SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES IN TEACHER RECRUITMENT, PREPARATION AND RETENTION AS PERCEIVED BY THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM REGENTS' INITIATIVE PROJECT DIRECTORS

A Dissertation

by

MICHAEL LEE HOLT

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2006

Major Subject: Educational Administration

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	John R. Hoyle
Committee Members,	Bryan Cole
	Virginia Collier
	William Nash
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ABSTRACT

Successful Practices in Teacher Recruitment, Preparation and Retention as Perceived by the Texas A&M University System Regents' Initiative Project Directors. (August 2006)

Michael Lee Holt, B.S., Tarleton State University;

M.Ed., Tarleton State University

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. John Hoyle

The purpose of the study is to identify the perceived successful practices that led to improved teacher recruitment, preparation and retention efforts within the nine universities of The Texas A&M University System brought about by the Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education. The data for this study, gathered through interviews, document reviews and observation, revealed that the Regents' Initiative was considered by project directors to be a challenging but rewarding educational reform initiative. The lessons learned through the experience reflect the general findings common to the research literature on school-university partnerships.

Research findings of this study revealed that the successful implementation of the Regents' Initiative involved strategies to overcome challenges and develop processes for recruiting, improving teacher preparation and teacher retention. Selecting the right person as the teacher recruiter was paramount to the successful attainment of A&M System university teacher recruitment goals. Operationalizing teacher recruiting included developing recruiting targets, organizing data management, tracking student

recruits in the teacher preparation pipeline and periodically reporting progress to stakeholders. Quality improvement of teacher preparation involved recruiting higher achieving high school and community college students, setting higher standards for teacher candidate performance and aligning course curriculum within the college of education and with community college partners to the state standards.

Institutional leadership was required to promote and build meaningful partnerships combining efforts to recruit, prepare and retain quality teachers in the profession. A&M System institutions developed a communications campaign to build legislative, institutional and public awareness and support of the Initiative. Institutional involvement was broadened by providing opportunities for interaction between arts and sciences faculty and college of education faculty through collaborative research grants, presentation conferences and symposia. Finally, the successes were celebrated with all stakeholders, and rewards were provided to those who made significant contributions to the effort.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife, Kathy, whose loving support and constant encouragement through this process created a positive and successful environment for me. It is because she saw something in me that I couldn't see myself that caused me to internalize the necessary motivation that eventually led me to this educational level.

I must also thank my three wonderful daughters Summer, Haylee and Jayden for their support and understanding when "daddy" wasn't always available for them.

Finally, I thank my parents, Howard (deceased) and Geneva Holt, who instilled in me, a first generation college student, the values and determination necessary to undertake this long term venture. It was their vision and appreciation for education that initiated this process for me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my chair, Dr. John R. Hoyle, for providing the leadership, encouragement and expertise to enable me to complete this research project. Dr. Hoyle's standards for excellence and commitment to his students create a positive and challenging Aggie education. Gig'em!

To the members of my doctoral committee, Dr. Bryan Cole, Dr. Virginia Collier, and Dr. William Nash, I want to thank them for their collegial support coupled with rigorous, thought provoking and educationally challenging questioning that brought this process to a boiling point, which I will savor the remainder of my life.

I thank my friend, colleague, former boss, and mentor, Dr. William E. Reaves, for encouraging me and providing me with the opportunity to work with him and pursue a doctorate at Texas A&M University. His leadership and genius have left an indelible impression on me. I am eternally grateful.

I would also like to include a special thanks to Dr. Leo Sayavedra, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, The Texas A&M University System, for giving me inspiration and encouragement to continue in the last stages of this work when his example of patience helped me to forge through "professional challenges."

Lastly, I thank Dr. Janet Black, Dr. Irma Marshall, Kari Curtis, Dr. Eric Wilson, Dorian Martin, Brenda Grays, Char Johnson, Eloisa Clack and Brandi Plunkett, my friends and colleagues, for their continual support and great personal relationships that have meant so much to me during this challenging and rewarding stage of my life.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In an attempt to move toward student assessment for the purpose of improving student performance and teacher preparation, Texas schools have transformed their educational processes over the past two decades to insure alignment and compliance with increased state standards and mandatory testing (Murdock, 2005). Rigorous attempts have been made through data driven shared decision making to close the achievement gaps between minorities and majority populations in the state. Yet compliance and public school accountability ratings have created a new anxiety among teachers and administrators (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Many educators are leaving the profession early and site increased responsibilities, diverse student populations, difficult teaching assignments, low pay and poor administrative support as key reasons (Ingersoll, 2001; Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002).

As many as 50 percent of public school teachers in Texas leaves the classroom within the first five years (SBEC, 2003; Institute for School-University Partnerships, 2002). This crisis is occurring during an era in Texas' educational history when accountability and educational testing are at an all time high. The resulting phenomenon is a novice teacher "revolving door" especially within "high-need" teaching field areas

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The style and format followed will be that of the *Journal of Educational Research*.

in urban communities. Teachers leaving the profession early coupled with steady increases in the State's student population, estimated at approximately 70,000 per year, has created extreme shortages of teachers especially in urban areas (Murdock, 2005). The author further suggests that this growing educational dilemma, though more prevalent in the south, is becoming a national norm. Some submit (Burstein, Kretschmer, Smith, & Gudoski, 1999; Peel, Peel, & Baker, 2002) that a solution to the growing teacher shortage may be best achieved by encouraging educational agencies to develop alliances and partnerships to determine strategies and share resources to collaboratively achieve the desired outcome.

In 1996, the Chancellor of The Texas A&M University System and the Texas Commissioner of Public Education agreed to establish the Partnership for Texas Public Schools. The Partnership, established through a memorandum of understanding, created the first state-level P-16 collaboration in Texas (Institute for School-University Partnerships, 2002). The stated mission of the Partnership was to improve coordination between The Texas A&M University System and its member institutions, the Texas Education Agency, and the public schools of Texas. In March 1999, The Texas A&M University System's Board of Regents unanimously passed a resolution establishing the Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education, a five year university-based teacher preparation reform project.

In a column in the *Austin American-Statesman*, October 14, 2000, Chancellor Graves cited the following reasons for implementing the Regents' Initiative:

- The explosive population growth in Texas;
- The national teacher shortage based on enrollment growth as well as replacement of retiring teachers; and
- The challenge of retaining teachers (approximately half of new teachers in Texas leave the field within five years).

The A&M System's universities – like most Texas institutions of higher education – were experiencing declines in teacher production. According to State Board for Educator Certification annual teacher production data, during the period from 1993-94 to 2000-01, system-wide production of teacher candidates decreased by over 14 percent so that by the end of the 1999-00 academic year, the A&M System universities were producing 300 *fewer* teachers compared to annual production rates seven years prior. The Regents' Initiative, a five year program implemented in 1999, established measurable production and performance targets for each university, establishing an accountability model which had never before been adopted by a U.S. university system (Institute for School-University Partnerships, 2002).

This study will identify successful practices in teacher recruitment, preparation and retention as perceived by Regents' Initiative project directors; faculty chosen at each university charged with the responsibility of implementing, managing and reporting progress toward the goals of the Initiative.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, the supply of certified public school teachers has not met the demand. This shortage has been the result of a number of factors including lower numbers of certified teachers, growing school populations, and teacher turnover (Ingersoll, 2001). At present, approximately one-forth of teachers in the state of Texas are not certified or are in the process of becoming certified while working as a full-time public school teacher (Institute for School-University Partnerships, 2002). Nationally, 22% of all new teachers leave the profession in the first three years because of lack of support and a 'sink or swim' approach to induction into the profession and 50 percent of Texas teachers quit the profession after the first five years of employment (US Department of Education, 2002).

School-university partnerships can offer a practical solution to recruiting, preparing and retaining teachers (Burstein, Kretschmer, Smith, & Gudoski, 1999). However, not all school-university partnerships have met with success. One of the main reasons cited for failings of school-university partnerships is the entrenched practices of both bureaucracies. Implementation of effective practices, experimentation and educational research are impacted by organizational calendars, lack of administrative commitment, time constraints, resources, and the extraordinary amount of energy and time required by both parties to create and sustain bureaucratic change (Burstein, Kretschmer, Smith, & Gudoski, 1999). Therefore, a critique of school-university

partnerships engaged in teacher recruitment, preparation and retention is vital to the welfare of Texas education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the perceived successful practices that lead to improved teacher recruitment, preparation and retention efforts within the nine universities of The Texas A&M University System brought about by the Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the course of this study:

1. What are the successful practices in teacher recruitment within The Texas A&M University System as perceived by project directors of The Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education?
2. What are the successful practices of simultaneous improvement of quality and quantity in teacher preparation programs within The Texas A&M University System as perceived by project directors of The Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education?

3. What are the successful practices of a university-led teacher retention program within The Texas A&M University System as perceived by project directors of The Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education?

Definition of Terms

There are several terms that need to be operationally defined before as investigation of the stated relationships can be performed.

Benefits: Benefits refers to the positive intended and unintended outcomes as perceived by the Regents' Initiative Project Directors pursuant to the goals and grant deliverables for teacher recruitment, production and retention.

Challenges: In the context of this study, this definition applies to the perceived obstacles of implementing teacher recruitment, preparation and retention reform practices within the colleges of education in The Texas A&M University System.

Dependent Variable: The dependent variable in the context of this study refers to the successful practices of teacher recruiting, preparation and retention reform strategies related to Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education.

Impact: To force the impression of one thing on another; or having a significant or major effect on something other than itself.

Independent Variable: The independent variable in the context of this study refers any one of the following; teacher recruiting, teacher preparation, teacher retention.

Member checks: Verification of data obtained from individuals through observations, interviews or other subjective methods for the purpose of verifying the truthfulness and reliability of the content.

