Bridging the Divide: Collaborative Practice Between Faculty and Student Services Staff

by

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Abstract

As post-secondary student demographics have changed in Canada over the decades, students come to universities with different expectations, and the more recent trend is that students increasingly expect the university to fit in with their lives rather than them fitting into the university culture (Fisher, 2011). This trend requires that institutions consider how to enrich diverse student experiences both within and outside the classroom.

Research has shown that collaboration between faculty and student services is essential for the development of a quality student experience (Kezar, 2005). First-year collaborations are designed to support the incoming student and provide a springboard/safety net, yet, they exist, more often than not, on the periphery of the academic experience (Barefoot & Gardner, 2003) and continue to be secondary add-ons.

The purpose of this research was to analyze cross-divisional collaboration between faculty and staff that aspires to build broad-based partnerships and integrative educational experiences for students. A multiple site case study design across three post-secondary institutions in British Columbia utilized interviews and focus groups with 10 administrators, 13 faculty, and 13 staff. The theoretical frameworks informing this study and its analyses were organizational culture (Schein, 2004; Tierney, 1988) and critical theory (Foucault, 1982; Horkheimer,1982).

The sites provided unique and individualized perspectives, but overwhelmingly spoke to cultural gaps—the lack of coordinated efforts and systemic issues that support separate functions. These cultural limitations have created a lack of knowledge and connection between faculty and staff that have led to hesitancy in attempted collaborative partnerships - although these layers of disconnection were minimized when participants had ongoing and prior relationship. Oshrey (1995) suggested: “Wherever there is differentiation—the elaboration of our differences—special attention needs to be given to dedifferentiation: developing and maintaining our commonality” (p. 8). Future studies might examine a) the impact of organizational structures, in particular, the lack of student service professionals on governance committees, task forces, and committees; b) communication strategies that enable knowledge sharing and provide access to institutional knowledge; c) institutional leadership; and d) how cultural change happens.

Keywords: organizational culture; power; relationships; student services; faculty; administrators; staff; collaboration

To my son Nicholas
who reminded me during those times of struggle that we just do not quit.

To my daughter Rachael
with her technical brilliance and constant support, thank you!

To my son Daniel
who looked after my spirit.

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List of Acronyms

NSO	New Student Orientation
SS	Student Services
SFU	Simon Fraser University

Glossary

Term	Definition
Co-curricular	Co-curricular is the out-of-class programming that supports and integrates course work with student experiences (Gardner, 2012).
Collaboration	Collaboration "is defined as individuals and groups working together toward a common purpose, with equal voice and responsibility" (Kezar, 2003, p. 140).
Curricular	Curricular defines aspects of the experience (e.g., course work; curriculum; pedagogy), and typically thought of as the academic experiences within courses and/or degree programs.
Faculty	For the purpose of this research faculty is focused on the individual voices of specific faculty members within their own context of teaching, research and service to the institution. They teach, advise, and bring the academic curriculum and initiatives to life
First Year Services	A series of programmes at many universities that are designed to help students to transition from high school to university. These programs foster participation in co-curricular activities with the objective of building community and connections (Barefoot & Gardner, 2003).
Persistence	Persistence defines the students who continue on to graduation (Tinto, 2006).
Student Services	Student services is the overarching name for departments who provides high quality services in non-academic areas to support the academic mission; accommodates non-cognitive student development issues that impact overall classroom learning; and develops a student-centred co-curriculum. Departments included under student services may include academic advising, admissions, first year, career services, residence life, student life, and counselling.
Sub-culture	A sub-culture is a group of people within a larger context who have similar attitudes and behaviors (Arcellus, 2012).
Success	Success is the outcome of different forms of persistence that help students stay and persist to graduation.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Student success [at university] is largely determined by student experiences in the first year (Upcraft, Gardner, & Barefoot, 2005), but higher education with an exemplary focus on subject matter, programs and content still struggles with implementation of student development and first year initiatives (Choy, 2002; Kezar, 2003; Kift, 2008). Twenty years ago, Baxter-Magolda (1999) supporting the value of interconnected educational communities suggested the "…integration of all domains of learning and involvement of all educators, regardless of their campus role" (p. 39) and Chickering (2006) speaks to higher education as neglecting the interior health of our students. As a student and a twenty-five plus years student service professional I have personally experienced the struggle of integrating student development with the student educational journey.

The following chapter clarifies the problem and provides a review of the literature that provides historical relevance, institutional context, and institutional structures/governance for collaborative first-year initiatives between faculty and staff. The chapter sets up the context/background on collaborative relationships within higher education – how relationships impact the development of collaborative partnerships that support student success and first year programs

1.1. Problem

Canadian universities have experienced tremendous growth in their student population over the last 30 years with the current enrollments of more than 1.2 million doubling since 1980 (AUCC, 2011). This increased enrolment in higher learning has been fueled by a demand for a highly skilled work force and a shift from a resource-based economy to a service-based economy. Demographic projections also suggest that in future years' population growth alone will be unable to meet the demands of an increasing labor market (AUCC, 2011). To meet these increasing demands universities have broadened access to higher education in order to accommodate "anticipated economic, social and labor market demands resulting from this demographic shift" (AUCC, 2011, p.5). Consequently, who university students are has changed significantly over time and is moving away from the traditional age (e.g., 18-19 years),

middle class, heterosexual, European males, to older students, students with dependents, and also reflecting a diversity of ethnic, sexual, and socio-economic backgrounds (Strange & Cox, 2016). In 2016 the Canadian Undergraduate Survey Consortium surveyed 34 universities, and a total of 15,000 first year undergraduate students, of whom 49 percent reported belonging to a visible minoritized population; three percent identified as Indigenous; 11 percent were over 25 and 34 percent were employed (Glauser, 2018). This increase in nearly every category since 2013 has resulted in institutions diversifying its academic programs and support services to support a diverse base of students (Fisher, 2011; Strange & Cox, 2016).

Providing access and quality education for this diverse "new normal" student profile within Canadian higher education comes with increasing challenges for institutions and creates an "increasing diversity of needs…indeed, students – their backgrounds, motivations and learning needs – add layers of complexity to the traditional delivery of higher education" (Fisher, 2011, p. 4). Layers of need for complex student support combined with student expectations create dramatic demands on the quality and accountability of higher education (Fisher, 2011). This inclusive "new normal" student profile supports students with disabilities, mental health conditions, limited finances, students who need to work, and increased visible minoritized memberships (Strange & Cox, 2016). Promoting this level of inclusivity and complexity in higher education requires challenges to be addressed: a) the effects of universal access, financial limitations, and poor matriculation percentages; b) the requirement to prepare students to become lifelong learners; c) new and emerging technologies; d) social and cultural trends; e) changing demographics and the increased focus on the unique needs of learners (Strange & Cox, 2016).

First year experience is defined as a whole university experience and is developed to support all students, no matter what degree of readiness students enter post-secondary education (Gardner, 2012). Historically, first year programs and services have been described as deficit enhancing to bridge the gap between what students can already do and what they must do to succeed. Currently, first year experience has been re-defined to emphasize a thriving culture where students are fully engaged intellectually, socially and emotionally (Schreiner, 2010b).

Supporting success during first year is the combination of services, programs, curricular and co-curricular activities that supports a student's transition into and through university by providing a foundation for academic success, student persistence, and personal resilience. The call for cross-divisional collaboration that supports student success requires a more coordinated effort from all areas of the institution. A collaborative university brings people together from different perspectives and environments and is critical for building and supporting links between the curricular and co-curricular in a seamless learning environment (Magolda & Baxter-Magolda, 1999).

> The goal is for students to appreciate the interconnectedness among components of their lives, strengthen their intellectual development, and cultivate a disposition toward life-long learning. (Magolda & Baxter-Magolda, 2011, p. 343)

Student services, over the last two decades, have attempted and often struggled to develop collaborative first year programs that create and implement a common framework for collaboration between faculty and staff. This framework includes: 1) social equity that supports and nurtures the student and creates a sense of affiliation; 2) engagement infrastructure that promotes an understanding of the campus and institutional ecosystem; 3) academic development of learning communities that foster academic perseverance; 4) the transfer of knowledge, acquisition of cognitive skills and the development of learning (Clark, 2010). Despite these efforts, collaboration between faculty and staff continues to struggle, and this research project aims to better understand and develop the relationships between faculty and staff that will ensure lessons learned become part of the broader umbrella of the institutional culture and continue to positively impact future first year collaborations.

1.2. Literature Review

There is a dramatic shift from an education system that chose who they believed to be the best and the brightest, with academic learning as the primary goal being completely separate from the development of self and personality (Guarasci, 2001). Looking back to 2004, *Learning Reconsidered* advocated "for transformative education – a holistic process of learning that places the student at the center of the learning experience" (Keeling, 2004, p.3) with student well-being and personal development becoming a key function of higher education. It has been more than fifteen years, and

the literature continues to demonstrate coordinated collaboration between staff and faculty (Arcelus, 2011; Banta & Kuh, 1998; Behl, 2003; Kezar, 2005) has not been continuously sustainable within higher education, but more like singular opportunities that are in isolation of the campus ethos (Arcellus, 2011).

The calls for collaboration continue as "education at many Canadian campuses is being positioned as a shared responsibility" (Fisher, 2011a, p. 7) requiring a network of cooperation between students, administration, faculty and staff. Although the literature, discussed further in Chapter 2 (Kezar, 2005; Magolda, 2010; Walsh & Kahn, 2010) recognizes the value of integrated and collaborative initiatives, researchers have found implementing these initiatives have been difficult. These difficulties surrounding collaboration have direct implications on the community and connection that students build and require for successful completion of their studies (AUCC, 2011).

1.2.1. Collaborations in Post-Secondary Education

Collaboration is not a new concept in today's higher education. For example, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) questioned the viability of individual silos of previous historical organizational structures (see also Frost, Strom, Downey, Schultz and Holland, 2010; Kezar, 2009; Magolda, 2010; Schmidt & Kaufman, 2005) that focused on the transfer and assimilation of information as opposed to an integrated campus-wide approach to learning*:*

> Organizationally and operationally, we have lost sight of the forest. If undergraduate education is to be enhanced, faculty members, joined by academic and student service administrators, must devise ways to deliver undergraduate education that is as comprehensive and integrated as the ways that students actually learn. A whole new mindset is needed to capitalize on the interrelatedness of the in and out of class influences on student learning and the functional interconnectedness of academic and student affairs divisions. (p. 35)

Supporting an integrated approach to higher education necessitates an institution-wide frame of reference that requires a "great deal of work to build common assumptions about needed direction or need for change" (Kezar, 2014, p. 33). Collaboration is more than cooperation and sharing timelines, reporting on programs, or aligning calendars (Keeling, 2006). Collaboration on a college campus is a partnership among functional areas that develops initiatives that support the mission of the institution

and achieve greater efficiency (Kezar & Lester, 2009). A collaborative university brings people together from different perspectives and environments, and is primarily about "extending the possibilities for research, opening up new avenues for learning and furthering a multiplicity of aims within the academy" (Walsh & Kahn, 2010, p. 5). Collaboration and shared responsibility deliver services and programs in a seamless, meaningful, integrated way that contributes significantly to the success of students and to institutional strategic goals, missions, and objectives. First year programs are examples of shared purpose that can benefit both faculty/staff and the institution as a whole.

The historical context suggests that an urgent need exists to re-evaluate the isolated structures that support students by changing the organizational design and cultural influence that isolate academic and student services (Boyer, 1987). The model of central and coordinated partnerships embraced by Canadian Student Services (Fisher, 2011) was highlighted in *Achieving Student Success: Effective Student Services in Canadian Higher Education* (Cox & Strange, 2010). Unfortunately, here lies the crux of the issue: although the research highlighting the benefits of collaborative initiatives between staff and faculty is well documented, this work is primarily ad hoc initiatives that do not always produce sustainable programming (Banta & Kuh, 1998; Bourassa & Kruger, 2001; Jez, Booth, Starer, & Arca, 2012). According to Bourassa (2001), the roadblocks to creating and sustaining these partnerships:

> have been seen as cultural differences, the historical separation between formal curriculum and informal curriculum, the perception of student affairs as an ancillary function to the academic mission, and competing assumptions about the nature of student learning. (p. 9)

Such assumptions have challenged how institutions respond to collaborative initiatives, and in the process, they have damaged institutional relationships and networks. It is essential that we continue encouraging partnerships and teamwork that search for common grounds and mutual goals (Purkey & Siegel, 2003) and that consider successes and failures as a collective responsibility.

Universities with successful collaborations between faculty and staff have opportunities for the cross-institutional dialogue defined within their organizational culture (Hirsch & Burack, 2001; Kezar, 2002; Kuh, 1996). Banta and Kuh (1998) have argued that collaborations between staff and faculty enhance student learning, so

students are more likely to persist to graduation. Also, Kezar (2003) found that seamless learning environments provide advantages for students because classroom and out-of-classroom experiences are connected, which ultimately leads to student growth and development. The Whitt, et al (2008) study "Principles of Good Practice for Academic and Student Affairs Partnership Programs" found that partnership programs foster student engagement (Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2008) and Pascarella & Terenzini (2005) found that student engagement was the "primary means by which students learn, develop, and persist in college" (p.138).

1.2.2. Faculty and Staff

With respect to faculty, the focus of the present study is on their individual voices and how they relate to students, the student learning journey and knowledge acquisition. Student services support student growth and development from orientation through to graduation. The changing profiles and mass marketization of higher education, the multiple layers of differences among learners require faculty and staff to complement each other to provide the enriched environment that students expect. This relationship is difficult to develop and maintain, since differences exist regarding cultural expectations, understandings about student learning, and even the logistics of putting it all together. Faculty and staff focus on different functional areas, and student services is often perceived as a support to the intellectual focus of the academic faculty. Student service approaches education as a comprehensive whole-person educational journey as opposed to strictly knowledge acquisition, yet it is incumbent on both staff and faculty to collaborate if students are to reap the full rewards of their educations (Kuh, 2003). Attempts to integrate student services and faculty have previously highlighted the clash between cultures and the roadblocks to collaboration (Magolda & Baxter-Magolda, 2011). What began as two separate domains of the student experience—student services focused on student development (co-curricular), and faculty focused on learning (curricular)—is now compounded by "incorrect perceptions and lack of knowledge about each other's jobs… confusing jargon of differentiated professional fields, increased specialization and financial competition" (Kezar, 2003, p.137). Benjamin and Hamrick (2011) have argued that these challenges are compounded when faculty continues to resist the benefits of faculty and staff working together to support student success: "More than fifteen years after student service leaders first proposed this shift in perspective,

student service professionals [in North America] are still met with scepticism or indifference when discussing their contributions to student learning" (p. 24).

This faculty viewpoint is supported by a belief that learning occurs exclusively in classrooms and academic settings under the direction of a faculty member (Benjamin & Hamrick, 2011). Chickering, Dalton and Stamm (2006) have documented this unspoken divide in higher education between personal/subjective learning and the professional/objective curriculum. Arcellus's (2008) ethnographic study examining the collaborative experiences of faculty and staff within one community found that some faculty are concerned about the hierarchy of importance—academics as the core function of the university and the core role of the faculty—their academic record, scholarship, and teaching. Kezar (2014) has added to this complexity by addressing issues of organizational change and the reasons for resistance: "People were often not resisting a change because they disagreed with it, but because they did not truly understand its nature or how they might integrate it into their work and role" (p.15). Arcellus (2008) and Kezar's (2014) studies support each other, as people are continually making sense of their worlds, building on their prior knowledge, and envisioning the future.

Arcellus's (2008) study has provided an integrated model for understanding the interconnected relationships between institutional leadership, faculty and staff. The study consisted of 154 formal interviews with 96 faculty, administrators, and students, as well as a review of minutes and events. Although the focus was on one case—and other institutions may respond differently—the conflicts and pressures revealed by this one case were found to be consistent with nationally recognizable struggles in American higher education. Arcellus (2008) found "there is pressure from within the campus culture that encourages faculty to minimize their broader participation in the community in favor of their professional, disciplinary, and departmental commitments" (p. 325). Resource allocation and time constraints also were faculty concerns, a very real need to protect their time and focus on their priorities. All of these conditions contribute to the lack of sustainable support for collaborative partnerships.

Relationships between staff and faculty also have suffered due to the external pressures that all post-secondary institutions are facing, including, but not limited to, decreasing funding, increasing role responsibilities, increasing diversity of students,

increasing complexity of student issues, and higher levels of accountability for student graduation rates (Strange & Cox, 2016). Additionally, differences in cultural expectations between faculty and student services impact how each understands student learning (Ahren, 2008). Bourassa (2001) has pointed out: "For example, the culture within student services is one that fosters working collaboratively, in groups, to solve problems, whereas faculty engage in solitary, autonomous work" (p. 9). Notably, most current literature is written from the staff perspective, and it speaks to the divide between faculty and staff, but expanding on this disparity, it also seems likely that a similar gap of misunderstanding exists between all the key stakeholders—administrators, students, faculty, and student services (Bourassa, 2001).

Faculty, student services, administrators, and students are the cornerstones of a renewed and successful development of a shared vision and collective responsibility for student success in higher education. Unfortunately, according to Tinto (2006), "most institutions have not yet been able to translate shared vision and collective responsibility into integrated forms of action, but rather add-ons to existing programs" (p. 6). As higher education continues to evolve, the collective responsibility is for mindful learning that includes "creation of new categories, openness to new information, and an implicit awareness of more than one perspective" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 7). This change does not start at the top: "Formal leaders normally do not have the power necessary to transform a system… [by] trying to enact the journey of individual intense achievement [as opposed] to trying to enact the journey of collective fulfillment" (Quinn, 2000, p. 129). Stakeholders in higher education must work smarter together than harder alone, and collaboration and shared expertise must replace competition:

> At the very least, educators need a language that is interdisciplinary, that moves skillfully among theory, practice, and politics… a language that makes the issues of culture, power, and ethics primary to understanding how schools construct knowledge, identities, and ways of life that promote nurturing and empowering relations. (Giroux, 1992, p. 8)

A high degree of intentionality and building of institutional connectedness will support a common ground that enables our educational institutions to reach new levels of significance (Purkey & Siegel, 2003). The concept of adding value and support to the student experience through first year programming provides an opportunity for discussion among faculty and staff that begins the development of this common language.

1.2.3. First Year Experience

Higher education is committed to the whole university experience through which students are accepted no matter what level they are at when entering post-secondary education (Gardner, 2012a). First year programs and services can bridge these adjustments between what students can already do and what they must do to succeed at university (Tinto & Pusser, 2006). Institutions of higher education continue to look for a "model of institutional action that will provide guidelines for the development of effective policies and programs to enhance the persistence of all their students" (Tinto & Pusser, 2006, p. 6). These actions are currently evident across educational institutions by a large array of first year strategies that have been implemented to address student persistence and the changing role of higher education (Clarke, 2010).

First year programming has experienced some notable successes, and first year literature continues to recognize the value and importance of collaboration between faculty and staff (Banta & Kuh, 1998; Hirsch & Burack, 2001; Kezar, 2003; Schroeder, 1999; Whitt et al., 2008; Gardner, 2012a). As Kuh (1996) connected the curricular and co-curricular (academic and student services) over 20 years ago, these collaborations have taken many shapes, including a variety of learning communities, first year programs, peer mentorship programming, and summer bridge programming. These integrated and holistic approaches to education developed learners who engaged and took responsibility for their learning as they applied their beliefs and learning to learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom (Arcelus, 2011).

In their review of 30 years of student success literature, Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) concluded that "the evidence strongly suggests that… multiple forces operate in multiple settings to influence student learning and change" (p. 629). First year is an educational experience that positively influences and supports student learning in college (i.e. student success) and provides an appreciation for lifelong learning (Baxter Madolda, 1999). Increasingly, as students begin their educational journeys, they are encouraged to engage in "learning resources that exist both inside and outside the classroom… and are asked to apply what they are learning in class to their lives outside the classroom" (Kuh, 1996, p. 136). These opportunities are learning communities that support peer mentorship programming and other tailored programs for specific student

populations, such as adults returning to school, students with disabilities, first generation students, and students from diverse cultures.

Research has suggested that student persistence increases over the course of a program, but there remains a considerably higher dropout rate during the first year of studies (Barefoot & Gardner, 2003; Finnie, Childs, & Qui, 2012) . Over time, this lack of student persistence during the first year relates to increased costs for students, institutions, and the public, since lower individual prosperity and increased social inequalities impact individuals' quality of life (Parkin & Baldwin, 2008). Higher education that focuses on persistence and degree completion has an opportunity during a student's first year of studies to provide them with support and services that will bridge into 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year studies. At many universities, a series of programs directed at first year students are designed to help students transition from high school to university. These programs foster participation in co-curricular activities, with an objective to build community and connection (Barefoot & Gardner, 2003). Engagement in first year programs enhances the quality of the university experience and improves academic performance; increases knowledge acquisition; and supports individual skill development (Gardner, 2012a). Over the last three decades, institutions of higher education have implemented first year concepts that support collaborative partnerships as integral to the success of students enrolled in post-secondary education (Gardner, 2012a; Kift, 2010; Kift & Field, 2009; Nelson, 2009; Upcraft, Upcraft, Gardner, et al., 1989). This success, although 20 years in development, still appears to lack the ability to become part of the core campus-wide institutional curriculum: "Current research and practice related to the first year experience… are still mainly piecemeal rather than institution-wide with institutions struggling to achieve cross-institutional integration, coordination and coherence of first year experience, policy, and practice" (Clarke, 2010, p. 1). Unfortunately, first year initiatives that are not embedded in the curriculum or clearly connected to it tend to remain an under-acknowledged or underfunded "add on" with little value and low participation (Clark, 2010).

1.3. Researcher Positionality

Research defined me as one of those undergraduate students who left higher education for any one of a multitude of reasons that impacted the quality and quantity of my involvement in academic and co-curricular campus activities, as well, as the quality

of my interaction with faculty, staff, and peers (Astin, 1993). I can affirm the very real possibility of my educational journey ending after just one year as an undergraduate, but I persisted intermittently over a number of years until being motivated by the attainment of a university degree to enhance my options for career advancement.

With over 20 years' experience as a student service professional, I have had many opportunities to collaborate with faculty on a wide range of programming that was designed to enhance the student experience. What I learned from these experiences is that we all collaborate on a daily basis. What I believe we fail to do is build collaborative thought (a common vision), and what we say we believe is at times different from how we behave. The theoretical framework for this research emerged from experiencing first-hand the sense of unease and frustration amongst staff and faculty colleagues as we explored collaborative frameworks. This unease appeared to be generated by an adversarial context and an unwillingness to engage in the exploration of power structures that might exist within the university.

We all bring belief systems to the collaborative table in the hopes of producing some heat, light, and magic for the student experience. Based on my professional experience, this collaborative synergy can take a while, although Keithia Wilson, Professor, Griffith University in a 2009 keynote address at the 12th First Year in Higher Education in Townsville Australia, stated we are "beginning to see less discussion about the merits of individual strategies and more discussion about their useful alignment to create learning environments that will facilitate student success" (Wilson, 2009, p. 1).

My interest in this topic has evolved from years of participation in collaborative initiatives and partnerships that supported the student learning experience. I have experienced the early success of collaborations that have come with excitement, passion, and creativity. Unfortunately, all too often, these initiatives faded from favour and continued along (if at all) with limited resources and one or two champions. Once the champions retired or moved to another area of the institution, the narrative became a nostalgic game of "do you remember when?" With the changing landscape and what I believe to be the limited success of current collaborative initiatives, the question remains whether or not these strategies have been created by accident or design. This leads to the theoretical influences in my research study, I used both Critical Theory (Foucault,

1982; Giroux, 1992) and Organizational Theory (Schein, 2004) to help investigate collaborations between faculty and staff.

1.4. Theoretical Framework

1.4.1. Critical Theory

Using a critical worldview will “address the processes of interaction among individuals... [and] focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work” (Creswell, 2009, p. 8). The theoretical underpinnings of critical theory began with Habermas in the 1950s as an attempt to “resolve the divisions between values and facts and theory and practice” (Ewert, 1991, p. 345) so to provide a descriptive and normative base for social inquiry. Critical theory addresses power relationships and power differentials so to critique and analyze the current worldview—how it came to be and what the effects are within power relations and pockets of domination (Lather, 2006). With respect to the present study, critical theory provides a theoretical tool to peel back the layers of collaborative relations and institutional culture by revealing their related complex issues and institutional contradictions. Specifically, critical theory can be used to analyze cultural differences, and the historical separation between the formal and informal curriculum, and organizational and governance structures. These theoretical concepts will be explored further in Chapter 2.

The issue of power sharing is the most important of all with respect to the dialogue around partnerships and collaborative practice (Metge, 2001). In examining the possible marginalization of stakeholders in higher education, Ahren (2008) has suggested that many players are involved in maintaining the status quo—institutional culture, governance structures, institutional policies, institutional leadership, poorly defined job descriptions, job duties, typical working hours, existing structures, institutional divisions, reporting lines, hierarchical notions, and governance structures, to name a few. In the current climate of continual budget streaming and increasing campus diversity, issues of power and privilege will continue to intensify, and some stakeholders who have a limited voice may become even more marginalized than they are today.

Although collegial for the most part, the present study examines organizational structures that address clear lines of responsibility, goals, expectations, and rules to enable the ongoing development of marginalized voices (Tisdell, 1993). Creating these effective partnerships to advance student learning, foster educational attainment, and reinvigorate higher education requires a determined effort to build bridges and organizational structures that level the playing field for all stakeholders.

1.4.2. Organizational Culture

Tension and conflict develop when organizational culture and values are not synchronized with personal or group values (Tierney, 1988). Resetting this relationship between faculty and staff requires an understanding of the complete higher education ecosystem within a campus as a learning community. Schein's (2004) theory of culture incorporates three levels of culture that include assumptions that are taken for granted and which are generally invisible, values that represent a greater level of awareness, and artefacts that are visible but often undecipherable. Cross-institutional dialogue brings an expanded awareness and understanding of the differing cultural perspectives and values that can be attributed to collaborations. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) has suggested that traditional culture transmits a historical pattern of meanings and symbols that people constantly perpetuate as they develop their attitudes and knowledge about life. This transmission of cultural influence requires a cross-institutional dialogue that can bring an increased awareness and understanding of differing cultural perspectives and values. This awareness enables researchers to explore culture with an attempt to minimize the occurrences and consequences of cultural conflict with respect to the development and implementation of shared goals and objectives (Tierney, 1988). What people think influences how they act, and bringing two or more of these communities together to discuss vision, beliefs, language, and standards creates many challenges.

The faculty and staff cultures have developed from different histories and values that have produced different views about what is most important in undergraduate education (Tierney, 1988). Organizational theory can help to unfold the underlying socio-economic, political, and cultural infrastructure that enables or hinders collaborative practice. Moreover, Schein (2004) has argued that studying culture is critical for analyzing the institutional norms, values, and behaviours that emerge from underlying

cultures. Organizational theory explores the complexity of multi-perspectival and multi-epistemological voices and how power can influence whose understanding is being heard; what is relevant; what conclusions are made; and what recommendations are being implemented (Foucault & Sheridan, 1972). Researching organizational culture from a critical perspective is to explore the values and beliefs of participants and institutional processes, and the structures that support these values and beliefs (Locke & Guglielmino, 2006).

This study captures collaborative practice as it exists in current contexts. Both faculty and student services are situated in operational silos that continue to specialize by creating individual goals and values (Birnbaum, 1991; Kezar & Lester, 2009). An analysis of this evolutionary development, and historical (critical theory) and social perspectives (organizational culture of universities) provides insight into and understanding of the evolution of this culture and how it is perpetuated through human interactions (Crotty, 1998). Thus, the present study analyzes the values and beliefs of its participants, whose voices are being heard, and how their values/beliefs impact collaborative practice; as well as how these individual stakeholders are influenced, supported, or hindered within their organizational structures and culture. This approach focuses the study to explore the network of connections and cultures that give meaning to the concepts, beliefs, and values currently held by stakeholders. Kezar's (2005) higher education three stage collaboration model— (1) building commitment: external pressure, values, learning, networks; (2) commitment: sense of priority, mission, and (3) integrating structures, rewards, and networks—emphasizes the powerful role of personal relations and underlying social structures in the success or failure of collaboration in higher education.

1.5. Research Purpose & Questions

The purpose of the present study is to analyze the faculty and staff cross-divisional collaborations that aspire to build broad-based partnerships and integrative educational experiences for students. As Kezar (2002) has noted, previous research has not identified the "most successful types of collaborations; the reasons people collaborate; strategies for creating collaborations; or the characteristics of successful collaborations" (p. 39). Thus, the present study helps to provide insight into the current

practices of collaboration/non-collaboration and what has been successful/non-successful, as well as suggesting possible alternatives for successful collaborations.

The present study has considered the following research questions:

1. How does power and stakeholder beliefs, perspectives, and experiences impact first year programs in higher education?
2. What are the experiences—commonalities and differences—between faculty and staff involved in first year programming?
3. What organizational factors (e.g., campus culture) affect the development of first year partnerships between staff and faculty?

1.6. Methodology and Research Design

The present study used a qualitative comparative multi-site case study at three post-secondary institutions in British Columbia to capture a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the impact of structures (organizational and power); networks of beliefs and perceptions; and current experiences within the development of collaborative initiatives between faculty and staff (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1994). The comparative case study also provided flexibility, openness to unanticipated insights, and an ability to capture the natives' point of view (Denison, 2001). Similar to Locke's (2006) research on the influence of subcultures on planned change in a community college, the present study's case study approach helps to expand our understanding of collaborative practice from multi-layered perspectives and beliefs. Additionally, the present study provides conceptual insights that examine what our relationships ask of us; who defines how things are structured; and who controls, legitimates, and defines knowledge.

