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Witch-Hunting at Crucible University: The Power and Peril of Competing Organizational Ideologies

"Cleave to no faith when faith brings blood."
    – Arthur Miller, *The Crucible*

Considerable research over the past two decades focuses on the influence of organizational culture in a variety of institutional settings (Ashkanasy, Wilderom, & Peterson, 2000; Schein, 1985; Trice & Beyer, 1993), including higher education (Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Tierney, 1988, 1992).[1] The salutary effects of shared beliefs and values in an organization, such as greater institutional alignment and efficiency (Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Trice & Beyer, 1993) and increased satisfaction in work and commitment to the organization and its expressed purposes (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Kanter, 1972; Kets de Vries, 2001) have received particular emphasis in the literature. However, collective beliefs and behaviors that coalesce into a shared worldview, that is, an ideology (Abravanel, 1983; Geertz, 1964), can cast a dark shadow on institutional life. On the one hand, a strong ideology can guide and regulate institutional behavior and instill in people a sense of belonging (Kanter, 1972; Pratt, 2000). Ideology can provide the impetus for productive change among

a group of adherents (Hartley, 2003; Kezar & Eckel, 2002). However, strong ideologies also hold the capacity to alienate and even demonize those who fail to conform (Hartley, 2002). Simply put, heartfelt commitment can, in certain circumstances, devolve into narrow zealotry.

In this article, we describe the divisive capacity of organizational ideologies through the analysis of an institutional case study of a college where, over time, the senior faculty and the president grew alienated and ultimately antagonistic toward one another. In the events that unfolded, no clear assignment of blame is possible. What is important, rather, is the sense that participants within the organization made of these events. The pattern that unfolded at Crucible University[2] conforms to the concept of organizational witch-finding or witch-hunting (Lutz, 1986), where the meaning of events is constructed by a group in order to assign blame and purge an undesirable element.

Universities often are viewed as organizations steeped in strong values and shaped by their internal cultures (Dill, 1982; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Tierney, 1988). Where a particularly strong culture exists, some members may come to hold very strong—even absolutist—beliefs regarding the enterprise. However, cultures are not monolithic. Even in organizations with strong cultures, subcultures often exist (Trice & Beyer, 1993). The witch-hunting framework highlights organizational dynamics that can occur when subcultures devolve into factions and collide (Ouchi, 1980; Wilkins & Ouchi, 1983). Crucible University, the site of the empirical analysis featured in this article, is a case that richly illustrates the capacity of disparate ideologies to fracture a single organization when they form. The study offers insights into how this process can occur and what might be done to alleviate such tensions before a witch hunt unfolds.

Literature Review

Much of the literature on organizational culture in higher education assumes an integrationist perspective where culture is a point of consensus and consistency around shared values, beliefs, and norms within the institution (Tierney, 1988). Community members are socialized to the culture and the supposition that the variation among groups within the organization is small (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). A shared sense of institutional meaning and purpose binds members together (Collins & Porras, 1994; Hartley, 2002; Tierney, 1988). Individuals affiliated with organizations that have strong cultures may come to view them as something more than a mere place of employment (Clark, 1972). Such a shared identity influences organizational behavior (for example, though

a greater sense of commitment) and conveys a sense of meaning and belonging.

Competing perspectives of organizational culture highlight the role of subcultures which can have quite divergent values and interests (Martin, 2002; Sackmann, 1992). Subcultures may form around hierarchical rank or occupational position. In universities, the disparate histories and epistemological assumptions of various academic disciplines cause them to operate as independent "tribes" (Becher, 1989). Each institution is therefore comprised of many communities of practice, each of whom attribute their own meaning and purpose to organizational mission and activity. Such divisions are often tellingly revealed during times of crisis (Meyer, 1982). Of course, diverse perspectives not only enrich institutional life, they have been shown to contribute to better decision-making, ensuring that ideas are vetted and contested (Hammond, Keeney, & Raiffa, 2001) but differences may also contribute to conflict. Sometimes the source of that conflict appears obvious as when groups compete for scarce resources. However, conflict also arises over divergent opinions about what meaning to make about events. The process of sensemaking during times of crisis (Weick, 1988) presents special challenges and may lead individuals (and groups) to construct entirely dissimilar views, ones that may place the groups sharply at odds with one another. Thus, the interplay between subcultures can serve as a powerful influence within the institution (Martin, 1992; Van Maanen & Barley, 1985) either bringing groups together or driving them apart.

When an organization's culture (its shared norms and values) evolves into a complex belief system about "how and why we do things around here," it can be said to constitute an ideology. Ideologies are "relatively coherent sets of beliefs that bind people together and explain their worlds" (Beyer, 1981, p. 161). They "legitimize certain actions, render other actions heretical, evoke historical reinterpretations, and create meanings for events that have yet to occur" (Meyer, 1982, p. 47). Strong ideologies can circumvent formal institutional structures (such as established policies) and dictate an institution's response, particularly during a crisis (Meyer, 1982). The ability of ideology to provide cultural identity and rationalize individual commitment to a larger purpose provides "a powerful means of unity" (Clark, 1972, p. 183). However, the dark side of an ideology is the potential of becoming pathological.

The study of organizational pathology examines how beliefs and values of individuals play a role in destabilizing organizations and adversely impacting their performance (Harrison, 1972; Kets de Vries & Miller, 1984). Individuals that make up an organization bring with

them a host of strengths and weaknesses, assets and dysfunctional traits. When a guiding coalition embraces positive and productive values, organizations flourish (Kotter, 1996). When the characteristics of such a group are dysfunctional, the very future of the institution may be imperiled (as events at Arthur Anderson, WorldCom and Enron have underscored in recent years.) Kersten (2001) calls for organizational pathology studies that can "be helpful by providing systematic examinations of these phenomena … [including] the structural and ideological factors considered by critical theorists" (p. 464). Few such studies exist in describing such dynamics in the higher education governance and management literature.