Naturalistic Inquiry: Imitating or reproducing perceived realities of the events related to this study in a very exact, trustworthy and faithful way through proven and accepted research practices.

Processes: A series of actions directed toward a particular aim. In the context of this study, the actions required to accomplish the goals of the Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education.

Professional Development School: A public school partnering with a university and selected for the purpose of providing teacher candidates quality field-based experiences in lesson preparation, teaching methods, student assessment, etc., as a partial requirement of the university teacher preparation program.

Project Directors: Project Directors in this study refer to the university personnel who were responsible for implementing the goals and strategies of the Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education in their university through the college of education.

School-university partnerships: Partnerships mutually established between universities and public schools for the purpose of improving one or more aspects of each organization simultaneously. Partnerships in this context may or may not have contractual agreements.

Successful Practices: For the purpose of this study, successful practices refers to the methods, strategies, and/or actions that yielded desirable results in teacher recruitment, preparation and retention as perceived by the Regents' Initiative project directors to be considered as exemplars suitable for replication in similar circumstances.

Teacher Preparation Improvement: Going beyond the norms of teacher preparation by targeting specific populations and teaching fields for recruitment and developing specific goals for teacher production and performance toward the conferment of a bachelor's degree toward certification through meeting the State's minimum exit testing requirements.

Teacher Recruitment: Teacher recruitment for the purpose of this study is the process of identifying, properly motivating and advising individuals who may be interested in becoming public school teachers in Texas by entering an educational degree & certification program in one of the nine A&M System universities.

Teacher Retention: Teacher retention for the purpose of this study is any organized attempt by A&M System universities to partner with public schools in an effort to support teachers who are in their first two years of professional service.

The Institute for School-University Partnerships: The Institute for School University Partnerships is a grant funded entity established in 1999 by the Board of Regents' of The Texas A&M University System and is comprised of personnel charged with the responsibility of implementing, coordinating and evaluating the Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education.

The Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education: The Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education refers to the goals of simultaneous improvement of both quality and quantity in teacher recruiting, preparation and retention established by the Chancellor of The Texas A&M University System in concert with the System university presidents and endorsed by the Board of Regents of The Texas A&M University System, and funded through a five-year (1999-2004) Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant awarded by the United States Department of Education and supported through subsequent grants awarded by private foundations.

The Regents' Initiative Project Team: Each A&M System university established a project team consisting of the university president, dean of the college of education, project director, teacher recruiter, induction coordinator, and Academy coordinator, for the purpose of administering the goals of the Regents' Initiative.

Triangulation: Comparing information from various sources, i.e., interviews, documents, artifacts, etc., about a particular event or situation for the purpose of validating the reliability of the researcher's descriptions.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made:

1. The data received from the Institute for School-University Partnerships will be accurate.

2. Interpretation of the data collected accurately reflects what was intended.

Limitations

The following limitations were recognized:

1. The data collected will be limited to the nine universities within The Texas A&M University System.
2. The findings of this dissertation may only be generalizable to the universities involved in this research, though they may have implications for all universities.

Significance Statement

The Texas A&M University System's Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education has recently been cited by former United States Department of Education Secretary, Dr. Rod Paige, as a national model for improving teacher preparation through school-university partnerships (USDE, 2004). The Regents' Initiative set ambitious goals for improving both the quantity and quality of teachers produced in The Texas A&M University System over a five year period. Identifying successful practices through this study may provide transferability to other universities and university systems across the State and nationally who are engaged in the process of building effective, sustainable school-university partnerships for the purpose of defining teacher quality with respect to improving teacher preparation programs.

Contents of the Dissertation

The dissertation is divided into five major chapters. Chapter I contains an introduction/background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the definition of terms, the assumptions and limitations of the study and a significance statement. Chapter II consists of a review of the literature. Chapter III includes the methodology and procedures. Chapter IV contains the analysis of data procured through interviews of the current and former project directors who agreed to participate and observations based on documents and artifacts obtained through the Institute for School-University Partnerships of The Texas A&M University System. Chapter V consists of the researcher's summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Historical Background

The Educational Impact of the Space Race

On October 4, 1957, the Soviets successfully launched a 183-pound sphere into space called Sputnik. This event caused a panic of the leaders of the western world. To respond to the call for action, Dwight D. Eisenhower created the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in 1958 to coordinate the development of space explorations by the United States (Cox, 1962). Two failed attempts to successfully launch an apparatus into space by the US created a general concern that Americans lacked the "know how" to compete with the Soviets (Boyle, 1997).

The cause for the technological "know how" gap came to rest on the perceived lack of educational rigor in science and mathematics across America's schools (Crosby, 1993). Policy makers and educators began placing a new emphasis on physics, mathematics and the sciences (Bell, 1993). Schools began revising science curricula and implemented standards that emphasized exploration and inquiry to assist in the development of scientists and mathematicians to further the cause of space exploration and related technologies. A wave of innovation flourished through the 60's, but fell into decline by the mid 70's (Bennett, Fair, Flinn, Flake, Hirsch, Marshall & Ravitch, 1998).

Much has been written about educational reforms of the 70's and 80's and about the policies that have instigated the reforms (e.g., Bracey, 2002, 2003; Darling-Hammond, 1995; Goodlad, 1984; Murphy, 1990; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; National Commission on Teaching & America's Future, 1996). The contemporary sense of school crisis, however, may be traced to the 1983 publication *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Kahane, E., Shea, C. M., & Sola, P., 1990) that called for accountability and higher expectations while arguing that U.S. schools fall far short of international counterparts. In no uncertain terms, this document sent out a challenge to America's schools:

> If an unfriendly power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves. We have even squandered the gains in achievement made in the wake of the Sputnik challenge. Moreover, we have dismantled essential support systems, which helped make those gains possible. We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament. (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p.5)

As states responded to the report heeding recommendations to strengthen graduation requirements, raise educational standards for both public schools and colleges and increase standards and accountability for teaching and learning, the question of "how" to measure the performance standards surfaced as a key issue (Haertel, 1999). The author further stated that assuming that the standards were clearly identified and

communicated and assuming that students were taught the material well enough to allow them to meet the standards, testing appeared to be the logical approach for identifying students who failed to meet expectations. Further, testing students may identify teachers who lacked the ability to transfer adequate knowledge to ensure student success. Thus, through developing higher standards and tests for measuring the degree to which students met those standards, a system emerged for holding students, teachers, and schools accountable for assuring that the expected standards were met by all students (Haertel, 1999).

However, standardized test scores have come under criticism as not being a true indicator of anything but the ability to do well on standardized tests or one's socioeconomic status (Marciano, 1998; Sturm & Guinier, 1996, p. 15). It has been argued that there is an inherent inequity among students' scores due to higher-performing students having access to schools with more honors and advanced placement classes, better instructional materials, and coming from higher-income homes where the parents have at least a four-year college education (Friedman, 1998; Sturm & Guinier, 1996).

Accountability opponents argue that teachers can only do the best with the resources supplied, resources meaning materials as well as "quality" students (Marciano, 1998). According to the author, to subsequently hold teachers, who have precious little control of their educational financial resources and no control of the income level of the households from which their students come, responsible for possibly inferior students' performance is deemed unfair. The author further stated that preparing students for the

21st century seems a lofty goal when one considers the many problems that failed to be addressed in the last century.

In the late 1980s, while discussions over standardized testing evolved, the focus in education changed from "seat time" and quantity of courses as precursors to student achievement, to the quality of curriculum and instruction and their results. However, conventional wisdom soon turned to the common-sense notion that student efforts and achievement are directly affected by expectations set by teachers, parents, schools, and the society at large. Therefore, teacher expectations began to emerge as a key factor influencing student performance (McLaughlin & Shepard, 1995).

The Current Foundation of Educational Reform

The current foundation of educational reform resides in the issue of teacher affect on student performance rather than the rigor of the tested and taught curriculum. Consequently, there is a growing body of research on individual teacher contributions to student performance (Haertel, E. H., 1999; Darling-Hammond, L., 1997a; 2000). However, the writings on teacher preparation, until recently, have essentially concentrated on the mechanics of teaching, rather than on the individual him or herself. Teaching was commonly viewed as a technique that could be practiced by anyone with any group of learners, regardless of the individuals or the sociopolitical climate in which the classroom was situated (Griffin, 1992). Even *A Nation at Risk* focused more on external factors involved in teaching than on the people involved (Murphy, 1990).

Overall, the report, while initially saying it wanted to "avoid the unproductive tendency of some to search for scapegoats among the victims, such as the beleaguered teachers" (National Commission on Excellence, 1983, p. 12), it indirectly seemed to lean toward that tendency. The recommendations of the report were representative of the first wave of reform efforts with a concentration on the system and on the process (Murphy, 1990).

Whereas *A Nation at Risk* served as a catalyst for bringing the troubling issues in U.S. education to the national front, a report from 13 years later, *What Matters Most* (National Commission on Teaching, 1996), was among those that did the same for the teaching profession and the teachers themselves. *What Matters Most* was representative of the second wave of educational reform, a concentration on the teachers, calling for restructuring of their duties, increasing their professionalism (e.g., via certification and professional development), and also on involving parents in the education of their children (Murphy, 1990, pp. 25–28). The thinking is that those closest to the students are best able to develop the students' minds.

What Matters Most emphasized the importance of involving the teacher in a continuous reinvention of teaching and of viewing the field as a profession akin to others, such as law and medicine. Rather than striving to change what goes on in the classroom, this type of reform focused on those responsible for classroom activities, the teachers (Murphy, 1990; Darling-Hammond, 1997a).

