to engage in the development of a long-term agenda for higher education (McGuinness, 2011). Higher education leaders and policymakers often appear more focused on institutional needs rather than larger system concerns and public priorities. In his studies of the relationship between the state and higher education performance, Volkwein (1986, 1987, 1989) found that funding and size are significant factors in producing quality and productivity. While some researchers call for minimizing the barriers of regulation and state intrusion (Birnbaum, 1983; Newman, 1987), Volkwein's findings suggest that the amount of state regulation holds little influence on the academic and financial success of colleges and universities.

Conclusion

The pressures driving institutions toward homogenization demonstrate the complexity of understanding the decline in institutional diversity within American higher education. In order to preserve institutional diversity as a strength of the U.S. system, higher education leaders, policymakers, and researchers need to make efforts on a variety of the issues raised within this chapter. Previous chapters in this monograph examined the historical development and theoretical contexts useful in understanding institutional diversity. This chapter explored the three trends and policy concerns most frequently found to encourage activities and structures similar to other colleges and universities. Understanding the drive toward homogenization assists supporters of institutional diversity by explaining the reduction over the past 40 years. The range of institutional and system factors that push institutions toward activities and structures similar to other colleges and universities remains strong and will likely continue in the coming years without direct intervention to support institutional diversity.

The Future of Institutional Diversity Research and Practice

INSTITUTIONAL DIVERSITY HAS SERVED as a cornerstone and key value of American higher education since the earliest days of the colonial colleges. Although the higher education system in the United States exhibits some of the most diverse tendencies of any in the world, the steady decline of diversity over the past 40 years remains a cause for concern and presents great challenges to the historical missions of higher education. The key to understanding changes in institutional diversity rests with appreciating the external influences and institutional responses that drive change at the system level. Although decisions and changes within individual campuses may focus on the circumstances of that college, the macro influence on the system of higher education remains important for scholars and practitioners alike to understand and consider.

My goal for this monograph is to examine the institutional changes taking place in higher education, particularly as a result of the external environment. This concluding chapter concentrates on the need for institutions to focus on their mission in order to overcome the challenges caused by homogenization and thereby to preserve the long-standing strength of the U.S. system. More specifically, a clearly defined mission supports both institutional aspiration and systemic necessities. For higher education to fulfill time-honored societal functions, colleges and universities must serve a variety of learning, research, and service goals. Debates around issues such as efficiency (Cohen & Kisker, 2010), accountability (Burke, 2005; McLendon et al., 2006), and relevance

(Altbach, 2011) only intensify the need for this self-examination within the higher education system. This chapter identifies the implications and future research directions relevant for policymakers, campus leaders and administrators, faculty, and students. Institutional diversity dates to the beginning of American higher education, yet the contemporary context requires an understanding of the concept in light of the changing political, demographic, and economic realities of colleges and universities.

Market Smart *and* Mission Centered

The role and mission of higher education remained focused on the public good and social contract of providing quality academic programs, conducting and disseminating research, and engaging in public service activities until recent years (Kezar, 2004). During this time, higher education underwent change and pressure to adapt to more commercial forms and functions (Bok, 2003). For example, the growth and expansion of marketing strategies and consultants attempted to brand and influence institutional messaging (Hartley & Morphew, 2008). As noted throughout this monograph, the trends and responses to market pressures often encourage institutions to engage in isomorphic tendencies that lead to increased homogenization and a decline in institutional diversity. In this approach, revenues generated from market-based activities were used to supplement declining or unpredictable public monies. While perhaps a successful short-term strategy, the long-term implications for institutions and the American higher education system remain pronounced.

Robert Zemsky and his colleagues (Zemsky, Shaman, & Shapiro, 2001; Zemsky et al., 2005) have argued for colleges and universities to be market smart and mission centered. Simply put, Zemsky contends that institutions must strategically position themselves within the marketplace in order to generate revenue and resources that can then be used to support the core mission and key values of the college. This approach protects the mission and positively utilizes the revenue generated. Unfortunately, too many market-based strategies and programs feed their own purposes rather than larger institutional goals (Zemsky & Massy, 1995).

Many deride the damage caused by the higher education market and hope to reduce the influence and domination of the marketplace (Bok, 2003; Grubb & Lazerson, 2005; Kerr, 1994; Kezar, 2004; Kezar, Chambers, & Burkhardt, 2005; Kirp, 2003; Rhoades, 1998; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Washburn, 2005). Clark Kerr (1994), past president of the University of California and later head of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, describes the history of higher education as a constant struggle between the tensions of mission and market. In many ways, one might give credit to limited coordination and market influences for allowing and encouraging the development of a diverse system of higher education in the United States. As each institution sought to resolve the tension between mission and market within their own particular local context, colleges developed a variety of forms, functions, and structures. The challenge in recent years is how the competing external pressures have encouraged institutions to follow similar paths ultimately decreasing institutional diversity.