Organizational Witch-Hunting

When human societies find themselves facing a difficult crisis, particularly in circumstances where either the nature of the danger or possible solutions are unclear, one pathological response is to look for a resolution to the crisis within the social-system itself—to seek out a person (or perhaps persons) who can be held responsible for the problem, to force blame upon them and then expunge them in hopes of resolving the situation. Simply put, creating a scapegoat. A functionalist approach views the witch hunt as "serving certain 'useful' functions such as the alleviation of anxiety, integration, and the creation of cohesion" (Ben-Yehuda, 1980, p. 7). In addition, Rutherford (1999) notes that anthropological discussions in recent years regarding witch-hunting view the act as a response to "wider social forces of state domination, capitalistic commoditization, and even modernity itself" (p. 91). (For further detail see Comaroff & Comaroff, 1993.) The "organizational witch hunt" described by Lutz (1988) involves the social dynamics of first searching out the source of "witchcraft" (or heretical and harmful behavior), conducting some sort of trial where the collective can see the evidence of guilt, and then the casting out of the offender from the group. Lutz (1988) defines "witchcraft" in this context as "an extreme and consistent violation of the norms of the informal organization" (p. 330). The central feature of witchcraft, therefore, is not the use of magic or trafficking with dark powers but a flagrant disregard of the accepted pattern of life for the convenience or benefit of the "witch." Since breaking accepted norms invites "ill luck" for the group (put another way it has the potential to destabilize it), a witch can be understood as someone who holds his or her interests above that of the community.[3] Therefore, when a witch is discovered, he or she must either come back into proper harmony with the group or be prepared for confrontation and expulsion.

Groups may attempt to discover which person (or persons) are covertly engaging in proscribed behavior in an effort to mitigate further danger to the community. When a culprit is suspected, those seeking to assign blame often do so in a manner calculated to influence communal consensus regarding the character or morality of the suspected offender. Innuendo and suspicion drive such events. In witch hunts, the consensus itself—the collective meaning making about events—becomes the evidence that convicts. Though individual incidents of this sort may look somewhat different at various moments in history, the basic tenets of the behavior are strikingly similar. As Lutz pointedly notes, witch-hunting exist today in much the same form as more-distant historical examples such as McCarthyism or the Salem trials.

Crucible University

The case presented here describes a witch hunt at Crucible University, a small, private faith-based college. The crisis came to a head after it was learned that Crucible's president agreed to an alteration in the grade point average of a star athlete, which allowed him to continue to play. This action spurred a subsequent confrontation by a group of influential senior faculty members who were deeply concerned about this precedent and its effect on academic integrity.

A deeper examination of events, however, reveals that the incident exposed long-standing tensions that had developed at the institution regarding its future direction. The case describes the formation and details the responses of two influential ideological camps, both of which sought to root out the cause of the institution's ill fortune by demonizing and neutralizing the other. Each group was influenced by a larger organizational culture, one that valued the faith-based mission of the institution and its claim to uphold and advance the highest standards of ethical behavior. However, the two factions came to very different opinions about how to best accomplish this and advance the interests of the institution moving forward. The resulting escalation demonstrates how poisonous invective and rigid dogmatism can damage even the most well-meaning academic community.

Crucible came to our attention when a colleague who worked at the institution happened to relate some of the details of the impending crisis to one of us (Harris). Neither of us had any prior relationship with the university. While our contact was of great help assisting us negotiate access with administrators and faculty leaders, he was not a key player in the events. Initially, our intent was to create a brief case that might be used for instructional purposes. We quickly became convinced, how-

ever, that we had uncovered what Patton (1990) describes as an "information-rich" case (p. 169). The following three questions informed our inquiry at Crucible University:

1. How did various members of the Crucible community (e.g., administrators, staff, and faculty members) make sense of the contentious events that unfolded?
2. How were the two dominant subgroups created and what were their disparate characteristics and beliefs that formed the basis of their guiding ideologies?
3. In what way did the emergence of two distinct belief systems influence the university's response to this crisis?

Methods

As Edgar Schein (1996) has noted, the literature on organizational culture needs more richly detailed case studies that reveal how norms and values influence the workings of organizations. Given the complexity of this phenomenon, and absence of empirical work on the negative implications of organizational ideology, we employed qualitative methods. Data gathering began by identifying an initial subset of individuals that could provide a range of perspectives on the events that were unfolding given their disparate roles on campus (i.e., administrators, staff, and faculty members.) After developing a working understanding of what was occurring, we developed our interview protocols. One of us (Harris) visited campus and conducted the 21 interviews for this study, which included eight faculty members (junior and senior), seven administrators, three students, and three community leaders. The length of service at the institution ranged from two years to nearly 30 years with most having worked there approximately 15 years. We sought to identify individuals with a range of perspectives regarding the events based on their various roles on campus. Crucible relies on the surrounding community for support and students leading us to interview the three community members. With the exception of the board of trustees (which we could not secure permission to contact), all of the key constituent groups at Crucible were interviewed.

We employed a semistructured interview protocol (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) asking each individual to describe their own understanding of how events had unfolded, to relate their own perceptions of events, to reflect on the roles that various individuals played, and to offer their thoughts on the implications of the crisis for the institution. Each interview lasted approximately an hour and early accounts were cross-

checked during subsequent interviews, an example of the "overlap method" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In essence, the intent of the protocol was to understand the events and perceptions of various participants in order for us to understand the efficacy of the witch-hunting framework. Additional names were solicited from each participant, a variation of the snowballing or chain technique (Bogdan & Bilken, 1992; Patton, 1990).

One of the challenges of conducting this kind of study is the reticence of potential participants. The contentious nature of the events made many participants concerned about confidentiality. A number of individuals insisted that the institution be disguised as a condition for their participation, which we agreed to do. Despite the fact that only one administrator was eventually relieved of duty, several participants expressed fears of reprisal if their opinions, which were contrary to their perception of the administration's "party line," were to become known. Harris assured participants (sometimes repeatedly) that no quotes would be used for attribution. At least two participants asked whether the researcher intended to feed the information to the media. Seven of the 21 interviewees asked not to be audiotaped and several of these asked to meet at off-campus locations for the interview. Extensive field notes were taken during the interviews not recorded providing data to analyze along with documents and transcriptions.

Institutional documents and media accounts provided an important additional source of data (Erikson, 1986, p. 240). These materials included institutional and widely disseminated internal memoranda as well as private documents and correspondence (provided by participants) that were not readily available to the public. These sources not only confirmed much of the information learned through the interview process, but also provided additional insight into the views of members as events were unfolding. Notes were taken during each interview; at the conclusion of the day, the interviewer made extensive field notes based on observations and notes from the interviews. The audio taped interviews were transcribed and stored electronically.