> We propose an audacious goal . . . by the year 2006, America will provide all students in the country with what should be their educational birthright: access to competent, caring, and qualified teachers. . . . the reform of elementary and

> secondary education depends first and foremost on restructuring its foundation—the teaching profession. The restructuring . . . must go in two directions: toward increasing teachers' knowledge to meet the demands they face; and toward recognizing and using teachers' expertise in schools that are redesigned to support high-quality teaching and learning. (National Commission on Teaching, 1996, p. 5)

The call was for teaching to be viewed as "a professional activity," one that is acquired thorough content and professional preparation as well as satisfactory and continual achievement of established criteria (Griffin, 1992). The author continues, concomitantly, teachers are to be recognized as professionals with expertise in the ways of educating, much the same as doctors and lawyers are recognized for expertise in their respective fields. Teachers should become involved in, as well as leaders of, the restructuring of the way schools conduct their business.

Coupled with the call for increased student and teacher productivity, there was a perceived national disenchantment with the educational system, based on the belief that U.S. children should perform as well as or better than their peers in other industrialized nations (e.g., Bracey, 1997; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Putting aside the dissimilarities in the cultures that are the preferred comparison points (e.g., Japan, where individualism is not fostered and promulgated as it is in the U.S.), other reasons mitigate such international comparisons (e.g., selective use of statistical data, minimizing of different socioeconomic and cultural demographics among countries) (Bracey, 1997).

Along with the focus on the individuals there was also the necessary re-examination of the professional development programs that service teachers, both novice and veteran. Beginning in the mid 1980s and increasingly so in the 1990s, there were calls for better preparation of teachers by institutions of higher education and for increased involvement of K–12 schools in that preparation, i.e., school–university collaborations (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 1996; Goodlad, 1987; Oakes, 1996; Oakes & Mitchell, 1995; Oakes & Rogers, 1997). As professional dialog developed concerning teacher preparation restructuring, contextual factors involved in developing an understanding of educational reform as it is carried out began to emerge (Oakes, 1996).

Thus, values and perceptions of community members, including parents and students, and of those involved in the instructional and learning processes, those in the K–12 system and in higher education, became necessary factors to include in analyzing the impact of a particular reform effort (Darling-Hammond, 1996). It is too often the case that reforms are implemented by those removed from the direct scene (i.e., the classrooms) for purposes that serve others (e.g., politicians, district administrators, special interest groups) more so than the students and teachers (Lewis & Nakagawa, 1995; Skocpol, 1995). Thus, a truer understanding of the complexities of the educational process, especially when reform is a central issue, evolves when the research is multidisciplinary and designed to include all voices (Wells, Hirshberg, Lipton, and Oakes, 1995).

These processes ushered in the current pressures on the U.S. educational system’s public schools consisting of class size reduction, higher student achievement

scores on standardized & criterion referenced tests, teacher accountability for students' performance, and preparing students overall for the 21st century, i.e., preparing them for productive competition in the international scientific and technological arenas (*Goals 2000*, sec. 2.6.C; Murphy, 1990, pp. 8–18; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Spring, 1996, pp. 21–22).

Policies Shaping Current Reforms

On the political front, following the 1989 Education Summit, the National Governors' Association and President Bush (41) adopted the National Education Goals, and the State-led education reform movement gained momentum. State and local officials, educators, parents, and community and business leaders joined in a commitment to raise the academic achievement of all students and use data to inform educational decision-making (Cantor, 1997).

However, these reform efforts were driven largely by non-empirical data, relying instead on political platforms such as the Bush (41) administration's America 2000 program (later reformulated as the Clinton administration's Goals 2000: Educate America Act), psychometric evaluations, and perceptions of the lay public (Cantor, 1997). For example, the California anti-bilingual education initiative Proposition 227, innocuously entitled "English Language Education for Children in Public Schools," proposed and heavily financed by northern California software engineer Ron Unz, who, though he has no firsthand experience nor children in school, perceived that bilingual education was a failure (Beyette, 1998).

What have been missing are data from those involved, i.e., students, teachers, parents, and administrators, who study or work daily in the primary locus of the educational process: the school (Cantor, 1997). The author further contends that also absent from many reform recommendations is the role of postsecondary education. Schools of education and teachers' colleges are held by the public to be responsible for preparing teachers to enter the profession. However, there are concerns that the institutions of higher education provide more idealistic theory than practical knowledge that can be applied directly in the classroom (Barreto, 1997; Oakes & Rogers, 1997).

Consequently, Goals 2000: Educate America Act, when signed into law on March 31, 1994, provided resources to states and communities to ensure that all students reach their full potential. It was based on the premise that students will reach higher levels of achievement when more is expected of them. Congress appropriated $105 million for Goals 2000 and funds became available to states July 1, 1994. In the first year, individual states were to submit applications describing the process by which each state developed a school improvement plan, made sub grants to local schools, as well as made grant awards for pre-service and professional development (Gayton, 1997).

Goals 2000 established a framework for identifying world-class academic standards, to measure student progress, and to provide the support that students needed to meet the standards (Gayton, 1997). The author further states that the Act codified in law the six original education goals concerning school readiness, school completion, student academic achievement, leadership in math and science, adult literacy, and safe

and drug-free schools. It added two new goals encouraging teacher professional development and parental participation.

The National Education Goals as stated in the Act (Sec. 102) are the following: By the Year 2000 1) All children in America will start school ready to learn; 2) The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent; 3) All students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics an government, economics, the arts, history, and geography, and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our nation's modern economy; 4) United States students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement; 5) Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; 6) Every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning; 7) The nation's teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century; 8) Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children (Goals 2000, 1994).

Thus, Goals 2000 ushered in the collaboration and partnership era in state educational systems yet little has been accomplished to systemically change the way that teachers are prepared or the way schools interact with universities that prepare them (Gayton, 1997). Texas schools, already heavily involved in transforming their educational processes over the past two decades, increased their alignment and compliance with the increased state and federal standards and mandatory testing while many universities lagged behind in revamping their educator preparation programs to meet the new demands (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Darling-Hammond et al. (2002) acknowledge that rigorous attempts have been made through data driven shared decision making to close the achievement gaps between minorities and majority populations in public schools within the state. However, prior to 2000, these attempts were rarely coordinated between public schools and regional universities within the state (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

When George W. Bush was elected Governor of Texas in 1994, his educational agenda, *No Child Left Behind,* increased the educational accountability for students, teachers, schools and school districts collectively in the state. Simultaneously, a serious shortage of teachers, especially in critical areas, e.g., math, science, special education, was developing across the state (Institute for School-University Partnerships, 2002; SBEC, 2003). This shortage has been the result of a number of factors, including universities preparing fewer numbers of certified teachers within the state, growing school populations, and teacher turnover. Approximately one-fourth of teachers in the state of Texas are not certified or are in the process of becoming certified while working

as a full-time public school teacher (Institute for School-University Partnerships, 2002). Nationally, 22% of all new teachers leave the profession in the first 3 years because of lack of support and a 'sink or swim' approach to induction into the profession (US Department of Education, 2002) and 60% of Texas teachers quit the profession after the first five years of employment (Suydam, 2002). The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) estimated that U.S. schools needed to train and employ more than 2 million new teachers from 1996-2006. Demand is even higher for teacher specializations when math, science, foreign language, bilingual, and special education are included as considerations (Institute for School-University Partnerships, 2002).

Yet the associated compliance with state and federal mandates along with public school accountability ratings in Texas have created a new anxiety among public school teachers and administrators in the state. Many educators are leaving the profession early and site increased responsibilities, diverse student populations, difficult teaching assignments, low pay and poor administrative support as key reasons (Ingersoll, 2001; Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002).

Annually in Texas, as many as 30 to 50 percent of first year public school teachers abandons the classroom for other educational duties or other professions (SBEC, 2003). This crisis is occurring during an era in the State’s educational history when accountability and educational testing are at an all time high. The resulting phenomenon is a novice teacher “revolving door” especially within “high-need” teaching field areas in urban communities, which further emphasizes the need for teacher

preparation institutions and public schools to become partners in creating solutions (Ingersoll, 2001).

In October of 2000, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board approved its C*losing the Gaps* initiative and began a new chapter in the development of a coalition of educational, business, community and public school partners to address achievement gaps between majority and minority populations in the state and a new term emerged, P-16; pre-kindergarten through the bachelors degree. This measure brought about a formal agenda for creating school-university partnerships that collaboratively work to increase student performance P-16 (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, 2000).

To further engage the reform process nationally as had been done in Texas, and, consequently, simultaneously exacerbate bureaucratic entrenchment, federal legislation was signed by President George W. Bush in early January of 2002, which according to experts and observers alike will have profound affects on public education in the U.S. over the next few years (Sunderman, G. L. & Kim, J., 2004). They further state that the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) significantly expands the federal role in public education and targets increased federal funding to improve designated "poor performing" school systems and promotes wide-spread cooperation between federal, state, public and private entities to accomplish this feat. NCLB further requires all 50 states to:

1. Become *more accountable for results* in the performance of students, teachers, and schools;

2. Place a greater *focus on what works* in terms of instructional approaches as based on scientific research;
3. Expand *parental options* with regard to accessing "performance" information and, furthermore, to permitting in some cases "school choice;" and,
4. Permit *more local flexibility* or control in the spending of federal monies earmarked for public education (PUBLIC LAW 107–110, 2002).

The NCLB law amends previous federal legislation dealing with public education by requiring states to implement rigorous assessment methods to determine achievement in reading, math and language arts, and eventually content standards for science. In essence, states are required to "intensify student testing, ensure high qualifications for all teachers, and guarantee that all students achieve a 'proficient' level of education by 2015 (PUBLIC LAW 107–110, 2002).