The case study examines the structure, values, processes, and history of each of the three sites that other methods (such as experiments) would not have been able to capture (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). Although there can be overlap between different research methods the multi-case study answered the "how" and "why" questions (Yin, 2011).

The present study was bound by time and institutional strategic plans. First year initiatives provided a natural link between faculty and staff because institutions of higher

education have been concerned with accountability measures in the form of student retention (Bean, 1979; Choy, 2002; Gardner 2012a; Le Peau, 2015; Tinto, 2007).

The comparative case study includes a review of the strategic plans from the three participating institutions of higher education. Individual interviews were held with senior leaders at each institution, followed by focus groups with key stakeholders. The institutions were chosen for their diversity of culture and program offerings.

1.7. Significance of the Study

Failure to complete a university credential has severe consequences on many levels (Parkin, 2008). Students will have less earning potential and opportunities; institutions will lose or will not recoup the resources they had targeted for recruitment; and teaching and administrative leadership will be critiqued for poor performance (Parkin, 2008). Additionally, Parkin (2008) has suggested that low persistence levels can, over time, relate to lower individual prosperity, which exacerbates social inequities and quality of life that ultimately are reflected in costs to society.

As campuses become more diverse, increasing issues of power and privilege will continue to impact collaboration between faculty and staff. The present study brings voices to the table to address "differences in aims; professional language and cultures; unwarranted assumptions; and genuine or perceived power relations" (Walsh & Kahn, 2010, p. 10). Highlighting different cultures and diverse perspectives creates opportunities for inter- and intra-group dialogue "that aims to develop trust and mutual understanding among groups defined by their different social identities" (Arcelus, 2011, p. 71). Thus, the present study bridges organizational structures, role boundaries, and power structures that may have been unquestioned and reinforced through formal and informal structures (Walsh & Kahn, 2010).

Developing shared goals and creating new ways of seeing and overcoming ingrained patterns of behaviour require change to be consistent with the values and the core mission of an institution (House & Watson, 1995). Exposing these commonalities and differences across disciplinary, service, administrative, and student boundaries creates new possibilities that support collaborative partnerships (ACPA, 2004). The present study examines the connections and disconnections between staff and faculty

by using dialogue and analysis to uncover what Chickering, Dalton & Stamm (2006) has suggested is an unspoken divide.

1.7.1. Delimitations and Limitations

The first delimitation of the present study was to intentionally set the context and framework to incorporate three institutions in British Columbia—a mid-sized regional university, a community college, and an institute of technology. The rationale for this decision was to enable a determination of whether the differences between the culture and scope of programming among these three higher education institutions—who design and implement their own services, programs, and policies (Fisher, 2011a)—have different outcomes with respect to first year programming. I also recognized a lack of research on the impact of the institutional context, and assumed that although common threads exist in the historical development of these three institutions, it was important to identify and address the unique situations embodied within each site.

Data collection from three diverse institutions where current culture and individual perspectives are richly detailed provided an opportunity to inform theoretical propositions that may be valuable to a broader scope of practitioners as they develop first year initiatives and co-curricular partnerships. The present study is limited to faculty and staff personnel who have an interest in, and history of, working with first year initiatives, although the research findings may have a broader interest across institutions that are seeking more collaboration and shared experiences. The criteria for selecting the research participants included functional roles, longevity of employment, and willingness to participate. The stakeholders included both genders, and a diversity of ages, ethnicities, position levels, academic disciplines, and student services. The research was limited to stakeholders who had participated in collaborative first year efforts. Minimizing the broad scope of collaborative practice to a single context provided a workable framework to examine institutional culture and its impact on collaborative success initiatives.

1.8. Outline of Dissertation

Chapter 1 provided a brief history of the shifting student profile in Canadian higher education and new layers of complexity that require a re-evaluation of how higher

education is structured to support student success. Chapter 1 also explored the need for collaborative practice in design and program implementation. It also described the purpose of the present study; the context in which it arose; the theoretical and methodological frameworks used; the research question outlines: and the limitations and delimitations of the study.

Chapter 2 presented an overview of the literature reviewed for this study, which includes an examination of organizational leadership and critical theories. The literature review provided an historical foundation of first year studies and key recommendations for their successful incorporation into the mainstream curriculum. The review also addressed institutional leadership and organizational structures, since they impact the implementation of first year collaborative initiatives.

Chapter 3 introduced the problem that this research addressed and provided a literature review of the methodological framework and research process for this study. It also provided the rationale for a qualitative comparative multi-case study research design, intended participants, context of research questions, timelines, procedures, data collection, and analysis plan.

Chapter 4 presented the study findings that help address the proposed research questions: power relations and the impact they have on first year initiatives; the impact of cultural and organizational structures on collaborative initiatives.

Chapter 5 provided a summary and discussion of the three main research questions within the context of the literature and theoretical frameworks. It concluded by sharing the implications of this research for theory, practice, and policy development.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

The changing landscape of higher education highlights a diversification of the student body along with increasing costs and decreasing government funding, which create dramatic demands on the quality and accountability of higher education (Mortiboys, 2002). As educators consider the context of shared responsibility for student learning that encompasses the whole student experience, students have become partners and co-creators within the learning environment where "…learning is far more rich and complicated than some of our predecessors realized" (Keeling, 2004, p.5). This complexity and volume of student needs require collaboration between faculty and staff that is responsive to the "whole student" (Keeling, 2004). The whole student approach incorporates the personal attributes, aspirations, and goals a student has before entering higher education and enables the student to connect what they "know" with new information and new learning connections.

Developing the whole student necessitates an effective stakeholder collaboration across the entire campus. In higher education, these collaborations still appear to be the exception rather than the rule (Magolda, 2010). For 20 plus years, researchers (Arcellus, 2011; Banta & Kuh,1998; Burack, 2001; Kezar, 2005; Kuh,1999; LePeau, 2015; Schroeder, 1999; Siefert, 2018; Tinto, 2007; Upcraft & Gardner, 1989) have reported that collaborative practice is a powerful approach to student development, yet such collaborations struggle with implementation, integration, and sustainability. Obstacles to the success of these partnerships have been attributed to cultural differences; historical differentiation between formal and informal education; perceptions that student services are an ancillary function; and competing assumptions about student learning (Bourassa, 2001).

The purpose of this study was to review the effectiveness of faculty and staff cross-divisional collaborations and how they were implemented in the development of broad-based first year partnerships. Thus, the study reflected on the experiences of stakeholders, and explored organizational factors that negatively impacted/enhanced the development of first year programs. The study used first-year programs to highlight initiatives between staff and faculty where, historically, "most retention activities are

appended to, rather than integrated within the mainstream of academic life... they are add-ons to existing university activity" (Tinto, 2007, p. 3). Chapter 2 begins with a review of the literature that helps situate the research. The chapter begins with an overview of Canadian Higher education, specifically governance, faculty, and student services. This is followed by a review of the literature on collaboration, collaboration between staff and faculty and first year programming. The chapter concludes with a review of the theoretical frames – critical theory, critical theory in higher education, organizational theory and organizational theory in higher education as a way to analyze faculty and staff collaborations.

2.2. Canadian Higher Education

The higher education system in Canada developed from two founding languages and cultures—English and French. In 1668, Bishop Laval founded the Quebec Seminary and adopted the Jesuitical educational system (Wallace, 1948), which was influenced by the Catholic Church. English speaking Canada was influenced by the influx of British Loyalists and maintained academic standards and structures that were influenced by universities in Great Britain (Wallace,1948). English educational practices were influenced by Oxford University and Cambridge University with an emphasis on liberal arts education and its mission to educate students from the elite class to be leaders of good character (Pocklington & Tupper, 2002). The first English-speaking university in Canada was Kings College in Halifax, Nova Scotia, which was established in 1789 by Anglican Loyalists and today is known as the University of King's College (Cox & Strange, 2010; Jones, Shanahan, & Goyan, 2001).

In the early days of Canadian post-secondary education, students typically went to religiously affiliated universities that were federally supported financially (Cox & Strange, 2010; Jones, Shanahan, & Goyan, 2001). The end of World War II was the catalyst for expanding post-secondary enrollments as institutions of higher learning moved from elite institutions preparing the next generation of leaders to accommodating a large influx of veterans and the demand for education and training (Skolnik, 1997; Jones, 1996; Strange & Cox, 2016).

The 1998 World Declaration on Higher Education called "for a major global effort to improve the delivery of higher education in every country in the world" (WCHE, 1998,

p. iv). The desired outcomes were significantly more holistic than the early years of higher education and aimed for an improved delivery that included a high-quality learning experience; access regardless of ability or background; better retention and progress toward graduation; enhanced career/employment prospects; and a life as a responsible contributing community member and citizen. The contemporary Canadian college and university systems agenda follows this global aim of higher education, since it is " imperative to educate a greater proportion of the Canadian population, lifelong, and prepare them for participation in a labour market that values knowledge, innovation, sustainability, and creativity, and in a democratic system that requires compassion, critical analysis and agency" (Fisher, 2011, p. 3). Preparing a greater proportion of Canadians for higher education means that the non-traditional students entering higher education have an increased range of issues that have begun to overburden faculty and staff personnel. Today, every student comes to higher education with a diverse learning past that is an important part of his or her present and future learning. Higher education must account for the diverse development of minoritized students, their cultures and backgrounds; the changing expectations of today's students; specific learning styles of women and returning adults; students with disabilities as well as students with sometimes debilitating mental health (Cox & Strange, 2016). According to Strange and Cox (2016), "[w]hat has functioned to serve students well in the past may no longer suffice as enrolment compositions continue to evolve in Canadian colleges and universities" (p. 215). An example of this evolving landscape is the Canadian Government launch of the International Education Strategy in 2014. This strategy aimed to double the number of international students and researchers studying in Canada to 450,000 by 2022, and was linked to a desire to create jobs and stimulate the economy (CBC News, 2014). However, as the coffers of B.C.'s universities and colleges have swelled, spending on student instruction and support hasn't yet caught up (Abby News, 2019). One VP of students reported the following concerns:

> One word sums up the overarching theme of what I heard and learned through this process: concern… Individuals and groups expressed concerns about [the] current approach to International admissions and enrolment, about the level of support available to faculty and staff as they navigate this change in classroom and campus composition, and about international student success and our efforts to support it. (Webb, 2019, p.14)

This situation has created a huge issue for staff and faculty as international students, who have very unique transitional needs, have become incredibly important for institutional functioning.

Decision-making becomes less about student development and success and more about marketing the services to students who are now being redefined as customers (Stringer,2009). Moving through the last quarter of the twentieth century, enrolment numbers continued to diversify, with growing percentages of first generation, adult learners, women, students of colour, single parents, students with disabilities, international students, and others (Hardy Cox & Strange, 2010). According to Kezar (2014), "[t]he perception is that institutions have been slow to address the different needs of these populations, which has partly led to low completion rates" (p. 209) and which has necessitated a division of student services to handle the burgeoning numbers of student requirements.

2.2.1. Governance—Higher Education

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries the Canadian federal government passed the British North America Act (Cox & Strange, 2010) giving provinces jurisdiction over higher education—its infrastructure and operational funding, quality assurance, and approval of new programs (Skolnik, 1997). The governance structure of an institution tells us how stakeholders (including board members, faculty and staff, students, and parents) communicate with each other—who is accountable to whom, how they are held accountable, and for what they are accountable. Birnbaum (1991) and Kezar (2004) have underscored the importance of human factors of governance within political, collegial, and symbolic processes—the human conditions that affect governance through group interactions and also the recognition of the importance of people to the process.

The 1906 Royal Commission on the University of Toronto provided the rationale for the development of bicameral governance structures at most Canadian universities (Jones, 1996; Jones, Shanahan, & Goyan, 2001). Bicameral governance separated university governance from the political power of the day by creating a delegated corporate board that handled the administrative duties of the institution and by retaining a senate that consisted of academic scholars and administrators who handled faculty affairs. Canadian governance structures within higher education are struggling with

economic and political changes, and new models and approaches of management are changing priorities in the face of these additional pressures from external forces (Levin, 2009). According to Jones, Shanahan, and Goyan (2004),

> [t]he bi-cameral form of governance at (this university) works reasonably well under normal circumstances. However, under circumstances of financial exigency and constraint the necessary priority given to monetary matters diminishes severely the effectiveness of the senate, without any reduction of the formally stated powers of that body. The focus of interest and attention shifts from academic concerns to financial ones, moving the dominant exercise of power to the board. (p.51)

This history of higher education continues to impact our current educational systems, since the bicameral governance structure is still the dominant model of governance within Canadian universities, providing for representation from both the academic faculty and the provincial government.

The Senate is composed largely of faculty members and is responsible for academic matters, whereas the Board of Governors is made up of a wide range of people—most of whom are not directly connected to the university—and is responsible for overseeing the general administration and finances of the university. Colleges and institutes of technology have an Education Council (rather than a Senate) that acts in an advisory capacity to the Board of Governors with a focus on developing and maintaining high quality programs and ensuring effective educational policies.

Higher education was now seen as a key component in the economic and social development in Canada. As the educational systems expanded, regulating systems were incorporated and faculty and students continued "demanding a greater role in the internal decision-making processes of the universities" (Jones, 2014, pg. 7). From 1964 – 1972 most Canadian universities re-examined their governance structures with an eye to a greater student voice in the Senate; a faculty voice on the board of governors and more open transactions between senate and boards (Jones, Shanahan & Goyan, 2001).

In 1962, John B. MacDonald recommended changes in the post-secondary system in British Columbia. His recommendation was to establish two-year community colleges that could offer programs in four educational fields: academic (university transfer); career/technical to train students for specific employment; vocational offering short applied programs of a year or less; and adult basic education to prepare those

without high school graduation for other post-secondary programs or for employment. This report became the framework for developing British Columbia's post-secondary school system. Higher educational institutions in British Columbia now had the authority to develop particular mandates specific to community needs, and the authority to manage various levels of administrative details with regard to operations, faculty, staff, and students. Governance as a process that has influence and responsibility for making decisions and being accountable for those decisions speaks to the value and importance of governance within higher education. Governments have a say in these institutional operations, "particularly those they saw as being central to their investments —such as functions affecting student retention, transfer and completion and employability" (Kezar, 2014, p. 7). A recognition that both these structures and behaviors matter (Goedegebuure & Hayden, 2007) is the ground for understanding the variances between the institutions of higher education in British Columbia. Vancouver and the lower mainland have two research universities, four teaching universities, three colleges, and seven institutes. Vancouver Island has one research university, one teaching university, and two colleges. The Southern Interior has one research university, one teaching university, three colleges, and one institute. Northern BC has one research university and three colleges.

Table 1. BC Public Postsecondary Institutions, 2015

Region and Type	Name	Opened	Notes
VANCOUVER			
Research University	Simon Fraser University	1965	
	Technical University of BC	1999	Merged into SFU to become Surrey Campus
	University of British Columbia	1915	Predecessor affiliated with McGill University
Teaching University	Capilano University	1968	Originally Capilano College
	Emily Carr University	1933	Originally Vancouver School of Art, then Emily Carr College of Art and Design then Institute
	Kwantlen Polytechnic University	1981	Originally part of Douglas College, became Kwantlen College, and then Kwantlen University College
	University of the Fraser Valley	1974	Originally Fraser Valley College, then University College of the Fraser Valley
College	Douglas College	1970	
	Langara College	1994	Originally Vancouver City College
	Vancouver Vocational Institute	1949	Merged into Vancouver Community College
	Vancouver Community College	1965	Originally Vancouver City College
Institute	Pacific Marine Training Institute	1938	Originally Vancouver Navigational School; merged into BC Institute of Technology in 1994
	Pacific Vocational Institute	1960	Originally part of BC Vocational School; merged into BC Institute of Technology
	BC Institute of Technology	1964	
	Institute of Indigenous Government	1995	Absorbed by the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology in 1983
	Justice Institute	1978	
	Open Learning Agency	1978	Originally Open Learning Institute; merged into Thompson Rivers University in April 2005

Region and Type	Name	Opened	Notes
VANCOUVER ISLAND			
Research University	University of Victoria	1963	Predecessor was Victoria College
Teaching University	Vancouver Island University	1969	Originally Malaspina College, then Malaspina University-College
College	Camosun College	1971	
College	North Island College	1975	
SOUTHERN INTERIOR			
Research University	University of British Columbia–Okanagan	2004	Originally part of Okanagan College
Teaching University	Thompson Rivers University	1970	Originally Cariboo College, then University College of the Cariboo
College	College of the Rockies	1975	Originally Easy Kootenay Community College
	Okanagan College	1968	Okanagan University College for a period
	Selkirk College	1966	
Institute	Nicola Valley Institute of Technology	1983	Private institution, became public in 1995
NORTHERN BC			
Research University	University of Northern BC	1994	
College	College of New Caledonia	1969	
	Northern Lights College	1975	
	Northwest Community College	1975	
MULTI-CAMPUS			
	BC Vocational School	1960	Campuses across the province; after 1970 merged into colleges and BCIT (1986)

Source: Cowin, 2018

As Table 1 shows, prior to 1960, students had few opportunities to attend post-secondary schools close to home. In the 1960s, the perception of education as too expensive for the masses changed to education as a way to improve an individual's way of life and society at large. This increasing demand changed higher education in British Columbia, and the federal Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act of 1960 provided the impetus for opening eight postsecondary vocational school campuses; followed by the University of Victoria in 1963 and Simon Fraser University in 1965

(Cowin, 2018). British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) opened its doors in 1964, and the following year 14 community colleges opened across BC.

Unlike other Canadian provinces, BC developed a comprehensive community college framework with a university transfer system that enabled 60% as many college transfer students to be admitted annually to BC research universities as were admitted directly from BC secondary schools (Cowin, 2004). BC community colleges were designed to address geographical barriers to higher education, and this priority was enhanced by university transfer options, which resulted in graduation rates from BC universities comparable to the direct entry students to university from high school.

2.2.2. Faculty Role and Responsibility

Canadian higher education faculty roles have evolved in a similar fashion to American and European models. Initially, faculty were responsible for all facets of academic learning and the student's life outside of the classroom (Colwell, 2006). Prior to the end of the war, in both Canada and the US, universities were elite institutions preparing the next generation of leaders. With the influx of so many new students post-war, institutions had to change rapidly to accommodate the demand for education and training. As the complexity of higher education expanded with increasing enrolments, athletics, campus publications, and student life activities, deans were hired to handle non-academic issues. With this restructuring, faculty began to re-focus their time on scholarship, teaching, service, and their contribution to their academic discipline. Austin (1990) has identified five core commitments of most faculty: furthering knowledge, intellectual honesty, professional autonomy, collegiality, and service to society.

As the changing landscape of higher education creates additional tensions and divisions, faculty continue to support excellence in teaching and learning as the core business of the university that must not be marginalized in the neo-liberal corporate governance structure (Lapworth, 2004). Due to cutbacks in funding that began around 1980 and increasing accountability measures, expectations have risen for faculty who are expected to publish, teach, supervise students, stay current in their field of study, obtain grants, and do research. Additionally, faculty are expected to participate in campus activities, prepare class notes, and attend professional conferences and meetings (Lucas, 1996). Faculty spend their time on these components with upwards of

70 hours per week on teaching loads, interaction with students, committee assignments, and research demands (Pearson & Bowman, 2000). Slaughter and Rhodes (1997) have suggested that the current university professoriate works in an environment full of contradictions in which faculty and staff “expend their human capital stocks in increasingly competitive situations” (p. 9).

This decreasing autonomy in higher education has created tensions between the new corporate model of governance and the historical academic method of collaboration and consensus. According to Kezar (2014), “In the last 20 years, higher education leaders have largely not responded to changes in the public policy environment around funding and public support rather than thoughtfully adapting to them” (p. 5). Government funding and public support have not re-bounded as hoped, and to offset some of these funding shortfalls, higher education in the United States (and Canada to varying degrees) has moved toward a corporate model of contingency employment where 70% of faculty do not have consistent employment, and more important to the present study, have limited connection to their campuses (Kezar, 2014). Moreover, faculty did not resist the changes that have created poor working environments in which it is difficult to teach and contribute to the vison and strategic goals of the institution (Kezar, 2014). Academic and professional values have taken a back seat to conversations and decision making that focuses on funding, marketing, branding, enrollment growth, and maximizing productivity (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). This shift towards corporatization has eroded the shared interest and trust between faculty and administrators (Kezar, 2014).

With faculty workloads reaching unsurmountable levels, debates have arisen about the actual definition of faculty work, the conflict with the original mission of higher education, and the shifting academic culture (Cote & Allahar, 2011), in particular the roles that are critical for faculty to address, what faculty should value and promote, and what student outcomes are critical (Pearson & Bowman, 2000). Since student-oriented faculty work—such as teaching, mentoring, advising, supervising, and participating in committees—are undervalued (Pearson & Bowman, 2000), faculty may focus their efforts on areas other than the student experience. Thus, this situation creates a challenge for institutions interested in first year programs designed to strengthen the student experience, build resiliency, and increase student retention. The conflict between faculty and higher education administrators around working conditions and

autonomy can be a stumbling block to institutional changes that might otherwise significantly benefit students.

Current higher education culture and organizational expectations can impact faculty involvement in first year initiatives, since their commitments are stretched in many directions. Campus-wide out-of-class activities often are unrelated to faculty in-class teaching and learning, and therefore, faculty are not generally involved (Kezar & Eckel, 2004). With the implementation of first year programming and the widening participation in higher education, academics may perceive a threat to their professional status (Thorley, 1995), especially as the focus turns to ensuring that every student has equal opportunity through the creation of learning environments in which all students can succeed in higher education. By combining academic learning and student development, student service professionals are seen as educators who increase learning opportunities for students (Magolda & Magolda, 2013), which is a substantial deviation from the historical approach of academic primacy. Historically, faculty cultivated the significance of academic primacy where they were considered first in order, power, and importance; and academic primacy was more imperative than educating the whole person (Magolda & Magolda, 2013).

2.2.3. Student Services Staff Roles and Responsibility

From its early beginnings, student services have struggled with identity and relationship to the core university value of student experience (Strange, Hardy, & Seifert, 2011). The earliest history of student services as a separate function from faculty within Canadian higher education is located approximately 70 years ago (Cox & Strange, 2010). Since that time, from house mothers, dons, and deans of men to vice presidents, directors of leadership, housing, and wellness, student services have evolved into a professional organization that is an essential part of undergraduate education (Fried, 1995).

In the early part of the 19th century, the function of student services in Canadian higher education was handled by teaching faculty and a few clerical assistants. By the mid-19th century, services for students had evolved to providing out-of-class support for students, which removed these responsibilities from faculty concerns (Hardy Cox, & Strange, 2010). Student numbers continued to grow exponentially, from the early to mid-

20th century and specifically during post World War 2 when the student body diversified as it accommodated military personnel (Hardy Cox, & Strange, 2010). As the number of student enrolments steadily increased, a division of student services was created to handle the burgeoning numbers of students and their service requirements. Moving through the last quarter of the twentieth century, enrolment numbers continued to diversify with a higher percentage of women, students of colour, older non-traditional students, single parents, students with disabilities, and others (Hardy Cox, & Strange, 2010).

Three distinct approaches to student services have emerged over the last 50 years. The first focused on providing high quality services in non-academic areas to support the academic mission, which was followed by a shift in student services to accommodating non-cognitive student development issues that impact overall classroom learning and satisfaction (ACPA, 2004; American Council on Education, 1994). Today, student services has been reconstituted with a broader view of student services as partners in the development and learning of students (Hardy Cox & Strange, 2010).

Current higher education's enrollment strategies that enhance student diversity have altered the role of student services from providing a service to support the academic mission to "be[ing] the strongest and most consistent voice in the academy articulating concern for the human growth and development of students" (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010, p. 20). Canada's umbrella student service organization, the Canadian Association for College and University Student Services (CACUSS), produced a 2011 white paper titled "Leaders in Learning—Student Affairs in Canada in the 21st Century and Implications for the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services," which provided a fresh understanding for Canadian institutions of higher education, their approach to holistic learning, and their work as integral to the success of post-secondary students in Canada today. According to CACUSS (2011), "What were characterized as challenges twenty years ago can now be seen clearly as opportunities —opportunities that student service practitioners are particularly suited to advance" (p. 4). The added layers of complexity in higher education that are ideally suited to student services professionals have shifted the responsibilities of student services from a guidance/disciplinary role to a key role for attracting and retaining students.

Student service professionals no longer hold positions previously released by faculty, and considering the exponential growth of higher education, the role of student services is too complex to return to the reporting structures of the 1800/1900s (Manning, 1996). Student services was forever changed in the 1980s when “for the first time in our history, there was support and recognition for professional development, for credentials, and for knowledge-based practice about students and student services” (Patterson, 2010, p. viii). Student services has “emerged... as a principal partner in Canadian higher education, contributing to quality of the students’ experience” (Strange et al., 2011, p.15) The desired outcomes for students include a quality well-rounded university experience, improved access—learning for all, better retention and graduation rates, career/employment opportunities, life-long learning, and the enhanced ability to be a contributing member of society (UNESCO, 2002).

As higher education has evolved, the division of services has created hierarchical structures that have addressed the complexities of higher education but, unfortunately, also have contributed to the lack of interest in collaborations between staff and faculty. Additionally, the separation of services has led to a limited knowledge of each other’s responsibilities (Philpott & Strange, 2003)—faculty were responsible for student learning, and staff were responsible for the co-curricular environment. In her book *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World*, Margret Wheatley (1999) discussed traditional organizational charts filled with lines connecting well-bounded boxes, and Wheatley compared these lines to reaction channels where energy meets up with other energy. However, as departments compete for students and government dollars, we are losing this network of interactions. The more unstable and untrusting this environment becomes, the more selective departments/individuals become with sharing their insights and knowledge (Arcellus, 2011).

Thackara (2007) has suggested that an attempt to implement processes and structures that build successful collaborative initiatives would require institutional and attitudinal transformations. In addition, Kezar and Lester (2009) have suggested that collaboration urgently requires new organizational structures and a re-evaluation of campus resources. Kezar (2014) also has pointed out that since change is a complex process, we need to look at external and organizational contexts if we want to develop any type of change in higher education.

2.3. Collaboration

In their article “What Is Collaboration? Diverse Perspectives,” Thayer-Bacon and Pack-Brown (2000) share their research on how to collaborate and also provide examples of collaboration. They found “little has been done to (a) justify definitions being used, (b) to unpack assumptions or to (c) assess cultural implications” (Thayer-Bacon & Pack-Brown, p. 46). Is *collaboration* a response to crisis where “parties who see different aspects of a problem can explore their differences and search for solutions beyond their own limited vision of what is possible” (Gray, 1989, p. 5) or does it come from a place of intentional growth and sustain itself as a change agent without necessarily being rooted in problem solving (Slater, 1996)?

The differing nature of functional roles has reinforced the separation of faculty and staff. To enhance collaborative partnerships, faculty and student service professionals are required to address their functional roles and “take on the difficult task of negotiating meaning, social relations, knowledge, and values” (Magolda, 2005, p. 21). Partnerships require collaborations from within and beyond the classroom walls with a focus on student needs and their educational experience. Even with these efforts, as higher education continues to exist in a state of flux, the current environment may not be conducive to building the trust and respect required for successful collaborative practice.

Collaboration in higher education is “characterized by coherent educational purposes and comprehensive policies and practices consistent with students’ needs and abilities” (Nesheim, 2007, pp. 436–437), but it has suffered due to external pressures and differences in cultural expectations, understandings of student learning, and even the logistics of putting it all together (Ahren, 2008, p. 6). “For example, the culture within student affairs is one that fosters working collaboratively, in groups, to solve problems, whereas faculty engage in solitary, autonomous work” (Bourassa, 2001, p. 9). The literature speaks to the divide between faculty and staff, but expanding on this disparity, it also seems likely that a similar gap of misunderstanding exists between all key stakeholders— administrators, students, faculty, and student services (Ahren, 2008). According to Giroux (1992),

> At the very least, educators need a language that is interdisciplinary, that moves skillfully among theory, practice, and politics… a language that makes the issues of culture, power, and ethics primary to understanding

how schools construct knowledge, identities, and ways of life that promote nurturing and empowering relations. (p. 8)

For the purpose of the present study, “Collaboration is defined as individuals and groups working together toward a common purpose, with equal voice and responsibility” (Kezar, 2003, p. 140). The present study recognizes the complexities of successful collaborations that require working with relationships that are fraught with opinions, knowledge, backgrounds, and experiences while, at the same time, untangling these structures, cultures, beliefs, expectations, and values (Behl, 2003). A great deal of work lies ahead if we want to be able to sustain partnerships that will provide exceptional educational experiences for all students.

Whether the collaboration is a diverse group of individuals or a group that brings with it a departmental and/or institutional continuity, most agree that a collaboration happens when shared common concerns exist and a belief that the collaboration will provide a more successful result (Magolda & Baxter Magolda, 2011). Successful collaborations continue to be valued within the practice of higher education, but the challenges and tensions that exist within these collaborations must be acknowledged (Magolda & Baxter Magolda, 2011). These challenges and tensions include potential differences between stakeholder beliefs with regard to the understanding of student success/excellence, accessibility or the reality of decreased funding, declining societal support, and more intrusive government intervention (Magolda & Baxter Magolda, 2011).