Within business sectors, it is commonly understood that a company strives to maximize profit. Colleges and universities do not pursue profit, at least in the traditional sense; rather, institutions seek to create margins to invest into institutional activities. Just as companies seek to maximize profit, higher education institutions should seek to maximize mission attainment. In this way, higher education institutions want to “produce as much high-quality education, research, and public service as possible given their circumstances. But like for-profit enterprises, universities are limited by the marketplace and productivity” (Zemsky et al., 2005, p. 59). For market-smart and mission-centered institutions, market activities are a means to an end rather than an end itself. This approach preserves mission as well as differentiation on both the micro and macro levels.

Policymakers

Policymakers for over a generation have increasingly implemented policies, regulations, and legislation that provided incentives for institutions to move in directions maximizing institutional gain and individual private benefit. This emphasis reduced the inherent, noneconomic value historically placed in

institutional diversity. Academic drift or mission creep, encouraged by significant deregulation within the public sector and rising institutional aspirations, occurs across all sectors and represents one of the most commonly cited causes of the decline of institutional diversity (Aldersley, 1995; Morpew & Huisman, 2002; Neave, 1979). These changes entice colleges and universities to pursue market-based strategies that favor revenue generation, prestige generation, and an expansion beyond traditional missions. Examples of this trend include the growth of doctoral degrees from institutions customarily focused on undergraduate education, the use of financial aid as a strategy in recruiting and retaining desirable students, and the overall emphasis on the research university model. State political leaders and policymakers should realize that these trends particularly put pressure on the backbone of most state higher education systems: comprehensive and regional public universities. Market-based solutions, deregulation, and reductions in state aid also hit these institutions particularly hard. State flagships, medical schools, and science and technology disciplines also stand to benefit with the increased emphasis on the knowledge economy and the growth of academic capitalism (Feller, 1990; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Thursby & Kemp, 2002).

State and federal policymakers should consider reforms and regulatory efforts that incentivize institutions to successfully achieve their particular mission and role within the broader system of higher education. For example, state funding metrics that use enrollment or graduation rates in specific majors overly focus on one aspect of higher education's mission and again place comprehensive and less selective colleges—those that particularly serve to provide opportunity for low-income and disadvantaged students—in a difficult competitive and financial position. In Florida, conservative Governor Rick Scott called for increasing funding for STEM fields by shifting monies away from disciplines that the governor perceives as having limited vocational relevance. Referring to anthropology, he said, “It’s a great degree if people want to get it. But we don’t need them here.” While many across the political spectrum from President Obama to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce call for more STEM graduates (Rotherham, 2011), setting up state funding around specific majors and vocational relevance continues an unproductive privatization movement and limits access and opportunity. Reform efforts that

encourage institutions to achieve their role within the broader higher education system not only improves the effectiveness of the overall system in achieving the full range of societal goals, but also encourages institutions to pursue those initiatives that benefit the state, students, and the higher education system rather than individual institutional aspirations. Governmental policies should also encourage institutional adoption of academic and financial strategies that rely on improving student learning outcomes rather than solely focusing on reputation, profit, and revenue generation. More specifically, relying on traditional metrics such as graduation rate may serve as great markers of institutional prestige, price, and a stronger academic profile among entering students (Zemsky et al., 2001), but fails to acknowledge those institutions that provide second and third chances for students— a value held dear in the U.S. system and serves as an important vehicle for achieving the American dream. This requires state legislators to provide more stable funding for public colleges and universities that will reduce the reliance on tuition and market strategies so heavily favored by institutional leaders in light of the overall decline of state funding as a percentage of institutional budgets over the past 20 years (Ehrenberg, 2005; McLendon & Mokher, 2009).

In addition, policy reforms at both the state and federal levels could encourage and support institutional activities outside of the traditional research university paradigm so heavily influential within postsecondary education. As an example, educational policy focused on the teaching or public service missions and valuing the specific mix of mission of colleges and universities would encourage institutions to create structures, rewards, and institutional activity in support of these other important goals. Moreover, financial and policy support in those disciplines important to developing critical thinkers and communication skills will prepare students for not only the careers and society that we have today, but also the one we will have 40 or 50 years from now. Initiatives such as those supported by the Association of American Colleges and Universities call for improving student learning in a variety of areas meaningful in developing the soft skills frequently touted by significant political and business leaders as important for the future workforce of the nation (Council of Economic Advisors, 2009). Encouraging the role of community colleges within this trend will also play a substantial role in the

overall success of any policy changes and improvements. Leveraging the potential of community colleges to serve as a source for academic preparation in those fields critical for improved success as an employee and a citizen presents a great opportunity to support the institutional type most foundational to ensuring the success of the overall higher education system in the United States. Policymakers in recent years have focused funding and expectations for community colleges on the singular mission of improving workforce training and development. While an important and necessary function, community colleges can additionally serve to drive the local economy and labor conditions rather than simply responding to the external environment.