School-University Partnerships

Authors who have explored school-university partnerships contend that "conversations among leaders on both sides of potential partnerships may be more successful if the practices presented are considered in getting a clear plan of action formulated prior to establishing the partnership" (Peel, Peel, & Baker, 2002, p. 44). Considering this point of view, educational partnerships should approach the development of relationships in the same manner as any well run organization in the public or private sectors, whereby stakeholders collaborate in the development of

policies and practices (Gayton, 1997). The author further stated that well designed and implemented school-university partnerships can lead to movement in a positive direction toward change benefiting all stakeholders.

TABLE 1. Elements of Effective and Ineffective School-University Partnerships

Effective Practices	*Ineffective Practices*
Development of respect and trust between stakeholders	Cynicism and absence of outreach needed to maintain trust or to revitalize the breakdown of trust
Visionary leadership based on knowledge and needs	Lack of shared vision and/or low vision clarity
Strong commitment to mutual interests	Individual interests prevail and discussion of mutuality are artificial—lacking clarity and focus
Willingness to promote change	Resistance to change is unaddressed leading to lack of change or relapse into prior behaviors
Flexibility in managing and coping with change	Rigidity and emphasis on the reinforcement of past policies over the need to adjust system to meet current goals

TABLE 1. Continued

Effective Practices	*Ineffective Practices*
Open and ongoing communication	Communication breakdowns are unaddressed or resolved inadequately
Partners strive toward constructive collaborative climate	Competitive approach to conflict is utilized with little or no responsibility taken when individual institutional interests are fostered over shared interests
Stable and detail-oriented project leadership	General concepts or ideas remain unrefined and unworkable and leadership is handed off from centralized leadership to lower levels
Adequate financial support	Mutual financial needs are not appropriately addressed
Acknowledgement of collaboration successes	Minimization of success and/or self-focused responses to collective achievements identified
Reward and recognition system aligned with mutual interests	Reward system is overlooked with regard to the partnership, or rewards for collaboration are not included

The literature identifying effective and ineffective practices associated with school-university partnerships imply some basic “practices” illustrated in Table 1 characterizing more and less successful partnerships. In addition to considering school-university partnerships from the perspective of effective versus ineffective practices, some researchers have explored these partnerships utilizing developmental stage models (Zetlin, Harris, MacLeod, & Watkins, 1992). The authors further suggested that the following stages characterize the dynamics of a school-university partnership: 1) People are consumed with hostility; 2) There is a lack of trust as the partners build "mutual confidence;" 3) There is a period of truce and equal participation; 4) Mixed approval and short-term successes are recognized; 5) Acceptance by both the school and university as they see the mutual benefits; 6) There is a time of regression due to attrition, faculty promotion, or lack of funding; 7) New members enter with new ideas that lead to renewal; and 8) There is a continuation of the collaborative effort.

According to Peel et al. (2002), clear understanding of the stages identified above along with an operational understanding of the essential elements associated with school-university partnership success can lead to more effective implementation. Although the overall stage model presented by Zetlan & Harris et al. (1992) is linear (suggesting that partnerships move consecutively from stages 1-8) the authors emphasized the important movement from stages one and two toward a more connected and clearly delineated partnership in later stages. Essential aspects in the establishment of functional school-university partnerships include: development of clear common goals, support of mutual trust and respect, maintenance of open communication, and

ongoing clarification of shared responsibility by all stakeholders (Peel and Walker, 1995).

Some researchers and practitioners have identified program design and program implementation as key elements in the development of school-university partnerships (Peel & Walker, 1993). According to Tushnet (1996), although the most committed stakeholders may be able to overcome poor program design and implementation, clear outlining and execution of these two elements is viewed to be paramount. Partnerships may begin slipping when necessary steps are not sufficiently clarified and acted upon prior to implementation (Peel & Walker, 1993).

Bullough and Kauchak (1997) indicated that universities and public schools face financial constraints due to the enormous size of each organization. They further contend that unless both entities are willing to pool their resources and work together in a collaborative manner, the partnership will most likely fail. This problem is especially true of educational partnerships in the rural southern US, which has the highest rural poverty rate in the nation (Davis, Emery, & Lane, 1998). In most impoverished communities there is generally a feeling of isolation along with limited resources (Davis et al., 1998). According to Wilcox (2002), partnerships tend to fail when the financial issues overshadow the impending remuneration, therefore implying that successful partnerships includes realistic financial commitments from all stakeholders.

Burstein, et al. submits that school-university partnerships also offer a practical solution to both recruiting and retaining teachers. Further, vested interests by the participating partners should create a rich environment for success. However, one of the

main reasons cited for failings of school-university partnerships is the entrenched practice of both bureaucracies (Pajak, 2001). Implementation of effective practices, experimentation and educational research are impacted by organizational calendars, lack of administrative commitment, time constraints, resources, and the extraordinary amount of energy and time required by both parties to create and sustain bureaucratic change (Burstein, Kretschmer, Smith, & Gudoski, 1999).

Teacher Recruitment

Teacher recruitment efforts have taken many forms and involve several dimensions. Recruitment focuses on attracting people into the teaching profession, in general, or into teaching positions in targeted public schools or districts (Rose & Gallup, 2000). States and districts employ various strategies to accomplish teacher recruiting objectives, including pre-college orientation, summer teaching camps, internship opportunities, college scholarship and loan-forgiveness programs and salary or bonus incentives for teachers (Ingersoll, 2001).

Despite organized teacher recruiting efforts, some experts believe a number of other factors affect the ability of the teaching profession to attract candidates such as increasing accountability, low pay, poor working conditions and increasing diversity (Darling-Hammond, Chung & Frelow, 2000). These candidates' perceptions of teaching are held as important, especially in comparison with their perceptions of other professions (Ingersoll, 2001). The author suggests that comparative starting salaries

repeatedly are cited as a key factor, as are expected working conditions such as the school environment, interaction with and support from colleagues and school leaders, workload and career growth opportunities.

Hiring practices are identified as another important factor in teacher recruitment (Burstein, Kretschmer, Smith & Gudoski, 1999). The authors continue that many stories exist of teachers choosing one district over another because of differences in the efficiency and friendliness of hiring practices or because of differences in districts' policies concerning out-of-field teaching. Stories told by frustrated younger teachers also abound in districts where rigid seniority systems make it difficult for younger teachers to find satisfactory teaching assignments (Ingersoll, 2001).

A number of states are seeking to interest high school or middle school students in teaching careers (Ingersoll, 2001). These efforts offer information to students about how to become a teacher, prerequisite high school course selection and opportunities that exist for students to tutor or work in classrooms. Reports from these programs often are very positive, claiming high rates of entry into teaching and high minority student participation. Outside evaluations confirm that such programs provide a jump-start for students who enter teacher preparation programs and help increase minority representation in teaching when that is a goal (Institute for School-University Partnerships, 2002).

By 1999, almost half of the states provided some type of scholarship or loan forgiveness program to college students pursuing teaching careers (Institute for School-University Partnerships, 2002). In most cases, the aid is reserved for minorities or

candidates who agree to teach for a certain time in subjects or schools where there is a teacher shortage. Evaluations indicate that when these programs are well-conceived and targeted at the promising candidates, they bring people into teaching. No data are available, however, on whether recipients remain in these high-need assignments or in the teaching profession longer than average (Ingersoll, 2001).

Many states, districts and institutions of higher education have made efforts to recruit minorities, teachers' aides, local residents, retired military personnel, outstanding college graduates and other target populations (Ingersoll, 2001). Such efforts usually are connected to a teacher preparation program and often seek to place graduates in hard-to-staff schools (Peel, Peel & Baker, 2002). Sometimes such efforts involve community colleges as a partner in a teacher preparation program. Available data indicate that many of these targeted programs are successful in preparing target populations for teaching careers and placing them for a substantial time in hard-to-staff situations, but they vary in the quality of preparation (Peel, Peel & Baker, 2002).

With increasing frequency, states and districts have resorted to providing various financial incentives in an effort to lure teachers into the profession including signing bonuses, housing allowances, moving expenses and salary increases to teach in high-demand subjects or hard-to-staff schools (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1997). States' experience confirms that states and districts do successfully draw teachers from neighboring states and districts by paying higher beginning teacher salaries or offering attractive bonuses; this strategy has an adverse impact, however, on poorer states and districts (Edutopia, 2001). Similarly, at least in the short term, salary bonuses

for teaching in hard-to-staff schools have proved be an effective incentive. There is no information, however, about whether teachers who receive such bonuses remain in their assignments for the long term. Surveys of teachers suggest that higher salaries will not motivate them to teach in schools with poor working conditions.

According to a 1998 national survey by Recruiting New Teachers, the general public believes strongly that raising teachers' salaries would aid in the recruitment of teachers (Edutopia, 2001). Further, research about the impact of salary on teachers' decisions to enter teaching or take a particular job does not yield clear conclusions. In fact, some studies indicate that young people often enter teaching out a sense of calling and are much more motivated by idealism and the perceived lifestyle teaching offers than by salary (Edutopia, 2001). Similarly, many mid-career change professionals are drawn to teaching by idealism and, especially if receiving retirement benefits from their first career, probably do not have salary as their primary concern (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1997).

A recent study of teacher migration among Tennessee school districts indicates that while salary was the single most frequent reason teachers cited for moving from one district to another, it was not the most significant factor for 79% of the teachers who had moved (Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 2000). Further, the authors state that a number of experts believe restricted mobility adds to the difficulty of recruiting teachers. Only a few states grant full licensure to teachers who bring credentials from other states, and full transferability of pension benefits from one district to another is comparatively rare (Edutopia, 2001).

On the whole, however, no information is available to indicate the degree to which mobility is a significant factor in teacher recruitment (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1997). Further, the NCES report states that there are anecdotal accounts of teachers discouraged from pursuing new teaching opportunities in another state because their existing licenses would not transfer. Likewise, there are incidents of teachers who decide against moving to a different district or state because they would lose retirement benefits further exacerbating teacher shortages and student achievement improvement efforts (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1997).