Collaboration is beneficial to higher education (Kezar, 2003, 2005; Martinelli-Fernandez, 2010; van Dijk, 2005), since it builds community to support the success of students. Collaborations create a seamless connection between in-the-classroom and outside-the-classroom experiences; provide holistic support for the development of the whole student; increase resources and support for students; and enhance the satisfaction of the overall university experience (Kezar & Lester, 2009). However, although successful collaborations are valued within the practice of higher education, challenges and tensions exists with respect to these successful collaborations that must be acknowledged (Magolda & Magolda, 2011), such as being time consuming, challenging, and “fraught with potential pitfalls [that] can result in tensions and disagreements” (Walsh & Kahn, 2010, p. 3). Collaborative work that occurs across institutional and disciplinary lines also is difficult due to the long standing differences in culture, education, philosophy, and professional “turf” (Karasoff, 1999). Arcelus (2011)

has argued that the root of the debate is between academics as the primary focus of the institution and the newer concept of seamless environments which positions the university as being responsible for educating the "whole person." Further challenges can include potential tensions between stakeholder beliefs with regard to their understanding of student success/excellence, accessibility or the reality of decreased funding, declining societal support, and more intrusive government intervention (Magolda & Magolda, 2011).

Changing the status quo of deeply entrenched divisions of labour, and altering policies and practices to support a move from an individual to a team approach require a difficult paradigm shift that can take some time to accomplish (Arcelus, 2008). As research has shown, collaborations between faculty and staff since the 1990s have been one sided because attempts at collaboration by staff have not been readily reciprocated by faculty. (Manning, Kinzie, & Schuh, 2006), which has made collaborations difficult to accomplish when they require people to work together in ways that balance the human relationships and limits the power within those relationships.

Kezar and Lester (2009) have developed a model for higher education collaboration by examining four campuses with high levels of collaboration. This model addresses the concerns of "add on" programming by incorporating the concept of collaboration into institutional missions and educational plans. Additionally, in the development of successful collaborations, they found networks and relationships were important, which is a significant focus of the present study. They also revealed partnership possibilities, obstacles, and windfalls in the development and implementation of the institutional mission, values, educational philosophy, networks, integrating structures, rewards, external pressures, and learning. They posited that genuine collaboration requires urgent action, new organizational structures, and the reallocation of campus resources.

2.3.1. Collaboration Between Staff and Faculty

Although "universities have proven resilient over several centuries of socioeconomic and political change" (Sporn,1999, p. 6), the dramatic changes happening today, combined with the "pace of change in our society is exposing the flaws in this traditional approach to university governance" (Duderstadt, 2002, p. 1). As the institution is being shaped by

“hierarchical relationships, competition for resources and shifting policies” (Reybold, 2007, p. 280), disciplinary loyalties, generational loyalties, and stratification (Schrecker, 2010) continue to divide the faculty. Programs and services that are designed to address the general well-being of students are being diminished due to declining resources for those areas not directly related to the marketplace and corporate welfare (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2007). Additionally, the historical lack of staff representation in higher education governance structures emphasizes the role of the historical and cultural foundations that continue to marginalize the voice of student services (Stringer, 2009). Although universities strive to economize and conserve institutional resources, the decisions regarding the allocation of funding belongs to a governing board forging new paths, and each province has exclusive powers to make laws and provide operating support for post-secondary education. Each province develops its own educational curriculum to address specific needs within their regions, and an overarching national drive exists to support the diversity and inclusivity of learners.

Colleges and universities play a major role in the global, knowledge-based economy (Slaughter & Rhodes, 2000) with their focus on training students for new information-based jobs and workplaces. The prioritizing of greater access, work across sectors, partnerships, and breaking down institutional boundaries aligns with the needs of private sector businesses and industry, which requires more collaboration between stakeholders (Kezar & Lester, 2009). This decreasing autonomy in higher education creates tensions between a new corporate model of governance and the historical academic method of collaboration and consensus (Lapworth, 2004). Lapworth (2004) has suggested that “much has changed since the golden years of higher education... there is a transition to a mass system; reduced funding; increased external scrutiny, and no longer the autonomy to govern as collegial democracies” (p. 300). Lapworth (2004) also pointed out that this rise of corporate governance has resulted in a decline in academic participation, managerial governance, and a new way of operating for universities.

In the 1990s, the ethos of higher education began to change (Kuh, 2006) with the re-introduction of a seamless learning environment to enhance the success of students. As institutions of higher learning worked toward innovation and change, the need for collaboration between staff and faculty became essential to creating a seamless learning environment and quality student experience (Kezar, 2005). Kuh (1996) connected the curricular and co-curricular and argued that many collaborative opportunities exist for

faculty and staff, including learning communities, first year experience programs, peer mentorship programming, summer bridge programming, and tailored programs for specific student populations – but continuing to complicate the changing ethos of higher education was the historical evolution of functional silos within higher education. The research of LePeau (2015) attributed the barriers between faculty and student services to differing cultures. The divide described faculty as thinkers, creating knowledge and focusing on student learning and student services supporting psychosocial and affective domains. Adding to the divide and increasing tensions between faculty and staff was the overarching institutional value on individuality and hierarchical power rather than the 'whole student' approach of student services. This was also visible in the research of Seifert (2018) that examined how student service staff made sense of formal and informal organizational structures of the institution and perceived such structures as helping or hindering their effort to support student success. The study focused on two organizational structures: the web (departments were interconnected and overlapped) and silos (no connection or overlap). The web produced a clear direction, linked to the academic plan and where student service staff had a better understanding of how their work contributed to the institutional mission.

> A synergistic leadership style, that was open to staff feedback and valued staff development, bolstered by a common vision and combined with a supportive senior administration, tended to result in a student-focused approach to the organizational structure (Siefert, 2018, p.22).

The silo approach had separate columns similar to organizational charts where student services were off to the side where staff perceptions were that of being peripheral or sometimes devalued by faculty and senior administration. This organizational structure and culture did not hold a shared commitment for student success and tensions arose between staff who maintained an institution-focused approach and staff who moved towards a more student-focused institution.

Funding for higher education has been declining across many jurisdictions, and the provincial government has become more intrusive with its increasing demands for educational quality and accountability (Mortiboys, 2002). As higher education struggles with these economic and political changes "public colleges and universities operate under a knowledge/education regime informed by academic capitalism" (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2000, p. 74). Academic capitalism moves higher education towards the market

place where students are perceived as revenue producers, and the government supports the educational fields that are close to their political mandates (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2000). Part of this shift in expectations and accountability is higher education turning away from the liberal arts, although there continues to be increased expectations for student access, persistence, and opportunity (Mortiboys, 2002). In October 2009, the Community Foundations of Canada released a snapshot of the issues youth were facing, which represented "massive economic, demographic and social shifts that have dramatically altered the landscape for Canadian youth" (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009, p. 2). Also, the Canadian Council on Learning has suggested that youth are growing up in a time of complexity and uncertainty that has diminished their ability to transition from one phase of life to another. According to Fitts and Swift (1928),

> For youth generally, for adults frequently, a sense of bewilderment comes with each new revelation. Inventions and discoveries continue to come so thick and fast, ideals and standards in the realm of social relationships continue to present every new and every changing aspects so swiftly that the high school student, the youth entering college or university, and even the adult finds serious difficulty in adjusting himself to the new accumulations of knowledge and to the resultant new ideals and standards. (p.1)

To support these transitions, specifically from high school to university, we need to ensure that our youth are healthy, educated, and fully engaged in their studies. As college degrees become the mainstay for economic self-sufficiency, earning a college degree produces long-term benefits that enhance students' quality of life as well as their communities and future generations (Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2008).

The stakeholders involved in collaborative initiatives must think differently, link new values to old beliefs, and create a new culture (Arcellus, 2008). Meaningful change is required and not just the work of people on the ground but also strong policies supporting institutional wide collaboration and governance action (Siefert, 2018). Collaborative partnerships that address first year programming with an emphasis on the experiences of first year students can support these massive economic, demographic, and social shifts with a welcoming environment that can increase student satisfaction, smoothly integrate new students into the campus culture, and ultimately lead to higher retention rates and student success.

In *Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience,* Keeling (2004) proposed an integrated and collaborative campus-wide approach to learning to “put academic learning and student development processes together in a format that would require all the resources of the academy to function together in an integrated manner on behalf of students” (p. 1). In *Learning Reconsidered 2: A Practical Guide to Implementing a Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience,* Keeling (2006) furthered this integration with a blueprint that addressed the need for learning inside and outside the classroom, and discussed ways to change organizational culture and the challenging ”structures and language of learning” (p. 2). The highlights of *Learning Reconsidered 2* defined a collaborative approach—making better use of available talent, linking resources, and creating a network of ideas to support student learning and the development of a mutual language/shared assumptions to create new cultural norms, which can transform working relationships and re-focus energy on the shared responsibility for learning (Keeling, 2006).

Historically, although examples of partnership programs have been highlighted as the means to create seamless learning environments for students, the assessments of these partnerships to improve student success have not been fully implemented (Clark, 2010, Kezar, 2005). Rossman and Rallis’s (2003) qualitative case study examined the outcomes for students participating in faculty and staff partnership programs at 18 institutions within the United States. Four categories affecting these outcomes were identified as acclimation to the institution, engagement, student learning, and career decisions (Neishem, Guentzel, Kellogg, McDonald, Wells & Whitt, 2007). Rossman and Rallis’s (2003) study found that partnership programs fostered desired outcomes for students, outcomes that were essential for student persistence and success in college (see also Astin, 1993; Kuh et al., 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto,1993).

Kezar (2001) conducted research with a number of American higher education institutions that examined perceptions about what made collaborations between staff and faculty successful. The study found that cooperation (73%), student staff attitudes (66%), common goals (63%), and personalities (62%) contributed to the success of their collaborative efforts. Kezar (2001) also noted a slight impetus for collaborative initiatives when funding was available and when the culture of the institution was experiencing greater demands. They found that first year experience, orientation, recruitment, and

athletics were moderately successful collaborations, although Doz (1996) found that more than 50% of the collaborations within higher education fail and in *The Leadership Challenge*, Kouze and Posner (2006) pointed out that 70% of new initiatives fail.

The differing nature of functional roles has reinforced the separation of faculty and student services. To enhance collaborative partnerships, faculty and student service professionals are required to address their functional roles and "take on the difficult task of negotiating meaning, social relations, knowledge, and values" (Magolda, 2005, p. 21). Partnerships require collaborations from within and beyond the classroom walls with a focus on student needs and their educational experience. Even with these efforts, as higher education continues to exist in a state of flux, the current environment may not be conducive to building the trust and respect required for successful collaborative practice.

Arcellus (2008) investigated how staff and faculty personnel perceived their own and each other's roles as educators and how these perceptions influenced collaborative practice. "Each person operated from their paradigms, frames of reference made up of assumptions that are informed by the cultures they are a part of in their professional and personal lives" (Arcellus, 2008). Arcellus found that collaboration between faculty and student services was a shift towards learning-centeredness that required a combination of leadership, dialogue and a willingness to re-evaluate ones viewpoint while learning about other perspectives.

Arcellus (2008) suggested further study is needed, which would include intragroup (within an organization) and intergroup (between two or more groups within an organization) dialogue processes within higher education. These dialogues could provide effective strategies to change attitudes to help "shift the campus culture to one that enhances the relationship between the educators on campus" (Arcelus, 2008, p. 420) and could encourage self-reflection; develop dialogue that breaks through the surface tension created by difference; create affirmative action; and challenge stakeholders to rethink many of their attitudes, assumptions, and social understandings (Arcelus, 2008). Arcelus's research is an early beginning of the enormous amount of work required for sustaining partnerships that can provide exceptional educational experiences for all students. The next section reviews the literature related to the importance of first year programming for student persistence.

2.4. A Key to Persistence: First Year

Historically, first year programs and services have been described as deficit enhancing to bridge the gap between what students can already do and what they must do to succeed (Tinto & Pusser, 2006). First year programming and the services developed to help students adjust to their physical and social surroundings and academic expectations have a long history in the United States, dating back to 1877 (Barefoot & Gardner, 2003). In 1877, John Hopkins University had advisors, and in 1889, Harvard University had a board of freshman advisors. It was argued that such support services were necessary due to the rapidly increasing body of knowledge in every field, which was becoming available to society and which was creating many new educational problems.

More than half of the freshman courses offered in 1926 in the United States were focused on adjustments to college life; methods of thinking and how to study; social problems and citizenship (Upcraft et al, 1989). Also, in 1926 in the United States, developing student personnel services focused on student adjustment, study skills, critical thinking, and the study of the nature of the world (Upcraft et al.,1989). Through the 1930s, an estimated 90% of US freshmen were required to take support courses until faculty concerns about credit for life adjustment content impacting already crowded curriculum space created a decline in course offerings.

By the 1960s, American freshman programming was almost obsolete (Upcraft et al., 1989), and student failure was seen as a reflection of students' abilities and attributes—the student failed, not the institution. The 1970s brought a resurgence of retention initiatives (Johnston, 2002), and higher education began to examine the role of the institution and the learning environment in student success.

Traditional beliefs attributed student withdrawal to personal problems, finances, and poor institutional infrastructure. Today, a lack of student persistence is believed to be tied to a lack of student engagement—students are not established in academic relationships, are not engaged with their studies; are not engaged in university life; are not establishing new friendships and their incompatibility with course work; and are lacking an institutional fit (Morgan, 2010). Research has found that students leave university for reasons external to the university but, more importantly, this research has

identified the institutional policies, programs, and practices that make a difference in why students choose to stay or go (Tinto,1988, 2005). It is timely that we again review first year programming as an institutional responsibility that can support the transition and persistence of students into higher education and through their first year of study.

First year programming is defined as a whole university experience developed to accommodate all students, no matter at what level they are entering postsecondary education (Gardner, 2012), although "higher education tends to add on single programs or services to help students, rather than fundamentally rethinking the structures and culture to support new students" (Kezar, 2014, p. 10). Researchers have continued to emphasize the quality of students' first-year experience as outweighing their entering characteristics with respect to predicting student success and graduation (Astin, 1993; Kift & Field, 2009; Kuh, 2009; Tinto, 2006; Tinto & Pusser, 2006).

The research for the present study began with my professional observation that first year programming initiatives appear to start with good intentions, but, more often than not, tend to flounder in the margins with no clear path to having an impact on the institutional policies or culture that could create real and lasting improvements for the student experience (Kezar, 2014). Student persistence, retention, and graduation have become big business for researchers, educators, and entrepreneurs (Tinto, 1988), but the rate of student persistence over the last decade has shown little improvement (NCES, 2005a). Tinto and Pusser (2006) described these disappointing results as a reflection of institutions failing to move from concept to practice. According to Tinto and Pusser (2006), "No program is better than its implementation and management within a system, and therefore institutions require guidelines for the development of effective policies and programs that institutions can reasonably employ to enhance the persistence of all their students" (p. 6).

As government, society, and higher education more fully recognize the overall negative impact of low student persistence, the changing student demographic, and the expectation that students "succeed in a system that wasn't designed for them" (Glauser, 2018, para.1), first year initiatives—with a focus on providing conditions and environments that support student persistence and success— are attracting attention. First year programs are campus support programs that are structured to help today's diverse non-regular student population that have different challenges and expectations

than in previous generations (Glauser, 2018). These programs are staffed by peer advisers who recommend simple things like where to find affordable food, where to sell books, and introductions to hubs of student engagement (Glauser, 2018). Struggling students also may find help in counselling centres offering mindfulness workshops; writing centres helping with writing skills and essay construction; and math centres providing hands on support. Additional programming may involve students in learning how to balance their time; improve critical thinking skills; improve academic skills in note-taking and test-taking; explore different majors; and make professional choices and broaden their university experience by participating in activities and/or community service projects (Glauser, 2018). In short, students will get involved where involvement and engagement matter.

Student first year support also can be a collection of seminars, courses, and programs; or a grouping of services, curricular and co-curricular activities, that support a students' transition into university and that are designed to improve the success of first year students (Johnston, 2002). No matter how these services have been defined –the one constant of all the first-year support models is that involvement/engagement matters, and it matters most during first year (Gardner & Barefoot, 2005; Tinto, 2001; Upcraft, 1994).

First year support emphasizes a thriving culture in which students are fully engaged—intellectually, socially, and emotionally (Schreiner, 2010). According to Kezar (2014), "Students learn better when their existing knowledge is scaffolded and explicit connections are made between content areas" (p. 14). Institutional understanding of student persistence has expanded to recognize the role of the environment, specifically the role of the institution (Tinto, 2006, 2007). Institutions no longer practice educational Darwinism in which only a few students survive, but rather have turned their focus to institutional ecology in which a student as an organism is sage—has experience, judgment, and wisdom (Clark, 2010), and thus the integration of content and student experience are critical to student success. First Year programs define this shifting context as a continuum that must change as students change.

Terenzini and Domingo (2005, 2006, 2007) found that among first year students an organizational context that values collaborative efforts and holistic education positively influences their learning outcomes. Their 2006 study on academic competence

found that an institution's ability to design and implement coherent first year programming, with cross-divisional collaboration and actively pursued goals, positively influenced students' academic progress. The implication is that policies and practices that espouse a holistic approach while improving faculty and staff relations can benefit students' overall educational experience (Arcelus, 2008, p. 31).

The success of a first year support model that can meet the changing needs and situations of students (Tinto, 1988) relies heavily on the successful development of a seamless learning environment as described book *Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience* by Keeling (ACPA, 2004). According to Schreiner (2010), "Although institutions may provide a smorgasbord of opportunities for students, there tends to be little intentionality about the way in which we design programs and services and connect students to them" (p. 6). Programs and current policies continue to be "… mainly piecemeal rather than institution-wide with institutions struggling to achieve cross-institutional integration, coordination and coherence of first year experience policy and practice" (Clarke, 2010, p. 1). As institutions of higher education attempt to implement these seamless learning environments, cross-institutional partnerships become an integral piece of the puzzle. The next section looks at the theoretical frameworks that help define the research.

2.5. Theoretical Frameworks

This study uses critical theory to examine the historical journey of three universities- a mid-sized regional university, a community college, and an institute of technology- and their differing institutional perspectives; the power attached to decision making at each institution; and the impact of their unique organizational structures and subcultures that enhance/impede collaboration. The present study also uses organizational theory to understand how collaboration between faculty and staff is situated in a longer history of organizational context and cultures. Therefore, as Chapter 3 will elaborate, the multi-case study design of this study is used to examine the collaboration of faculty and staff, particularly first year (FY) programming, at three post-secondary institutions in British Columbia. These frameworks, as the following sections outline, enable a deeper analysis of the impact of organizational factors and power in first year collaborations between faculty and staff.

2.5.1. Critical Theory

Critical Theory has its origins in the Frankfurt School that emerged in the 1930s, which included scholars such as Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Jurgen Habermas. Max Horkheimer describes *critical theory* as a theory that liberates people from the circumstances that enslaves them (Ewert, 1991), which requires digging beneath the surface of social life and uncovering the assumptions that have been created and shaped by social, political, cultural, and economic forces that have formed over time into social structures that are accepted as real.

Critical Theory is explanatory, practical, and normative: “It must explain what is wrong with current social reality, identify the actors to change it, and provide both clear norms for criticism and achievable practical goals for social transformation” (Bohman, 2010, p. 3). Critical theory enables an examination of the current assumptions that have been constructed by history (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005), and exposes power relationships that can create “psychic prisons that prevent seeing old problems in a new light” (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 5).

Critical theory can be used to peel away the layers of institutional development and departmental fragmentation and can expose the relationships between faculty and staff while also providing directive suggestions for new collaborative partnerships. Critical Theory assumes that (1) meanings are constructed by human beings, (2) historical and social perspectives provide understanding and knowledge, and (3) meaning is social and is produced through human interaction (Crotty, 1998). A critical lens can be used to explore the perceptions of faculty and staff as they see themselves and as they see their colleagues. Exploring perceptions, culture, and institutional structures is a first step towards an integrated plan for collaboration. According to Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000), “Critical theory research aims to increase our awareness of the political nature of social phenomena and to develop the ability of researchers to reflect critically upon those taken for granted realities which they are examining” (p. 111).

The present study uses a qualitative critical approach to ground its logic and criteria rather than continuing to add to the diverse ideological perspectives of myself and the stakeholders participating in the study (Anfara & Mertz, 2006). Central to this

critical social research is the knowledge created within the social structures of the organizations being examined, and the recognition that this research stands apart from particular social orders so to examine how their structures originated and evolved (Smyth & Shacklock,1998).

2.5.2. Critical Theory In Higher Education

Critical theory can address a number of long-standing discussions with regard to faculty and staff collaborations. The traditional theory of the Frankfurt school explained how society functioned, whereas a modern critical theory analysis examines existing social problems and promotes social transformation. Critical theory helps us to analyze relationships using values and beliefs as a necessary part of the inquiry into the network of connections that give meaning to the concepts, beliefs, and values held. Critical theory can turn things upside down—it can look at power structures and peel away their layers of complexity to understand what is going on; it can ask why something is represented in a certain way; it can consider what has been harmed and what can be restored? Critical theory, as transformational research, provides tools for people to emancipate themselves and effect change at the structural level (Ewert, 1991).

Critical theorists and postmodernists believe “social structures equate to the domination and marginalization of some groups by others” (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006, p. 102). Using a lens of ‘power’ enabled the present study to explore governance and hierarchical structures as they apply to the voices being heard within the three institutions being examined, and the impact of these structures on the development of the collaborative practice between staff and faculty. According to Levin (2009), “Institutional governance is on the one hand what shapes institutional behaviours and on the other hand what defines the character of the institution” (p. 47). Ewert (1991) has pointed out that “Critical theory tries to understand why the social world is the way it is and, more importantly, through a process of critique, strives to know how it should be” (p. 346). As radical demographic and socio-political changes continue to evolve in higher education, critical theory provides an opportunity for reconstructing higher education by articulating the key themes in the development of alternative critical approaches for faculty and staff transitions to a new era.

Marxist criticism focuses on how historical actions are determined by the political economy of time and place, and is preoccupied with revealing the ideologies and power relations behind human action (Ewert, 1991). In the 1950s, Habermas aimed to “resolve the divisions between values and facts and theory and practice” (Ewert 1991, p. 345). A Marxist critical approach provides a descriptive and normative base for a social inquiry into the relationships between faculty and student service personnel and the organizational structures of higher education. Critical theory addresses power relationships and transcends power differentials so to critique the status quo of the worldview—how it came to be and what its effects are within power relations and modes of domination (Lather, 2006). With this focus, the present study examines the “whys” and “hows” of collaborative partnerships, not just the “whats.” Reflecting critically on current social systems and structures helps to inform the development of future knowledge and stimulates action with respect to the social transformation of institutional partnerships (Conrad & Serlin, 2006).

However, the limitations and critiques of critical theory also may point to potential distortions with regard to the validity of interpretation, since participants in the present study may not have the same assumptions about knowledge and thereby hold different interpretations that may or may not be equally valid. Hence, I decided to incorporate organization theory, so I also could examine the social units within the three institutions and how they are structured to meet a need or pursue a collective goal. With a focus on commonalities rather than differences, the present study addresses the “misunderstandings, mistrust, disrespect, conflict, disdain and antagonism” (Arcelus, 2011, p. 65) that have developed through historical differences.

The overlay of critical theory with organizational theory enables a broader view with sometimes contrasting viewpoints, which provides for greater understanding. This juxtaposition of critical theory and organizational theory is crucial for the reflective processes that are required for analyzing the subcultures of student services and faculty. In each division, subcultures have their own values and norms, which are distinct from the institution as a whole. This overlay highlights the culture, power, and equity that have “created negative and disjointed practices that have prevented practitioners from reaching their full potential” (Manning, 1996, p. 6) and that have created divisive splits and negative interpretations between colleagues (Tierney, 2008).

2.5.3. Organizational Theory

To better understand this evolution of higher education, the present study also examines organizational theory and, in particular, social structures and how they support the domination and marginalization of some groups by others. The present study also examines organizational culture to provide insight into the status quo and opportunities for stakeholders to reflect on structures that may impede collaborative practice, especially the structures that require change. Effective change requires an integration of subcultures to create an equal playing field on which "power is distributed according to the abilities and proclivities of the individuals in these subcultures, not based on social class" (Magolda, 2005, p. 19). The stakeholders involved in collaborative initiatives need to think differently, link new values to old beliefs, and create a new culture. Stakeholders also must develop processes and procedures that have a strong voice within the governance structures of the institution.

Bolman and Deal (1997) have discussed four models of organizational culture—collegial, bureaucratic, political, and anarchical—that have four different perspectives through which an organization can be understood. The present study uses the political frame to understand how formal and informal power are used to achieve goals (Stringer, 2009). The political frame showcases the different interests competing for power and resources, and how, as resources become scarce, key decisions involve who gets what. The political model also highlights the issues of privilege, equity, and inclusion as instrumental concepts when addressing organizational change with major stakeholders.

2.5.4. Organizational Theory Applied to Higher Education

A collaborative effort on first year initiatives would be a large-scale change to the development of first year infrastructure. The success of this substantial change relies heavily on the ability of stakeholders to understand, manage, and possibly shape a new organizational culture (Kouzes & Posner, 2006). Although subcultures with dichotomous beliefs and perspectives can provide diversity and strength, most organizational change—and some have argued, sub-culture collaborations—fail due to these cultural differences and organizational fragmentations (Locke, 2006).

Culture is the framework for how individuals, groups, and systems organize time, energy, and resources to accomplish goals (Kuk, 2009). According to Bolman and Deal (1997), "Culture is the set of values, norms, guiding beliefs, and understandings that is shared by members of an organization and is taught to new members" (p. 361). Anfara and Mertz (2006) also have pointed out that "Culture is the internal and symbolic context for organizational identity" (p. 74), and the structuring of social interaction, power, and privileged interests.

In higher education, staff and faculty have widely varying cultures and subcultures that reflect higher degrees of specialization, different training, and distinctly different roles (Arcelus, 2011). Subcultures define who they are, what they need to achieve, with whom they talk, with whom they work, and their dominant perspectives and tasks (Davies, 1997). Magolda (2005) has defined faculty and staff subcultures as "… faculty generally coalesce… around generation and dissemination of knowledge; autonomy rooted in academic freedom; and collegiality" (p. 20), whereas student services"… coalesce around core values such as tending to students' multiple needs, respecting differences, developing citizen-leaders, and increasing students' self-awareness and self-direction" (p. 20). These obviously diverse subcultures with different perceptions and experiences have different responses and influences as they develop first year programming. Subcultures that align with the dominant culture can provide strength, but subcultures that deviate from the dominant culture produce dysfunction (Locke, 2006). It becomes understandable that organizational cultures and subcultural groups respond differently to any form of planned change (Locke, 2006).

2.5.5. Critical Theory and Organizational Theory—Understanding Faculty and Staff Collaborations

As the environment of higher education continues to change and the need for more effective collaborative practice grows, it is reasonable to look at current social structures and review them to determine if they create a form of oppression or roadblocks to new concepts and collaboration within higher education. Critical theory discovers and can reveal disparities between stakeholders in collaborative first year efforts, and can also uncover complex realities that include tacit knowledge that is interpersonal and subjective by nature. Critical theory addresses perceptions and interpretations that are influenced by the context in which they occurred (Crotty, 1998),

including normative interpretations that produce consensus based on distorted knowledge, for example, the large numbers of higher education programs and policies that currently exist without evidence to support their value to, or impact on, students (Pascarella, 2006).

While critical theory helps with social construction, organizational culture helps to understand the impact of structural and cultural impediments within the institution. According to Fendler (1999), “The task of critical research in education is to provide theoretical mechanisms that allow for radical change in social relations” (p.169). This awareness helps to create a better understanding of diverse responsibilities across disciplines that showcase the opportunities to be found in interdisciplinary collaboration.

As noted in the previous sections, faculty and student services have developed from different histories and have sharply distinguishable values that tend to produce different perspectives on what is most important in undergraduate education (Magolda, 2005). Although these differences may not actually be so disparate when addressing the norms and values of an institution that include a common vision of student success, they may impede the development of collaborative practice and initiatives.

2.6. Summary

Using first year programming as the focus for collaboration and applying critical and organizational theoretical frameworks, this chapter studied successful/unsuccessful collaborations between faculty and staff. The focus was on “explain[ing] what is wrong with current social reality, identify[ing] the actors to change it, and provid[ing] both clear norms for criticism and achievable practical goals for social transformation” (Bohman, 2010, p. 3). This chapter reviewed the contexts that included the following: competing demands for dollars; loss of control; power issues; evidence of differing cultures; potential limited resources; disengagement; need for administrative support; and improved communications that enhance collegiality and mutual respect.

The next chapter, Chapter 3 is an overview and rationale for the selected methodology for this study, which includes the problem under investigation, a rationale for the strategy for inquiry, the research methods used, and the strengths and weaknesses of the methods. The comparative case study provides the flexibility and

openness that is required to analyze multi-layered relationships and perceptions and to discover unanticipated insights and nuances (Denison, 2001). The research purpose and questions are provided in the next section, which is followed by a section on the research design, ethics, and sampling procedure for the study. The chapter then discusses the research design, the case study development of the three sites, and the data collection from interviews and semi-structured focus groups. *Data collection* is defined as interpreting how people thought, felt, and acted in relation to their involvement in collaborative initiatives (Denison, 2001). The analysis of the data section includes descriptions of the data, the data analysis conducted for each question, and how the data were integrated for this research. The final section discusses the threats to validity, researcher subjectivity, limitations of research, and implications for research. The chapter concludes with a summary of Chapter 3.

Chapter 3. Methodology

The landscape of higher education continues to evolve, and collaboration between faculty and student services is becoming essential for the development of a quality student experience (Kezar, 2005). As Chapter 2 established, first year programming is an example of cross-divisional collaborative practice between faculty and student services; however, such collaborative programming, more often than not, exists on the periphery of the academic experience and lacks status and respectability (Barefoot & Gardner, 2003). In part, this marginal location and low value within the institution complicates collaborative initiatives between student services and faculty (Tinto, 2007). During his term as President of UBC from 2006–2014, Stephen Toope wrote an article in the *Globe and Mail* in which he spoke to the need for universities to give up control and lower the barriers that impede direct experience. Specifically he asked the question, “Why do so many of our staff see themselves as ‘supportive of’ rather than ‘integral to’ our mission and vision?” (Toope, 2013, para.7). How many of our faculty, administrators, and students also have this perception that continues to be reinforced through culture and organizational structures.