Proprietary institutions present a significant challenge for policymakers seeking to support expanded access to higher education, increased job training, and preventing abuse of federal financial aid. For-profit institutions fill an important niche in the American higher education system offering educational opportunity to students seeking professional and market-oriented post-secondary education (Ruch, 2001). Furthermore, many for-profit universities offer a second chance for students who due to social or educational reasons were unable to participate in higher education. Despite the rapid expansion of proprietary schools, the sector has faced substantial scrutiny from Congress and regulators (Fain, 2012) as a result of recruiting scandals, high student debt default rates, and program costs. Policymakers will continue to consider ways to protect students and taxpayers while also encouraging for-profits to provide for students underserved by nonprofit higher education.

The damage caused by the Great Recession has driven many of the policy decisions related to higher education in recent years. Even before the economic downturn however, higher education financing, governance, and policymaking exhibited signs of substantial change. The long-standing social compact between government, institutions, and students (Kezar, 2004) appeared to undergo change and even substantial decline. The conservative resurgence in state houses across the country as well as the general antitax rhetoric exhibited by both political parties decreased the funding available to support higher education. The growth in spending for corrections, K–12 education, and most importantly health care have taken up a greater share of discretionary budgets (Breneman & Finney, 1997; Hovey, 1999). Despite the

rhetoric lamenting the dramatic growth of tuition costs, many political leaders deemphasized spending on higher education knowing the result of such decisions would lead to the rise of tuition. In a very real sense, the antitax positions and philosophy facilitated this trend. Rising tuition, in effect, became an increase in taxes without having to take the political hit, leaving colleges and universities left holding the bag. For their part, universities argued quite persuasively for the private benefits to students in the form of increased lifetime earnings and the economic development benefits to the local economy of the state and region. The emphasis on private benefits minimized the importance of public support and provided additional justification for a reduction of governmental and societal resources. I believe the discussion of institutional diversity in this monograph will prove useful to policymakers seeking to invest in higher education by developing a more sophisticated approach to thinking about the historical strengths of the American higher education system, particularly given the dramatic changes in the economy and information technology in coming years.

Campus Leaders and Administrators

With the causes and challenges related to increased homogenization likely to continue influencing higher education, institutional diversity will likely continue to decline, which will threaten historical institutional missions. Public institutions will likely continue to face increased pressures to privatize and support expanded academic programs in light of declining state resources. Comprehensive colleges will face recruiting challenges to maintain student enrollments and the aspirational urge to expand graduate and doctoral education. Liberal arts colleges will face enrollment and recruiting challenges while also receiving pressure to expand business, professional, and graduate education programs. Increased student consumerism and savvy parents will demand responsiveness, amenities, and services while also seeking greater alignment between academic programs and employment outcomes (Harris, 2009a). The trend pushing community colleges toward a primary focus on workforce development and eschewing other functions lets economic circumstances and labor needs drive institutional activity. Within the for-profit sector, a source

of growth of institutional types in recent years, a number of bad actors and diploma mills will likely weaken the reputation of the sector overall (Fain, 2012) and challenges with technology and scale will continue to face the industry.

This monograph provides campus leaders with the background and context essential to preserving institutional diversity within American higher education. Campus leaders, state higher education officials, and system offices would gain from understanding institutional diversity. While no leader wants to stand and argue for the historical status quo, new initiatives and innovations should be considered within the context of historical purposes and missions of the institution. Lofty institutional rhetoric without considering traditional functions within the higher education system should be avoided. Instead, market-based strategies and innovations should include specific actionable recommendations for how new approaches can benefit and indeed strengthen the institution's role in the higher education system. Second, college leaders should limit the degree to which program expansion is incentivized as institutional reward structures can focus on areas outside of the college's primary functions. Understanding both the system of higher education and the institution's specific role in providing a well-balanced diverse higher education system should remain at the forefront of institutional decision making. An appreciation of the history and context of the increasing marginalization in higher education and the declining degree of institutional diversity within the system provides institutional leaders a more comprehensive view of higher education's strengths and values.