Teacher Preparation

This latest federal mandate increases the pressure for public schools and universities to partner and collaborate in order to meet the sweeping changes ordered by the legislation (Sunderman, G. L. & Kim, J., 2004). Although school-university partnerships have existed in isolation for some time for the purposes of preparing teachers via professional development schools, there is little evidence that it has had a major effect on teacher preparation and school improvement (Burstein, Kretschmer, Smith, & Gudoski, 1999). The clinical supervision of would be teachers seems to work in theory only in most institutions (Pajak 2001).

The context in which clinical supervision occurs is based primarily in professional development schools. Theoretically, these partnership schools provide clinically supervised opportunities for field-based experiences for the teacher candidate

toward the end of the undergraduate experience. Ironically, the most common criticism by participants of professional development schools associated with these types of partnerships is the lack of supervision and relevant feedback (Burstein, Kretschmer, Smith, & Gudoski, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

Professional development schools have also attracted criticism over the years for the entrenched structure that perpetuates them (Pajak 2001). Most states encourage teacher preparation programs to complete degree requirements for undergraduates within a four-year time frame. Course requirements for degree granting purposes are steeped in content (Szuminski, 1993). For secondary certification areas such as mathematics, science, language arts and social studies, most undergraduates spend the majority of their higher educational experience in the colleges of arts and sciences (Szuminski, 1993; Darling-Hammond, 1994a). Further, the arts and sciences faculty are generally grounded in content rather than pedagogy.

The challenge for professional development school-university partnerships for the purposes of teacher preparation is to create an evaluation mechanism that adequately measures the effectiveness of the program, communicates the results to stakeholders in clear terms and provide enough bureaucratic flexibility to enable programmatic adjustments without compromising the integrity of the partnership (Darling-Hammond, 2004b).

Although there is little evidence that higher education-based teacher preparation programs are fiscally sound and effective, many new efforts to assess and/or enhance the impact of teacher education have emerged (Cochran-Smith, 2001). The author further

contends that these efforts often rest on strikingly different assumptions about what teachers and pupils should know and be able to do and about what the larger purposes of American schooling should be about. However, all of these efforts assume that a defining goal of teacher education is student learning (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002). They also assume that there are certain measures that can be used to assess the degree to which this outcome is or is not being achieved by teachers, K-12 pupils, teacher educators, higher education institutions, alternative programs, local and state policies, and the education profession itself. (Cochran-Smith, 2001)

As standards increasingly define the parameters of performance for both students and teachers, as schools and universities share responsibility for preparing new teachers, and as more attention is paid to ensuring the successful induction of novices into the teaching profession, more pressure will be placed on educational leaders at universities and public schools to become more clinical in their approaches to preparing and inducting new teachers (Pajak, 2001).

Teacher Retention

The recent focus on the national teacher shortage has spawned many studies and consensus is building that teacher supply may not be the problem but the “revolving door” certainly is (Ingersoll, 2001; Quartz, 2003). A recent study in Texas, for example, estimated that the state's annual turnover rate of 15 percent, which includes a 40 percent turnover rate for public school teachers in their first three years, costs the state

approximately $329 million a year, or at least $8,000 per teacher recruit who leaves in the first few years of teaching (Texas Center for Educational Research, 2000).

In 2002, William Franz, former Executive Director of the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) in Texas, conservatively estimated a 20% drain from the teaching ranks in Texas after the first year in the classroom. In fact, some estimates state that as many as sixty percent of teachers leave the profession within the first five years (Suydam, 2002). This rate is especially alarming when one considers the investment of professional development costs to school districts for each leaver. Exacerbating the leaver problem for school districts is the educational loss to students in a high stakes testing environment (Ingersoll, 2001).

Texas innovative approaches to address the teacher shortfall include alternative certification programs, innovative high school recruiting programs, and teacher mentoring programs for retention purposes. Because the problem involves not only bringing new teachers into the ranks, but also retaining those who would otherwise leave, teacher-mentoring programs have received increased emphasis (TexasTEACH, 2002). After the Texas Beginning Educator Support System (TxBESS) was created in 1999 by SBEC with a $10 million three-year grant from the Department of Education, Franz reported an 88 percent retention rate of new teachers involved in the program, and a 98 percent retention of those teachers returning for a third year.

Project funding for TxBESS ceased in 2002 causing many schools to drop the program or modified it to “within the budget” specifications. These changes have rendered mixed results (TexasTEACH, 2002). However, there is no question that teacher

retention programs through an induction model have merit (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Induction as a means to retain novice teachers has been thoroughly researched. In the late 60's, a barrage of experiments was conducted with induction teachers using student performance as the dependent variable. All studies found a significant correlation between teacher induction and student performance (Schuck, 1981).

If colleges of education possess constructive knowledge about teaching and learning, and if they conduct viable educational research, then they should be able to influence teaching and learning in the public educational community in a positive way (Fullan, 2003). However, the author suggests that there are many factors outside of university control after teacher candidates leave the institution. Basically, according to Fullan, in most scenarios, disconnections exist between the university college of education and the public school sector. Although most universities maintain placement services for teacher graduates, the final decision for the teaching assignment rests with the principal of the receiving school (Fullan, 2003).

Most of the vacant teaching positions in urban schools exist in difficult teaching situations such as highly impoverished, highly diverse, over-populated and low performing situations (Brown, 2002). Thrusting a novice teacher into a school that has a culture of failure is almost a sure teaching career death sentence (Ingersoll, 2001; Fullan, 2003; Linda Darling-Hammond, 1994a). Asking colleagues for instructional help and guidance for matching students' needs compromises the novice's credibility and adds responsibility to experienced teachers. Trying to meet administrators' expectations becomes a struggle for the novice because helping students achieve and demonstrating

professional expertise are not synonymous (Fullan, 2003). Many induction teachers find teacher training and the internship to be incongruent with the daily responsibility of managing an actual classroom (Brown, 2002). Brown indicates that finding the delicate balance between theory and practice becomes primary to the induction teacher's survival, particularly when applied to diverse learning cultures.

In most of the literature embodying teacher retention, there exist some basic assumptions concerning beginning teachers. All new teachers have two jobs (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999). The authors suggest that teachers have to teach and they have to learn to teach. Most urban districts provide some kind of support to beginning teachers, usually in the form of mentoring though loosely defined. These teacher induction initiatives are part of a larger effort to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools by focusing on the recruitment, preparation, retention, and renewal of teachers (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996).

No matter what kind of preparation a teacher receives, some aspects of teaching can be learned only on the job (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). No college course can teach a new teacher how to blend knowledge of particular students and knowledge of particular content in decisions about what to do in specific situations. In fact, teacher preparation field experiences have come under criticism because program coordinators rarely make clinical field visits or provide adequate observations and feedback to teacher candidates (Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

As schools look to innovative ways of inducting new teachers, standards for student performance quickly rises to the surface as a major player. Standards for schools

and students have been at the heart of the debate over resources, practice, and performance and have been proposed as a way to address the lack of equal opportunity for students in our current education system (Pajak, 2001). The author further suggests that the standards movement potentially reduces the loose coupling that results in achievement inequities by demanding that all students, teachers, and schools be held to the same high standards. Although some critics fear that students who are already placed at risk cannot thrive in such an environment, the goal is to more tightly couple instruction to publicly available criteria for success (Cohen & Spillane, 1993). Further, individual teachers would be supervised, ultimately, in terms of how well their students move toward proficiency on those common standards.

When teaching and learning are not monitored in schools, the quality of teaching and learning can vary tremendously from one classroom to another (Cohen & Spillane, 1993). If poor teaching is ignored and tolerated, mediocrity too easily becomes the norm. The autonomy of classrooms also makes innovations difficult to introduce and virtually impossible to sustain (Cohen & Spillane, 1993). Curriculum content that is covered, the methods by which learning is assessed, and the ways by which grades are derived, tend to be determined idiosyncratically by individual teachers (Pajak, 2001). Further, in most schools, students are processed as members of a group, without adjustment for the fact that they do not all learn at the same rate or in the same way.

There is also no guarantee that the education students receive at two different schools is of comparable quality, even if they have taken courses that share the same titles and they earn similar grade point averages (Pajak, 2001). The author summarizes

that the loose coupling of educational organizations makes it difficult, if not impossible, to ensure the equitable quality of processes and outcomes, especially with regard to instruction

The solution to the problem that clinical supervision seems to pose may be embedded in two variables, lack of time and lack of expertise (Cohen & Spillane, 1993). The authors further contend that these two variables play an important role in the day to day operations of public schools and universities. Further, there are numerous distractions that draw from the time that administrators, educators and program coordinators need to spend supervising teachers to ensure that teaching and learning are taking place.

The second variable, the lack of expertise, also surfaces all too often (Cohen & Spillane, 1993). According to the authors, many school principals have come through the ranks as core teachers, elective teachers, coaches, shop teachers, agriculture teachers and band directors. He or she may know his or her own area of study, but may not feel confident discussing math or reading teaching strategies with teachers in those disciplines for fear that he or she will appear less knowledgeable, therefore rendering them, in their own mind, useless or incompetent. Therefore, productive successful new teacher induction programs basically do not exist in most public schools (Cohen & Spillane, 1993).

A recent review of research on supervision in teacher education reported little if any agreement among teacher educators on the goals and purposes of pre-service field experiences and how these experiences relate to programs of study and student teaching

(McIntyre & Byrd, 1998). Furthermore, the authors suggest that communication among university faculty and coordination between university faculty and cooperating teachers during student teaching is often almost nonexistent. Such findings sadly suggest that the most important and fragile phase of a teacher's career, the transition from aspiring novice to beginning professional, is often seriously neglected (Pajak, 2001).