The present study informs the practice of collaboration in a way that enables staff and faculty to mutually share expertise and resources to support the social negotiations that promote multiple perspectives, ownership, and responsibility (Stanton, 2005). In other studies that have explored staff and faculty collaborations, a number of research approaches were followed. For example, Dr. Tricia Seifert’s (2011) research, *Supporting Student Success: The Role of Student Services within Ontario’s Post-Secondary Institutions,* “asked focus group participants to reflect on examples in which they felt they were at their best in supporting student success, and also on examples in which they felt they had failed to support student success” (p. 14). Her research design involved a thorough document analysis of institutional charters and websites, and site visits consisting of 60-minute individual interviews with senior administrators and 90-minute focus groups. A total of 278 staff across 14 institutions from a wide spectrum of functional areas within student services participated in the study.

Arcelus (2011) used an ethnographic methodology to investigate collaboration between faculty and staff, to understand the “misunderstandings, mistrust, disrespect,

conflict, disdain and antagonism" (p.65) that have been allowed to fester through departmental misunderstandings and cultural differences. Arcelus's (2008) study began with multiple, semi-structured interviews with faculty and student services administrators, which was followed by participant observation and an examination of current university planning documents, meeting minutes, and publications.

Reflecting on the problems I personally observed in my student services profession when attempting to collaborate with faculty on initiatives like first year programming, I have been left wondering why didn't it work? What can we do better? These exploratory questions influenced my research focus on qualitative research methodologies, specifically the multiple case study approach that addresses the "how" and "why" of a contemporary phenomenon where human beings are reacting and contributing in their workplace environment. According to Yin (2003), case studies are also valuable when contextual conditions are relevant to the phenomenon under study, and the boundaries are not clear between the context and the phenomenon.

3.1. Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this research was to analyze cross-divisional collaborations between faculty and staff that aspire to build broad-based partnerships and integrative educational experiences for students. This research identified and examined the participant perceptions of first year initiatives and how participant relationships may have promoted or hindered collaborative practice. The present study also explored the potential disparities between stakeholder ideologies; defined who gained and held power; and recognized organizational/cultural impact on the development of successful collaborative initiatives. The data was pulled from discussions around the following three questions:

1. How does power and stakeholder beliefs, perspectives, and experiences impact first year programs in higher education?
2. What are the experiences—commonalities and differences—between faculty and staff involved in first year programming?
3. What organizational factors (e.g., campus culture) affect the development of first year partnerships between staff and faculty?

3.2. Qualitative Research: Multiple Case Study Design

Qualitative studies are investigations of a contemporary social phenomenon (Yin, 1994) based on human experiences and observations. As a form of inquiry that looks for the meaning imbedded in participant experience (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the present study focuses on personal experience, perspectives, and histories to critically assess the forces of power, cultural implications, and organizational structures that shape the perspective of the study participants as they collaborate with their colleagues (Stake 2010). According to Yin (1994), the qualitative case study can document multiple perspectives, explore contested view-points, demonstrate the influence of key actors, and explain how and why things happen.

The use of specific purposeful sampling and multiple stakeholder interpretations provides an in-depth exploration of the central phenomenon constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds (Merriam, 1998). According to Stake (2010), "Connected knowing is the embodiment of empathy using personal experiences and relationships to inquire how others see how things work" (p. 47), which also addresses how relationships, power structures, organizational structures, and subcultures help or hinder collaborative initiatives.

Qualitative research enables a study to represent the views and perspectives of stakeholders within the contextual framework (culture) of their world, and helps to generate emergent ideas based on the lived experience of a study's participants, rather than the biases of a study's researcher. Using and integrating multiple sources of evidence contribute to an understanding of existing concepts and produce insights into how to explain emerging concepts (Morgan, 1980; Stake, 2010).

The present study uses a multi-case study design (Stake, 2006) due to its ability to narrow down a very broad topic (collaboration) with boundaries of time and place. The multi-case design can be used to examine a number of cases and their stories, but it also can be used to study a phenomenon in which the cases are similar in some ways but also dissimilar in ways that can shape the research. One of the key aspects of a multiple case study is that it can recognize how a phenomenon appears in different contexts (Stake, 2006), which can create a concern with data gathering and analysis due

to the subjective nature of the data gathered, since it can be overgeneralized or overlooked.

Case studies can develop an interdisciplinary humanistic background with detailed descriptions for setting the case (Merriam,1998; Stake,1994). A case study addresses real-life situations in which boundaries between a phenomenon and its context are not specifically evident. Additionally, a case study can accommodate a wide range of institutional actors, support the complex interplay across many domains, provide a diversity of perspectives, understand the whole, and illuminate the complexity (Merriam, 1998). The multiple case study can examine the structure, values, processes, and organizational history that other methods cannot (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1994). Also, a case study is a systematic way of creating a detailed examination of a single example so to provide reliable information on a broader level.

3.2.1. Limitations of Multiple Case Studies

Historically, the case study has been argued as an inadequate research methodology due to misinformation about its validity, and multi-case studies of less than four sites have been said to be inadequate due to the limited interactivity between sites (Stake, 2006). Concerns about case study analysis include a lack of ability to generalize from a single or multi case, varied researcher interpretations due to the subjective approach of case studies, and I think, more importantly, that the belief practical knowledge is not as valuable as theoretical knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

These concerns have grown out of an effort to frame qualitative research in a scientific paradigm that can destroy the strength of qualitative research, and the use of different assumptions and approaches (Stake, 2005). Notwithstanding, the present study has focused on personal stories and organizational culture to understand the roadblocks to collaborative practice between faculty and staff. According to Flyvbjerg (2006), "Predictive theories and universals cannot be found in the study of human affairs. Concrete, context dependent knowledge is, therefore more valuable than the vain search for predictive theories and universals" (p. 224). The multiple case study expands understanding and improves practice but the researcher needs to be diligent in the analysis of data to prevent an oversimplification or exaggeration of a situation that can lead to misguided conclusions (Merriam, 1998). The value of the results will be

determined by linking the data to the research propositions; the quality of the questions; and the ability of the researcher to listen effectively, to be willing to explore unexpected issues in the data collection, to be adaptive/flexible, and to attempt to eliminate personal pre-conceived ideas (Creswell, 2007). The researcher is core to the success of the study because they are the key instrument of the data analysis, and therefore, must be authentic and trustworthy by ensuring that the collection, interpretation, and assessment of data have been carried out in good faith (Conrad & Serlin, 2006).

Case study research also is limited by an abundance of rich data and the time and money that may be required to complete the study, although the researcher always decides on the scope and amount of data collected. The researcher is key to the success of the study and being the key instrument of data analysis, and must be authentic and trustworthy in all aspects of the study (Merriam, 1988).

3.2.2. Comparative Multiple Case Study – Why?

This comparative multi case study binds together a collection of three sites that are not uniform across their different campuses, cultures, and history, although they do share common programming and institutional characteristics (Stake 2006). These sites were also chosen because of their disparate provincial mandates that arguably creates a different focus and culture. A comparative multi case study examines in detail a "collection of people, activities, policies, strengths or problems or relationships" (Stake, 2006, p. vi). Each site has its own culture, organizational structure, problems, relationships, and stories. The three sites examined in the present study are all institutes of higher education with different strategic plans; a diversity of students; and similar, but different experiences. The primary interest of the study is in the collection of data, how the three sites operate as a whole, and how they compare with each other. Each case was studied for complexity and situational uniqueness with an in-depth attention on their similarities and differences. This is an appropriate research strategy for a number of reasons that include reviewing "how" and "why" questions, and recognizing that the research has no control over behavioral events (Yin, 2014).

My decision to use a comparative multi case study recognizes the complex role played by organizational cultures and subcultures. Each institution within this study has evolved from its Canadian post World War 2 educational direction, its establishment in

the early 1970s, and its specific focus created by provincial needs and funding. As these institutions of higher learning have developed, their ways of interacting and their structural supports created differentiated ways of developing partnerships and collaborations. As these institutions evolved, they created institutional differences in their organizational pathways and how their boards and senate members approached institutional decision making.

As a comparative multi-site case study that embraces a critical perspective, the present study opens up new questions that address the biases, values, and tensions related to the collaborative initiatives between staff and faculty. The present study examined a specific cultural setting within its own socio-cultural context, identified patterns of social interactions, and "appreciate(ed) the social processes that move(d) educational events" (Steinberg, 2012, p. 185). The present study's initial focus provided faculty and staff stakeholders a safe platform for engaging in a dialogue on the student experience that was situated within the context of first year initiatives at their own institutions.

Due to the high failure rate of collaborative practice, much has been written with regard to barriers, but "few, if any of these works, examine the broader challenge of how institutions have been transformed to enable collaborative work" (Kezar, 2005, p. 832). Support for flexibility and the emergence of relationships between individuals helps to open the door to studying diverse perspectives. The present study examined the three chosen institutions to provide data that could address the issues and/or successes in the development and implementation of a collaborative environment (Merriam, 1998).

3.2.3. Protocol and Design for Multiple Case Study Research

Every research design has a number of steps between the questions being asked and the conclusions being drawn. Multiple case study research has five components that guide the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data (Yin, 2014). These components include the *questions* that address the "how" and "why"; the *proposition* that directs the research as to what should be examined within the scope of the study; and the *unit of analysis* that defines the case to be studied. These first three components lead the research to the data to be collected. The last two components—

Three sites were chosen to provide the *logic* that links the data to the propositions and the *criteria* for interpreting the findings—anticipate the case study analysis (Yin, 2014).

3.3. Multiple Case Study

3.3.1. Sites

This comparative multi case study binds together a collection of three sites that are not uniform across their different campuses, cultures, and history, although they do share common programming and institutional characteristics (Stake 2006). These particular sites were chosen in order to provide different context as a result of the dissimilar provincial mandates. The comparative multi case study examines in detail a "collection of people, activities, policies, strengths or problems or relationships" (Stake, 2006, p. vi). Each site has its own culture, organizational structure, problems, relationships, and stories. The three sites examined in the present study are all institutes of higher education with different strategic plans; a diversity of students; and similar, but different experiences. The primary interest of the study is in the collection of data, how the three sites operate as a whole, and how they compare with each other. Each case was studied for complexity and situational uniqueness with an in-depth attention on their similarities and differences. This is an appropriate research strategy for a number of reasons that include reviewing "how" and "why" questions, and recognizing that the research has no control over behavioral events (Yin, 2014). Comparing the three sites provided a context for the common/uncommon characteristics that can help/hinder collaborative first year programming.

Table 2. Multiple Case Study Design

	Site 3	Site 2	Site 1
Structure/Type	Public Polytechnic Institution	Degree granting College	Public Regional University
Established	1960	1994	1974
Purpose	Serve the success of learners and employers	Commit to enhancing the skills, knowledge, and values of life-long learners	Measure its success by the successes of its graduates
Student population	18,000 full-time 30,000 part-time	21,000 full- and part-time	14,849 full- and part-time
Faculty/Staff Demographic	1,800 full-time faculty and staff 600 part-time faculty and staff		722 faculty full- and part-time 699 staff and administrators
Institutional First Year Program	Individual Programming	Individual Programming	Individual Programming
International First Year Programming	Yes - limited	Yes	Yes
Isolated Departmental First Year Programming	No	Yes	Yes

Table 2 provides an overview of the three campuses—when they were established; their student populations; staff and faculty populations; their mission statements; and whether or not they participated in first year programming. Although all of the institutions had programming that would fall under the umbrella of first year programming, for the most part, it was not defined in that manner. The institutions included a regional university, a polytechnic, and a community college.

Site 1: University

Site 1 is a fully accredited public university with five campuses. It was founded as a college April 4, 1974, and gained university status in April 21, 2008. The first site examined by the present study opened in 1975 with support for 2,300 students throughout five rural communities, which by 2011 had grown to serve 15,000 students, including 800 international students. Site One grew out of the provincial mandate to offer post-secondary opportunities in communities throughout the regions and province. The fundamental purpose was to help students succeed and become leaders of social, cultural, and economic development in the region. Site One grew from a Community

College with a focus on student support to a University College to a full-fledged University.

Site 1 offers more than 100 programs including two master's degrees, 15 bachelor's degrees, majors, minors, and extended minors in more than 30 subject areas, and more than a dozen trades and technology programs. Admission policies are flexible, and students can learn in a variety of ways: full-time, part-time, in-class, online, as part of a structured program or one tailored completely to their interests.

Mission: Engaging learners, transforming lives, building community.

Vision: Known as a gathering place for learners, leaders, and seekers. We will pursue diverse pathways of scholarship, leading to community connection, reconciliation, and prosperity, locally and beyond.

Values

1. Integrity—We act honestly and ethically, upholding these values and ensuring our mission is delivered consistently.
2. Inclusivity—We welcome everyone, showing consideration and respect for all experiences and ideas.
3. Community—We cultivate strong relationships, acting as a hub where all kinds of communities (educational, scholarly, local, global, and cultural) can connect and grow.
4. Excellence—We pursue our highest standard in everything we do, with determination and heart.

Site 2: College

The evolution of Site Two is publicly documented through their institutional website, which records first offered programs in 1965 at a City Centre that was part of a City College. On April 1, 1994, this site was established as an independent public college under the Provincial College and Institute Act. As of 2015 there are 22,000 full time and part time students. A focus on students is the overarching strategic priority of Site Two—to provide accessible programs and services to learners across the community.

Site 2 offers Bachelor degrees and university courses in the arts and sciences, as well as programs in health care, human services, business, and the creative arts. It has three campuses, and each year, approximately 14,000 students take credit courses, and 12,000 take non-credit courses for personal and career development.

Mission: Provides accessible, high-quality undergraduate, career, and continuing educational programs and services that meet the needs of our diverse learners and the communities we serve.

Vision: Canada's pathways college. We provide students with the academic and experiential foundations to chart their course to further education, professional and personal development, and career success.

Values

1. We strive for excellence for our students in teaching and learning, and in all aspects of administering the college.
2. We are forward thinking and open to new ideas, approaches, and technologies.
3. We welcome and include diverse people and perspectives collaborating together in mutual respect and dignity.
4. We act in the interests of our students with honesty and transparency, and are responsible stewards of public resources

Site 3: Polytechnic

According to Site 3's website it was first established as the British Columbia Vocational School in 1960, broadened to include applied research in 1989, and became a polytechnic in 1996. With a new campus in 1964, its initial enrollment was 498 students; as of 2017, enrollment had grown to 18,755 full-time and 30,593 part-time students. Site 3 is the largest post-secondary polytechnic institution within British Columbia, offering career credentials designed for the workplace with applied education and integration with industry. It has five main campuses across the Vancouver area, as well as satellite locations across the province. This institution also has international partnerships with South America, Central America, East Asia, and Eastern Europe.

To build a broad base of skills for the workplace, students learn theory in the classroom and put it into practice by working within industry. Its six schools include the school of business, school of computing and academic studies, school of construction and the environment, school of energy, school of health sciences, and school of transportation. Each school offers a variety of certificates, diplomas, and degrees—the entry-to-practice credentials that lead to rewarding careers.

Approximately 16,600 full-time and 31,000 part-time students enroll annually and 1,700 full-time and 500 part-time faculty and staff work at the polytechnic.

Mission: Partnering learners and industry for success through workforce development.

Vision: Empowering people; shaping BC; and inspiring global progress

Values:

1. We strive to achieve excellence in everything we do and to accomplish real and measurable results.
2. We embrace innovation, ignited by imagination and creativity, to improve our approaches, opportunities, and outcomes.
3. We champion diversity of experiences, ideas, cultures, and perspectives to foster a community permeated with equality and inclusivity.
4. We believe in the power of collaboration to amplify our efforts.
5. We work from a position of respect for others' expertise, insights, and inherent worth, and we reflect a respect for future generations in our passion for sustainability.

3.3.2. Propositions and Unit of Analysis

The propositions within a multi case study are the areas of significance as outlined in the present study. They were developed from the initial objectives defined by this research and were then reflected in the development of the set of research questions and the literature review (Yin, 2014). The unit of analysis is the focus of the research as it is examined through the lens of the propositions.

Proposition: Power, culture, beliefs/perceptions, and organizational factors that impact interactions, decision making, and the issues affecting collaborative program delivery.

Unit of analysis: Collaboration between faculty and staff on first year programming.

3.3.3. Participants

This study included the administrators, faculty, and staff at each site who have experience and/or interest in first year initiatives. The participant selection was based on individual functional roles and a willingness to participate. Participants were selected purposefully to represent diversity of ages, position levels, academic disciplines, and levels of involvement with first year initiatives.

Potential participants for the interviews were chosen through a purposive sample identified from publicly available institutional organizational charts. Individuals deemed to have a first-year portfolio were contacted with a letter of invitation to participate (see Appendix A: participation letter, interview; Appendix B: participation letter, focus group).

I also generated a snowball sample (Creswell, 2008) by asking interview participants to provide the names of those they thought would be eligible participants. The names that were provided by other participants were sent an email of invitation to participate in the focus group. I also asked senior administrators for names of people they felt might be valuable to the study. Faculty/staff employees recommended by focus group participants also received an invitation to participate. Although case studies do not determine concrete numbers of participants, an adequate number was deemed appropriate when the data answers the questions posed at the beginning of the study (Merriam, 1998). Participants were not purposefully added but there were a few additions at site three due to the difficulty in scheduling of the focus groups. The other two sites maintained the same cohort although numbers did decrease in the third focus groups.

To provide a baseline for understanding the context of first year programming, stakeholders in both the interviews and focus groups were provided with reading material that discussed the scope of first year programming (Wilson, 2009) and a document from the Foundations of Excellence of the John N. Garner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education, which highlighted the principles of good practice for student success partnerships (Gardner, 2012b).

Table 3. Demographic of Participants

Participants	Site A	Site B	Site C
Admin	6	2	2
Staff	6	5	3
Faculty	5	5	3

Note: This table provides the number of research participants from each site.

3.3.4. Data Collection

The following table outlines the protocol for this research by drawing on the data gathered from interviews and focus groups, and other sources of data that included historical documents, mission and strategic plans, and informal conversations.

Table 4. Data Collection Points

Documents and Policies	Interviews	Focus Groups	Researcher Observations and Reflections
• strategic plans • mission statements • current programming	• senior Administration • two interviews per site • interviews are 1.5 hours in length	• three focus groups at each site • 1.5 hours in length • student affairs • faculty • blend - optional • intergroup dialogue	• researcher subjectivity • journalling • paying attention to energy and dynamics within the room

The documents and policies were, for the most part, located on the website of each institution. There was very little information available that defined first year programming, but examples were provided for what could be considered first year programming.

- At each institution, I held interviews with senior administrators who had some knowledge of first year programming.
- At each institution, I held three focus groups, one with faculty participants, one with staff participants, and a combined group. Due to timing and commitment issues, one institution had a total of two combined focus groups.
- Throughout the interviews and focus groups, I paid attention to my observations and summarized them after each group meeting.

3.3.5. Interviews

I scheduled 1 and 1.5-hour interviews with senior administrators who had first year programming as part of their professional portfolio. The interviews were designed to get a broad sense of administrators' understanding of collaborative first year initiatives, as well as to gather the names of faculty and staff who were involved in collaborative first year programming. The semi-structured interviews enabled me to incorporate relationships, history, and interdependencies at each specific institution. The collection of historical documentation and the data collected from the interviews of senior administrators from each of the institutions provided the context for the focus group discussions.

The interviews were labour intensive and took a great deal of time, since I had to "establish access and make contact with participants, interview them, transcribe the data, and then work with the material and share what they have learned" (Seidman, 2013, p. 11). Interviewing enabled me to make meaning through language. The strength of this interview process was its ability to gain insights by understanding the collaborative first year initiatives experience through the perspectives and beliefs of senior administrators (Merriam, 1998; Seidman, 2013)

3.3.6. Semi Structured Focus Groups

At two institutions, I held three 1.5 to 2 -hour focus groups. The third institution combined their faculty and staff for the two focus groups. The first two focus groups were divided into faculty participants and staff participants. This method was supported by Arcelus (2008), who suggested using three focus groups designed to initially incorporate intragroup dialogue (likeminded), with the third focus group incorporating intergroup (diverse perspectives) dialogue.

> Developing mutual understanding and tending to the ethos together allows for collaborative programs to then emerge from a foundation built of trust, respect, acceptance, and appreciation that allows people across divisions to recognize their common aspirations and operate with shared purpose. (Arcellus, 2011, p. 406)

Dessel, Rogge, and Garlington (2006) have defined *intergroup dialogue* as a peacebuilding tool: a process designed to involve individuals and groups in an

exploration of societal issues about which views differ, often to the extent that polarization and conflict occur.

My focus groups brought together a small group of people (3–6) based on institutional size, composition, and purpose (Krueger & Casey, 2009) to gather opinions to understand my participants' perceptions, feelings, and thinking on collaborative initiatives. This discussion enabled each participant to share her/his views with the other focus group participants, and as the moderator, I was careful not to allow my personal perspective to influence the responses of the focus group members (Yin, 2013) and did not pressure the participants to vote or reach a consensus (Krueger & Casey, 2009).

The purpose of these semi-structured focus groups was to obtain qualitative data from a range of people across several groups (e.g., faculty and staff). Participants had a voice in the direction of the focus group through dialogue and reflection (Krueger & Casey, 2009). The process confirmed what was already known and provided opportunities for new diverse contexts. The information obtained provided answers, but more importantly, reasons for the answers.

3.3.7. Researcher Observations and Reflection

I recorded my observations relevant to the campus culture to assess individual participants' sense of comfort with the topic and any other behavioral idiosyncrasies that I felt were important to the research. Informal observation helped to interpret the ethos—whether or not the researcher was welcome, whether the participant was anxious, whether power structures were operating within the room, and a number of observations that proved important later in the interpretation of the data. Observation provided a comprehensive picture of the setting, a rich description of the data collected, and a sense of the norms and values of the participants.

3.3.8. Documents and Policies

With regard to first year initiatives, documentation was limited, but it included a first-year program proposal; a Residence 101 program along with "one-off" programming that discussed orientation, study skills, and six weeks to success programming. Along with these initiatives, a variety of resources and support services had been created for

the development of first year student success. The historical documentation helped to identify the institutional structure for first year programming, and partially answered the broader research question.

3.3.9. Data Analysis

Data analysis requires a layering and connecting themes and variables increased the rigor of the study, which increased its complexity and interconnections (Creswell, 2008). The themes developed a complex picture of the problem, involving multiple perspectives and multiple factors, and projected a larger emerging picture (Creswell, 2008). I describe in detail my analysis process as the complexity of a multiple case study design which allowed me to compare perspectives of various participants within each Site and across Site comparisons required multiple readings of the transcripts to making meaning of the themes that helped answer my research questions and directly informed the presentation of the findings in the Chapter 4.

Analysis Process

The data, collected in multiple forms through analysis, was developed into themes and classified into major/minor, unexpected, and hard to classify. Layering and connecting themes and variables increased the rigor of the study, which increased its complexity and interconnections (Creswell, 2008). The themes developed a complex picture of the problem, involving multiple perspectives and multiple factors, and projected a larger emerging picture (Creswell, 2008).

Step 1: Administrator transcripts were read independently in consideration of the interview questions – this process allowed emerging codes to come directly from the participants. Then I did a comparison between the administrative interviews at each site – from this I was able to see connection of themes between the two perspectives; this process would also highlight any differences. The themes that came from the administrator interviews were: institutional histories; challenge of collaborative initiatives; personal relationships, effective communication and intentional integration of departments; hierarchical divides, collective agreements and governing boards.

From the administrative transcripts from each site I learned about the organizational culture and the leadership types at each institution. From this process, I was able to

create a narrative of the culture of the organization and the leadership perspective on their roles in collaborative practice.

Step 2. From the staff and faculty focus group from Site 1 and Site 2, I did a similar process reviewing the transcripts across the questions (e.g. question 1 across all staff focus groups and then question 1 across all the faculty focus groups) and the emergent similar themes came across through the conversations as well as differences across the sites. I also looked at how frequently these concepts/ideas were mentioned across the conversations. This process was done by hand – I had colour coded post-its that were for faculty and staff – I was then able to tally the themes across the focus groups and between the two groups across the staff. I was able to then tabulate the themes that emerged that were common to staff and faculty and I was also able to see the differences of perspective from these two groups and two sites. The themes that came from the faculty and staff interviews were: institutional awareness, strategies and training for collaboration, fragmentation, duplication of services, culture, resources, role responsibilities, trust, and connection,

This understanding of commonalities and differences of faculty and staff perspective, then informed my process in the third focus groups with Site 1 and 2. This focus group had both faculty and staff present at each site. The transcription for the third group was coded and different contexts and conversations were occurring between the faculty and staff. Themes that emerged here were governance, hierarchy, power, roles and responsibilities, and organizational structure.

Step 3. For the Site 3, the two focus groups were with both faculty and staff. The coding process followed the coding process for the combined focus groups from Site 1 and Site 2. In that process, I read across the questions and look to the similarities and differences of themes that emerged from the first and second focus groups with Site 3.

Step 4. Theory Influence in Analysis

The theoretical frameworks – organizational theory and critical theory - were used to explore the historical evolution of higher education in the development of current organizational structures and cultures that impact first year collaborative initiatives. The critical theoretical framework looked at the separations between faculty (curriculum) and staff (co-curriculum). Drawing on the work of Fendler (1999) the critical theory provided

a theoretical frame that allowed for an analysis of changes for improved social relationships between faculty and staff. The critical approach studied culture, governance structures and policies, job descriptions, institutional divisions/ reporting lines and the marginalized voices. This historical pattern of meaning created the current structures and cultural infrastructures at each of the sites. The research analyzed assumptions that had been cultivated from culture with a goal of the cross divisional conversations expanding the awareness beyond isolated divisions and leading to shared goals and objects.

The theoretical influences in my thinking of the coding, emerged when the organizational culture was described by the administrator interviews and re-emerged in the faculty and staff interviews, who spoke of the organizational barriers, role confusion, lack of knowledge, lack of time, lack of connection, Furthermore, critical theory was important for the analysis as I was interested in the influence of power in collaborations and included in my analysis the institutional strategic plans to examine mission and culture.

In the combined focus groups of faculty and staff, I was mindful of power potentially influencing the discussions (e.g., staff not feeling comfortable to speak with faculty listening) however, this was not evident in the focus groups as each participant did share their ideas and perspectives. The issues of power came out in the conversations in relationship to funding and allocation of resources along with job responsibilities and areas. These three areas were themes that were consistent in how power came to influence collaborations between faculty and staff.

Step 5. Once I had all the transcripts coded from across the three sites, I clustered themes together that were similar. These major themes were: Informational, Environmental, Relational and Structural. Informational encompasses themes that were specific to knowledge, resources, training, and information needed to support collaboration.

Within each major theme, I was then able to bring together similar sub-themes/codes. For example, within the major theme of Informational a strong sub-theme was Improving Collaboration, where the codes of awareness included roles and responsibilities; evolution of student services from service to supporter of student development;

understanding definitions of collaboration; different models of collaboration, and strategies/training for successful collaboration were placed.

The major theme Environmental included sub-themes/codes of institutional historical evolution, current culture of faculty, current culture of staff, resources (time and funding), Power was evident in this theme through influence of directives that created power imbalances, resource imbalances and concerns about who made impactful decisions.

The major theme of Relational spoke to the sub-themes/code of trust, connection, inclusivity, individualistic culture, communications, and power. The success of any collaborative initiative had its roots in the relationship and respect that participants had for each other

The major theme of Structural included themes around organizational structure that included placement of administrative offices, divisional offices and student service space; governance structure and staff/faculty representation balance/voice, and physical space that allows for individuals and departments to interconnect and share ideas.

Step 6. Following the establishment of the major themes, I then created a comparative table that mapped out my research questions, the literature, the theoretical connections (e.g., organizational structure, and culture, power) to the research analysis (e.g., I selected quotes that demonstrated a particular theme). These comparative tables (akin to mind-maps) were used to find any connections between the schools and connect the data to the literature and theoretical frameworks. Key connections found in this research were also addressed in an Article in University Affairs (2018) which highlighted the research of Tricia Seifert who asks what should fall to student affairs professionals; what motivates faculty to get involved and how did people “describe the culture of the place and how they worked together – or maybe had difficulties – and how they’re encouraged to work across the entire university to support student success”(para.4).

This comparative chart then allowed me to be confident in the presentation of my findings in response to answering my research questions – both within each site and then across the sites. In having the connections to the literature in this table – it helped guide my writing of the discussion chapter as I was able to see the connections between what the literature said and what was similar to the findings and also identify unique findings of this study, which are further explored in Chapter 5.

3.3.10. Ethics Protocol

I completed the Office of Research Ethics (ORE) workshop through SFU. I submitted a research proposal for approval to the Ethics Review boards at each of the three educational institutions, starting with Simon Fraser University. Once I received approval from SFU, I submitted an ethical proposal to each of three sites involved in the study. Upon approval from the respective sites, I sent a letter of invitation to individual stakeholders at each institution. I sent an informed consent form to those individuals who agreed to participate (Creswell, 2008).

Maintaining confidentiality and recognizing the sensitivity and ethical issues involved in face-to-face interaction required confidentiality and an assurance that the collected data would not be shared with other participants or anyone outside of the research project (Creswell, 2007). Each participant (interview and focus group) received information about the research, were asked to sign a letter of consent, and had an opportunity to review transcribed data. Participants were given the opportunity to opt out of the research at any time without any negative effects on their status at their institution and/or with their relationship with the researcher.