The two primary modes of data analysis were (a) searching for patterns by comparing results with patterns identified in the literature on organizational culture and (b) examining findings for other possible conclusions of the events in order to build the case (Yin, 1994). We followed Merriam's (2001) discussion of analyzing data with data reduction and interpretation by coding to identify broad concepts and themes that emerged to paint a broad picture for our audience. Consistent with Strauss and Corbin (1990), coding into categories assisted in identifying the important categories and themes that our research uncovered. We

were particularly concerned with clearly understanding how participants fell into the two camps and how this process occurred. Although participants made sense of the events in striking different ways, there was substantial agreement about what actually occurred. This is perhaps not surprising since Crucible is of the size that most of the key players (administrators, staff, and faculty) know each other well. It is not a large, complex university.

The Crucible University Case

Crucible University is a private, faith-based institution located in a rural area in the Mid-Atlantic region. The institution enrolls fewer than 3,000 students and has a small graduate population. Many of the university's students come from the region and a substantial proportion come from the local area. Crucible's mission aims to shape both the minds and values of its students by upholding "Judeo-Christian" values, especially ethical conduct of the highest order. The educational mission is embraced by the university's faculty and administrators, and is a key draw for many students. (Indeed, the notion of "upholding" or "honoring" Judeo-Christian values proved a constant refrain when speaking with members of the Crucible community.) As one staff member put it, "I feel like it's important that, as a Christian university, we can have an impact on our kids." Though it takes its faith-based mission seriously, Crucible is not fundamentalist. The institution's admissions materials describe its education as "grounded in the liberal arts" and one that "encourages intellectual thought, critical analysis, and spiritual growth within a diverse community of learners."

In the mid-1980s, Crucible was adrift. This was in due to "a combination maybe of poor leadership on the part of [the former president] and the country's general economic stagnation" as one senior faculty member explained. Then, President Samuel Parris arrived. An often aloof and hard-driving man, Parris took Crucible on as a personal cause. Prior to his arrival, Crucible had struggled for years. Many years prior it had gone from a two-year to a four-year institution. Teaching a local, commuter population remained its core purpose and there was scant attention paid to research or graduate education. During Parris' tenure, both the physical campus and the aspirations of Crucible's faculty and staff were transformed. As one long-time faculty member explained:

> Dr. Parris played a huge role in transforming this school from a two-year college to a four-year college. When he came here, it was already a four-year college but it still had a two-year mentality on the part of a lot of the

staff, business office folks, and the faculty. The faculty did not get sabbaticals and we did not offer what I would call a university education. He did a big job—a great job, really—in transforming the campus.

Some of President Parris' early initiatives included the successful development of a range of profitable masters degree programs, the expansion of the development office and a growth in fundraising, and renovations to Crucible's business school. Such efforts over time helped the institution regain its financial footing. As the dean of academic affairs pointedly noted, "our situation improved rather dramatically."

Parris then began to give greater attention to Crucible's academic mission. During this time a number of people on campus came to view the President as a "visionary micro-manager." Parris not only believed he knew in which direction the Promised Land lay, he was also intent on ensuring that each and every wagon in the caravan moved forward simultaneously and briskly. A strong supporter of President Parris pointed to this resolve and compared him with another prominent, strong-willed leader of a faith-based institution of higher education:

> I think Dr. Parris was a visionary. He was similar to Dr. Jerry Falwell in that way. They both could see the big picture and the importance of dreaming and thinking big. The big thing Dr. Parris did … he was willing to put the steps to those visions and make changes. I know that style of leader is obviously at some times going to open himself up for criticism because a lot of people want things to stay status quo. They don't want to see improvement and don't want to see change.

Parris held substantial control over the day-to-day decisions of the institution, including activities such as selecting the furniture and pictures placed in the admissions office. As one dean explained, "[Parris] would be the one overseeing everything. For example, a vice president could not change the offices of where staff members sat without his approval— it was a bit unusual."

President Parris consistently asserted that Crucible needed to take seriously the competition for better students, faculty, and resources. He worked tirelessly to improve the physical infrastructure of the campus. A successful fundraiser and a fiscally sharp and driven manager, he dramatically improved the financial picture of the university. Within a few years Crucible's reputation regionally began to improve. The institution had great success recruiting more academically talented students. A restless Parris argued that Crucible should not rest on its laurels. Such a prodigious effort began to exact a toll. While administrators and faculty

alike had readily embraced a vision of renewed excellence, some began to question the sort of "excellence" Crucible ought to seek. After all, hadn't the university served a worthy purpose for years offering a caring environment and a well-rounded and spiritually anchored education for its students? What were the rightful markers of progress?

Witchcraft. President Parris began to set his sights on a goal that he felt would serve as the very pinnacle of Crucible's rise: becoming an NCAA Division I institution. As one supporter of the president explained, "he felt like that was the next progressive move for the institution" because the move would set Crucible apart from many of its regional peers. Becoming Division I would be the jewel in university's crown, a source of distinction and pride. Parris was relentless in his competition with other institutions. He wanted not only to win athletically, but also to best them in terms of the number and breadth of graduate programs offered and in faculty and staff salaries. A senior administrator explained how Parris saw these various goals as linked:

> He would look at how our salaries were at the bottom, and he would set a goal to move those salaries up. … Now what we would be forced to do is improve those salaries so that we could get those faculty members that not only wanted to teach at a more regional based institution, but one that's a Division 1 school. I honestly think he saw that as being an institution-wide move to be made.

Some faculty members began to privately question Parris' dream. Was this a shrewd bit of strategic positioning or merely an expression of personal vanity? They were particularly concerned about the expense of the transition. The faculty was also left out of any major discussions regarding the decision. Some faculty members accepted the situation at face value. As one explained, "I don't really know about the funding. Of course, we're never involved in that— that's considered a trustee matter." Another professor, however, reflecting a sentiment held by others, quipped that Parris's chief desire was to "see the university's name scroll through the sports ticker at the bottom of ESPN." University finance officers estimated that a move to Division I would require an increase in annual athletic expenditures of between three and four million dollars to meet NCAA requirements.

From the viewpoint of other faculty members, Parris made the decision to move forward with little evident analysis and no discussion or debate. Even his supporters acknowledged Parris' actions were unilateral. As an administrator clarified, "I don't want to sit here and mislead and say that there was a lot of input from other people. I don't think

that was ever really the case. … He was the president and he felt like this was what was going to help us." In the ensuing months the football stadium was expanded to nearly double its previous size. Financial aid, in the form of additional sports scholarships, was reallocated to attract new athletic talent. Unfortunately, the change in policy occurred at precisely the time that the arts and sciences were being pressured to grow their enrollments. An academic dean detailed the challenges stating, "Our budgets in academics were not going up and we needed the extra money—for more students, more phone calls, more packets to mail out, more files to take care of and all of that." Meanwhile, an athletic leviathan was growing before their eyes. Many faculty members could see the construction cranes at the football stadium from their office windows. When news of discontent reached him, Parris dismissed it as the grousing of a few faculty naysayers unwilling to make the sacrifice necessary to lift Crucible from its current obscurity and secure the institution's future. It was at this point that the faculty began to exhibit, what one described, as "extreme unhappiness with his leadership style." The fires of discontent were already smoldering long before a particular crisis fanned them into a conflagration.