Leadership as a Contributing Factor

Historical Perspective of Organizational Leadership

Leadership plays an important role in putting into context the current state of affairs regarding educational decision making (Cohen & Spillane, 1993). Therefore, it becomes necessary to gain a historical perspective of the development of leadership theories impacting educational organizational management.

Max Weber, Frederick Taylor and Henri Fayol are known for their pioneering work in organizational management. Although Weber was a proponent of bureaucratic management in the ideal setting, most organizations fail to meet the characteristics of the "ideal type" because of differing environmental settings (Boone & Bowen, 1987). However, the authors submit that most organizations today maintain a form of bureaucracy that would be recognizable to Weber. In education, the president, deans and professors in a university setting, or the superintendent, principals and teachers in a school district represent top management symbolic of hierarchical design.

Taylor, the “Father of Scientific Management,” proposed that organizational management concern itself with planning, organizing and supervising the work at the lowest levels (Boone & Bowen, 1987). The authors further stated that Taylor developed this philosophy while observing workers generally resistant to labor saving devices thereby working slower in fear of working themselves out of a job. Continuing, Taylor insisted that supervisors must constantly observe labor and devise ways to record time and effort as a cost factor observation and evaluate output data to measure organizational success. Although it may be difficult to cite transferability of Taylor’s work into the educational arena, the use of time clocks, designated periods, and course specializations continue to shape educational organizations (Boone & Bowen, 1987).

In contrast, Henri Fayol wrote from the perspective of the top management suggesting that managers should attempt to forecast the future and make provisions for it, therefore, planning became critical to the success of any organizational endeavor (Boone & Bowen, 1987). According to Fayol’s bureaucratic paradigm, the manager is responsible for preparing the plan and developing the objective and scope (Fayol, 1949). This theory of management is evidenced in educational organizations from the turn of the Twentieth Century through the early sixties where most decisions concerning educational advancement were made by top management (Bracey, 1997).

Mary Parker Follett was a pioneer in the concept of shared decision-making and she understood the important roles that leaders play in developing collaborative efforts and she believed that it was the leader’s responsibility to cultivate group interaction to improve decision-making (Boone & Bowen, 1987). Follett suggested that leadership

should have good knowledge of the job and the ability to grasp the total situation (Follett, 1949). Follett contended that this quality would assist leaders in seeing the evolving situation and provide visionary leadership. Further, the workers, on the other hand, should communicate problems to upper management, informing them of things that went wrong. Follett's work is a precursor for today's site-based decision making efforts visible in most public schools (Brunner, 1997).

Lessons learned through research into organizational management have incrementally approached the current popular philosophy that the success of any organization depends largely on the success of individuals within that organization (Krajewski, 1996). Thus, for people to flourish within any organizational environment individual's needs must be met (Boone & Bowen, 1987). This philosophy is deeply grounded in Abraham H. Maslow work as he theorized that human motivation is based on a hierarchy of needs, which unconsciously predispose human reason (Maslow, 1943). According to Maslow, an individual encounters ranking needs that, once satisfied, cease to play a role in predicting human wants. Maslow's "hierarchy of needs" theory opened the door for human motivation research as it pertains to organizational structure and leadership development (Boone & Bowen, 1987).

Organizational behavioral theorist and paradigm creator Douglas McGregor (1985) extended Maslow's needs theory into the organizational setting applying it to management and motivation. McGregor characterized the traditional autocratic bureaucracy as Theory X while developing a new collaborative paradigm as Theory Y. McGregor indicated that employees exhibit behavioral symptoms that reflect the health

of the organization based on satisfaction of individual needs. McGregor's synthesis of individual motivation transformed organizations and energized the decentralization of management movement throughout the decades of the 60's, 70's and 80's, the effects of which can be see in educational institutions today (Boone & Bowen, 1987).

Frederick Herzberg (1968) assimilated organizational theory into employee motivation-hygiene factors. Herzberg's theory came as a result of studying the job satisfaction factors of many different groups of engineers and accountants in a variety of settings in countries throughout the world. His studies revealed many factors that lead to job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. According to Herzberg, the basic functions of life, such as being hungry, motivate humans to do things such as get a job thus satisfying the hunger problem. However, once on the job a more complicated set of factors emerge that fall into one of two groups; dissatisfiers and motivators (Boone & Bowen, 1987).

Herzberg's point is that humans can be moved to act positively in organizational settings provided that managers help the employ build his or her own generator (intrinsic motivation) to provide the necessary motivation and maintain the hygiene factors as organizational controls (Herzberg, 1968). Throughout much of the 80's and 90's, educational leaders applied Herzberg's theory to educational settings in an attempt to override mounting teacher dissatisfaction claims with low pay and insisting that teaching, much like the clergy, was a calling (Gayton, 1997).

Fred Fiedler developed a "Contingency Theory" of leadership styles that was revolutionary for the times (Boone & Bowen, 1987). Rather than finding the right manager for the job, which was the industry standard, Fiedler suggested that the job

should change to fit the manager, or be situational contingent (Fiedler, 1965). Fiedler identified a continuum of leadership styles that he suggested could be employed in certain situations to render the optimum results (Boone & Bowen, 1987).

There were other theorists who followed, each with an important extended concept on previous work and impacting educational leadership in myriad ways (Gayton, 1997). Robert House & Terrence Mitchell's "Path-Goal Theory" of leadership that speaks to subordinate motivation for doing things that are valued by management, Victor Vroom's decision tree for unilateral vs. participative expansion on McGregor's Theory X Theory Y, the Hershey& Blanchard Situational Leadership Model, providing managers a model for situational decision making, Gary Latham and Edwin Locke's goal setting theory, the Getzels-Guba Social Systems Model, the Hoy-Tarter decision rule model (tests of relevance, expertise and commitment) and others have significantly impacted educational leadership and decision making (Hoy & Miskel, 1991).

The Role of Educational Leadership

Given all of the previously mentioned theories of bureaucracy and organizational leadership, examples of each can be found in some form in educational institutions today (Bullough & Kauchak, 1997). The reason that this is true resides in the historical development of educational leadership, though, as it applies to institutional oversight, is basically still in its infancy (Hall & Hord, 2001). The authors continue that at the beginning of the 20th century, school-level leadership became the accepted paradigm for middle level management, held by men supervising women teachers. They further

suggest that the most important decisions were made at the top, above middle management. “Leadership” as a term to describe middle management did not emerge until the 1970’s and 80’s and it was brought about because of a large population of underserved entering public schools (Donaldson, 2001).

At this point, theorists looked to two sources for models in educational leadership development: the business literature and the effective schools literature (Cunningham, 1990). Both, according to Cunningham, prescribed checklists of leadership tasks and strategies that soon evolved into the need for examples ala “instructional leader.” Now, Donaldson (2001) describes the new function of school leadership “to mobilize people to change how they themselves work so that they collectively serve better the emerging needs of children and demands of society” (p. 6).

Regardless of one’s position on which leadership development model is most appropriate, it is clear that leadership plays a fundamental and critical role in developing the plan and moving the organization in a successful direction (Edens, Shirley, & Toner, 2001). The authors further emphasize the importance of ongoing leadership participation in the development of an organizational collaborative such as a school-university partnership. The authors observe that a premature departure from central decision-making by top leadership diminishes the likelihood of school-university partnership success.

New educational organization leaders must have a working knowledge of the types of challenges that may arise at various organizational levels when implementing initiatives that require collaboration and cooperation between and among educational

institutions (Fullan, 2001). Therefore, leaders must be willing to communicate the vision or plan effectively, solicit "buy-in" from the constituency by engaging all levels of participation in the dialog, delegate authority to people who have the ability and willingness to carry out the necessary functions, develop and share the resources necessary to support the project (including time, space and financial resources), and share decision making in order to provide a productive climate for organizational change (Boone & Bowen, 1987; Bullough & Kauchak, 1997).

Leadership in Higher Education Culture

"Over time, organizations tend to develop personalities" (Gruenert, 2000). As a group of people responds to persisting conditions, behaviors become patterned and evolve into habits, expectations, or norms (Deal & Peterson, 1999). Through rewards and punishments, organizations develop means to reinforce these norms, and the strongest norms become rituals, traditions, or rules (Gruenert, 2000). The author submits that people within the organization become conditioned to follow these norms, gradually becoming desensitized to the conditioning. Gruenert (2000) contends that this is organizational culture at work, a phenomenon that evolves slowly over many years and eventually dictates the way things are done and the way people are supposed to act.

Although the collaborative decentralized culture seems to contradict the assertions of Edens, Shirley, and Toner (2001), in reality, maintaining a form of centralized involvement throughout the partnering process cements the vision and renders a more favorable result (Peel, Peel, & Baker, 2002). According to Bullough and

Kauchak (1997), ongoing representation by top school and university leaders is important to balancing information sharing and investment. In one case, a divestment in time and energy spent by a school representative was diminished leading to a more dominant role on the part of the university. This imbalance leads to partnership misalignment and perceptions that the efforts are initiated singly rather than joint school-university efforts. In such cases, leadership imbalance leads to insufficient formation of goals, unbalanced communication, and unequal responsibility (Bullough & Kauchak, 1997).

One of the problems that exist in school-university partnerships is the entrenchment of bureaucracy in both institutions that create a natural opposition to shared decision making and the facilitation of change (Burstein, Kretschmer, Smith, & Gudoski, 1999). To further illustrate the dilemma of change exacerbated by bureaucracies, McGregor (1985) characterized management's task through Theory X Theory Y, where Theory X represents a centralized form of supervision requiring a directive form of leadership. Contrastingly, Theory Y represents a more collaborative decentralized style of management that yields to both independent and collaborative thinking by subordinates, which provides several paths to organization goal attainment (McGregor, 1985). Though both operational styles of leadership defined by McGregor may be found in higher education, institutions generally operate more from a centralized perspective and may pay lip service to collaborative decision making rather than embraced it as a practice (Burstein, Kretschmer, Smith, & Gudoski, 1999; Griffin, 1992).