When safeguarding participants, the ethical principal of *do no harm* is not straightforward in a case study where people and their experiences are "closely described and interpreted in unique contexts" (Simons, 2009, p. 97). Building relationships and establishing trust with a participatory approach to the research empowered participants and myself to minimize ethical conflicts that might occur during the research process and reporting stage.

3.3.11. Researcher Subjectivity

The success of this research required me to show diligence in analyzing the data so to prevent an oversimplification or exaggeration of a situation that could potentially lead to misguided conclusions (Merriam, 1998). I reflected on my own thinking so to recognize the forces that shaped the lives of my participants and myself (Frieire, 2009). Morgan and Smirch (1980) asked whether people could achieve knowledge independent of their own experience, "since they are agents through which knowledge is perceived and experienced (p. 493). As human beings, we all have values, beliefs, and

assumptions that have been many years in the making, and so I used critical inquiry as a tool to challenge those established values, beliefs, and assumptions. My 20 years of working in student services is a unique perspective that will have an impact on the observations and conclusions of this study. So as a participant observer in this study, it was imperative that I immersed myself in my participants' way of thinking and modes of perception.

During the course of the study, my assumptions changed, but the process was transparent and authentic. As Conrad and Serlin (2006) have suggested, in qualitative research, the researcher is a key instrument in the analysis of the data and will expose the contradictions accepted by the dominant culture; irritate dominant forms of power; and uncover the complex ways in which power operates to dominate and shape stakeholders and institutional cultures.

The research design of the present study is congruent with the research question, and the status and role of the research has been clearly explained (Conrad Serlin, 2006). Findings showed connection across a variety of data sources and transparency of actions and thoughts removed the possibility of bias negatively impacting the study.

3.3.12. Limitations and Delimitations

The first delimitation of this research sets the context and framework to incorporate three institutions of higher education—a mid-size regional university, a community college, and a polytechnic institute. The rationale for this decision is a recognition of the extensive scope of programming differentiation among higher education institutions and that institutions generally design and implement their own services, programs, and policies (Fisher, 2011).

The present research was limited to administrators and faculty and staff personnel who have an interest in, and history of, working with first year initiatives. This limitation confined the research to participants who had worked with collaborative first year initiative efforts. Minimizing the broad scope of collaborative practice to a single context provided a workable framework with which to study institutional culture and its impact on collaborative success initiatives.

The limitations for the study also addressed the concept of insider endogenous research as opposed to outsider research (Mercer, 2007). Transparency of actions and thoughts, and the inclusion of stakeholder participation removed the possibility of researcher bias negatively impacting the study. I assumed there were common threads in the historical development and power imbalances of the three institutions in the study, although it was difficult to incorporate data in a way that could specifically address individual cultures and organizational hierarchies. Although the delimitation prevents the results from being generalized to other populations, the findings may be valuable to practitioners as they develop collaborative partnerships framed by the development of a common understanding of values and beliefs as they relate to student success and persistence.

3.3.13. Implications for Research, Theory, and Practice

The present study has generated recommendations for improved collaborative practice between faculty and staff, which can establish integrated models of delivery that will attempt to reduce fragmentation and duplications of service (Karasoff, 1999). The findings from this present research provide an understanding of collaborative partnerships through cross disciplinary dialogue with a potential to build a new collective knowledge base. This generation of collective knowledge has the capacity to engage all members of the community in many forms of sustainable collaborative practice. An example would be the strategic enrolment management plans that are becoming major forces in higher education and that require institutional cooperation as complex systems are put in place to improve enrolment management strategies to maximize the resources of the institution (Wilkinson,Taylor, Peterson, DeLourdes, Machado-Taylor, & Lourdes, 2007). If nothing else, this research provides an opportunity to reset the relationships between faculty and staff because we need to talk, and we need to work together.

3.4. Summary

This chapter described the methodological considerations, research design, method, and analysis used to conduct this study. It has provided a detailed outline of comparative multi-case study research, why a comparative multi-case study was chosen, and the difficulties associated with using the case studies. Chapter 3 also

discussed protocol, researcher subjectivity, limitations/delimitations, challenges, and opportunities for more research.

Chapter 4 provides the data analysis of administrator's perspective; faculty and staff perspective; organizational factors that impact first year programming; and staff and faculty experiences of first year collaboration. Chapter five looks for common threads between the sites using four themes: Informational, Environmental, Relational, and Structural. Data Analysis

Chapter 4. Data Analysis

Higher education, with its beginning as a school for the elites, has evolved historically through mass appeal and marketizations (Slaughter & Rhodes, 2000).This evolutionary history of higher education has created a range of complex issues, which have been conceptualized by Henry Giroux (2003) as “different historical conditions, posit different problems and demand a range of diverse solutions” (p. 3). The present study examines the interdisciplinary collaborative partnerships between faculty and staff as a means to changing the ways of “producing, consuming, and relating to one another and to our world” (Garcia, 2007, p. 8). Simply stated, this research is timely, since interdisciplinary collaborative partnerships continue to struggle with cultural, organizational, and relationship barriers that have become the real descriptors of campus culture, the key roadblocks to institutional collaboration. As Chapter 2 described, some interdisciplinary collaborations are successful, although most are not. Specifically, the present study examines the interdisciplinary collaboration between faculty and staff through first year partnerships. Recognizing that staff are predominantly on the margins of academic culture (Kezar, 2003; Tinto, 2006; Upcraft, 1989), the present study focuses on what impedes or underpins a stronger, more collaborative relationship between faculty and staff:

> Change processes need to involve collaboration, the examination or formation of shared interests, and collective leadership. The bad faith created through unethical change processes; a continuing erosion of trust between faculty, administrators, and staff through unilateral campus decision-making processes; a lack of vision for multi-level leadership; and limited empowerment among employees; all continue to create a context unfavorable to true or authentic change. (Kezar, 2014, p. 225)

A comparative multi-case study enabled the collection and comparison of data across three unique sites (Yin, 2013) and addressed “how” institutions collaborate, but, equally important, “why” they collaborate (Yin, 1994). Each institution within the present research was bounded by the academic years of the study. The problem addressed in this study was the influence of various barriers and supports as identified by faculty and staff participants. All three institutions were experiencing substantial budgetary issues and employee redundancies, and one site was transitioning from a University College to a University. Data was collected through interviews with senior administrators and focus groups of staff and faculty participants who were familiar with first year programming.

4.1. Overview

This chapter provides the key findings for this study and is organized into five sections. The data for each of the three research sites were mapped out individually, and section 4.5 provides the findings on the commonalities between them. This approach highlighted the individual histories of each site, which was used to reflect on how the leadership and historical significance of each site impacted the collaboration at the site. William Tierney (1988) has suggested that educational institutions have different cultures, and therefore, the successful leadership at one institution might fail at another: "The rationale for a cultural framework is not to presume that all organizations should function similarly, but rather to provide managers and researchers with a schema to diagnose their own organizations" (p. 17). Moving forward and developing an integrated plan for collaboration begins with an examination of these perceptions, cultures, and institutional structures.

Section 4.2 - Organizational Culture and Collaboration: Administrator's Perspective

The interviews of the present study were based on a qualitative analysis using open-ended questions that highlighted the leadership, cultural values, and current direction of each institution. The interviews with administrators also provided insight into the current leadership potential for facilitating future collaborative initiatives between staff and faculty.

The separate focus groups for staff and faculty at Site One and Site Two provided the necessary time and space with colleagues to create a sense of comfort, and possibly reduce any perceived power dynamic in the room. Then, the groups were merged together as combined focus groups to provide opportunities to enhance faculty and staff collaborations, and to promote more positive attitudes between the groups. Due to time commitments, the staff and faculty for the first two groups were combined at Site Three, and therefore, a third focus group was not required.

Section 4.3 - Campus Culture and Collaboration: Faculty and Staff Perspectives

This section addresses how campus culture and stakeholder beliefs and perspectives impact collaborative practices in higher education. This section analyzes the three focus groups from the three sites.

Section 4.4 - Organizational Factors Impact on FY Programming Collaborations

This section addresses the organizational factors that impact the development of first year partnerships between staff and faculty. This section analyzes the three focus groups from the three sites.

Section 4.5 - Experiences of Collaboration on FY Programming

This section examines the experiences of faculty and staff with first year programming.

Section 4.6 - Summary

This section summarizes Chapter 4 and introduces Chapter 5.

4.2. Organizational Culture and Collaboration: Administrator's Perspective

4.2.1. Site One

Interviews at Site One included senior administrators who had some experience or knowledge of first year programming. When asked whether first year programming could appeal across lines, one administrator felt that "first year can appeal across the lines especially for people who have been here awhile" (Administrator 5, Site One). Administrator 4, Site One, expressed the following: "First year programming speaks to who we are… Faculty and staff run into problems with first year students equally. I think they would each see this as beneficial, but, that said, there may be some territorial issues." Administrator 4 is pointing to the challenges of breaking down silos within an institution, particularly with respect to territorial issues (e.g., who is responsible for what within the institution). Administrator 2, Site One spoke to the value of first year programming, specifically because they are an access institution, and although their

faculty wants students to be prepared, students are not changing, and so a lack of realism exists as to who their students really are:

> There seems to be a lack of reaching out beyond one's own area—for example, connecting with student services and orientation. There is a need for a smart start for our students, but it is not an institutional initiative, there is no agreement about importance, and there is no money attached. Local initiatives tend to disappear, not because of a bad idea but because institutionally we are not taking responsibility for our new students.

As the demographic of the student population changes, support programs are critical for accommodating the divergent abilities of incoming students. Magolda (2005) has pointed to the separation of departments as a difference in the nature of their functional roles, which is similar to the territorial issues raised by Administrator 4, Site One. Administrator 2, Site One also has suggested that: "There seems to be a lack of reaching out beyond one's own area—for example, connecting with Student Services and orientation."

Administrators at Site One felt there was a willingness to collaborate and support first year programs, but someone had to take the initiative to say "we need to do this." For example, Administrator 1, Site One also pointed to the importance of institutional support and resources to demonstrate commitment to such initiatives: "There is a need for a smart start for our students, but it is not an institutional initiative, there is no agreement about importance and there is no money attached."

In discussions about collaboration at the administrative levels, a general consensus arose that administrators collaborated because collaboration was an essential part of their job. Administrator 3, Site One believed faculty/faculty and faculty/staff collaborations were less successful:

> There is a cultural shift… faculty don't have training in teaching to begin with, and I don't think there is anything in their training that leads them to think that way unless they have experiences themselves as a student. I don't think there is anything in their background that leads them to think they are part of a team.

For many years, the differing ideologies of faculty and staff have enabled them to operate as separate entities within higher education. This historical separation, an informal curriculum, and governance structures have hindered the development of collaborative initiatives between faculty and staff. Hatch and Cunliffe (2006) have suggested that these organizational structures support the domination and

marginalization of some groups by others, and Administrator 2, Site One expressed a similar view:

> The community misses the overall vision. Student Services being part of staff are not easily recognized as staff, therefore hierarchy exists. The concept of non-teaching faculty highlights the structure and jockeying for power with the differentiation between teaching in a classroom and teaching in workshops with a focus on orientation.

This divide between faculty and staff also resonates in governance, the Senate, and Faculty council:

> The scale in the Senate is tipped to faculty 15 to 1. Same with provosts and academic priorities. This imbalance ripples through the institution from resources to access and priorities. We need to work together to build and develop governance structures in order to develop process and procedures that are beneficial to everyone. (Administrator 3, Site One)
>
> Faculty Council needs staff representatives—some do attend but don't have a voice and don't speak up, feel they are the only one. It is difficult being the only voice at the table. It is challenging, overwhelming, and lonely. I don't have the words to express myself. I don't have the research to draw on. How can we fit in if we don't have models? I can't contextualize how we could fit in. (Administrator 5, Site One)

This separation of faculty and staff into two separate houses creates an imbalance of representation and roadblocks that minimize the success of first year programming. Structures are in place that minimize connections and impede the contribution of student service professionals. Administrator 3, Site One pointed out that:

> We haven't found a way or defined strategies on how this collaboration should happen. Don't know if it was the intent of the university to bring student affairs to the provost table, but it is still very academically driven—no focus on student affairs.

This lack of effort to collaborate is driven by the historical evolution of higher education. The voices at the governance table impact how time is organized and money and resources are allocated, which, over time, has created tensions between faculty and staff:

> We have not defined ways or processes to create opportunities for collaboration. There are territorial issues when developing new processes, programs, and services. It is key to appeal to something everyone shares as a value, which usually comes down to students and learning. (Administrator 1, Site One)

An example of the effort to collaborate was a first-year program that created cross-collaboration between faculty and staff. The concept was to create a critical mass of students on campus. In part, the appeal was to faculty and staff who thought that, at last, programing was being developed to support first year students. Faculty and staff quickly took ownership in the enterprise of education that was all about the students. This collaboration effort was met with great fanfare and success, but it only lasted two years. Administrator 3, Site One wasn't sure why the program lasted only two years, but speculated that a lack of student demand might have been the reason. Interestingly, a faculty member who was involved in the program made the following comment:

> The first-year cohort program—English, History, and Social Sciences—was a wonderful project, and I loved doing it. We were not given time to collaborate, and we knew we shared the same body of students, but it didn't work physically for faculty to get together; I meet the class on Tuesday, you meet on Thursday; it was demanding—everything about it was promising, and it was exciting, and the will was there, but the geo-physical time/space stuff made it impossible to collaborate except spiritually. It worked for a couple of years but was highly fraught. This was not a failure to collaborate—it was a failure of time and money. (Faculty 1, Site One)

The divergent views of the administrator and faculty member highlight a disconnect and a lack of cohesiveness between the administrators and faculty/staff who were integral to the first-year project: "They (administrators) are not listening to the people with expertise and their stakeholders" (Faculty 1, Site One) or the information is not trickling down. Administrators may feel they have provided leadership but "if it is coming down, it isn't coming with support or clear purpose". (Faculty 1, Site One)

Difficulties with collaborative efforts are a systematic problem that occurs campus wide. Departments are territorial, and when new initiatives such as an advising review are being developed, not all people agree:

> The task force could not agree on models to be adopted and were unable to come up with viable solutions. There were different points of view, pressures that individuals were working under, and differing priorities. The review failed. (Administrator 3, Site One)

A collaborative vision requires the development of shared values that can dismantle territorial issues, so people can reach agreement: "A common vision and language were not developed with a new advising review initiative, and the review failed because of a lack of agreement" (Administrator 3, Site One).

These collaborations needed to appeal in ways that made sense to each of the participants and would be in each of their interests: “We have grown up in this culture—how do we make the switch? Sure, I will work with you, but what is the benefit to me, and if no benefit to me, I don’t see the value of doing this” (Administrator 4, Site One). Polnariev and Levy (2016) have argued that student success needs to be the core guiding principle, and, for the most part, they define it as academic achievement, competency development, and credential attainment; but they also recognize the need for other outcomes like civic engagement, cultural awareness, and development of personal values and ethics. This approach to student success is in alignment with the understanding that Student Services are not the reason students are at institutions of higher learning, although the co-curricular program supported by Student Services provides a richness to students’ academic goals:

> Once a student decides to come here to get an academic credential, we realize Student Services makes or breaks a student’s educational journey. Life outside the classroom enriches the student experience and supports the success of the student. Student Services needs to show what we do and how we can enrich student life. Examples include work experience, labs, co-op; support services for a wide range of student issues that can include disability and mental illness; athletics; and leadership. (Administrator 6, Site One)

Other administrators believed that faculty recognized the importance of staff supports for students and the significant role they play in student success, but opportunities were limited for faculty and staff to integrate their work into a cohesive program or initiative: “Nobody says no to collaboration... but it doesn’t happen” (Administrator 1, Site One). Participants in the present study felt that joint institution-wide initiatives highlighted the push for change from the president and governance, but also recognized that when the leadership is weak, there is no coming together on these initiatives.

Finally, administrators were asked about the beneficial outcomes of collaborations between faculty and staff. In general, the conversation addressed the need to have good leadership and for everyone to have a voice so to create collaborations that would be beneficial to the group, institution, and individual: “When you put people together, and they can’t see the benefits to them, it is hard for them to collaborate. Folks may agree to get on board if they see something really positive in the future” (Administrator 2, Site One). The participants shared a general belief that

collaborations were hard work requiring trust and respect, and that the successful results of collective thinking produces creativity, synergy, and innovation.

4.2.2. Site Two

The interviews at Site Two were held with two senior administrators: one was a longstanding employee of the institution and the other was fairly new to the institution but had substantial connections to Student Services while working in other positions at other institutions. Interestingly, both interviews at Site Two began with conversations about the importance of personalities and relationships, which differed from the interviews at Site One that focused predominantly on organizational barriers. The interviews at Site Two focused on the relationships impacting the success of faculty and staff collaborations. The participants suggested that faculty and staff would work together, but informal chats required a genuine mutual respect to make a collaboration work. Moreover, this level of trust and respect takes time, and collaborative work helps to build these values:

> We value collaborative processes and collaborative planning—it is what we do. It strikes me that here we appreciate and also expect that a silo approach is not going to be as valuable and, in some cases, not even effective… Now that said, I would say between academic and other support or administrative services, I would say not as much, but I think that is fairly common. (Administrator 1, Site Two)

The Site Two participants valued camaraderie and appreciated their ability to have informal chats and hallway conversations. However, as institutions evolve and create a higher level of specialization, more confusion occurs around roles and exactly what people are doing. An example of this potential confusion occurs around the Registrar's office processing of degree granting programs that require significant changes in how they function, which creates more complexity in the workplace:

> I don't think anyone on the academic side ever really understands what's going on in the Registrar's office. Why do they need more positions? We are teaching the same number of students, and so there is a lack of understanding of most academics of what actually goes on in the Registrar's office and how complex things can be there, and why complexity leads to more people. (Administrator 2, Site Two)

Within the Registrar's office, as a school becomes a degree granting institution, rules and regulations become more complex. Often, this level of complexity is not accounted

for in time or staffing, and academics don't grasp the importance of this level of work/complexity with respect to the need for an increased budget for staff positions:

> It doesn't take a lot of time to process another 150 straight out of grade 12 applications, but it does take more time if you are adding more programs… when we became a degree granting college, it created a huge level of complexity in the Registrars' office that was not anticipated nor was it staffed. (Administrator 1, Site Two)

This level of confusion can add to the challenges of collaboration because when institutional culture changes, not all people always get what they want: "Everyone wants to work Monday through Thursday 9:30–2:30, and we need to spread that out" (Administrator 2, Site Two). Administrator 1, Site Two commented that:

> If you don't have that communication or relationship where you can go in with trust, and you know sort of a common philosophy that is going to be benefitting the college and the students, if you don't have all that, everything is going to slow down, and your outcome is never going to be the same.

What helps Site Two to connect faculty and Student Services is a very flat organizational structure that produces a limited hierarchy. The Student Services portfolio reports to the VP Academic, which, participants believe, creates a greater connectivity between Student Services and faculty departments. Administrator 1, Site Two felt that a closer connection to the VP Academic produces a stronger connection to the core work of the institution:

> It's very common for academic policies or Student Service policies to come through a Dean and division chair committee for approval. Because someone from Student Services is on that weekly committee, it gives that constant presence of someone who can say wait a minute from the Student Services side of things—that isn't going to work because…

This flat structure enables the head of Student Services to sit on the curriculum committee that deals with curriculum and academic operational matters.

The physical plant is laid out in an attempt to support collaboration between similar departments, so people are encouraged to talk to one another. Unfortunately, "sometimes people in close proximity with different reporting structures do not share information, and sometimes people with the same reporting structure have relational issues that prevents the collaboration" (Administrator 1, Site Two). According to

Administrator 2, Site Two, the degree of success of a collaborative partnership depends on personal relationships: “How well people get along personally tends to make the collaborative relationships closer or further apart.” In addition:

> When Student Services and the Registrar’s office were separated, we reported to an Associate VP communications and marketing, so structurally we were communications and marketing. People would look at that and say that’s weird, but if you think about it, it was ideal at the time because what we really needed to do was look at how we market ourselves internally to students. (Administrator 2, Site Two)

Although this approach contradicts an earlier point concerning organizing work space according to similar job requirements, this restructuring was effective during a time when marketing internally to students was the mandate.

Organizationally, an academic core is surrounded by organizational layers, and a belief endures that programs closer to the academic core are safer because money tends to move towards the core. These layers can create cross functional teams but also can create tensions if already resourced money and resources are driving the initiative:

> Where it hits the wall is who is going to pay for it; who is going to own it; whose responsibility is it; who is accountable; who benefits; whose empire is it going under. If you can push past those things, I think it comes down to leaders modeling the kind of behaviour you want your managers and staff to follow. (Administrator 2, Site Two)

Funding for new collaborative initiatives enables participants to engage in dialogue without having to wonder what part of their programming is going to be defunded to pay for new initiatives.

Participants noted that one of the challenges of this organizational structure was the introduction of a new Career Counselling Centre and the role it plays in conjunction with Cooperative Education. Career Counselling and Cooperative Education work well together, but: “It is highly unusual for Career Counselling to report to an academic dean…and Co-op does report to an academic dean, and the notion that it doesn’t report to an academic dean would be challenging” (Administrator 1, Site Two).

Who owns the Career Centre and from where will its funding come? Administrator 1 pointed to the flexibility of their institutional structures, which helped to bring people together to find ways to mutually answer these questions without distracting from the

goal. Although it was unusual for the Career Centre to report to an academic dean, a willingness existed for this to happen, and, so for now, the structure was working.

Site Two has a history of employees staying for a long time, and thus, long-term relationships are instrumental at this institution, whether they be with unions, staff, faculty, or the leaders of different units.

4.2.3. Site Three

The interviews at Site Three were with two administrators who had worked there for a number of years, although post-interviews, they no longer work at this institution. Both administrators had a business orientation and brought this unique perspective to the interviews. Administrator 1 spoke about the previous three years at Site Three and the observable growth in interest in the value of, and need for, collaboration that has increased for all the reasons outlined in the literature, especially with respect to the synchronization and integration of activities to better serve students and program efficiencies. Although the interest in collaboration has grown, the institution still has a long way to go:

> We have a heck of a long way to go to having a full integrated collaborative model, and the reasons for that are two things. Culturally, we just haven't been doing it, and one of the big challenges in any post-secondary is the large amount of history with these institutions—that is the way it has always been. The other is that some of our systems don't support taking apart the silos and integrating things. (Administrator 1, Site Three)

Both administrators pointed to the different understandings as to what *collaboration* is and how these understandings are divided into two distinct camps. One camp believed that by sharing and working together, the world will be a better place; and the other camp believed that they have seen this before, and when they tried collaboration the last time, they lost their resources, and their programs were cut. According to the present study participants, the environment at Site Three did not support collaboration, and if it did happen, it was due to people working really hard, and believing in the benefits of collaboration. To begin developing an integrated model of collaboration, Administrator 1, Site 3 focused on the need to clarify the exact definition of *collaboration*:

> Collaboration in my mind is that everyone is heard. Collaboration in other peoples' minds is that they must see the specific outcome they

> want, and if it isn't there, then we haven't collaborated. We must be clear on what our definition of *collaboration* is. Some people want to keep all their pieces in play in addition to the collaborative work.

Administrator 2, Site 3 believed that people are good with collaboration when everyone is on the same page, when expectations are managed, and when reminders of the purpose and conditions of the collaboration are repeated over time. However, roadblocks to collaboration can develop when "the desire to not share resources and the lack of agreement to work together if individuals do not get their own way creates power struggles and hierarchy within the group" (Administrator 2, Site Three). Also, "I think, in some cases, my perception is that we bend over backwards to make everyone feel that they have been heard at the risk of not meeting our goals" (Administrator 2, Site Three).

One example of these tensions occurred during a large project that reviewed all admission practices. The entire campus was involved with more than 200 people in the discussion groups. Based on the information from the focus groups, goals were established and shared with everyone. After this goal setting was accomplished, certain groups pushed back against these goals, and a decision was made to make changes to address their concerns: "We ended up with a much more wishy-washy final outcome than what we could have created, and what the community as a whole said they wanted" (Administrator 1, Site Three).

Administrator 1, Site Three wondered about how to bring differences of opinions together to change things and still be flexible in a way that could benefit everyone. At the time of the interviews, Site Three was struggling to implement strategies and processes to create successful collaborations. Both administrators believed that post-secondary education was not structured to be collaborative, and the physical plant at their institution did not support people working together: "There is not a lot of space to bring people together, and the faculty of arts and sciences are set up to be independent decentralized organizations" (Administrator 1, Site Three). These faculties are fundamentally structured to prevent collaboration, but "[s]ome organizational structures including the educational council that focuses not on faculties but industries is a good model for collaboration" (Administrator 2, Site Three). Other models such as international initiatives do not support collaboration. Finally, the financial savings of successful collaborations don't go to those groups actually doing the projects; rather, they become part of general revenue (Administrator 2, Site Three):

> Barriers are typically around the physical structure of the schools, and lack of incentives are around financial models, the revenue models, the collective agreements—none of them encourage it. If it happens, it is just because people are working really hard, and they believe in it fundamentally. (Administrator 2, Site Three)

Additionally, “resources and trust play significant roles in collaboration” (Administrator 1, Site Three), and if resources are available, everyone is willing to collaborate; but if resources are limited, they are not. Trust requires that partners are accountable to their piece and bring their skills with a willingness to collaborate:

> It is interesting to me, because I come from the corporate world, that there is less trust in post-secondary than in the corporate world. I think it is because of reduced mobility, and people don’t move around as much. From a military and corporate perspective, you have to be able to trust that partner to do their thing, collaborate with others, and work towards each other’s strengths. (Administrator 2, Site Three)

As institutional culture continues to change, post-secondary institutions require leaders: “Good organizations take the research and ask how do we take the barriers down, how do we improve productivity and creativity and innovation? It is not a common conversation in public post-secondary” (Administrator 1, Site Three).

During the interviews at Site Three, when asked for their advice about how to develop a collaborative practice, both administrators agreed that change was messy and required institutional support and the ability to try without fear of failure. You must “look for opportunities to work together within schools and departments. Create an environment where collaboration is rewarded, create pathways, and build collaborations into the structures” (Administrator 1, Site Three).

4.3. Campus Culture and Collaboration: Faculty and Staff Perspectives

4.3.1. Site One

When the staff at this institution discussed their culture and stakeholder beliefs, they expressed a substantial frustration. At that time, the economic climate was rife with layoffs and cutbacks that disadvantaged collaborative initiatives due to the fact that minimal available resources were creating a competition for dollars:

> Right now, it is difficult because some departments are unstable with layoffs, bumping, not filling positions, and we are just trying to find solid ground. Previous collaborations still happen, but moving forward requires time and resources that we don't have. People after resources takes away from being here for our students. How do you stop the money grab? (Staff 3, Site One)

This institution also was evolving into a university. Not only was there competition for departmental dollars and resources, qualifications were being added to faculty positions, which raised the professional bar and increased the competition between faculty members.

As the institution was being recognized as a university, Student Services still were considered a very new profession, although the research was building. The newness of the Student Services profession and the lack of a cohesive structure contributed to continued power differentials when working with faculty:

> Maybe the expectations will change as the years go on. For some folks it is just a job, not about teaching students. Is it about non-competent professionals? In the States, you go to grad school to be a student-affairs professional. Then you have a professional degree and that brings the professional ethics. (Staff 1, Site One)

As Student Services staff grew into these new professional roles, they recognized that fostering new relationships was essential. Unfortunately, some faculty were still being influenced by their past perceptions of student service roles, which included negative interpretations: "Relationships are haphazard and depend on who you know. Nothing is imbedded, and people forget what we do. We can't build relationships if they are not fostered" (Staff 6, Site One). In addition, "building these relationships also requires an understanding and knowledge of what each of us does within the institution and how we connect" (Staff 6, Site One). Misunderstandings can exist as to where staff fit in the hierarchy of higher education:

> There are perceptions that faculty do the real teaching, and all the rest of it is non-teaching. So, in any programming with a focus on first year, there are questions about what the content should be and who should be teaching the class. (Staff 1, Site One)

An example of these misunderstanding at Site One occurred when a committee (all staff) was created to develop a system that would engage first year students and first year experience. There were lots of constraints including a lack of funding and the need to

shift people around and use the monies they already had. It was very challenging, but the committee put together a model and forwarded it to the department heads:

> As we were sitting at a luncheon provided by the VPs to celebrate our work, we were informed that they were going to follow an entirely different program. Something happened in that time period a week later, and an entirely new, different document was produced. They had nothing to go with it—they had a flow chart. This is how we are going to report? It was not our report. (Staff 4, Site One)

The committee was advised not to make trouble, and when people started to complain about the program, the department heads kept referring everything back to the committee as if they had created the document (a flow chart). The committee informed their supervisors that the report did not look anything like what they had produced, and it was an unworkable system. This situation highlighted the disconnect between the direction that the administrators wanted to take and the information that the staff received; or, perhaps the formation of an all-staff committee eliminated the very real need for faculty input. Historically, staff and faculty have worked independently, and leadership is necessary for introducing collaborative initiatives. Faculty 1, Site One spoke about how institutional memory is a history that impacts decisions and informs beliefs and perspectives:

> Historically, there have been successes where people work together around a common goal, sharing the workload and resources, but that model doesn't exist today because you need administrative buy-in. Today, with changes to higher education, there is confusion around perceived areas of responsibility and competition for the same university resources.