I have presented the benefits of institutional diversity for students, colleges, and society in attempts to contextualize the broader discourse currently prevalent within higher education regarding institutional aspiration, prestige, and deregulation. Campus leaders under seemingly constant attack for inefficiency, a lack of accountability, increasing costs, and a lack of student learning may see reputational factors and less regulation as a potential strategy to gain enrollment, revenue, and political support. However, as many institutions attempting to pursue the lucrative oasis of online education learned, no single strategy proves to be a panacea. The University of California spent millions of dollars on an online education program that has enrolled virtually

no students (Asimov, 2013). Instead, the goal for institutional activity should be linking new and innovative approaches within the context of the historical value the institution has played within the system. The teaching, research, and service functions of institutions when considered in this vein form stronger and more effective grounds on which to build the institution's future. As a result, careful strategic planning with a variety of internal and external stakeholders allows an institution to chart a course into the future while recognizing its important role from the past and the necessity of building a strong diverse higher education system.

In order to more fully understand how changes in the higher education environment and institutional strategy influence the degree of institutional diversity present, more empirical research is needed. Better data would improve our understanding of how institutional approaches to the changing political, economic, and social environment may result in greater homogenization. This research would complement the existing literature addressing the increased influence of the higher education marketplace as well as privatization. Studies exploring how changes in institutional mission shape institutional diversity would also benefit scholars and practitioners. For example, colleges and universities seek to expand into new student markets to increase enrollment and stabilize finances. In particular, the growth of graduate education programs often presents an institutional advantage for improving enrollment, financing, and a better utilization of campus facilities for evening, weekend, and online models. Empirical research considering how these strategies move institutions in directions either complementary or contradictory to their traditional role within the higher education system would benefit campus leaders as well as policymakers. By increasing the understanding of the ways that institutional strategy reduces the overall strength of the system, campus leaders and administrators will benefit in negotiating between the traditional mission and new initiatives.

While many of the strategies employed by colleges across a variety of institutional types have improved or stabilized the academic and financial position of the college, the increased marginalization of long-standing values and missions at both the campus and system levels presents an ongoing risk as higher education continues to confront current environmental challenges. Additional

research to understand those programs and disciplines most susceptible to environmental pressures and likely to lead the institution away from its place within the higher education system would improve the practice of academic administration by identifying specific areas within the institution that warrant additional oversight.

Faculty

Among the various constituencies within higher education, faculty are perhaps in the role benefiting the most from a decline of institutional diversity. To be sure, faculty received great blame for increasing costs and failures of inefficiency. For their part, faculty respond to their experience largely based in elite education settings with training in research universities. Faculty structures and reward systems encourage this tendency by recognizing research productivity above other types of faculty work (Fairweather, 2000). Institutions that move toward the research university model and growing prestige may lead to increased faculty autonomy, reduced teaching loads, and increases in graduate education. Empirical research should explore institutions that made the change to implement a research university model and how this change impacts faculty work. Faculty hold great affiliation to their discipline over their home institution and may support or foster changes in institutional behavior and strategy that places the institution more in line with “leaders” in the field. Just as campus leaders and administrators desire greater prestige and aspirations, many faculty harbor similar hopes in the benefits that may result.

As much as faculty may look toward business strategies as providing additional benefits to their academic work, many often lament how the same strategies cause institutions to focus less on traditional core educational values, instead favoring the pursuit of prestige, rankings, and new sources of funding. In many ways, the faculty argument demonstrates how “they want to have their cake and to eat it, too.” As much as faculty play the important and critical role in protecting and maintaining the academic integrity of the institution, they must also play a greater and more substantial role as protectors of institutional mission as well. Faculty can demonstrate the importance of

traditional mission by supporting those initiatives most valuable within their respective institutional type. For example, faculty can reemphasize the teaching mission or public service role often left behind in the pursuit of academic entrepreneurship. Across higher education, faculty will likely continue to engage in entrepreneurial pursuits at the behest of their campus administrators and their own personal aspirations. Faculty hold a unique role as the designers and implementers of academic work to ensure the larger social orientation of teaching, research, and service (Mars & Metcalfe, 2009). Faculty can operationalize these values in a variety of faculty-run structures, most notably the tenure and promotion process.

The ability to promote additional views of academic entrepreneurship and institutional aspiration that value new sources of market success and revenue as well as the traditional social and public contract of higher education will prove important in maintaining the strength of the overall higher education system. Professors individually and collectively can convey support for structures, forms, and rewards that value the traditional purposes of the institution. By valuing these historical missions, faculty can encourage their institutions to play their unique role within their institutional type and subsequently within the higher education system, thereby preserving institutional diversity's strengths and benefits.