Conditions that promote the bureaucratic nature of higher education are the competition and isolationism created by promotion and tenure and the traditional nature of the professor/student relationship (Peel, Peel, & Baker, 2002). The authors further suggest that tenure and academic freedom become the stalwarts of the professoriate that dictate the direction of independent action; therefore to create organizational movement it is necessary to do so by decree. Wilbur (1998) suggests that power must be shifted toward faculty-driven collaborative discussions rather than the rubber stamp committee work that is an extension of delegation.

Brunner (1997) supports the concept that power parity is essential to a collaborative leadership style rather than power with autocratic overtones. He further suggests that educational leaders should practice collaboration and not erroneously assume that delegation and collaboration are synonymous. However, Johnston and Kerper (1996) found that faculty collaboration was not an easy task. In their study, they were unable to ignore their roles as professor and student. Furthermore, they found it was difficult to relinquish their power or overlook their university culture. Peel et al. posit that institutions must first reward partnerships and collaboration before the organizational culture incorporates it as an expectation.

Consistent with McGregor's Theory Y, as organizations provide more opportunity for involvement and assumption of responsibility by participants, the needs of both the individual and the organization may be met (Boone & Bowen, 1987). Consequently, when educational partnerships develop out of a shared vision, a new blended culture will form with new relationships and new needs (Peel and Walker,

1995). Further, if leadership fails to provide a clear vision and communicate goals, disorientation may occur leading to confusion, frustration and failure (Gruenert, 2000).

According to Peel and Walker (1995), school-university partnership initiatives meet with more success if the leadership provides support by developing clarity of mission, maintaining channels of communication, providing adequate resources to enable the coordinators to fully implement the strategies and initiating a rewards system that recognizes the efforts of the stakeholders. Further, the synergistic behavior created by collaboration and the combined creative energies and assumed responsibilities of individuals creates a climate suitable for simultaneous organizational goal attainment and personal goal attainment (Boone & Bowen, 1987).

Leaders must recognize the capabilities of organizational members, respect their contributions, and foster open communication within the organization (Brunner, 1997; Senge, 1990; Wagner, 1998). DuFour (1997) argued that staff members should not only be invited to contribute and serve on task forces but they should also be expected to generate innovative ideas to improve the organization. Further, higher education leadership must recognize, understand and value the potential in developing school-university partnerships for the purposes of collaborative action teacher/administrator research and field-based experiences by modeling partnership outreach (Burstein, N., Kretschmer, D., Smith, C., & Gudoski, P., 1999).

Leadership in Public School Culture

For decades, educational leaders have spoken in favor of developing collaborative school cultures (Fullan, 1997). With regard to public schools, collaborative organizational environments have shown to be a major contributor to successful school reform efforts (Gruenert, 2000; Fullan 2001). A collaborative culture provides a favorable environment to fulfill three of the four basic human needs in organizations as set forth by Peters and Waterman (1982): (1) an element of control, (2) meaning in a situation, and (3) positive support. However, a collaborative culture is not prevalent in most school districts across the nation. Although a top-down authoritative culture is obsolete, it remains the pervasive practice in today's schools (Wagner, 1998).

Tyrrell and Stine (1997) state:

> Leadership practices that emphasize cooperative relationships and a shared vision can create schools that aim for excellence. Successful organizations focus on practices through which everyone participates in defining the common direction and takes on a leadership role because of the desire to excel ... The emphasis on cooperative relationships can help bring about a work climate in which self-esteem, commitment, and task accomplishment are so significant that they raise people to higher levels. (p. 34)

Organizations tend to experience success to the degree that the individuals within the organization flourish (Krajewski, 1996). Krajewski (1996) states that the leader is the chief enculturation agent and owns the responsibility for developing and nurturing a

collaborative culture. He further contends that building others' strengths, consistently communicating the vision and modeling shared decision-making increases the achievement growth for all. Interestingly, the term “leader” is relatively new as it is applied to campus administration and did not surface as such until the 70’s and 80’s (Donaldson, 2001). The author suggests that other terms, such as “instructional leader” (a 90’s tag), have been used to describe the ever-morphing role of the campus manager in an effort to meet the changing needs of the principalship. According to Donaldson (2001), leadership “mobilizes members to think, believe, and behave in a manner that satisfies emerging organizational needs, not simply their individual needs or wants” (p.5).

Not everyone in an educational organization is independently motivated to satisfy organizational needs through collaboration nor do they seek to participate in organizational decision-making (Brunner, 1997; Fullan, 2001). Many are content to allow others to rise to the leadership role. The reasons vary, but many educators take comfort operating in isolation content to stay under the radar retaining their autonomy or maintaining a resistance to change (Gruenert, 2000). The author further suggests that opportunities for collaboration must be constructed by the principal, i.e., common planning periods, team teaching, action research, etc., again, alluding to the importance of leadership to develop a collaborative culture. Gruenert (2000) states that collaboration will prevail only if the principal values and rewards it and the culture embraces it.

However, according to Donaldson (2001), most public school schedules provide between 7½ to 8 hours of duty time for teachers each day. With 6½ to 7 hours a day

devoted to class time, lunch and other student activities, teachers are left with less than an hour per day, or approximately 8% of the scheduled day, to develop lessons, plan and involve themselves in leadership activities. This causes communication and leadership to be addressed “on the fly” where teachers and administrators are forced to engage in decision making as they meet in the hall for 4 to 5 minute intervals indicating an overall lack of support for leadership development (Donaldson, 2001). The author further suggests that the “busyness of school” prescribes school working conditions that rarely support a regular meeting schedule where leadership events and activities, such as partnerships and collaborative initiatives, can be cultivated effectively.

According to Hall & Hord (2001), collaboration is a product of change. The authors posit that change is brought about by “change facilitators” who fit into one of three styles of change facilitation; initiator, manager or responder. Further, depending on the change facilitation style employed by the change agent, progress may be rapid or delayed severely. The implication is that the principal is generally the change agent in the school (Donaldson, 2001). Therefore, the degree to which any change is successful and/or timely depends largely on the leadership style of the principal (Hall & Hord, 2001; Donaldson, 2001).

Becoming an effective leader through on the job experience and managing change by trial and error should not be the standard, although it is generally the practice in public education (Donaldson, 2001). The increasing demands on school leaders and, specifically, campus principals, reiterates the need for leadership academies or

professional learning communities, which have been encouraged by national education leaders for some time (Goodlad, 1987; DuFour 1999; 1997)

Generally, change in education does not occur easily although there is increasing pressure to change more rapidly which exacerbates an already difficult proposition (Fullan, 1997; 2001). In the wake of teacher shortages, higher standards, increased accountability, an increasingly well informed public and mounting political pressure on teachers and administrators to perform to higher levels of excellence, schools are scrambling for “quick fixes” to their problems (Goldberg, 2001; Haertel, E. H., 1999; Ingersoll, 2001).

For example, in the mid 80’s, when there was a prevailing belief that large, comprehensive high schools were desirable, not to mention more economical, Theodore Sizer argued that the best solution may be "small schools of choice with high standards and dedicated staff" (Goldberg, 2001). Further, after considerable study of many schools and extensive discussions with educators, Sizer outlined nine guiding principles for his Coalition of Essential Schools. His concepts frustrated people who wanted unambiguous, definitive, one-size-fits-all answers. Sizer said over and over again that there is no single best answer. He reiterated that leaders must be very sensitive to the community and families that they serve and they must know what the expectations are (Goldburg, 2001). The author further offered that John Goodlad experienced similar problems in the 90’s when he communicated his reform plans to districts and was dropped as a consultant when the districts learned that his plan involved years of change.

As teacher recruitment, preparation and retention issues continue to raise concerns for legislators, educators and the general public, it becomes imperative that schools and universities come together to evaluate the effectiveness of educational leadership development and its impact on teacher recruitment, preparation and retention (Bracey, 1997).

Leadership Preparation

Many questions have been raised about the quality of teacher and administrator preparation and the ability of higher education to produce individuals who understand school reform and leadership from a practical perspective (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2002; Fullan, 2001; Griffin, 1992; McIntyre & Boyd, 1998). The theory and supporting research for collaborative, innovative instructional leadership clearly points to problems associated with the teacher and administrator preparation programs failing to provide adequate skills development (Burstein, N., Kretschmer, D., Smith, C., & Gudoski, P., 1999). According to Barnett (2004), university based leadership preparation programs fail to meet the rigor required of leadership activities therefore a systemic overhaul in leadership preparation programs may be in order. Barnett (2004) encourages the formation of stronger ties between public education and universities, providing authentic and on-going school-based experiences with less emphasis on management and more emphasis on instructional leadership.

Burstein et al. (1999) suggest that many leadership preparation criticisms target an educational system that fails to value internship experience for school leaders, similar

to that employed by the medical and law professions, and, as a result, leadership candidates are entering positions inadequately prepared. Most of our universities arm potential school administrators with ample theory while remaining deficient in providing practical experience in a low-risk environment (Barreto, 1997; Oakes & Rogers, 1997; Peel, Peel, & Baker, 2002). Peel et al. contend that school-university partnerships can provide an induction laboratory for potential administrators to receive necessary field experience that will decrease the practicum learning curve significantly.

The Affective Domain of Leadership

Rensis Likert found, in his studies of high performance supervisors, that they focused "primary attention on the human aspects of their subordinates' problems and on endeavoring to build effective work groups with high performance goals" (Hersey & Blanchard, 1972, p. 78). He defined their actions as being employee centered, providing a democratic environment constantly clarifying performance goals. Likert concentrated most of his efforts on moving organizations from Theory X assumptions to Theory Y assumptions because he believed that organizations functioned more effectively when focusing on intrinsic motivators and management styles were based on trust and confidence in subordinates (Hersey & Blanchard, 1972).