At Site One, faculty were successful when they all had one common goal, and they succeeded without funding when they used collaborative effort to share the workload (Faculty 2, Site One). However, more inclusive cross-institution collaborations have not been as supported as they should have been, even though they have been shown to increase support for integrated learning: "All those elements that comprise a safety net for first year students are lacking" (Faculty 2, Site One). Faculty and administrators who are not onboard create roadblocks to the growth of general first year education. These roadblocks can be in the form of limited resources being made available or a lack of approval for continuing development of initiatives:

> Cross disciplinary initiatives sometimes get through concept, some get to draft, and some even get to the administrative line. Some we are

> talking about now that we were talking about 10 years ago—Adult Education and a service learning precursor to an applied learning center—and we are still talking about it and still have zero resources for it. Very frustrating. (Faculty 1, Site One)

In addition, the economic climate can undermine ongoing broader collaborative initiatives because funding dollars are limited, which in turn creates a lack of resources and a lack of training due to limitations on time and connectivity (Faculty 3, Site One). According to Staff 4, Site One, "There is a lack of desire to understand or find out, and we are not supporting what we need to support." Is first year programming considered to be a core business of the institution or is it just specialty programming? And if it is a core business, where is the leadership that will drive the initiative:

> We don't commit to anything. We do little conversations and a little bit of what works because it worked somewhere else, and we will cherry pick. An innovation fund should be on first year programming. The priorities of our education are not reflective of first year. (Faculty 2, Site One)

Staff 3, Site One asked: "How do we prioritize first year learning—to help retention and maximize capital?" According to Faculty 1, Site One, there is no context or direction for how we prioritize first year learning, and Staff 4, Site One was frustrated that we don't support our first-year students in a team way. Also, Faculty 6, Site One commented that:

> When I was a new faculty member, student service was an afterthought and only came up when there was a crisis. And quite often at that point, I didn't know the process—Who do I contact? What do I do? But I feel a lot of it is resources, time/people.

Discussions in the faculty and staff shared focus groups of Site One highlighted that the cultural and structural patterns of their organization have created levels of disconnect between faculty and staff, and a lack of understanding about what each other does and who is responsible for what. Due to the physical disconnections and the lack of awareness about each other's jobs and responsibilities, the only thing that seems to bring the two factions together is some form of crisis (Faculty 6, Site One).

Another theme in the Site One focus groups was a lack of comprehension about the organizational structures that impeded collaborations. According to Staff 3, Site One, "Employees don't know how all the pieces fit into the puzzle." When faculty first arrive at the institution, they get a new employee orientation, but the time allotment for Student Services is quite small, and there really isn't a sense of how the two groups can work

together: “We have faculty and we have Student Services. The collaboration pieces that I think are valuable to student learning and to the institution are not happening” (Staff 5, Site One), and “some of us have been here for many years and never had the opportunity to connect” (Faculty 3, Site One). What is the missing piece that can create synergy between staff and faculty?

K-12 education has ongoing discussions about the whole child learner, but this topic is not considered in higher education. Although as pointed out in the focus group with faculty, private sector employees are perceived as whole employees, but the concept of developing the whole person seems to stop at the university education level:

> We don’t talk about the whole student process, so it becomes very hierarchical because we put curriculum above everything else, which also conveys an impression to faculty that everything is there for their bidding, that everything else is there for what they are doing, instead of completely flipping it around. (Faculty 1, Site One)

One initiative put forward at Site One was the idea of a credit career prep course that students would be able to fit into their schedules because it could be delivered online. This course was designed to fit the department portfolio and also was tied to the Career Centre: “The course was never created because of the resistance from faculty who believed it wasn’t curriculum content and would water down the program and increase workload” (Faculty 2, Site One). In addition, Faculty 1, Site One commented: “We don’t even start to approach anything by how do we get the best bang for our buck—from what we are doing. The conversation needs to change. There is no conversation happening amongst groups of people.”

According to Faculty 2, Site One: “If people don’t pick up the idea, agree about importance, attach money to it, then small local initiatives disappear not because of a bad idea, but because of a lack of institutional buy-in that results in a lack of power for the program.”

4.3.2. Site Two

The discussion at Site Two began with stakeholder beliefs and a question about whether Student Service professionals could be considered educators. In this discussion, a certain level of uncertainty existed regarding the defined role of Student Services within higher education, specifically its roles as educators:

> I wonder at times what our role as an educational institution is, whether it is to teach math and science or whether it is to teach young people how to be well rounded and contributing members of society. If the latter is the case, then I do feel that student support is meant to educate and meant to show them how to pay their fees on time and meet deadlines and take responsibility for their actions. But at the end of the day, that is not what we are getting funding for so that is the first thing that gets cut. I think Student Services do educate, but maybe I am just green and wearing rose-colored glasses. (Staff 1, Site Two)

The focus group agreed that staff professionals provide education of a different sense, and although it is not academic, it is directly linked to helping students succeed academically. With respect to any relationship between staff and faculty connecting to provide these academic supports, "it is really one off's and usually a faculty member coming to Student Services because of an issue with a student" (Staff 1, Site Two). However, some exceptions exist where faculty are aware of the services provided and take the time to connect counsellors with their students before there are issues:

> One instructor teaches several first-year courses, and in the first class, he invites a counsellor to come and speak for about 30 minutes about the resources available and normalizing the challenges they may or may not be going through. This is fantastic—we are a team—let's work together and help students succeed. (Staff 3, Site Two)

Stakeholders at this institution, including administrators (as evident in previous discussions), have a very real sense that staff are secondary to academic classes, even though Student Services reports to the VP Academic. The perception is that "two very distinct entities [exist] where faculty teach and staff supports" (Staff 4, Site Two). Participants also expressed the view that student support was used to describe who they were, rather than Student Services. This perception is changing slowly, beginning with a significant hierarchical change by which Student Services professionals report to the same VP Academic as faculty. This connecting point for faculty and staff has provided more encouragement from the top down for collaborations that can support students: "A lot of these changes had to do with the change in leadership. It has been much more collaborative, and you know it feels okay, more collaborative in working with students and supporting faculty" (Staff 2, Site Two).

Site Two had a very strong feeling of community and a vibe that it believed students loved, since it felt a bit more like home and created a sense of comfort for new students. The present study participants also spoke about their comradery and passion

for supporting students. This warm and supportive culture, although valuable for the development of first year programming, was unable to develop a master plan that incorporated all of their resources. Additionally, a fear existed that their community connection and warmth was being gradually lost as a new layer of administration was being added. The research participants struggled with the following questions: How do we communicate what the opportunities are? How do we share what we are doing? How do we unravel the culture, so we can begin collaborations? In addition, Faculty 3, Site Two spoke about the lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities that further complicates collaboration across departments:

> Who does what and when? We don't know what everybody is doing or what is being funded. That is always one of the biggest barriers in academic environments—how can we best communicate to one another. What are we doing? What are the opportunities? How can we collaborate more? (Faculty 3, Site Two)

The research participants also commented that the strong community feelings nurtured at Site Two extended across individual departments in which there was a common alignment, but cross-divisionally, a level of disconnection existed. Site Two was a smaller institution, and the focus group felt that they had benefited from a more centralized environment, and also recognized that the decentralization spurred on by growth created communication issues:

> Having conversations with different departments is interesting in how they all work differently and have different perspectives. For example, with one department, I can pick up the phone, and another department, I have to set up a meeting for the week ahead. Work with Student Services is like that as well. How you work with different departments is dependent on the time of the year, impact times. (Faculty 1, Site Two)

One example of increased communication and awareness is "The academic plan and committee work [that] created an environment where Student Services staff are being consulted and their voices are being heard" (Faculty 5, Site Two). In addition:

> In a good way, these levels of committee work are drawing out what is known and not known and providing knowledge for sourcing students. Do you know what resources are available or what to do if a disability becomes prevalent? Do you know where those resources are? (Faculty 1, Site Two)

Although staff and faculty are centralized under the VP academic, the explosive growth within departments has caused a level of decentralization to the extent that the present

study participants believed that “supports and services are being reinvented at different levels where we just don’t know what everyone is doing” (Faculty 4, Site Two). Even though the reporting structure was centralized, communication issues still continued to create roadblocks to collaboration. Different departments under the same dean weren’t sitting down and discussing how they could share expertise and resources:

> There is always the territorial piece that says we are already doing this, why are you doing it? So, I had to sit down and have that conversation. Tell me exactly what tools you are using, maybe we can cooperate on software tools that are useful to all the students, regardless of what department they come from. (Faculty 3, Site Two)

These recent changes, although impacted by the sheer size of the reporting area, have staff and faculty reporting to the same VP Academic, and have created more synergy within the current academic plan. More encouragement to collaborate is coming from senior leadership, and both sides are beginning to realize that they need to work together:

> We can’t do it on our own. There is less pointing the finger—that is your job, this is my job. Five years ago my answer to these questions would be very different, and it is just the way things have changed in terms of our senior leadership team. (Faculty 1, Site Two)

Administrative roles have increased 20% over the last 5 years. The growth is happening quickly, and fortunately “the institutional restructuring has put Student Services under the VP academic, which helps to keep all of the student services close to the core of the institution” (Faculty 3, Site Two).

Orientation at Site Two is focused on one event at the beginning of the year. This event is similar to an information fair where students can find all the resources they might need in one spot. The coordinator of orientation believes that the event is gathering greater support from a more diverse base of services due to the increased request for tables and information regarding the event: “Departments are starting to see the value in participating in a centralized orientation rather than just doing their own thing” (Staff 3, Site Two). This is a slow process with one of the greatest successes being the combining of domestic orientation and international orientation – although a few departments are still siloed and provide their own unique student support services:

> Arts are still very siloed. We are trying to move away from that. The model worked well a few years back, but I think a lot of people are

> reinventing the wheel. Trying to synchronize rather than being asynchronous is a challenge unto itself. People don't want to let go of what they are doing. Why would they want to let go and integrate with another system when they know what they are doing? (Staff 2, Site Two)

Faculty 4, Site Two highlighted that: "Goals and objectives for orientation are missing from the educational plan and are needed to encompass the entire community." With respect to siloed individual orientations, the same people are at the table generating the same ideas—there may be a hundred people who are engaged, but they are the same hundred people who are engaged in multiple initiatives: "If we want to get better at it, we need to bring different people to the table" (Faculty 1, Site Two). In addition, Staff 1, Site Two suggested: "Great idea but we don't have time. That is horrible to say, and it discourages collaboration, but faculty and staff are burning out." Also, Staff 5, Site Two pointed out that: "First year programming has to be resourced with both money and people and buy-in from senior administrators." Buy-in from senior staff would provide the impetus and some level of power to move these initiatives forward.

4.3.3. Site Three (Combined)

Site three was a combined faculty and staff focus group due to the limitations of time and coordinating scheduling for three focus groups. Site Three did not have a third focus group. At the time of the interviews, this site was going through substantial organizational change that included a lot of turnover in leadership roles. Structural change and decreasing budgets were considered to be key components impacting the culture of this institution. Both faculty and staff expressed a belief that they owned student success, but "with the number of departments and schools, part time students, varying entry start dates, and revolving dates, it becomes difficult to break down the silos" (Faculty 1, Site Three) and create collaborative initiatives. In addition:

> The challenge is that we have intakes every 3 weeks for our trades programs. How do you provide support for those students? Do you centralize or not? September orientation is a pretty good template, but throughout the rest of the year, what do we do for our students? (Staff 3, Site Three)

The funding model is also "competitive and encouraged to be entrepreneurial and becomes less collaborative as departments compete for resources" (Faculty 1, Site Three). A competitive model can make it difficult to get a foothold for developing

partnerships, but it is easier if common ground or a prior relationship exists between the parties:

> Liberal Studies Advisory reps from different areas get together three times a year. This is a deliberate collaboration that is occasionally pulled together over conflict. It is still a work in progress but has a time commitment, and each dean recommends people to sit on the Advisory. (Staff 1, Site Three)

Staff 1, Site Three suggested: “Relationships are frayed with everyone working off the side of their desks.” Time and money become the problem because employees don’t have the time to collaborate or figure out who does what and when. In addition, collaboration models are not embedded in campus culture, and the silos create a lack of trust between departments and schools. Participants from Site Three felt they had to work on their relationships:

> You have to put effort into it, you have to have the dialogue—what are the students’ needs, the schools’ needs—and be able to find those opportunities for success. It’s all measured in success, at the end, it is the success of the students, whether it is first year or fourth year. (Faculty 3, Site Three)

In the focus group, the shared consensus was that everyone was there for student success and that this success starts from day one when a student walks through the door: “Success requires finding opportunities to work with schools and other departments” (Faculty 3, Site Three). Students are going to measure success by how they are treated and how they are supported. Everyone must be involved in creating a successful student journey.

4.4. Organizational Factors Impact on FY Programming Collaborations

4.4.1. Site One

Strategic Directions for Site One is divided into four sections—curriculum, services, environment, and innovation—that include entrepreneurial and accountable initiatives. Strategic priorities documents also broadened the discussion to focus on student recruitment, retention, and success. This document highlighted the support that connected students’ intellectual development with their emotional and physical state, and their social and economic conditions. As stated in the document, “that is why we

need to develop greater integration of our service and academic areas." Thus, the knowledge developed in service areas needs to inform the thinking of faculty and vice-versa. It appears that Site One is definitely moving towards a more collaborative approach, but "[w]hat is missing is the lack of strategies for the implementation and achievement of these goals, [and] if we can't define these processes, then we can't be accountable" (Faculty 1, Site One). Administrator 1, Site 1 supported these concerns about future directions, and agreed that "we haven't developed processes to create collaborations" and "staff support for students is distinct and separate from what faculty does." The new strategic direction also includes a focus on retraining, resources, and support: "It will take a lot of support. It will be interesting to see what we accomplish" (Faculty 3, Site One), and Faculty 5, Site One wondered: "So is that the problem that we don't have long-term goals to engage in activities that will take long-term attention to complete?"

As noted above, Site One, although recognizing the need for collaboration, still had a firm organizational line about where employees fit into the organization: "There are very clear divides that separate staff, non-teaching faculty, faculty, and administrators, which create silos that are difficult to work within" (Staff 2, Site One), especially with respect to those who have a foot in more than one unit: "Sometimes we straddle the line and report to academic and student affairs with discussions as to who we should actually report to with an overwhelming sense that you don't belong to us. So, we end up belonging to nobody" (Staff 2, Site One).

This rigidity of staffing structures is supported by staff because "people feel safe in their own unit" (Staff 3, Site One). Improving the resiliency of staffing structures and the relationships that are enhanced by proximity "requires flexibility, purpose, and the right to be wrong—at the moment we don't have any of those" (Faculty 2, Site One). Also, where employees are located physically makes a huge difference: "They are not structured for collaboration and most collaborations begin and end as hallway conversations" (Staff 4, Site One). Faculty 1, Site One also pointed out that:

> There is just not a lot of opportunities for people around the institution to actually engage. This is why I wonder why there is not a focus group for administration. Part of that needs to happen. There needs to be engagement opportunities that are organic and supportive, sharing activities. I feel like there is a real loss here as to what people could be doing.

Increasing the disconnect between staff and faculty is the fact that these organizational structures support divisional divides: “Departments operate independently with separate staff, office locations, budgets, responsibilities, and report to different executive offices” (Faculty 5, Site One). These structures do not support collaboration and cross divisional initiatives:

> Trailers have been erected, supposedly only for a temporary period of time but have now been around for at least 15 years. These temporary spaces isolate people and departments from the rest of the institution. Why do we need an underground parkade? Make space! (Staff 3, Site One)

An intention to create space for collaboration has not been part of the process of creating space for departments: “In some cases, services are found in the same building, which creates better connections, but more often than not, space allocation is haphazard and creates barriers” (Staff 3, Site One).

The creation of a VP Students sent a message that the institution valued students and was focused on student-centred learning: “Previously the position was Dean of Student Services, but the position did not hold a lot of power and was considered secondary by the president and the board” (Staff 5, Site One). Even with the new position, Student Services may be invited to the table but still lacks a voice and still must struggle to connect with academic stakeholders:

> Is the message clear about the VP Students? Is there a respect for the profession in our current culture? It hasn’t really changed the perception of our profession, our voices are mostly silent, and the higher you go, the worse it seems to get. (Staff 1, Site One)

Participants in the current study felt that a need existed for Site One to be intentional in setting up meetings between staff and faculty to discuss common issues and challenges around first year programming. It is much easier when deans and administrators are on board: “Student support courses are being developed, but in the end, it will come down to who is teaching the course. Are they credit courses? And are there resources to fund support programming?” (Staff 2, Site One). Top administrators need to be part of these conversations, but currently, the reporting structures do not produce effective communications. Additionally, “there is also no conversations happening with students where they can see the benefits of the programming and what they can get out of it” (Faculty 1, Site One). Examples include planning for an upcoming educational plan:

> How do we achieve goals of education? And how do we implement? The educational plan has very broad concepts and lacks strategies in how to implement the concepts across the entire institution. There are no strategies in the educational plan. If we can't define our goals—the best undergraduate education—then we can't be accountable. (Faculty 6, Site One)

The current culture of Site One indicates that faculty and staff are committed to their own work, and for the most part do not see their connection to the whole. Leadership will be required, since changing a culture is difficult, especially when the majority of existing administrators and faculty are not on board: "We need to hire people who understand and value first year programming" (Faculty 5, Site One).

4.4.2. Site Two

The Site Two vision focused on five key areas—students, employee sustainability, financial sustainability, communication, and advocacy. One key point considered the experiences and activities that actively engaged students and enhanced their development and learning. Historically, Site Two has had a clear hierarchical structure that puts teaching and learning first and student support second. With new leadership, "the senior leadership team has made positive impacts on the perceptions of roles within the organization, but there is still a sense that student support is a secondary player and has a quieter voice" (Staff 4, Site Two). Also:

> I think there is a perception that although we are student services and student support, a lot of faculty view us as faculty support. They are completely frustrated because they are trying to help students who run into issues around registration/graduation, and I will ask them "Why don't you tell the student to call the help line?" They respond with "Oh, I don't know. They just come to me, so I try to help them." (Staff 1, Site Two)

Although staff appreciated the efforts of the faculty member, the member was assuming that they were qualified to provide this kind of support, whereas such support lies within the purview of Student Services, since its staff understand the registration systems, and have access to the systems that contain all the student background information:

> Student Services can see why they are running into difficulties and what their options might be. When department chairs take on student support roles, even when their heart is in the right place, they are not the experts, and they can make costly mistakes. (Staff 3, Site Two)

Additionally, staff recognized that once a student makes a connection with faculty, that student is more inclined to continue that connection with respect to all manners of concerns and problems. If a more open connection existed between staff and faculty, the expansion of a student's support network would be much more realistic.

Geographical location also plays a role in developing valuable connections, but "the reporting structure has more play when it comes to who is interacting with whom" (Staff 1, Site Two). This is true for both staff and faculty, and although formal structures do not exist, bringing people together under one umbrella potentially enhances collaborative opportunities: "When employees are located in the same general location with the same dean, there is a lot of communication and connection, but when located in the same area under different deans, there is no conversation" (Staff 5, Site Two).

Recent changes at Site Two required that staff and faculty reported to the same VP who was spearheading the current academic plan: "The academic plan has committees where there is cross pollination between staff and faculty and their areas of expertise" (Staff 5, Site Two). In addition: Staff professionals also sat on other committees to influence decisions, such as:

> the committee for teaching and learning, and what is nice about that is it was a very deliberate decision that not only faculty should be on the teaching and learning group, but also the registrar, student services, someone from the library, as well as faculty from the learning centre. (Staff 2, Site Two)

This organization deliberately used a top-down approach to set out priorities and make sure that each academic planning committee and each initiative was a cross representation of faculty and staff with different opinions and experiences to support collaboration: "The inclusion of staff on these committees is a promising step forward, but it would have been beneficial for all members to understand the processes used to pick committee members and have insight into the scope of the initiative" (Staff 4, Site Two). This approach would have provided a greater opportunity for staff professionals to provide key contributions to the dialogue:

> No idea how the chairs were chosen. Everyone has an equal voice, but sometimes the way the conversation goes, I have little to say because they are talking very much about what happens in the classroom. And so, the challenge for us is to kind of broaden the definition of teaching and learning, which is the reason why we are there. (Staff 2, Site Two)

Despite the shared representation within the committee, power-relationships still exist, so while the intention may have been to broaden representation, Staff 2, Site Two pointed out that "their voices can still be silenced or marginalized." Fortunately, being at the table provided some opportunities for additional communication between staff and faculty, and as the literature (Magolda, 2010) has pointed out, a greater overlap between staff and faculty contributes to greater collaboration:

> There should be goals and things we achieve that cover all those bases, and then even now we are breaking down to subcommittees, and I worry in terms of collaboration there is not enough collaboration between the five priorities. We are all doing these things off the side of our desks, on top of what we already do. If someone is not telling me that I have to share and collaborate there, I have other things that have to take priority. (Staff 1, Site One)

Although this approach is promising, some are concerned about decreasing communication and collaboration as committees break down into sub-committees, and thus reduce the connectivity between groups.

At Site Two, it has been difficult to build trust and ongoing relationships between staff and faculty, since collaboration does not come naturally to individuals, the design of the physical plant undermines the success of people working together, and many staff have pointed out that collaborative work became an "add-on" to their already full workloads. Additionally, with the arrival of a new layer of administration, the present study participants shared that they had begun to feel lost and were losing their sense of connection with the administration of the institution. They also sensed that the administration was having a greater influence over the direction of institutional growth:

> Culture is rapidly shifting where we feel more distant from the administration. The perception amongst the junior faculty is that administration is almost like a bunch of seats in heaven—they don't even know who they are. Administrators are in a separate physical space, often off campus. There is no interaction with faculty. (Faculty 4, Site Two)

In addition to this perceived disconnection, "there is a decreasing level of communication between administration and faculty" (Faculty 1, Site 2). This rapid growth was also detrimental to communication, and "there is no sense of what everyone is doing" (Faculty 1, Site 2). More opportunities are needed to share initiatives that support first year students: "Giving a chance to hear about the fantastic things that are being done to

create fantastic supports for one another, all these fantastic things that we do on behalf of students" (Faculty 5, Site Two).

Since faculty are aware of students needs because they interact with them every-day, they should be part of the discussions with administration and staff. Faculty 1, Site Two commented on this disconnect between the administration and faculty:

> I think there is still a strong enough culture that people would love more collaborative conversations and feeding the engine shall we say on behalf of students. I get worried that the administration makes decisions without knowing what we know. What does what we are doing look like to everyone, and how does it support students and the people who work here?

In this present study, focus group participants generally felt that committee work was a positive opportunity to work together. If staff representatives are participating on academic planning committees, they can provide valuable input into available resources and student disabilities, and thus help to expose what is known and not known. Moreover, if faculty, staff, and administrators are at the same table, informed decisions can be made at a much higher/realistic level.

Site Two participants also expressed concerns about an infrastructure that was out of date and that was contributing to business processes being bogged down in a paper-based environment. This lack of IT infrastructure caused additional issues regarding bridging awareness around the campus:

> Nobody knows what anybody else is doing. It is only by having lunch or talking to someone in the hallway you find out what is happening. We need to have a central repository of information, but the difficulty with a campus-wide calendar is that someone needs to own it. (Faculty 4, Site Two)

The participants also noted that the campus calendar didn't schedule orientation until the long weekend before school started: "Orientation programs that are being held in September actually miss the boat when it comes to what the students need to know to be successful" (Faculty 2, Site Two). Participants agreed that orientation programs would be better situated in June and then in various support systems throughout the year.

4.4.3. Site Three (Combined)

One of the organizational factors that provided insight into the structural complexities of Site Three was academic admissions. Every school has their own (or have had in the past) admissions practices, which make it difficult for a support unit to provide services across a broad spectrum. It is confusing trying to assimilate all of the different structures:

> We have an enrollment management structure in place that involves a large number of people across the institution. They are to look at all the issues involving student supports particularly focused on retention and recruitment. We have that structure but haven't quite figured out how to use it to the best of our ability. Orientation, as an example, is a bit of a hit and miss with different schools doing different orientations at different times of the year. (Faculty 3, Site Three)

Organizational structures do not exist for campus-wide orientation: "There are intakes every three weeks for the trades programs, so what would support look like for those students?" (Faculty 2, Site Three). A large student welcome orientation is held in September each year, but very little orientation is done throughout the rest of the year. After the beginning of the school year, it becomes difficult to support students across the institution because of the diverse number of schools, registration dates, and student requirements: "The question is whether or not it is best to leave orientation programming with the individual departments, creating a silo approach to student support" (Staff 2, Site Three).

According to participant Staff 1, Site Three, "Workload is increasingly becoming an issue where orientation is something that is done off the side of the desk." Staff and faculty have excellent intentions, but they are pulled in many different directions, and "the new 3-year plan has very little focus on first year, and therefore, it becomes less of a priority" (Faculty 1, Site Three). Also:

> There is a large percentage of the population that almost refuses to participate because they see it as potentially more work or something else they will have to learn, and they already have enough things on their plate, and they don't want to be part of it. (Faculty 1, Site Three)

Decreasing budgets and government guidelines are integral components of the strategic plan to support the institution. The strategic operational plan is revisited every three years, and all initiatives must support this plan: "All about the money. First year

programming is a service to our students, but in and of itself, it doesn't bring in money, and therefore, it is easier to cut these services" (Staff 3, Site Three).

The Student Association at Site Three was strong and proactive, but not political; their focus was on supporting students and the student experience. They are very well resourced and run an efficient association:

> We have a wonderful Student Association. If you can't get organized, we will do it ourselves, and it is holding a bit of a mirror up to the institution. Okay we are glad you are doing it, but we should be doing it too, and we should be doing it together—coaching, mentoring, math tutoring—all working together to pool those resources. We are at that awareness stage, driven by some good leaders. (Faculty 2, Site Three)

All the present study participants recognized the value of the student union to the student population, and spoke about the opportunities to join forces with it to deliver first year support programming: "Creating strategies and opportunities for collaboration highlights common themes and puts an institutional value on first year programming" (Staff 1, Site Three). However, to date, this has not happened.

4.5. Experiences of Collaboration on FY Programming

This section discusses the first-year programming that has been implemented at the three study sites. Participants were asked to speak about their experiences and relationships as these programs were implemented.

4.5.1. Site One

First year collaborations at this institution have included a number of initiatives, such as a general-studies first year course and an ARTS 101 program, neither of which are running currently. Staff 4, Site One expressed the following:

> Collaboration worked well when all participants are on the same page, but there is a definite lack of understanding when it comes to recognizing the potential of embedded first year programming as it applies to student retention and supporting the whole student.

New student orientation has been a constant initiative hosted at the beginning of the school year (September and January) with participation from staff, faculty, the student

union, and administration. All other first year initiatives appeared to be ad hoc and relied on available resources and the enthusiasm of stakeholders:

> Once you reach out to faculty, they are receptive and supportive, but the knowledge piece is missing. There is a lack of training or orientation as to what the institution actually has, and faculty don't take the time to find what is out there for students. (Staff 1, Site One)

According to the focus group participants, some faculty are happy to get together with Student Services, but others don't even know where Student Services is located. Collaboration works when a good relationship and good communication exists between staff and faculty:

> Everybody has a different idea of what it should be, and not everyone is interested in putting in the work. What will work for me? Doing the work for their own good, not necessarily for the good of the whole. (Staff 2, Site One)

Participants also discussed how the same people continued to show up for committees and events—it was a small number. The converted will show up continually, but the rest won't:

> When they come for counselling, they have usually already been to see the department head. The department head didn't really care and focused on the student not meeting expectations. Empathy and faculty support are valuable for students who suffer from anxiety and depression. (Staff 3, Site One)

Although mental health workshops target first year cohorts, they also continue throughout the year. The following description is an example of a workshop that happened during the school year. Following up on the increasing demand for support around mental health, the staff counsellors developed a workshop on mental health: "What do you do when a student is depressed?" Sixteen people attended—1 faculty member, 1 new sessional who had an interest in mental health, and 14 staff professionals (Staff 4, Site One). In addition:

> Orienting students to school—we all have different pieces—may not need to be in collaboration, may be more of an awareness, more dynamic, whereas referring to Student Services requires an office or centre that is collaborative between different stakeholders, so we can share out strengths. (Staff 4, Site One)

Focus group participants had an appreciation for the diversity of support that is available to the student body—from time sensitive information to ongoing support and crisis intervention—and recognized the value of working together, seeing value in collaboration, and creating opportunities to work together. But, this collaborative approach needs to be enjoyable, respectful, and rewarded: “Find people who have energy and commitment and ask leaders to provide time and space” (Staff 3, Site One). Bringing a diverse group of people to the decision-making table provides different contexts for decision making and builds shared goals.

Faculty participants suggested that to increase support for first-year (FY) programming to engage students academically and non-academically, top administrators needed to be part of the dialogue and discussion: “Definitions of first-year programming need to be developed, shared, understood and clarified” (Faculty 1, Site One). Conversations need to be held to “understand, plan, and develop programs with first year programming in mind” (Faculty 5, Site One). Furthermore, as Faculty 1, Site One stated strongly, commitment is needed to engage in the change to make stronger connections between courses and experiences:

> General education is where you start, not as an afterthought but a more supportive philosophy. My biggest single frustration is the absence of connectivity between courses and between experiences. We have a wishy-washy commitment to first-year programming, we are afraid to jump off the plank to see if it can swim, so we do small things and individual programs within individual faculties.

These definitions of first-year programming require a re-evaluation and reframing of goals, values, and beliefs—our own goals and beliefs, as well as those of our colleagues.