Witch-finding. Several years later in the early fall, one of Crucible's star athletes learned that he was in trouble academically. He had failed a course the previous year and had retaken it the following semester hoping to do better. His faculty academic advisor told him that doing so would allow him to replace the "F" with a higher grade (what turned out to be a "C.") However, this proved to be inconsistent with the school's written policy. A student could retake a course but all grades would be factored into the grade point average. The athlete's GPA was so close to dipping below academic eligibility that not replacing the "F" meant the difference between playing and sitting on the sidelines. When the student's advisor learned of his error, he went to the athletic director (AD) extremely apologetic for the mistake. However, he remained adamant that despite his error, university policy clearly indicated that the player would be ineligible. The athletics department, he recalled, "was pretty upset." Indignant, the AD brought the issue to President Parris. Recalling the meeting, the AD stated that he had approached the president about the advisor's error and argued that "out of fairness" an exception should be granted. After all, had the student known the grade would not be substituted he might have done other things to ensure he remained academically eligible (presumably study harder or take an additional course.) Following the meeting, the president directed the registrar to change how the athlete's grade point average was calculated, thereby making him academically eligible to play.

Soon thereafter, Dean of Academic Affairs John Proctor learned of the president's decision. He was outraged. Recalling the events later he explained, "I was extremely, extremely upset about this. My first impulse was I'm going to resign if the president wouldn't change his mind. I was furious with him. I really felt betrayed in the matter in which this had come about." Proctor, who had been a star baseball player at the university during his undergraduate years, firmly believed that athletics was an important dimension of the Crucible experience, but one ultimately ancillary to the academic mission. As Proctor contended, "I have a picture in my office with me and my teammates from forty years ago. They couldn't paint me as anti-athletics. But this decision was against everything I believe in. I couldn't be dismissed as just an anti-athletics faculty member." Proctor confronted Parris. However, the president waved aside his concerns, reminding the dean that the grade change was one of many appeals that crossed his desk every day and that in his judgment the case for changing the grade had real merit. Proctor remained unconvinced and he left the meeting believing that ultimately the president's actions constituted hero-worshipping of a star athlete plain and simple and that Parris' desire for "the athletics [department] to like him" had superseded his commitment to academic integrity.

The more he pondered the decision, the more Dean Proctor became convinced that the president's agenda for change had become so single-mindedly focused on athletics that it was fatally flawed. During the past several years, Proctor had tried to spark debate about institutional priorities and questioned the large expense of moving to a Division I school during senior staff meetings. However, his concerns fell on increasingly deaf ears. He saw the rest of the senior administrative team as "a bunch of yes men." He explained, "In the nine years I was on senior staff, when I took issue with the president, which I did on occasion, not once in nine years did any other member of the senior staff side with me against the president. … I had to suffer under that regime for quite a while." Indeed, the senior administrative team unquestioningly supported the president's efforts, convinced that his actions were moving Crucible forward. Several administrators viewed Proctor's occasional "rants" as "puzzling" and gradually learned to ignore them.

During the semester following the president's decision to approve the change in the athlete's GPA, the administration learned that the NCAA's compliance office was mounting an investigation of Crucible's athletic department. The NCAA investigation initially began by probing concerns over a recruiting violation in another sport. However, when Proctor learned of the investigation, he felt that the opportunity was ripe to raise the issue of the grade change in order to ensure that the universi-

ties policies were clarified and that they reflected a commitment to academic integrity.

Proctor began by gathering together "a group of the most respected academicians on the campus." His goal for the group was to "deal with this before the NCAA comes." Some members of the group had a longstanding and very good working relationship with the president. A number of them had supported and applauded his efforts to expand the graduate programs. When the group met, Proctor told them about the president's decision to change the star athlete's GPA. He argued that Crucible was in a "dire situation"—materially because of the impending NCAA investigation and morally because Parris had wantonly violated core institutional values by sacrificing integrity on the altar of athletic success. As one faculty member recalled, at the end of the meeting, "We were all unanimous that we had to address the situation immediately." One suggested that they take a scriptural approach to resolving the situation by meeting with the president, laying out their concerns, seeking his repentance and reconciliation. Quoting the New Testament he explained,

> If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. … If he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or tax collector.

Such a meeting would provide an opportunity to not only address that particular decision but to air what became a growing set of grievances about the president's autocratic leadership style. The group scheduled a time for all concerned faculty to meet with the president the following Monday.

Two Trials. On the scheduled day of the meeting, the story of the impending NCAA investigation was leaked to the local newspaper. (The source of the leak was never revealed.) It immediately became the lead story. The article also stated that Crucible's faculty was scheduled to meet with President Parris that afternoon to "discuss issues involving the athletic department." Seeing that the newspaper account had characterized the meeting as some sort of showdown, the group of senior faculty members met with President Parris that morning to explain that their intentions had been to engage in a collegial discussion about events. They were met, however, by what one faculty member described as an "angry and shocked" Parris who, although uncommunicative, seemed not at all inclined to back down. News that something momen-

tous was at hand began to spread. By the time the meeting convened that afternoon, the auditorium was filled to near capacity. The meeting opened with some confusion regarding the specifics of the athletic department issues. A professor from the group who approached the president who attended the meeting described the scene:

> It was very difficult. There were several faculty members there that knew nothing of what was going on. They had not even read the paper. I think we could have done a better job of giving them some background. I really can't estimate how many knew. The rumor mill had been flying. Most people had read the newspaper, but some had not.

President Parris arrived, walked calmly to the front of the room and took charge of the meeting. Rather than directly addressing the issue of the NCAA investigation or his decision to sanction the change in how the star student athlete's GPA was calculated, Parris instead offered some personal reflections alluding to several Biblical examples of forgiveness. He asked the faculty to think carefully and rationally about how Crucible University might best move productively forward. He ended his comments by conceding, "I'm very human and humans tend to do things that are not right." He then calmly left the meeting.