Additional research should examine the ways that faculty engage and conceptualize their work contextualized within the institution, its unique mission, and the pressures of the marketplace. Although research has explored the concerns surrounding the implications of the market in higher education, theoretical and empirical study on how faculty are engaging in this work and how it may benefit both market and mission activities would provide a new base for understanding this topic. This research strand could explore how organizational factors, disciplinary influence, and faculty background and training impact faculty and institutional work. Moreover, this line of inquiry would provide a more holistic and empirically informed perspective to the debates around the role of faculty as a cause for the decline of institutional diversity. Many of the current debates around this topic are informed more by stereotypes of faculty work than well-informed understandings of academic norms, values, and activities.

Students

Despite the oft-cited benefit of institutional diversity in providing students a variety of options for pursuing higher education, the research literature examining the implications of changes in institutional diversity on students remains limited. In particular, research should explore student expectations and how the diversity present in a system meets the desires and expectations of students. For example, the cause-and-effect relationship between student expectations and desires for postsecondary education options and the opportunities available in the system remain largely unexplored. Additionally, how does increased consumerism influence the expectation of students for higher education opportunity to meet their individual goals both personally and professionally? Within the competitive marketplace of higher education, understanding institutional strategy and aspirations and how these influence institutional diversity in the higher education system remains critical. More research is needed to understand changes in enrollment and recruiting of students and how these may be privileging certain segments of the student population as well as particular institutions. How do institutional recruiting practices influence student enrollment and the perception of the opportunities available for postsecondary study? How do these images and messages influence a variety of external constituencies?

Furthermore, exploring how changes in the student population as well as the college search process influence students' pursuit of higher education would contribute to the research literature. One important aspect, particularly for state governments and state higher education systems, is in understanding how changes in students and college search influence the migration of students between states. A diverse higher education system is touted for the ability to keep students in state by providing a range of higher education offerings, but empirical testing of this assumption remains underdeveloped.

The debate within higher education regarding the utility and influence of university rankings continues with some questioning whether the trend will continue to push institutions towards the prestigious research university model leading to a continued decline in institutional diversity (Marginson, 2006). To put it simply, if the trend toward emphasizing the private benefits

of higher education and student consumerism continues largely unabated, will institutions continue to implement strategies and initiatives to meet student demands in similar isomorphic ways? Understanding how these trends will influence institutions and ultimately the opportunities available in a system of higher education remains one of the essential questions facing the future of higher education.

Conclusion

Institutional diversity has been a leading value and strength since the earliest founding of colleges and universities in the United States. The diverse system of higher education developed in response to a variety of uniquely American ideals and beliefs shaping our postsecondary opportunities and our society. Despite the challenges facing colleges and universities and a decline of institutional diversity in recent years, the U.S. system of higher education remains one of the most diversified systems in the world. The institutions that make up our education system provide opportunity for students from a variety of social and academic backgrounds and in many ways reflect the diversity of our country.

This monograph provides an overview of the research examining institutional diversity and can serve as a foundation for additional research necessary to understanding changes and challenges to institutional diversity in the future. The American higher education system is certainly not perfect and has room to improve, innovate, and invest. However, in these efforts, we should not and we must not lose one of the great historical strengths of the system. Improving postsecondary opportunity, particularly among marginalized groups, as well as supporting the economy and nation in light of globalization and the knowledge economy, remain important goals for higher education to achieve in this century. Increased empirical research on institutional diversity and asking tough questions regarding institutional strategy and aspirations remain essential to preserving and strengthening American higher education. Researchers must be cognizant of both the historical missions of higher education and the real economic and political challenges facing campuses and institutional leadership. A considerable gap in our knowledge regarding best

practices and theoretical implications for resolving this critical tension remains. Additional research, given the neoliberal regime currently in place, should explore these issues and provide greater information and answers to individual institutions, students, states, systems of higher education, the federal government, and society.

The arena of institutional diversity presents a substantial opportunity for scholars to improve higher education research. With the changing economic circumstances and demographics of the country, providing a strong higher education system will in many ways necessitate a greater degree of institutional diversity. Higher education systems that are able to meet students with a variety of skills, talents, and socioeconomic backgrounds will be best positioned to succeed in the 21st century. Research examining institutional diversity in the coming decades will prove significant in the future and ongoing success of colleges and universities. The historical advantage that higher education has offered to the United States relied greatly upon the benefits of institutional diversity. Understanding how to strengthen and preserve this key strength presents one of the greatest challenges and opportunities facing American higher education.

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