Resources are one of the largest factors impacting collaborative practice. Funding for higher education is decreasing, and the provincial government is more involved in strategic planning and the direction of higher learning institutions: “Collaboration is not as supported as it should be, and in the end, it is about money not student success” (Faculty 3, Site One). Administrators are defining the educational experience as retention and graduation: “We need to look at the whole student. Today, there is no time for self-actualization—university is survival” (Faculty 1, Site One). In addition:

> Loss of our first-year program was sad, and good things came to an end. Conversations were happening, and we could see the connections. The work was hard, and we didn't get paid for collaborative work. Much of the success of this program was our passion for the program and what we could see happening. (Faculty 3, Site One)

Since the loss of its first-year program, Site One has developed multiple initiatives for first-year programming, but they are ad hoc and one-time supports: "We don't look at best practices, we don't do our research, and we make it up as we go" (Faculty 1, Site One). Moreover, the majority of participants agreed that resources were limited, and they felt they were paid less for collaborative work:

> We don't commit. We can disagree, but we seem to disagree and kill things rather than disagree and build things. American institutions continue to have amazing success in first-year programs. They are doing amazing things. The difference is that they are more streamlined. We have convoluted processes that sap time and people away from what they are supposed to be doing. (Faculty 4, Site One)

According to participant Faculty 4, Site One: "There is a very real need for administrators and the strategic plan to provide the bridges to support first-year programming or general programming." With respect to hiring practices and developing policies and procedures to a coordinated university-wide commitment, Faculty 3, Site One expressed the following:

> Student engagement is both academic and non-academic, which correlates positively for student retention. Institutional commitment is needed. We need a whole university, systemic initiative to force philosophy towards first-year initiatives, change the climate, change the attitude… Is that possible?

As Faculty 1 Site One shared earlier, their biggest frustration was the lack of connectivity between courses, experiences, just about everything. Bridges are lacking to connect students to faculty and staff. Others agreed, but felt that some connectivity existed when relationships preceded particular collaborations. In addition, "Changing the climate and attitude with existing faculty is a frustration especially when those faculty become administrators" (Faculty 1, Site One). Also, "If they are not on board and collaborative behaviour is not modeled, then faculty, staff, and students will not model the behaviour" (Faculty 3, Site One).

According to Faculty 5, Site One: "Faculty work to their course loads, which focuses the importance of their work on teaching." Some faculty just focus on their

teaching and don't want to have anything to do with the university community: "There is no personal downside to that, but there is a downside to student learning and being involved in the community and being an active member" (Faculty 1, Site One). Faculty and staff need to learn how to negotiate what orientation will look like: "To change things everyone must be flexible in looking for what benefits all" (Faculty 3, Site One).

The administrative interviews were a general discussion about personal goals and the "grabbing of resources" for individual departments, which provided a snapshot of the difficulties facing collaborative practice: "There needs to be education where everyone takes part in learning to be collaborative and be open to other points of views" (Faculty 4, Site One). Also, "Faculty need to identify. We could have professional development around collaborations, but you will only get the people that identify [with the benefits of collaboration]. Those people who do attend are self-selecting to sessions" (Faculty 4, Site One).

With respect to Site One, an example that highlighted poor communication and a lack of connectivity was the establishment of a student service committee that was tasked with developing a system that would engage first-year students and first-year experience. There were a number of constraints, one being funding because they were told to shift around people and monies that already were allocated. After a number of months, they produced a model that wasn't ideal but met the constraints of the project: "At a luncheon to celebrate our work, the two vice presidents who initiated the work produced an entirely different program that they decided to follow instead" (Staff 4, Site One). This kind of behaviour created a disconnect between departments, so staff pulled away from contributing because their work was not moving forward and was being replaced by work that did not include their input.

4.5.2. Site Two

The staff and faculty at Site Two are just beginning to realize that first-year programming is important and something they must do rather than something "nice to do." According to Staff 1, Site Two, "Crisis happens, then collaboration, as is highlighted by the number of students on academic probation where there is a lack of structures around where a student can go for help and who is responsible for these students." Collaborations usually are one-time occurrences instigated by a crisis or by a faculty

member who is student-centred in her/his approach to the classroom: “If there is no crisis, there is no collaboration” (Staff 1, Site 2). Coordinating for first-year support is not generally proactive, but there is one success story:

> One instructor in particular teaches several first-year courses, and in the first class of every one of his classes, he invites a counselor to come and speak about the resources available and normalizing the challenges they may or may not go through. (Staff 5, Site Two)

This one story about working together to help students succeed—originating with one faculty member—has become an initiative to increase the number of classes that the counseling department has been invited to address. The instructor and counsellors were in alignment that they shouldn’t wait for a crisis, but rather should develop structures ahead of the issues. The flip side is that some faculty:

> think yeah that is a great idea, but I only have so many instructional hours, and I don’t want to waste them. Slowly, we are plugging away at that misconception, starting to convince instructors that spending ½ hour up front can save you down the road, and help students to be more independent and successful. (Staff 3, Site Two)

The steady increase of international students is creating a greater demand for student support across the institution. To that end, International Education has offered a variety of programming—during orientation and throughout the year—that can enhance the international students’ journeys:

> Our challenge is getting the students there and hoping that the students realize that this is important for them in order for them to succeed, and often, they realize when it is too late, and even when it is too late, they don’t realize. (Staff 4, Site One)

According to the present study interview participants, faculty who have a high number of international students in their classes are coming forward to ask for help or to indicate that their students need help. Some faculty offloads this responsibility to staff, and their ability to help these students has been more apparent during the last year:

> The faculty who care come forward. Of course, there are faculty who feel they are here to teach, and whether the student succeeds is up to them. I don’t know if you are ever going to win those faculty over, but more and more faculty are realizing that students need help. (Staff 4, Site One)

Participants also felt that much of the first-year programming was ad hoc, and they were gradually realizing that these first-year initiatives could not be successful if they were generated individually—instead they required a sharing of responsibility across divisional lines.

According to Faculty 2, Site Two, "Student Services are not part of the Academic Plan, and, for the most part, faculty don't know where to resource students to." Student Services is not explicitly mentioned in the Academic Plan, but its mission statement talks about providing an accessible undergraduate education through which experiences and activities actively engage students and enhance their development and learning. Although staff play a critical role in this vision of undergraduate education, their lack of representation in developing the Academic Plan can create roadblocks for the future development of first-year programming. Site Two is very diverse, and it is a balancing act to support student service programs. Most of the first-year supports are created individually by departments: "A conversation with the business folks is different than the conversation with IT… yet, the requirements are the same for all students. We have to have those conversations" (Faculty 2, Site Two).

The Learning Commons at Site Two delivers course material and is available to students five hours a week. The Commons, a participant in orientation, also provides an access point for students and a connection with staff. The priority of the Commons is to deal with issues around course work, but it also provides a central location for students who are having difficulties with being a first-year student:

> A large part of what I do (Learning Commons) is unofficial counselling. Students are more anxious about their success, and they aren't as aware of the ways in which to deal with things. I am not trained, so I take them to counselling, to disability services if they need it, to medical services. I am doing that almost as much as I am mentoring them in terms of academics. (Faculty 3, Site Two)

The same can be said for Cooperative Education, which is a centralized department working primarily with the School of Management and Computer Science students. Their office is located centrally for students walking around campus: "We end up being an awful lot like an information kiosk area for students. We get to touch base with a lot of students who are lost, anxious, excited, who are a mix of everything, looking for their way" (Faculty 4, Site Two).

The Learning Commons and Cooperative Education provide essential links between students and the services that are available to them. Faculty 1, Site Two pointed out: "This school has lots of support services for students, but faculty and students don't know of the services being offered." Sometimes students don't go to Student Services because they already have developed a relationship with faculty, and sometimes they just don't know that support exists. If faculty were more aware of these services they could re-direct students similarly to the Career Centre and Cooperative Education.

Staff 5, Site Two suggested that "there is one main orientation that is similar to an information fair and is starting to gain support from more faculties." Additionally, there are "program specific orientations that involve faculty but not the broader campus that would include departments like counselling and disability services" (Staff 5, Site Two). Also, Faculty 4, Site Two recognized that if individual departments continued to do their own programming, the entire institution would lose valuable opportunities to collaborate to provide students with the all the supports they needed:

> I wonder if these little orientations have benefits to doing them? By not letting the larger campus community know about it, there are fewer opportunities for collaboration. I would love for our department to go to these orientations… been here two years, and this is the first I am hearing of it.

Staff 2, Site Two pointed out: "With these program-specific orientations, there are a number of faculty who have been here a long time, and they feel they can advise in areas that are not their areas of expertise," which created a lot of misinformation being given to students, and frustrations between departments due to a lack of communication and connection.

According to many of the present study participants, people are burnt out waiting for all the stars to align, and considering the current economic climate, they didn't anticipate further support for collaborative initiatives: "Love to collaborate, but it is more time from what we have to do. Collaboration takes more up-front time, and I'm really busy with my own stuff, even though it may be easier down the road" (Faculty 2, Site One). Also, Faculty 3, Site One pointed out: "Faculty and institutions are changing, research publications are increasing, and more people are publishing, which leaves less time for service." Senior leadership support also continues to be important: "In order for faculty to buy-in, it needs to come from a Provost or Vice Provost" (Staff 1, Site Two).

Also, for the most part, the majority of full-time faculty were not participating, and many of the participants wondered—how do we get them involved?

4.5.3. Site Three

Similar to Site Two, this institution has an information fair at the start of the semester. However, Site Three struggles with some departments that have intakes every three weeks and varying entry start dates: "There has been a lot of work on provision and allocation of services, but the biggest challenge is making sure that students are aware" (Faculty 3, Site Three). The Learning Commons supports first-year students and works well with the Student Union to create many support systems for students: "The focus is on helping to increase retention, building a dichotomy between inside the classroom and outside the classroom. This is about learning outside the classroom, and we most definitely need to, and do, collaborate with faculty" (Staff 3, Site Three).

The library at Site Three also provides services to first-year students, and is part of their educational component:

> Building skills and helping them with access to research and building those collections, so resources are there to support the curriculum. This is a big job with first year students, and part of my position is to liaise with faculty making sure students are coming in for research classes. (Staff 1, Site Three)

Many diverse approaches to student support are provided because many differences exist between trade and tech, not the least of which is five different directors and five different areas. Each area has a unique culture, and sometimes opportunities exist to work together to support students:

> As faculty I see collaboration between math, physics, and chemistry. There are good working relationships because we share values and goals. We incorporate support pieces into our classes and try to incorporate study skills. There is also help with technology entry and a summer success course. (Faculty 2, Site Three)

Additionally, a disconnect seems to exist between what these individual departments do and how the rest of the organization perceives them. Everyone has excellent intentions, but as they are pulled in different directions, the workloads keep them close to their own departments. One faculty member suggested a possible solution to support more

collaboration: “We need an open forum where people can come together and provide informed briefs of their first-year programming that build toward a common ground” (Faculty 1, Site Three). Participants agreed on the need for strategies to build relationships across the institution—formal structures that can provide time, resources, and leadership to enable people to feel that they are truly part of the discussion.

4.6. Summary

Chapter 4 has provided a brief overview of higher education and the complexities of building collaborative partnerships between faculty and staff that can enhance student experience. This chapter described each of the three sites that participated in the study, including the structure of the interviews and focus groups. It also provided the data—the study participants’ comments and feedback—on which the qualitative findings of the present study are based. These findings provide a picture of the study participants’ real-world beliefs and perspectives as they relate to the collaborative practices between faculty and staff at the three sites. The site administrators provided insights into the strategic directions of their institutions, and contributed their thoughts about the collaborative initiatives ongoing within their own institutions. The faculty and staff of the three sites also provided insights into the organizational frameworks that imbedded/enhanced collaborations between faculty and staff.

Chapter 5 integrates these qualitative findings within a combined theoretical framework of critical theory and organizational theory. It draws together the qualitative findings from the three sites by looking for their commonalities and unique differences that could impact future collaborations. Through a discussion of the results, the differences and commonalities that could impede/enhance collaborations are brought to light. “While critical theory helps with social construction, organizational culture helps to study the impact of structural and cultural impediments within the institution” (Fendler, 1999, p. 169). This chapter also summarizes the layers of context as it relates to first-year programming and collaboration, and the implications of this context for practice, policy, and theory. Chapter five concludes by identifying implications for practice, policy, theory, and further areas of research.

Chapter 5. Finding Common Threads

This chapter brings together the qualitative findings from the three study sites by summarizing and discussing the results using critical theory, organizational theory, and a review of the literature: “The task of critical research in education is to provide theoretical mechanisms that allow for radical change in social relations” (Fendler, 1999, p. 169) and organizational culture provides an analysis of structural and cultural impediments within the institution (Fendler, 1999). This chapter also summarizes the layers of relevant context, across the three sites, as they relate to collaborative initiatives between faculty and staff.

As described in Chapter 2, the present study sought to determine the impacts of the real-world beliefs and perspectives of Student Services professionals and faculty as they collaborated on first-year initiatives to support students. As the research developed, it began to reveal a complex pattern of perceptions and beliefs associated with the levels of understanding around the definition of *collaboration*; a lack of knowledge about individual roles and expectations; and a general lack of awareness of what was happening outside of an individual context. Kezar (2014) has suggested that “various groups often see or experience the same culture differently” (p. 33).

Intertwined discussion threads suggested that collaborative first-year programming was difficult to implement due to a lack of institutional awareness of first-year programming and the perceived value of first-year programming; a lack of resources; a lack of time; a lack of connection; a lack of intentionality; and a lack of leadership. If a more integrative educational experience is the goal, collaboration must begin with an examination of these perceptions, cultures, and institutional structures.

None of the three institutions had campus-wide first-year programming initiatives, but they all provided examples of ad-hoc collaborative student success programming that had been quite successful. Faculty at Site One reflected on the success of the Writing Centre and Math Centre; Staff at Site Two recognized the growing requests from diverse departments for tables at the central orientation; and Administrator 1, Site Three spoke about the successful leadership program that was supported by both faculty and staff. However, these successful initiatives were not sustainable. The Writing Centre at Site One was dismantled; orientation at Site Two had increasing numbers, but individual

departmental orientations also continued to grow; and the leadership program at Site Three became another non-recurring ad hoc project. The data collected at the three sites also showed that the expansion or creation of inclusive campus-wide, first-year support programs was problematic. Administrator 3, Site One stated: "We haven't found ways or defined strategies how this collaboration should happen… it is still very academically driven with very little focus on Student Services." Similarly, Administrator 1, Site Two believed that "a lot of institutions push the person who talks about students a long way down from the core," and Administrator 1, Site Three recognized that "we have come a long way in five years, but we have a heck of a long way to go. Culturally we just haven't been doing it." These difficulties at these institutions appear to begin with a lack of awareness about what colleagues are actually doing within their respective roles.

When reviewing the present study data, four threads recurred throughout. Table 5, synthesized from the data, highlights these findings.

Table 5. Discussion Threads Common to all three Sites

INFORMATIONAL	Awareness and definition—What is *collaboration*? Who is at the table and what do they bring? How do we improve model/strategies/training? Territorial awareness
ENVIRONMENTAL	History Individualistic culture Resources (time & money) Resources (human) Roles and responsibilities
RELATIONSHIP	Trust, connection, communication inclusivity Leadership Power—stepping stone for success How do we communicate? How do we connect so to understand each other? Who can teach?
STRUCTURAL	Governance structures Reporting structures Silos Availability of administrators Space allocation

5.1. Informational – What is Collaboration

Collaboration was the focus of this research, and multiple interpretations of what this word meant were evident across the three sites, with respect to both definition and practice. For example descriptions of *collaboration* ranged from "everyone wants to have their opinion heard and getting a bee in their bonnet if they feel they haven't been heard" (Staff 3, Site Two) to "people feeling pushed, and some felt left out, and some people who were pushing were doing it for their own reasons, not necessarily for the good of the whole" (Staff 5, Site One), and Faculty 2, Site Three felt they just weren't asked: "I want to talk about retention, no one has come to me, not asked. A lot of people could be asked but aren't. I suppose workload could be an issue." This lack of a clear definition, poor communication, and a sense of being left out created a lot of apprehension that impacted the willingness of colleagues to participate.

Defining *collaboration* is a critical first step towards developing a collaborative initiative. Kezar and Lester (2009) have referred to *collaboration* as a partnership that supports the mission of the institution and requires work that builds common language and assumptions around a needed direction. Administrator 1, Site Three described a project that involved everybody in a series of focus groups, in which goals were created, changes made, and final changes reviewed. Although the process included the development of goals, during the review a lot of people were disappointed because they did not find their voices/insights articulated in the final document.

An analysis of the research data shows that collaboration requires more than just developing common goals, language, and assumptions. Exploring the obstacles that "have been seen as cultural differences; the historical separation between formal curriculum and informal curriculum; the perception of staff as an ancillary function to the academic mission; and competing assumptions about the nature of student learning (Bourassa, 2001, p. 9) can inspire a shared vision that includes shared aspirations for the future. To be successful, "we need to define *collaboration* and create an environment in which it is rewarded" and we need to "appeal to something everyone shares" (Administrator 1, Site Three), which makes everyone feel that they are an important part of the initiative.

It is worth noting that the administrators at all three institutions felt that they, as a group, collaborated between themselves very well. For example, Administrator 2, Site Two stated that they had a good connection with the Student Services administrator because "I think I have experience working in student services offices… I have more empathy maybe for what is going on … so my relationship is pretty good," and Administrator 3, Site One felt that they collaborated well because part of their responsibilities was "to build relationships, and we were fortunate to have opportunities to bounce ideas off each other, and we learned about other areas of responsibility … Communication is the bridge," and Site Three administrators from different areas prepared their work together and provided updates and new initiatives as a united team. However, the administrators felt that faculty and staff were not aligned to be able to collaborate. All three sites did have pockets of highly collaborative people, but the broader population was not interested in collaborating: "Why should they collaborate when the work they are doing is well respected?" (Staff 3, Site Two). Faculty 1, Site One commented: "It takes someone in a leadership role to say we need to do that. If people don't pick up the idea and agree about the importance, then many small local initiatives disappear."

Faculty 4, Site One expressed that "collaborations do happen, but moving forward requires time and resources, and takes time to foster new relationships"; Staff 1, Site Two suggested that "collaborations only happen when there is a crisis"; and Staff 2, Site Three felt that "it is hard to work together with different goals, and a lack of awareness." Consistently, throughout the data, concerns existed as to a lack of process that would support collaborative initiatives, and the need for formal structures and clear goals and definitions—a very real need to be shown how collaboration could work.

Many participants at the three institutions expressed a concern that systemic issues tend to support separate faculty and Student Services functions and that collaborations were one-time events with individual groups and faculty. Collaborations were not embedded in campus culture, and FA/SA relationships were haphazard, with the exception of the collaborations built on personal connections, and most collaborations were not fostered. According to Faculty 2, Site Three: "The few relationships that are collaborating tend to suffer as institutions become more entrepreneurial and as relationships shift from collaborative to competitive in search of funding and resources."

5.2. Environmental

The second thread emerging from the data analysis was the environmental data that included the evolution of roles and role confusion; departmental responsibilities; the impact of culture; and the placement of resources (time and money). Administrator 1, Site Three suggested that: “Culturally, we just haven’t been doing it, and one of the big challenges in any post-secondary is the large amount of history—the way it has always been.” This necessary cultural shift is difficult, especially with respect to faculty “who do not have an experiential background that enables them to think that faculty and staff could work as a team, and they lack an understanding of what Student Services does” (Staff 3, Site Two). According to Ahern (2008), “The disparity between faculty and student service cultures is clearly having a deleterious effect on partnerships between the two” (p. 89).

The present study used a critical lens to examine the perceptions of faculty and staff—as they see themselves and as they see their colleagues. Often, the roles of staff and faculty are perceived as very different, with staff having a secondary role in the institution. Participants tended to understand the need for collaboration but felt that an overarching belief existed that faculty work had nothing to do with Student Services work, so there was no point in faculty and staff working together. Participants also recognized that an understanding of the complexities and scope of each other’s work was lacking, and they also were concerned about making the necessary cultural shifts—the difficult tasks of negotiating meaning, social relations, knowledge, and value (2005)—although, at the same time, they recognized the potential benefits and value of faculty and staff understanding each other’s roles and responsibilities.

Staff 3, Site Two suggested that: “All of this is hard because we are so diverse.” Also, “We need to show positive change and that Student Services makes a difference to student lives” (Staff 1, Site Three). It became clear that, in general, the participants felt that Student Services must be able to show its value and have benchmarks to track progress:

> We know our students are not here for first-year programs, but a student’s experience at an institution of higher learning is enriched and supported through the support that Student Services provides—through work experience support, disability support, and mental health support—and it becomes another kind of valuable purpose by helping a

student stay at the institution and continue their learning experience Administrator 6, Site One.

At the three sites connections between Student Services and faculty also suffered due to decreasing levels of funding, increasing roles and responsibilities, increasing complexities of student issues, and an increasing level of accountability (Arcellus, 2011). As resources for educational areas not close to the marketplace diminished, programs designed to support the well-being of students also diminished (Slaughter & Rhodes, 2004). Additionally, Staff 1, Site Three and Staff 3, Site Three commented on a lack of training (due to lack of funding), a lack of knowledge between groups, and a lack of connection that ultimately led to a lack of trust.

Consistent themes reflected the "expectation to do more work (while holding on for dear life), and an inability to find the time for collaboration" (Faculty 1, Site Three). Faculty 3, Site Three expressed "having excellent intentions but being pulled in different directions," and Staff 4, Site One spoke about "more work on each person, doing so much more. We don't have time to collaborate." Staff 1, Site Two commented that "more often than not, there is not even a willingness to cooperate."

The understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities differed, and common questions included: What are the job descriptions? Who is responsible? Where are the resources? According to Faculty 1, Site One, "Staffing structures are disjointed, and nobody knows who does what and when." It is difficult to change past perceptions, and until strategies are developed that build partnerships that can reflect the values of both faculty and staff, collaborations between them will not be central to the goals of the institution. An examination of these perceptions, cultures, and institutional structures is a first step in moving forward with an integrated plan for collaboration (Magolda, 2005).

5.3. Relationships

Respect, shared values, and appreciation are required for successful collaborations, but, at the three study sites, trust between staff and faculty was lacking. Baxter and Baxter-Magolda (2011) have pointed to the importance of recognizing the tensions and challenges that create distrust amongst colleagues and the need to acknowledge these tensions and create opportunities to discuss the divergent views and beliefs around student success. Departmental silos, a lack of communication, and "new

layers of administration, [create] a loss of connection" (Staff 1, Site Two). "Unless we trust people we will be unable to talk to them" (Faculty 2, Site One).

Communication is the necessary bridge: "Currently we only build relationships when there is a problem" (Staff 1, Site Two). If we don't build relationships, how can we work together? Siefert (2018) has highlighted the importance of building communities of practice where staff across divisions get together to share information. Faculty and staff need to create these networks to "build relationships and reinforce a sense of common purpose vision, and focus on mission" (Seifert, 2018, p. 4). Many of the participants of Seifert's (2018) study expressed the need to meet people, learn about other areas, and build up networks; and the need to get together and talk about goals and frustrations and successes:

> Relationships that resulted from engaging in these intentional communication forums enable staff and faculty from across the institution to develop a better understanding of the role of student affairs and services in supporting student success and contributing to the institutional mission. (Siefert, 2018, p. 5)

Also, Thackara (2007) has highlighted the importance of institutional and attitudinal leadership transformations that support the necessary time and space for sharing knowledge and getting to know each other. Models for connecting faculty and staff are not structured, and tend to create roadblocks to developing relationships.

Participants at all three sites believed that fostering relationships was about 80% of the job. Administrator 1, Site Two thought that good relationships built strong inter-related pathways and connections for collaboration. Healthy relationships build trust and respect and enable healthy dialogue and collaboration. Collaborations between staff and faculty at all three sites were highly dependent on individual relationships. Importantly, these relationships take time to develop, and they are crucial for any initiative that requires collaboration.

5.4. Structural

The fourth thread focused on structural issues that included governance structures, space allocation, availability of administrators due to the location of their offices, and gathering space. Institutions of higher learning are not intentionally designed

to create space for conversation and collaborations. The present study staff participants suggested that an organizational structure around orientation was lacking, and that “the voices supporting first-year programming (Student Services) were limited due to hierarchical divisions and limited power” (Staff 4, Site One). According to Seifert (2018), Any meaningful change certainly required the work of the front-line employees but also strong policies and government action. Additionally, the groups recognized that collaboration had a greater chance of success when senior administration was involved: “The development of first-year partnerships has a chance of success if the department initiating the contact (Student Services) is under the responsibility of a traditionally respected deanery” (Administrator 4, Site One).

All the present study participants discussed hierarchy within their institutions and the impact of governance structures in creating roadblocks to developing collaborative initiatives (Conrad & Serlin, 2006). Two of the institutions in the present study created VP Students positions, whereas the third institution located the Student Services portfolio directly under the VP Academic. The schools with VP Students believed the creation of the position supported a student-centred approach to learning and the value of support services to the delivery of an excellent academic program. The third institution felt that reporting to the VP Academic kept Student Services close to the academic core and strengthened its position in the hierarchy of the institution. The data collected did not indicate that one of these organizational structures produced a better impact on governance or status of Student Services within the institutional community. Concerns existed at all three sites regarding the different interests competing for power and resources when key resources became scarce, and regarding the decisions that had to be made about who would get what in terms of resources, time, and money (Bolman & Deal, 1977).

At the three sites, some reporting structures produced overlapping communication, but, for the most part, they were not structured that way. Faculty 5, Site One suggested that “their institution was not supporting what we need to support cross-divisionally… reporting structures don’t produce communication… too many committees and a waste of resources.” Intention was lacking regarding the creation of necessary spaces for collaborations, and the conversations that were being held were not structured for collaboration: “If the institution is intentional in the commitment to student development, then set up meetings between SA and FA were there are facilitated

discussions/forums around common issues and challenges" (Faculty 1, Site One). Structured conversations are needed to keep people informed.

Participants at all three sites asked many similar questions around common issues and challenges: What is the core business of the institution? What is specialty programming? What is being funded? What is the composition of the collaboration committee? Who was on the committee and did they bring prestige and political clout? Staff 1, Site One expressed that: "Staff may be invited to the table but do not have a voice and don't connect with academic affairs stakeholders, and the higher you go, the worse it gets." Staff 5, Site Two suggested that: "We are not presented as equals—Student Services are secondary." Staff 2, Site Three said that: "discussions are needed with regard to who is at the table and whether their voice is distributed across divisions." These questions are essential and have not been answered through the organizational positioning of staff on various committees, task forces and governance boards. Answers require the leadership team to provide the direction and opportunities for collaborations.

According to Faculty 4, Site Two: "There is no sense of what we are each doing and no organizational structure that would support dialogue between faculty and staff." Kezar (2014) has pointed to importance of the work needed to build common assumptions around the need for structural change, and 27 years earlier, Boyer (1987) argued for a change in organizational design and cultural influence that continues to isolate staff and faculty. The faculty at all three institutions expressed their concerns about separation, the lack of cross-divisional alignment to structural and work demand barriers, and how this problematic environment encouraged them to easily fall back onto what always has been done. Faculty 1, Site One suggested that "this is a very real culture of 'what has always been' in the absence of leadership around holistic student development."

Site One participants looked for intersecting paths and relationships, whereas participants at Site Two looked for ways to communicate available opportunities, and different ways to collaborate. As a researcher, I anticipated finding a power differential between staff and faculty, but I did not sense this in any of the focus group discussions, although it was evident in how they spoke about their roles within the institution (e.g., resources, influence). Participants from Site One and Site Two talked about power differentials when decreased funding was an issue or when territorial claims were being

questioned. An administrator from Site Three said that “everyone was willing to share when resources are ample,” and Staff 4, Site One stated: “The teeth come out when resources are limited or someone needs to change their way of doing things. Sure, I am happy to collaborate, just don’t ask me to change anything.”

Although a few academics and senior administrators in the present study didn’t see Student Services as a vital component of students’ educational journey, I sensed a willingness and openness, within the focus groups, to discuss the changing roles of Student Services. However, that is not enough. Tinto (2006) also recognized this willingness to discuss, although it was accompanied by an inability to translate the vision into integrated forms of action. The faculty at Site One recognized a lack of support for integrated learning; the faculty at Site Two suggested that departments were integrated, but the institution was not; and Site Three did not have the systems to dismantle departmental silos and begin the integration of departments and schools. These comments are all reflected in Reybold’s (2007) suggestion that institutions are being shaped by hierarchical relationships, competition for resources, and shifting policies.

5.5. Summary

Chapter 5 synthesized the data of the three study sites, and interpreted the findings by using critical theory and organizational cultural theory. The data reflected the beliefs and perspectives of individual study participants and also the similarities in the development of collaborative first-year programming at the three sites.

Chapter 6 provides a brief summary of the statement of the problem, reviews the methodology, and identifies the implications of this research for practice policy and theory. The reflections of the researcher of the present study conclude the chapter

Chapter 6. Conclusion

As described in Chapter 2, this study sought to determine the impacts of the real-world beliefs and perspectives of staff and faculty professionals on their collaborations on first-year initiatives to support the student journey. This multi-case comparative study used a qualitative perspective to examine three institutions of higher education situated within British Columbia, Canada. Participants were selected for their previous experience with or familiarity with first-year programming. This multi-case study relied chiefly on interviews and focus groups: a total of 10 interviews of approximately 1½ hours each, and 8 focus groups of approximately 2 hours each. A total of 10 administrators, 14 faculty, and 14 Student Services staff participated in the study.

The findings of the study provided numerous examples of successful and not so successful collaborative initiatives being developed through inconsistent silo approaches that more often than not only lasted a few years. Participants described the layers of context that contributed to road blocks to collaboration, and the potential opportunities for successful collaborations and support for first-year programming. They also expressed their uncertainty about how to proceed with a collaborative approach to supporting students, although agreement existed on the need for high level support that would embed first-year programming in the strategic plans of each institution. Additionally, they expressed the need for developing policies and evaluation processes for new institutional initiatives, and for training for faculty and staff. They thought it was time for real change, not for just doing what they always did… but for doing it better.