Proctor did not moderate the meeting, as was customary; because he felt it would be inappropriate for him to "prosecute the case and chair the meeting." However, when the president chose to leave it became clear there would be no dialogue. Therefore, Proctor rose and began to carefully outline the case against Parris presenting evidence by placing the student's transcript on an overhead projector and showing it before and after the change. He displayed the pertinent academic policy on calculating grades that had been violated. Proctor then argued that Parris had violated the most sacred trust of any community of scholars, academic integrity. He had run roughshod over clearly written policies—ones endorsed by the faculty—in order to keep a star player in the game and keep Crucible's team competitive. Parris had also lied about the propriety of his actions. The President had no authority to circumvent written policy. By doing so he had violated the university's honor code. When Proctor stepped down, three other senior faculty rose to endorse Proctor's case against the president. They were followed by two faculty members who argued that even if the president had perhaps made mistakes, he had not wantonly done anything unethical or immoral. Another faculty member suggested that the views of the two were suspect and implied they were Parris partisans because they held primarily administrative appointments. The meeting spiraled into confusion. Many fac-

ulty were uncertain how best to proceed. One later said to Proctor, "I'm behind you 100 percent, but I understand the president's side too. It's really hard." Much of the discussion centered on reviewing the details of what had occurred and debating the president's authority or lack of authority to make such a change.

Finally, a vote was taken. A faculty participant described the dynamics of the meeting: "It was not a unanimous vote, by any means. We were there for quite a while. There was a great deal of give and take. There was an anger on the part of – some felt they had not been given enough notice." The final vote supported a resolution expressing no confidence in the president's leadership by a margin of 89-47. Some of the faculty members voting against the motion were not unsympathetic to the concerns being raised, however they were distressed that there was insufficient time for reflection. Given the eminence and influence of the senior faculty members arguing in favor of a vote of no confidence, some faculty found themselves unwilling to speak up in support of the president or even in favor of delaying the vote in favor of more deliberation. Berating those who were still undecided one faculty member asserted, "You can admire somebody who stands up for what he or she believes is right, but to sit on the fence on an issue like this?"

Proctor later maintained that the changed GPA fiasco was only a part of the decision that led to the no confidence vote; concerns over the institution's direction and leadership style were the major contributing factors. As a faculty member reflected, "Because of his leadership style, I believed that Dr. Parris would eventually get himself into the kind of trouble he couldn't get out of." Another professor supported the no confidence vote for reasons echoed by others at the meeting, "Yes, he's visionary and has helped the university, but he also has a sense of self that places him above everyone else." One professor went so far as to state that if the vote had been taken before the news of the NCAA investigation, it would probably have been "50-50." Interestingly, in an acknowledgement of the authority of Parris and his ongoing influence on campus, many individuals on both sides of the issue believed that a strong and unequivocal apology by him could have thwarted the effort to remove him from office. That was not to be.

The fault lines on campus became clear in the days following the vote of no confidence. Senior administrators on the president's cabinet and several deans and department chairs came out strongly in support of Parris. Two days later the morning edition of the local newspaper characterized the position of the board with a front-page, banner headline, "Trustees support Parris," which was accompanied by a brief story

referencing a public statement written by the board chair. Although the board expressed its full confidence in the president's leadership, they indicated in a press release that "they would begin a full and thorough investigation of all allegations and the actions that had been taken in the faculty meeting." The board also apologized to the athlete and his family for any embarrassment caused him by the recent allegations. The following day the trustees hired a law firm to begin an investigation.

The senior faculty who had raised the concerns and later championed the no confidence vote was incredulous when they heard of the trustees' apparent unequivocal support for Parris. They were also shaken when a team of lawyers descended on campus conducting dozens of interviews in order to prepare a report for the regularly scheduled trustee meeting, which was occurring the following week. The legal team examined email accounts of the senior faculty, informing them only after the fact. The lawyers focused particular attention on the senior faculty who had met with the president. They also seemed especially interested in the faculty discussions at the afternoon meeting and who had made arguments that had led to the vote of no confidence. One senior faculty member felt that "conclusions had already been reached when the investigation has just started." Another told the local newspaper "the trustees are looking for a way to discredit those of us who spoke."

The next week, the entire board met and discussed the report prepared by the legal team. The document conceded that the president had erred and had mistakenly overstepped his authority. However, he had done so in order to right a wrong (that is, to make good on the academic advisor's promise to the student that the "C" would replace his "F" and make him eligible to play.) If the letter of the law had been violated, a broader spirit of generosity and fairness towards the students had been upheld. The vast majority of the report focused on Crucible's potential legal exposure because the legal team considered Dean Proctor's showing the student's transcript in the faculty meeting as a violation of FERPA. The report even went so far as to suggest that the breach might lead to a loss of federal financial funding (a tenuous claim since no institution has ever lost funding as a result of FERPA violations and the student never showed any signs of wanting to sue the institution).

Crucible's director of public relations had asked that a number of senior faculty members convene in Dean Proctor's office in the event the board wished to speak with them. They were never called. The board chair decided only to hear from the legal team even though some trustees had requested to hear from the faculty. "It's almost like someone accused of a crime never allowed to appear in court," said a senior faculty member. A number of faculty later found it suspicious that the trust-

ees had kept the most influential faculty members sidelined during the meeting, "in one place where we couldn't cause trouble."

Purging. Following the meeting, the board chair announced a decision. The board affirmed its support for President Parris and decided to remove Proctor from his position as dean of academic affairs. Proctor would be allowed to retain his position as a tenured faculty member, but he would no longer maintain his administrative role or salary. The trustees acknowledged that Parris had erred, but they argued that his long, distinguished service to the institution far outweighed this minor indiscretion. Proctor, who the trustees concluded was the leader of the faculty uprising, was seen in a very different light. A statement released by the board explained that by displaying the athlete's transcript at the faculty meeting, privacy policies and federal law were violated which justified Proctor's removal. The decision seemed to entirely vindicate Parris.

However, following the meeting word began to spread on campus that the board chair and a group of influential trustees had been shocked by the strident dissent that had seemingly arisen from nowhere. Faculty and staff members with board connections learned that these trustees had concluded that the group of senior faculty members must have been conspiring for some time, waiting for an opportune time to stab Parris in the back. In fact, the faculty group had only met for the first time the week of the vote. In leaked discussions from the board's meeting, Parris described the situation as follows: "[I] am the victim of an attempted coup, an ouster, an 'assassination.' A small group of highly motivated and organized individuals are led by their 'religious zeal.' Proctor 'turned on me' and intended to nail me for a long time."

Members of the senior faculty immediately contacted the local newspaper. Decrying the injustice of the trustees' indictment, one wrote in an op-ed piece: "I now know what Jesus meant when he spoke of being 'persecuted for righteousness' sake." The faculty continued to maintain that the president's actions were clearly and manifestly immoral and that his unwillingness to recant and the trustees' inability to discern right from wrong boded ill for Crucible and its mission of educating students to become people of intellect and character rather than following the ways of the world by seeking acclaim.

In the days that followed, the newspaper articles and letters to the editor showed public opinion shifting decisively in favor of the faculty. In fact, many faculty leaders were active members of the broader community. One served on the elected town council. Community members knew and trusted the faculty from seeing them in the barbershop, at little league games, and on Sunday morning at church. As a commu-

nity leader explained, "I've known John Proctor for a long time. His integrity is beyond reproach." If Crucible's students had in the past been relatively docile, they now began protesting right outside of the president's office. Television crews flocked to the small town, drawn by the spectacle. With pressure mounting from the faculty and parents, alumni and local citizens, the trustees called a special meeting for Friday, precisely two weeks after the meeting where they had demoted Proctor.

The trustees met for hours in a closed-door session. Although a number of influential trustees continued to support the president, the rank and file board members were deeply distraught by the turn of events. Ultimately it was their discontent and discomfort at Parris's actions that convinced the chair that the president no longer enjoyed the support of the board. During a break he had a private word with President Parris. At the conclusion of the special meeting, the trustees announced that Parris had resigned. His resignation letter stated:

> I am sorry that what I did out of fairness to a student has led to such controversy. But I am more sorry that the harm inflicted on Crucible University the past few weeks has been self-inflicted by men and women of the Crucible community to the detriment of our students who we are here to show the abiding values of charity and justice.

Following the announcement that Parris was leaving, the board also announced that the decision regarding Dean Proctor was final and irrevocable. Although upset at the injustice to Proctor, most of the faculty expressed relief that, as one put it, "The organism had rejected the virus."

Discussion: Organizational Witch-Hunting at Crucible University

An analysis of the events that unfolded at Crucible University suggests that four factors contributed to the organizational witch hunt: the establishment of distinct ideological divisions, the control of communication networks and the shaping of the predominant institutional narrative about what events meant, and the construction of perceived violations of institutional norms.

Ideological Division of Two Camps

The debate at Crucible regarding a set of issues (the propriety of changing the student's GPA, the leadership style of the president) was increasingly shaped by the emergence of two distinct ideologies. These particular sets of beliefs and suppositions provided a lens through which adherents understood the events at the university. It is important to note

that the ideologies, while upheld by certain "facts," are constructed by the interpretation of the evidence. Thus, supporters of the president pointed to gains in admissions statistics, more fundraising, and the creation of a viable Division I program as evidence for his efficacious leadership. Detractors used the same set of facts as evidence of narcissistic "striving." An ideology, therefore, is a highly interpretive worldview.

Ideologies produce highly affective responses among their adherents. They thereby exert profound normative pressures. At several points in the case individuals felt significant pressured to get "off the fence" and join one of the two ideological camps because of the self-evident "truth" or morality of its stance. Both ideological camps creatively made use of the escalation of events to bring more devotees to their respective positions. Perhaps the best examples of this are the faculty meeting that led to the vote of no confidence and the trustee meeting that led to the deposing of Dean Proctor. The supporters of each camp sought to coerce non-committed members of the campus to make a decision. The growing pressure from the camps to gain supporters led to the use of increasingly public venues where organizational members were put on the spot and made to feel that they had to make a choice. Both camps at times limited debate in pursuit of an outcome that appeared forgone from their ideological perspectives.

The Crucible case demonstrates the potentially destructive power that ideologically divisive confrontation can have on an institution, particularly when powerful entities such as the president, chair of the board of trustees, or senior faculty are involved. Ideologically driven debates leave little room for moderates or fence-sitters who might otherwise be the source of conciliatory decisions. In this way they push community members to opposite ends of the ideological spectrum which intensives an ever-widening spiral of divisiveness fueled by zealotry. What is particularly noteworthy is that despite their underlying differences in the interpretation of events and motives, both camps behaved quite similarly. In addition to the broad similarities listed below, Table 1 further details the parallels in the views of each ideological camp.

- *Both camps were concerned about the external perceptions of the institution:* Each group believed that the actions of the other negatively impacted the reputation of the institution as an exemplar of faith-based higher education.
- *A shared worldview or ideology drove each camp and provided justification for actions on moral grounds:* To the senior faculty members, the president engaged in immoral behavior, which required him to "come forward to repent." From the perspective of the president and

senior administrators, the faculty behaved in an "unchristian" manner by failing to forgive the president for the indiscretion of changing the athlete's grade. While the president's supporters no doubt saw his admission of human frailty as indicative of his high moral character, the group of senior faculty felt that his unwillingness to directly apologize was evidence of his recalcitrance and failure to take responsibility.

- *Each camp sought to eradicate the source of the problem in order to resolve the crisis:* According to senior faculty who challenged the president and orchestrated the subsequent no confidence vote, the faculty were retaking their proper place in the institution. The president, board chair, and several supportive trustees moved to demote the leader of the senior faculty from his administrative post and brought in an outside legal team to investigate the senior faculty's actions following the publication of the grade change.

The convicted individuals were further judged by the community (including the demotion of Dean Proctor by the trustees and the no confidence vote by the faculty and ultimately the president's resignation). After the community judgment, the convicted members of the organiza-

TABLE 1

Comparison of Participant Perspectives

President and Supporters	Senior Faculty and Supporters
The Judeo-Christian values of Crucible are most important.	The Judeo-Christian values of Crucible are most important
Dean Proctor violated the ideals of the honor code by showing the grades of the student and the faculty violated it by calling an impromptu faculty meeting and then summarily calling for a vote of no confidence.	The president violated the ideals of the honor code by changing the student athlete's GPA rather than following the stated University policy.
If you believe in integrity, then Proctor and his collaborators must be sanctioned and Proctor must be removed from his position.	If you believe in integrity, Parris must be removed.
The faculty overstepped their authority by calling an impromptu faculty meeting and forcing a vote of no confidence.	The president overstepped his authority by changing the athlete's GPA calculation.
The academic dean is a disruptive naysayer.	The senior administrative team is made up of "yes men."
The faculty are using underhanded tactics by going to the media.	The president is using underhanded tactics by going to an outside law firm.
We were vindicated by the trustees who supported us by removing the academic dean from his post.	We were vindicated by the trustees who supported us by having the president resign.

tion were, figuratively speaking, "burned at the stake"—sacrificed and sanctioned in the interest of restoring order. Both sides engaged in ideological warfare that made it impossible to determine who was the witch or the witch hunter. Concurrently, the strategy employed by the two groups appeared to exhibit similar themes of ideological driven rhetoric and interpretation. Each camp maintained that they, and they alone, were acting in the institution's best interests.