According to Kift (2009), the changing profiles and mass marketization of higher education have created multiple layers of diversification among learners so that faculty and staff must complement each other to provide the enriched environments students expect. Cho and Sriram (2016) have suggested that "[t]he importance of collaboration on college campuses necessitates that more work is done to understand how to help professionals and institutions develop, sustain, and improve these programs" (p.67).

Kotter (1995) has pointed out that "until new behaviours are rooted in social norms and shared values, they are subject to degradation as soon as the pressure change is removed" (p. 63). And Seifert's (2018) research provided three lenses with which to view organizational structures—the hub, web, and silo. The web provides

connections between departments, and this intentional overlap creates an awareness of other areas and provides mutual support for working towards a common goal. Silos represent institutional cultures that have fewer shared commitments and departments that are more closed with less clear visions of their institutional mandate. The third lens is a hybrid of the other two—a spoke or hub where services exist with some centralization, and where the customized versions of these services exist at the faculty level. According to Siefert (2018), "Working in isolation is not a best practice for supporting student success" (p. 43). A culture that supports a shared commitment to student success enhances the development of collaborative initiatives.

Moving forward, a need exists to look at existing structures, institutional divisions, reporting lines, and hierarchical and governance structures that include administrative and service components. Due to increasing complexity and demands; budget and finance constraints; a permeable membrane around research and traditional teaching; increased competition; and rapidly changing expectations and learning approaches from young learners (Magnusson, 2010), we must engage with each other to support a common goal—student success.

It will be some time before staff and faculty collaborations become a valued and necessary part of higher education culture, although some programs have been experiencing a certain level of success. These programs include counselling, some first-year experience programs, orientation, and recruitment. The present research used this context of collaboration to explore the nexus between faculty and staff. It looked for complimentary links between boundaries, explored formal and informal transitional processes, and addressed the perceived values about, and acceptance of, first-year programming.

The present study used a critical theory framework to understand "how things got to be the way they are, and [to expose]... how situations were structured… and [to] have a voice in evaluating their results and altering them in the interests of the common good" (Starratt, 1991, pp. 189–190). Critical theory enabled a critique of the status quo and provided suggestions for initiating change at the structural level. Additionally, the application of an organizational theory framework produced a "web of significance" that highlighted the internal workings that were rooted in organizational histories (Tierney, 1988). An understanding of the organizational culture of the three institutions supported

the development of shared goals and language, and enabled stakeholders to apprehend how actions and shared goals could be successfully implemented (Tierney, 1988). Although an understanding of organizational culture will not resolve the difficulties of implementing collaborative initiatives, it did provide critical insight.

6.1. Implications for Practice, Policy, and Theory

The present study informs the direction for future research and provides ongoing value and utility. It offers insights for the next phase of the development of well-defined processes that will bring people together by inviting many diverse voices to create connections that will better serve everyone. The present study highlighted the complexities of developing a collaborative institution, whether it be ad hoc programming or an institutional-wide sustained initiative. Although the research is timely, it also has been a topic of conversation in higher education for the last 20 years. Tinto (2007) has described it as the inability to move from theory to practice. The data analysis of the present study provides a number of recommendations that were similar to those put forward in Kuh's (1966) and Kezar's (2003) studies:

Table 6. Six Principles that Help Guide Faculty and Student Affairs Professionals to integrate the Curriculum and the Extra-Curriculum

1. Generate enthusiasm for institutional renewal.
2. Create a common vision of learning.
3. Develop a common language.
4. Foster collaboration and cross-functional dialogue.
5. Examine the influence of student cultures on student learning.
6. Focus on systematic change.

- (Principle 1) A number of grass roots initiatives worked with individual faculty and staff to build excitement for future programming. These initiatives included staff providing timely information in the classroom; the development of a Writing Centre; expansion of orientation programs to include cross-institutional participation; and peer leadership programming.

- (Principle 2) It is important to understand the roles of others within the institution, and to have an institutional awareness outside one's own department, both of which were lacking. *First-year programming* did not have a common definition,

and faculty and staff applied department-specific strategies to support their students.

- (Principle 3) Administrators and focus group participants all spoke about the confusion generated when collaboration was being discussed. Some wanted to have their voice expressed in the final document; some wanted to know what the benefits were going to be; and others needed to know who was in charge and from where the resources were coming.

- (Principle 4) Faculty and staff at all three sites were concerned about the need for leadership to support and champion a student-centred approach, which required collaboration, mutual support, and dialogue. They also recognized the impact of organization culture and the structural barriers that were creating roadblocks to the development of partnerships.

- (Principle 6) Discussions around governance structures, role differentiation, lack of connectivity creating road blocks to collaboration. There was a need to review the org structures and mindfully reflect on the impact of space.

- Principle 5 was not included in the present study, but it would be beneficial to include it in future research.

According to Kezar (2003), “The common element in each of the six principles is altering values through institution-wide dialogue… creating a common vision with which to provide a seamless learning environment for students” (p. 140). Although the present study did not specifically address the creation of enthusiasm for institutional renewal or examine student culture, I see these principles as key elements that warrant further study with respect to the Canadian higher education context. Institutional renewal can be present in 3-year and 5-year strategic plans that are common at institutions of all sizes, and it is worth studying the direction of, and enthusiasm for, these institutional initiatives. Strategic planning may be the place to begin increasing the influence of staff professionals.

As noted in preceding chapters, student culture is evolving: “students are mostly quite satisfied with the quality of their experience” (McInnis, 2001, p.3) because they

know what they want and are clear about what they expect. Students don't necessarily know what will benefit them in future careers, and those who have been contacted 10 years after completing their degree often express a desire to have had a greater involvement and engagement in their university experiences (McInnis, 2001). Currently, student engagement has been declining due to part-time work, financial issues, difficulty handling work-loads, and difficulty maintaining motivation for study (McInnis, 2001). These changes in student engagement patterns must be reflected in any collaborative initiative tied to first-year programming and student success. Reframing the concept of *first-year* and being inclusive of all participants may help to create a vision and language that all parties can buy-into and value in collaborative first-year initiatives.

Three schools, three strategic plans, three cultures, and three diverse structural designs have created contrasting frameworks from which to build collaborative partnerships. This present research has shown that it would be difficult to develop a universal approach for developing first-year initiatives due to the differing leadership styles and mandates of different sites. When asked about collaboration, Site One mainly focused on organizational structures, governance structures, and historical evolution. Site Two focused on relationships, and felt that the size of their institution enabled an overall feeling of connectedness, although growing administrative numbers were putting a strain on that connection. Site Three also focused on relationships to build successful individual programs, but included organizational structures as impacting opportunities for broader institutional collaborations. These differences in culture and leadership provide different trajectories for the development of collaborative integrated first-year programs.

Institutional renewal and common vision are broad concepts that involve whole-institutional participation, considerable time, and effective leadership. However, as noted by Kuh (1966) and Kezar (2003), before these broad concepts can be developed, a common language and communication strategy must be created. Leadership must "address differences in aims, professional language and cultures; unwarranted assumptions and genuine or perceived power relations" (Walsh & Kahn, 2010, p.10).

The success of any institutional renewal urgently requires the re-evaluation and development of organizational structures that reflect the needs of a changing culture. This renewal might include examining the lack of Student Services personnel in governance, finding ways to create opportunities for staff voices to be heard, and

building structures and campus resources that support collaborative practice and integrated learning (Kezar, 2014). This renewal also will require student participation that encompasses the diversity of the student body, as well as their goals and expectations. A critical reflection on organizational structures and changing cultures can provide a framework of understanding of current environments that can enhance future discussions concerning knowledge development around collaborative initiatives and first-year programming.

6.2. Researcher Reflections

This research has confirmed for me that I am the typical learner—we all face obstacles, some visible and others not so much. My journey has been long, with frequent gaps that have included the weddings of all three of my children, the addition of three grandchildren and one on the way, two personal rather scary visits to hospital, a job redundancy, the loss of my mother, and months dealing with the debilitating side effects of drugs that were supposed to be helping. Why is this of value to my research? Good question! Yes, I have reached this point because I really do love learning, but more to the point, it was the connections, relationships, and purpose that kept me going. Many people have played pivotal roles in my getting to this point—my friend who I started this journey with who unfortunately had health issues that precluded her finishing the program, my children who are a constant source of inspiration, my writing partners who helped keep me focused, and a senior supervisor who was constant in her direction and support throughout my journey; and my own pinch of stubbornness. While my doctoral journey might not be called first-year programming, the learning outcomes are the same: as a graduate student, like many first-year students, I also needed connection, relationships, and passion to successfully complete my studies.

When my research began 10 years ago, I was employed in a student service position. As I neared retirement, one question initiated my doctoral studies: What is the divide between faculty and staff that makes it so difficult to collaborate on supports that will enhance students' ability to succeed? At that time, I had spent 20 plus years developing orientation, first-year, and leadership programs as co-curricular opportunities. Over those years, I participated in a number of collaborations, although I now recognize that they were not collaborations built on a common language or vision, but rather on a

framework of friendship and relationships that created ad-hoc programs and events for our students. I was dreaming bigger than I was creating.

The new realities of the student experience and their aspirations have dramatically exceeded what we could have experienced even a few short months ago. Although the context of the student experience is radically different, the value of providing inter-connection and an expansion of this experience is more important than ever. There is a need for institutions to be responsive to these changing forms of student engagement. Communication, connection, and collaboration across all divisions of the institution remains essential for broadening the opportunities for student experiences. Today, my question recognizes that universities have worked hard to provide the organizational structure for students to continue their education, but have they been intentional in designing the student experience?

6.3. Summary

Chapter 6 has provided an overview of the present study research and a discussion on the implications for practice, policy, and research for developing collaborative initiatives. The overarching themes in the development of collaborative initiatives relate to relationships, common values, positioning of power and voice, financial and human resources, and effective leadership. Some of these concerns can be dealt with immediately, but others will take time, resources, and leadership. Overall, a need exists to be more focused on initiatives; the cultures that define us; the structures that impede us; the roles that we play; the commonality of the work; and the positive impact on student success.

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Appendix A.

Invitation to Participate: Interview

February 10, 2015

Greetings, you are being invited by Jill Gibson (EdD candidate), Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University, to participate in a research project entitled **Bridging the Divide: Exploring Collaborative Practice Between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs**. This research is being conducted in partial requirements for the Doctorate in Educational Leadership and is being supervised by Dr. Michelle Pidgeon, assistant professor, Faculty of Education.

This doctoral research project encompasses the following:

<u>Study Background and Procedures</u>:

The main goal of the research project is to build broad based partnerships and integrative educational experiences for students through the clarification of key factors that can help or hinder collaborative practice in a post-secondary environment. This project aims to understand faculty and staff beliefs and perspectives as they pertain to collaborative practice in first year programming at three institutions of PSE within the province of British Columbia.

This project has undergone ethical review process with Simon Fraser University [BREB Approval.2014s0004]. This research has also been reviewed and approved by the Langara College Research Ethics Board, which is responsible for helping to ensure that the rights of research subjects are respected in any research that is conducted under the jurisdiction or auspices of Langara College. LC-REB may have access to research records and data.

As part of this project, you are being invited, as a senior member of your institution, to participate in a one-on-one semi-structured interview that will last approximately 1 ½ hours and will be held at a time and location that is convenient for you.

In the interview you will be asked by the lead researcher about your experience with collaborative initiatives that support first year programming at your institution and notes will be made during the interview. Your identity and confidentiality will be respected in any final reports, presentations, and/or publications emerging from this research project.

The questions you will be asked during your semi-structured interview will include the following, as well as other questions that may emerge from the conversation:

1. How would you describe the current culture of the university as it applies to supporting collaborative practice?

2. What type of collaborations have you been involved in?

3. What organizational factors do you believe impact the development of first year partnerships between staff and faculty? Governance? Leadership?

4. What strategies or structures do you feel were useful (or not useful) to facilitate these collaborations

5. What have you found beneficial in collaborating? For example, can you explain what you found useful (or not so useful) in such collaborations?

6. What advice would you have to someone, either faculty or staff, in thinking about building collaborative practices?

You will have the choice to be audio taped for this project. The audiotape will be transcribed and a copy of this transcription will be sent to you.

Compensation:

There will be no reimbursement for your participation in this research study. A beverage of your choice will be provided

Benefits of Participation:

There is limited Canadian research on collaborative partnerships between Student and Faculty Affairs, particularly in the context of first year curriculum. Participants will be contributing to a broader understanding of collaborative practice between faculty and staff as it relates to first year programming with an aim to supporting future collaborative efforts.

As a participant of this project, you can contact the lead researcher, Jill Gibson to receive a copy of the final research project.

Risks to Participants:

There are minimal risks to you as a participant in this study.

Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw participation from the study at any time by simply advising the researcher. You may choose to not answer any questions, and any information provided can also be withdrawn or retracted at any time.

Confidentiality:

Your identity and all records will be kept confidential and any identifying information obtained will be kept confidential. Any references to persons, programs, institutions, or departments that might identify you or your university will be edited, replaced by pseudonyms or deleted in order to provide anonymity.

You may refuse to participate or withdraw participation in this project at any time without consequence and none of your data will be used in the report. Your involvement or non-involvement in this project is in no way related to or will impact your status at your institution.

The data will be kept on a memory key or printed hard copy and all data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in Jill Gibson's office and any electronic files will be backed up on a password protected computer hard drive.

Only the lead researcher and her doctoral supervisor, Dr. Michelle Pidgeon, will have access to the data.

Contact for more information:

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about your participation, please contact Jill Gibson, the researcher. You can also contact Dr. Michelle Pidgeon, the senior supervisor for this research.

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact Dr. Jeffrey Toward, Director, Office of Research Ethics and John Russell, Chair Langara Research Ethics Board.

Yours Sincerely,

Jill Gibson

Appendix B.

Invitation to Participate: FOCUS GROUP

June 30, 2014

Greetings, you are being invited by Jill Gibson (EdD candidate), Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University, to participate in a research project entitled **Bridging the Divide: Exploring Collaborative Practice Between Faculty and Staff**. This research is being conducted in partial requirements for the Doctorate in Educational Leadership and is being supervised by Dr. Michelle Pidgeon, assistant professor, Faculty of Education.

This doctoral research project encompasses the following:

Study Background and Procedures:

The main goal of the research project is to build broad based partnerships and integrative educational experiences for students through the clarification of key factors that help and hinder collaborative practice in a post-secondary environment. This project aims to understand faculty and staff beliefs and perspectives as they pertain to collaborative practice in first year programming at three institutions of PSE within the province of British Columbia.

This project has undergone ethical review process with Simon Fraser University and (REB Approval 2014s0004) and is in the process of gaining ethics approval from Langara.

You will participate in two focus groups that will last approximately 1 ½ - 2 hours each and will be held at a time and location that is convenient to the members of the focus group. The first focus group will be specific to staff or faculty and the second focus group will be a combination of both faculty and staff.

Your identity and confidentiality will be respected in any final reports, presentations, and/or publications emerging from this research project.

The guidelines for this discussion will focus on the following concepts as well as on other concepts that may emerge from the interviews conducted with senior managers and focus group conversation.

1. How do stakeholders perceive their own and each other's role as educators as it relates to first year programming initiatives?

2. How do perceptions influence cross divisional collaborations?

3. How do perceptions influence cross divisional relationships?

4. What organizational factors impact the development of first year partnerships between student affairs and academic affairs? Governance? Leadership?

5. How would you describe the current culture of your institution as it applies to supporting collaborative practice?

You will have the choice to be audio taped for this project. The audiotape will be transcribed and a copy of this transcription will be sent to you.

Benefits of Participation:

There is limited Canadian research on collaborative partnerships between Student and Faculty Affairs, particularly in the context of first year curriculum. Participants will be contributing to a broader understanding of collaborative practice between faculty and staff as it relates to first year programming with an aim to supporting future collaborative efforts.

As a participant of this project, you can contact the lead researcher, Jill Gibson to receive a copy of the final research project.

Risks to Participants:

There are minimal risks to you as a participant in this study.

You may refuse to participate or withdraw participation in this project at any time without consequence and none of your data will be used in the report. Your involvement or non-involvement in this project is in no way related to or will impact your status at your institution

Confidentiality:

While participating in a focus group, your anonymity cannot be protected. However, your identity and all records will be kept confidential and any identifying information obtained will be kept confidential. Any references to persons, programs, institutions, or departments that might identify you or your university will be edited, replaced by pseudonyms or deleted in order to provide anonymity.

The data will be kept on a memory key or printed hard copy and all data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in Jill Gibson's office and any electronic files will be backed up on a password protected computer hard drive

Contact for more information:

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about your participation, please contact Jill Gibson, the researcher. You can also contact Associate Professor Michelle Pidgeon, the senior supervisor for this research.

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact Dr. Jeffrey Toward, Director, Office of Research Ethics and Dr. John Russell, Langara College Research Ethics Board.

Yours Sincerely,

Jill Gibson

Appendix C.

Consent Form - Interview

By signing this consent form, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities

Permission to conduct this research study from Langara has been obtained. Ethics approval documents from Langara and SFU will be provided.

This doctoral research project encompasses the following:

Study Background and Procedure:

This research is being conducted in partial requirements of the Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership and is being supervised by Dr. Michelle Pidgeon, assistant professor, Faculty of Education.

The proposed research will analyze cross-divisional participation of faculty and staff in collaborative initiatives that aspire to build broad based partnerships and integrative educational experiences for students. The proposed research will address culture, values and beliefs as they apply to stakeholder relationships and how these relationships impact the collaborative knowledge building for first year curriculum. As part of this study, the culture of the institution will be recognized as instrumental in the development of collaborative practice and questions will be raised regarding the policies and structures that play a role in the creation of sustainable collaborations.

Interview questions will investigate how universities and university culture are supporting collaborative practice and will provide the framework for the focus group dialogues.

The interview will take approximately 1 ½ hours and will be carried out in person (face to face) at a location and time of mutual convenience for you and the interviewer.

Shortly after the interviews are completed, a copy of the interview transcript will be sent to you in order to provide an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of the interview and to add, clarify or delete any comments.

You will be asked to allow the interview to be digitally audio recorded to ensure an accurate record of responses.

Confidentiality:

Data and audio recordings collected during the study will be kept in secure and encrypted storage on an external hard drive, protected by a secure password in a locked cabinet, in the researcher's locked office at UFV. Data collected during the study will be retained for two years and then destroyed in conformity with the research ethics policy of SFU and following the guidelines of the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Only the researcher, Jill Gibson, and her senior supervisor will have access to the data.

Audio recordings will be deleted soon after transcription.

You are aware that all information provided will be treated confidentially. Any references to you, other persons, programs, institutions, or departments that might identify the university will be edited, replaced by pseudonyms, or deleted in order to provide anonymity. No names will appear in the thesis or in any report resulting from this study; however, you are also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the thesis, or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

This project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics at Simon Fraser University (REB Approval 2014s0004). This research has also been reviewed and approved by the Langara College Research Ethics Board, which is responsible for helping to ensure that the rights of research subjects are respected in any research that is conducted under the jurisdiction or auspices of Langara College. The LC-REB may have access to research records and data.

Compensation:

There will be no compensation for your participation in this research study. A beverage of your choice will be provided

Benefits of Participation:

There is limited Canadian research on collaborative partnerships between Student and Faculty Affairs, particularly in the context of first year curriculum. Participants will be contributing to a broader understanding of collaborative practice between faculty and staff as it relates to first year programming with an aim to supporting future collaborative efforts.

As a participant of this project, you can contact the lead researcher, Jill Gibson to receive a copy of the final research project.

Risks to Participants:

There are minimal risks to you as a participant in this study

Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw participation from the study at any time by simply advising the researcher. You may choose to not answer any questions, and any information provided can also be withdrawn or retracted at any time.

Contact for more information:

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about your participation, please contact Jill Gibson, the researcher. You can also contact Associate Professor Michelle Pidgeon, the senior supervisor for this research.

Contact for concerns or complaints:

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact Dr. Jeffrey Toward, Director, Office of Research Ethics and John Russell, Chair Langara research Ethics board.

Consent Form:

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason. Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records. Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

Participant Name:

____(please print)

Participant Signature:

____

Date:

____

Appendix D.

Consent Form - Focus Group

By signing this consent form, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities.

Permission to conduct this research study at UFV has been obtained. Ethics approval documents from UFV and SFU will be provided.

This doctoral research project encompasses the following:

Study Background and Procedure:

This study is being conducted in partial requirements of the doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership and is being supervised by Dr. Michelle Pidgeon, assistant professor, Faculty of Education.

The proposed research will analyze cross-divisional participation of faculty and staff in collaborative initiatives that aspire to build broad based partnerships and integrative educational experiences for students. The proposed research will address culture, values and beliefs as they apply to stakeholder relationships and how these relationships impact the collaborative knowledge building for first year curriculum and programming. As part of this study, the culture of the institution will be recognized as instrumental in the development of collaborative practice and questions will be raised regarding the policies and structures that play a role in the creation of sustainable collaborations.

Focus group questions will investigate how universities and university culture are supporting collaborative practice. Using a framework developed by Joan Metge, the focus groups will look to a common enterprise that explores the values, beliefs, and values of the participants.

The focus groups will last approximately 1 – 1 1/2 hours each and will be held at a time and location that is convenient to the members of the focus group. The first focus group will be specific to staff or faculty and the second focus group will be a combination of both faculty and staff.

You will be asked to allow the focus group to be digitally audio recorded to ensure an accurate record of responses.

Audio recordings will be deleted soon after transcription.

Compensation:

There will be no monetary reimbursement for participating in this research.

Risks:

There are minimal risks to you as a participant in this study

Participation is voluntary and you may withdraw participation from the study at any time by simply advising the researcher. You may choose to not answer any questions, and any information provided can also be withdrawn or retracted at any time.

Benefits:

There is limited Canadian research on collaborative partnerships between Student and Faculty Affairs, particularly in the context of first year curriculum. Participants will be contributing to a broader understanding of collaborative practice between faculty and staff as it relates to first year programming with an aim to supporting future collaborative efforts.

As a participant of this project, you can contact the lead researcher, Jill Gibson to receive a copy of the final research project.

Confidentiality:

Data and audio recordings collected during the study will only be identified by code number and kept in secure and encrypted storage on an external hard drive, protected by a secure password in a locked cabinet, in the researcher's locked office at the University of the Fraser Valley. All data files will be encrypted and labeled to protect confidentiality of participants and their institutions.

Data collected during the study will be retained for two years and then destroyed in conformity with the research ethics policy of SFU and following the guidelines of the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Only myself, Jill Gibson, and my senior supervision will have access to the data.

You are aware that all information provided will be treated confidentially but focus groups, by nature, can only provide limited confidentiality. We encourage participants not to discuss the content of the focus group to people outside the group; however, we can't control what participants do with the information discussed.

Any references to you, other persons, programs, institutions, or departments that might identify the university will be edited, replaced by pseudonyms, or deleted in order to provide anonymity.

The results of this study will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books. The main study findings will be presented at academic conferences. Participants will not be identified by name in any reports of the completed thesis or in any report resulting from this study; however, you are also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the thesis, or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

This project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Office of Research Ethics at Simon Fraser University (REB Approval 2014s0004.)

Contact for more information:

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about your participation, please contact Jill Gibson, the researcher. You can also contact Dr. Michelle Pidgeon, the senior supervisor for this research.

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact Dr. Jeffrey Toward, Director, Office of Research Ethics.

Consent Form:

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason and with no effects on employment. If you choose to enter the study and then decide to withdraw at a later time, all data collected about you during your enrolment in the study will be destroyed.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your own records. Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

Participant Name:

____(please print)

Participant Signature:

____

Date:

____

Appendix E.

Ethics Approval

Street Address
Simon Fraser University
Discovery 2
Room 230, 8900 Nelson Way
Burnaby, BC Canada V5A 4W9

Mailing Address
8888 University Drive
Discovery 2
Burnaby, BC Canada
V5A 1S6

Director
Associate Director
Manager
FAX

http://www.sfu.ca/vp-research/ethics/

Delegated Minimal Risk Approval

Study Number: 2014s0004
Study Title: Bridging the Divide: Exploring Collaborative Practice Between Academic and Student Affairs

Approval Date: 2014 January 29
Principal Investigator: Gibson, Jill
SFU Position: Graduate Student

Expiry Date: 2015 January 29
Supervisor: Pidgeon, Michelle
Faculty/Department: Education

Co-Investigators: N/A

Funding Source: N/A
Grant Title: N/A

Documents Approved in this Application:
- Study detail, uploaded 2014 January 28
- Consent form (interviews), uploaded 2014 January 28
- Consent form (focus groups), uploaded 2014 January 28
- Participation letter (interviews), uploaded 2014 January 28
- Participation letter (focus groups), uploaded 2014 January 28

I am pleased to inform you that the above referenced study has been approved by the Associate Director, Office of Research Ethics, on behalf of the Research Ethics Board in accordance with University Policy R20.01 (http://www.sfu.ca/policies/research/r20.01.htm). The Board reviews and may amend decisions or subsequent amendments made independently by the Associate Director, Director, Chair or Deputy Chair at its regular monthly meeting.

Please note that this study would normally be exempt from ethics review in Canada according to *TCPS2* Article 2.2 (see below). However, this study has been reviewed and subsequently approved in order for the researchers to access this dataset.

Research that relies exclusively on publicly available information does not require REB review when: (a) the information is legally accessible to the public and appropriately protected by law.

The approval for this protocol expires on the **Expiry Date**, or the term of your appointment/employment/student registration at SFU, whichever comes first. **An annual renewal form must be completed every year prior to the anniversary date of approval. Failure to submit an**

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annual renewal form will lead to your study being suspended and potentially terminated. If you receive any grant for this protocol in addition to any funding listed above, please email stating the funding source, the term of approval of the funding source and the title of that funding application if it differs from the title of your ethics application. If you intend to continue your protocol to collect data past the term of approval, you must contact the Office of Research Ethics at and request an extension at least 6 weeks before the expiry date.

The Office of Research Ethics must be notified of any changes in the approved protocol. If you wish to revise your study in any way, please send an email requesting an amendment addressed to . In all email correspondence relating to this application, please reference the application number shown on this letter, which should be included in square brackets at the beginning of the Subject Line; this will ensure that all correspondence is saved to the electronic study file.

Your application has been categorized as "Minimal Risk". "Minimal Risk" occurs when potential participants can reasonably be expected to regard the probability and magnitude of possible harms to be no greater than those encountered by the participant in those aspects of his or her everyday life that relate to the research. Please note that it is the responsibility of the researcher, or the responsibility of the Student Supervisor if the researcher is a graduate student or undergraduate student, to maintain written or other forms of documented consent for a period of 1 year after the research has been completed.

The REB assumes that investigators continuously review new information for findings that indicate a change should be made to the study protocol or consent documents and that such changes will be brought to the attention of the ORE in a timely manner.

If there is an adverse event, the principal investigator must notify the Office of Research Ethics within five (5) days. An Adverse Events Form is available electronically by contacting .

All correspondence with regards to this application will be sent to your SFU email address.

Please notify the Office of Research Ethics at once you have completed the data collection portion of your project so that we can close the file.

This Notification of Status is your official ethics approval documentation for this project. Please keep this document for reference purposes and acknowledge receipt of this Notification of Status by email to and include the study number in square brackets as the first item in the Subject Line.

Best wishes for success in this research.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Bell, PhD
Acting Associate Director
Office of Research Ethics

Appendix F.

Korero Tahi: Focus Group protocol

Korero Tahi: Guidelines for Facilitators working with small groups (Metge, 2001)

1. After welcoming participants, the facilitators explain the korero tahi procedure

2. In each group the facilitator begins the process of going around the circle, asking participants to give their names and any information they think relevant about themselves (ethnicity, work, place of origin or residence et.)

3. The facilitator asks all members to think of a partnership either good or bad, and tell the group about it. This process should produce a variety of partnerships (in work situations, marriage, sport, dancing etc.) involving any number of parties of both equal and unequal standing.

4. It is important that participants draw the ideas out of their own experience. The facilitator should compose his or her own list of possible features beforehand but use this only as a checklist to make sure that something important is not overlooked. The issue of power-sharing is the most important of all and needs to be highlighted.

5. Reviewing the entries, they have made and rewording reordering them as necessary, each group draws up a list of the features essential to a good partnership to hang on the wall.

6. The groups can then proceed, to discuss broader questions as they relate to Student and Academic Affairs

Appendix G.

Questionnaire Protocol

At the start of every interview there will be a brief explanation about the nature of the interview and the research in which I am engaged.

Explicit Purpose

I will offer an explanation about the interview to informants as they first arrived for the interview. I will attempt to be clear from the outset regarding the purpose of the interview.

The reason I have asked you to come and share with me is so that I can learn about your experience with collaborative initiatives specifically around first year programming or student success programming. What I do want to learn about is the way in which you experience collaborations and the way in which you see the institution valuing and implementing collaborative initiatives

Project Explanation

What follows next is the explanation I shared with informants about the way information from their interview would be incorporated into the final project.

This research will help me to learn about the way in which collaboration shapes the work around first year programming. I will take the information I gather and study it to discover which aspects of collaborative practice are most formative, how they form and why.

Recording Explanation

There were some technical issues that I needed to address from the outset with informants, which I did as follows:

I'd like to write some of this down as I go to help me better recall what you have said. If I may have your permission, I would like to tape this interview so that I can go over it later and not be tied to pen and paper as we talk; would that be OK?

Native Language Explanation

It was important to emphasize to informants the fact that I was seeking information on their own terms.

The best answers in all instances are answers that reflect your experiences with collaborative initiatives.

Question Explanation

If I am looking for a different kind of information, I will let you know that we are moving into a different kind of question as we talk.