Control of Communication

In order to motivate supporters and convert fence sitters, adherents used both formal and informal communication strategies to promote their particular ideologies. The core adherents of each side responded thereby escalating the desire to impose their interpretation (and even paranoia) on the organization. For example, President Parris and the board chair went to great lengths to control the dissemination of information after the board meeting and achieved a measure of success. The trustees, senior staff, and supportive faculty diligently issued public statements at key moments in order to support the president. Additionally, the president and his supporters benefited by using the university's public relations unit to control official information that was conveyed to external constituents (as evidenced by the ability of the board to generate a newspaper headline in the aftermath of the vote of no confidence, "Trustees support Parris.").

The formal communication patterns established in particular venues allowed certain messages to prevail. The trustee meeting that led to a resolution supporting the president and the removal of the dean from his position serves as a prime example of this sort of control. Although prior to that meeting a few trustees made public statements that evoked a note of caution about Parris' leadership, at the meeting itself all questions regarding the president or current issues were deferred and the board was informed that the university spokesman or the board chair would be the sole public voice in the matter for the time being. Trustees whose support prior to the meeting was qualified were thereby brought into line. Even the information the board received in the meeting was tightly controlled and no member of the opposition was allowed to speak. A similar dynamic was also at work in the faculty meeting that ended in the vote of no confidence as fence sitters were castigated or the faculty status of two proponents of the president questioned.

Dominant ideologies are also able to draw upon or replace structural supports to communicate their messages (Meyer, 1982). The president and board chair did so through the public relations machine of the uni-

versity. Proctor and the senior faculty made use of their own control of institutional structures to support their efforts. For example, they set the agenda of the faculty meeting in the form of a trial during with Proctor serving as prosecutor and judge. The senior faculty supporting the vote made it uncomfortable for those with dissenting ideas to raise them. The push to have a no confidence vote that afternoon, even though some colleagues had great misgivings about making that decision without time to deliberate, was calculated to send a message that the president needed to leave precisely when trustees were about to arrive on campus. Each camp took advantage of the organizational structures in place to support and communicate their respective views, which quickly increased the contentiousness between the groups.

The role of informal communication, or gossip, is another key element of witch-hunting. Informal communication systems provide a foundation for determining if an individual within the community is the source of trouble for the group. As a result, a formal accusation and trial only confirms what has already been established by rumor and innuendo. Lutz (1988) notes that the accusers in Salem in many cases "knew" the identity of the witches because of their star witnesses, but they needed a formal trial in order to legitimately put the witch to death. The value of the formal process is to develop consensus among the entire community, not just those accusers at the forefront. This is one area in which the senior faculty of the institution (with their roots in the community) had a distinct advantage. It was not possible for the administration to impugn the character of their opponents because these individuals were well known at the institution and in the community. A charge that Dean Proctor was somehow acting in nefarious or self-serving ways was not credible among those who knew him. Indeed, the very characterization called into question the motives of the accusers.

Perhaps one of the most detrimental aspects of organizational witch-hunting is that the "evidence" is often simply speculation, rumor, and supposition. The focus of allegations during institutional witch-hunting are "capable neither of proof nor disproof … the accused are helpless to prove their innocence" (Lutz, 1988, p. 335). A persistent and damaging rumor that the president's supporters cited was that the group of senior faculty members had been holding secret group meetings for months in an effort to plot against the president and had been merely waiting for a chance to strike. There is not a shred of evidence to support the claim, yet the faculty found the charge difficult to fight because they could not produce evidence proving they had not been convening. Similarly, the faculty charged the president with narcissistic tendencies including the idea that Parris wanted to "see the university's name scroll through the

sports ticker at the bottom of ESPN." Parris could not effectively dispute the charge. It was an article of faith not a product of evidence.

Both sides projected motives onto the other that fostered the caricature necessary to support their own claims. The president's actions were viewed as selfish and self-seeking to ensure the success of the move to Division I athletics. The senior faculty and especially Proctor were viewed as traitorous collaborators looking for the first opportunity to attack the president. In reality, neither side was probably right, but with certainty neither can be proved. Due to the nature of the ideological conflict occurring within the organization, the charges alone were enough for some members of the institution to become adherents.

Violation of Institutional Norms

Institutional norms are the guidelines that define appropriate or unacceptable behavior within a group. In this context, groups protect their values and beliefs by punitively responding to behavior that does not confirm to the group norms. Lutz (1988) defines witchcraft as continual violation of norms that is seen as detrimental to the institution. President Parris spoke of forgiveness at the initial faculty meeting where the no confidence vote was taken, yet his later fight to keep his job was interpreted by the senior faculty and their supporters as a sign that the talk of contrition was disingenuous. The president's comments at the faculty meeting were only heard by a relatively small number of the overall campus community and open to often widely varying interpretations.

Furthermore, there were different interpretations over the grade change, depending on an individual's ideological bent. Parris contended that he acted within the scope of his authority as president and that changing the GPA had nothing to do with athletics. Instead, he claimed it was about helping a student. Many interviewees, supporters and opponents of Parris alike, reported that they believed the crisis could have been averted if Parris had apologized clearly, directly, and profusely. There is certainly no way to know if this is true; however, the fact that so many on campus believed the situation could have been resolved by an apology demonstrates the power of such language within the norms of the campus community. The absence of an "apology" exacerbated the existing ideological division. The ideological construction of events by the senior faculty depicted the president as powerful and unwilling to listen to faculty voices.

In the case of witch-hunting, community members learn, mainly through gossip, the identity of the witch. Typically, an "accepted diviner" arises during a negative situation, not to "discover but to proclaim witches so they can be dealt with" (Lutz, 1988, p. 322). One of the most

remarkable aspects of the witch hunt at Crucible was the presence of two diviners. Proctor galvanized the faculty and metaphorically lit the torches for the opposition; he wrapped himself in the espoused moral values of the institution, and pressed the case against the president. Proctor's decisions and actions created a situation where confrontation inevitably couched his own ideological argument on the pedestal of honor and integrity. This conflict set up a dichotomous scenario within the organization in which "citizens" could be in favor of integrity *or* the president, but not both. Organizational members were forced to choose sides in the conflict. Ironically, the same thing happened to Proctor. The board chair in particular sought to cast Proctor as a violator of cherished norms and led efforts by the trustees to remove him from his adminis-trative position. Proctor's longstanding and outspoken critiques of the administration set him up to be the symbolic witch of the mutinous se-nior faculty who engaged in overstepping rightful bounds and using the media as a pawn against the rest of the community in a power play for institutional control.

Competing Ideologies

As we have discussed throughout, an organizational witch hunt leads to a divisive spiral where the ideologies become increasingly entrenched and contentious influencing the organization's culture (Van Maanen & Barley, 1985). Our findings expand the Lutz witch-hunting frame-work to consider the role of two competing ideological interpretation of events within an institution. The role of historically strong stakehold-ers groups and diffused power within higher education governance sys-tems provides potential fuel for the development of multiple ideological interpretations. Organizational stories perpetuate these interpretations serving to "[anchor] the present in the past and lending meaning to the future … intermix[ing] historical facts, retrospective justifications, and wishful thinking" (Meyer, 1982, p. 50). Throughout the course of our study, participants from each camp described essentially the same facts, yet as ideologues understood the cause and effect of the events funda-mentally differently. While the role of Christianity in both participants and the institution influenced events in this case, we contend a similar process would occur around other seminal ideas such as the debate re-garding the role and purpose of a liberal arts education. Fundamental-ist beliefs regarding an ideal, as in the case of the two camps at Cru-cible, can create intractable views that prevent any sustained attempt to achieve détente.

Within the context of highly ideological groups in an organization, an individual or cadre that assumes leadership evolves in the minds of

devotees as "quasi-mythical heroes" (Meyer, 1982, p. 60; Clark, 1972). The irony, as in the case of Crucible, becomes the perception of opposing groups or non-believers who consider the leaders' actions as iconoclastic and detrimental to organizational goals. The resulting conflict over the leaders further exacerbates the differences between the competing views. Lutz (1988) describes a witch as "usually marginal or weak persons without strong protectors" (p. 334). However, the example of Crucible shows this is not a necessary requirement and indeed may not hold the significance Lutz contends. More influential, particularly as the conflict grows, is that each side becomes increasingly entrenched to the point that past institutional or individual success proves insufficient to bridge the gulf between the disparate ideologues. The only resolution to the conflict is for the community to eliminate the witch to reestablish order. In the end, both Parris and Proctor had to be removed from power to appease both ideological camps. Throughout the crisis, each of the men had been so demonized and become so controversial that the only way to reduce the conflict was the ouster of both. This action enabled both camps to place blame as needed, claim the moral high ground, and begin a process of reconciliation. Once ideological tactics are used, an ongoing danger exists that they may be utilized in future conflicts. The source of the immediate problem and crisis has been eliminated, but many of the underlying tensions may still remain.

Although the case here presents a seemingly stereotypical and time-worn conflict between a president and faculty, the bitterness of the dispute can be laid at the door of differing ideological interpretations. While honest disputes occur between administrators and faculty members all the time, the difference here was the construction of a belief system that prevented the identification of middle ground. Such dynamics have the potential to occur on many campuses. Understanding the development and escalation of competing ideologies provides an additional critique of traditional integrationist views of organization culture within higher education. As Burton Clark's (1971) seminal work clearly describes, "as participants become ideologues, their common institutional definition becomes a foundation for trust, easing communication and cooperation" (p. 511). Yet, our work demonstrates the damaging consequences of strong and competing ideologies sowing seeds of distrust while breaking down communication between groups. The dynamic of multiple ideologies on campus, particularly during times of strategic conflict over institutional purpose, further illuminates the complexities discussed by Kezar (2005) among others.

Conclusion

The events at Crucible University illuminate the potential danger to an organization of using ideology as a political weapon. Although institutional vision can liberate and motivate campus communities, such vision can also paradoxically blind groups. Members of competing subcultures can turn into zealots, willing to justify the use of any means necessary to support their ideological stance. This fundamentalism creates participants who are dogmatic and unable to make decisions which are rational and for the good of both individuals as well as the entire organization. Instead, the blinders of zealotry move each competing group further away from the other on the ideological spectrum, weakening the organization in the process. As a result, both leaders and followers become engulfed in the larger purpose of the cause (Burns, 1978). Groups will silence any stance that is viewed as incongruent; each side is willing to sacrifice people for the good of the cause. In the end, proponents will violate their own norms that are established early on by the movement including openness, discussion, debate, and inclusion.

This case raises important questions and implications about the need for expanding the discussion of organizational culture in higher education. As a working framework for understanding colleges and universities, culture provides insights into the how and why of institutional behavior. Yet a large segment of the literature focuses on the coalescing and positive influence of culture within institutions. Detrimental and divisive components of organizational culture and change exist, as evidenced by the case of Crucible. A need persists for additional indepth studies that explore interactions between subcultures, particularly negative and conflicting ones. The organizational witch hunt at Crucible University also demonstrates how groups excise members who are perceived by powerful subcultures as antithetical to the institution's missions, goals, and values. This conflict provides a unique window into organizational pathology in higher education and how dysfunctional interactions can come to dominant an institution that is not currently explored in the literature. An additional strength of such an approach recognizes that culture is not bound solely within institutional boundaries—at Crucible, the media played an integral role in shaping public opinion regarding the case. Recognizing the power of ideology, organizational pathology, and conflict to shape institutional behavior has the potential to expand the application of organizational culture as a theoretical framework for understanding the inner workings of colleges and universities.

Notes

[1] A great deal of debate exists about the definition of "organizational culture" (e.g., do organizations have cultures or are they cultures?) For an excellent overview of these debates see the introduction of Ashkanasy, Wilderom, and Peterson, (2000). For the purposes of this paper, we draw on the work of Tierney (1988), Kuh and Whitt (1988), and Schein (1992) who hold that culture consists of shared assumptions and values that bind a group together and guide organizational behavior.

[2] A pseudonym derived from Arthur Miller's insightful play on witch-hunting, *The Crucible*.

[3] We are using the term "witch" as an anthropological term. It is not a reference to adherents of the Wiccan religion who may use this term. Additionally, witch is frequently used in a gendered context, but this is not necessarily the case in an organizational witch hunt.

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