However, two generations removed from Likert's study, Hoyle and Slater (2001) have identified a critical missing element in educational organizations and schools today; love. They state that perhaps the most important task for leadership is restoring love to the educational vision. Sergiovanni (1996) states that education is on a different plane

than other professions: it is a calling. He declares that educators engage in a professional act unlike any other, which it is most noble and whose effect is immeasurable. Many educators have lost there sense of calling and caring due to stringent educational policy fostered by increased state and local accountability, social cynicism and the hyper-individualism that is prevalent in our society (Hoyle & Slater, 2001). Sergiovanni (1996) believes that humans are moral, caring beings and that moral education is a responsibility of the schoolhouse led by moral school leaders who make moral decisions. He continues that education cannot be run like a business because the business of schools is building people, which cannot be measured in dollars and cents.

To go further into the morality issue, Klenke (2003) indicates that spiritual leadership (tapping the soul) has become a serious topic of discussion in both the corporate world and in educational circles. Klenke (2003) contends that this is a complex issue and defining the leadership characteristics imbedded in spirituality raises several questions. Can it be taught in the classroom through traditional teaching methods? Assuming that it can be taught, how can the knowledge of spirituality be acquired through personal reflections and life experience (Klenke, 2003)?

The subjectivity of the concept creates a number of complex issues such as the personal nature of spirituality, the mosaic engulfing the diversity of thought in this realm and varying values that are represented in spiritual contexts (Klenke, 2003). Hoyle & Slater (2001) suggest that increased love and mutual acceptance (common factors in spirituality) will provide a sense of community through relationship building. Donaldson (2001) insists that good leaders put relationship building at the center of their activities,

building, cultivating and maintaining working relationships in order to pursue goals with a consistent purpose.

Others, not as outspoken about love and spirituality, place soulful issues in the context of existing leadership paradigms. For example, Fullan (2001) contends that leaders will increase their effectiveness if they continually work on five components of leadership: pursue moral purpose, understand the change process, develop relationships, foster knowledge, and strive for coherence.

In a different analysis of leadership qualities, Mark Goldburg (2001) interviewed 43 educational leaders over a period of time and determined that they all possessed five consistent quality characteristics that defined their leadership. These leaders held a 1) bedrock belief in what they were doing, 2) they had the courage to swim upstream in behalf of their beliefs, 3) they possessed a social conscience, 4) they maintained a seriousness of purpose, and 5) they exemplified situational mastery. Not all educational leaders have to be ministers or mavericks to be successful, but Goldburg (2001) stated that leaders must have enough courage and compassion to “step out” and lead and go against the tide of popular criticism.

Summary

School-university partnerships are becoming increasingly important to the landscape of educational scenery (Peel, Peel, & Baker, 2002; Zetlin, Harris, MacLeod, & Watkins, 1992). Improving the educational continuum from early childhood through the baccalaureate requires cooperation and partnership development that transcends existing

boundaries and brick walls (Burstein, Kretschmer, Smith, & Gudoski, 1999; Fullan, 2003). Throughout this process, teacher recruitment, preparation and retention must be at the heart of the debate in order to create a functional educational reform movement that values teaching and simultaneously creates sustainable momentum (Darling-Hammond, 1996; 1997a; 2000).

Educational leadership decisions and institutional organizational cultures must be clearly defined by high standards, high expectations and a climate that promotes success for all (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Finally, successful school-university partnerships correlate directly with the amount of involvement and direction provided by senior leadership in the organization (Edens, Shirley, & Toner, 2001; Boone & Bowen, 1987; Bullough & Kauchak, 1997). However, the leadership must also recognize the important contributions that the individuals make toward reaching collaborative goals in order for any educational initiative to reach full maturity (Sergiovanni, 1996; Klenke, 2003).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Upon completion of a thorough review of the literature, the design of this study attempts to identify "best practices" that emerged from implementation of the Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education as interpreted through interviews conducted by the researcher to gain the perceptions of the Regents' Initiative project directors within The Texas A&M University System. The research design follows that of a naturalistic inquiry methodology whereby, as data is collected, preliminary analysis is conducted and the context becomes more fully described (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen, 1993). A qualitative approach was selected for this research in order to enhance the researcher's ability to understand and reconstruct the emic, the research participants' understanding and view of their social reality (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996).

This chapter describes the population, outlines the data collection procedures, and explains the data analysis process using ethnographic dialog.

Population

This study was conducted with the cooperation of the Regents' Initiative project directors within the colleges of education within the nine universities that constitute The Texas A&M University System. Each university appointed a Regents' Initiative Project

Director from existing faculty or administration who was charged with the responsibility of implementing the goals and strategies of the Initiative. Due to natural attrition, only three project directors served for the full five years of the Regents' Initiative. The others served various tenures during the project period. The Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education was initiated through the college of education at each of The Texas A&M System's Universities as a five year project to simultaneously improve teacher quantity and quality. These nine institutions serve a population of undergraduate and graduate students that exceeds 100,000.

Protection of Human Subjects

Prior to conducting the research, an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application was sent to the IRB Office at Texas A&M University and the study was approved. To guarantee anonymity for the participants, each response was codified and retained in a file that remained under lock and key during this study. Only the researcher had access to the file. Furthermore, each participant was provided a statement of assurance prior to the interview that outlined the research procedures and informed the participant that he or she could elect not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time.

Instrumentation

According to McNamara, Erlandson and McNamara (1999), when a qualitative evaluation of a program is being attempted, the researcher is the primary instrument by relying on senses, intuition and thoughts and feelings. Erlandson et al. (1993) contend that the naturalistic paradigm provides the researcher the opportunity to discover interrelationships that exist through persistent gathering of data via observation, interview and triangulation, accepting multiple realities rather than attempting to converge all data into a single outcome. Thus, naturalistic inquiry is very dependent on the context; therefore, instrumentation will emerge as the assimilation of the retrieved concepts begins to take shape.

Initially, a set of questions was developed by the researcher, which was posed to each of the Regents' Initiative Project Directors who participated in the study. Reliability was achieved through follow up questioning, prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation**,** debriefing, and member checks.

Procedures

The data collection for this study required a qualitative methodology of naturalistic inquiry. "Methodological soundness" (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 131) in a naturalistic study is the main requirement for assuring trustworthiness. The use of multiple data-collection methods contributed to the trustworthiness of the data. Data was

gathered through a variety of means; however the main sources of data were collected through face-to-face interviews, phone interviews and emails. Supporting data was retrieved through review of existing artifacts, grant deliverables, planning and evaluation documents and verifying findings via email and phone conversations.

The procedures used to conduct this study included a thorough review of the literature followed by a review of the key components of the Regents' Initiative. From that knowledge base a set of interview questions was developed to assess the Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education Project Directors' perceptions of the challenges, processes and benefits of implementing the Regents' Initiative as a teacher recruiting, teacher preparation improvement, and teacher induction program in their respective university. The subjects selected serve or served as Regents' Initiative Project Directors for at least one year. Twelve subjects were identified that met these criteria. The subjects were contacted by email and asked to participate in a face-to-face or phone interview where logistics became difficult. I initiated a follow up phone call or email to each subject who agreed to participate to determine the appropriate setting, i.e., time and place. Before each interview, each subject was given a statement of the IRB restrictions and "protection of human subjects" protocol. Each interview was conducted using precisely the same set of initial questions and questioning techniques followed by probing questioning to determine the precise meanings of the responses. I recorded the subjects' responses manually on a previously developed note template organized by central theme as determined by the original set of interview questions. I took hand scripted copious notes throughout each interview.

Prior to the interviews, I codified each response template to insure anonymity for the subjects and their responses. These were kept in a locked file cabinet during the duration of the research project. Following each interview event, I reflected on the comments made while reviewing my notes and then transcribed my accounts into an electronic Word document. Upon completion, each Word document was sent electronically to the corresponding subject for verification of interpretation and further clarification and questioning if needed. Following this member check procedure, each subject returned the file to the researcher electronically with revisions or additions highlighted in the document. The researcher reviewed the responses and made necessary revisions to the interview documents and followed up with any questioning that was necessary.

Artifacts and archival data were obtained from the System and General Offices of The Texas A&M University System's Institute for School-University Partnerships. Authentication of findings was verified through triangulation and further member checks as necessary. The data was organized by the researcher and analyzed to determine paralleling qualities and divergent qualities. The final analysis yielded commonalities, which emerged as best practices with regard to implementing a school-university teacher recruiting, quality and quantity improvement and teacher retention program. A discussion of results and recommendations for further study were outlined.

Timeline and Data Analysis

The initial notification of the research study was sent to the subjects in July, 2005. Seven of the identified twelve subjects agreed to participate in the interviews. Five of the seven interviews were face-to-face. The remaining two were conducted by phone due to logistical difficulties in arranging a face-to-face meeting. I began making phone calls or email contact to interviewees in early July to develop a research project calendar. Because travel was involved, I had to coordinate my travel calendar to make the best use of time and travel.

The initial interview was conducted on July 22, 2005 and the final interview was conducted on October 19, 2005. I developed a timeline spreadsheet to track the dates of interviews, keyed in responses, emails to respondents to verify my interpretations of each interview, verification responses and final member checks for each respondent. Although the interviews were the main source of data gathering for this research project, significant subsequent data was collected during member checks and follow-up emails or phone conversations.

Being very familiar with each A&M System university campus, I began contextualizing the data immediately as it was being collected. According to Erlandson et al. (1993), data analysis is an interactive process that begins when the researcher enters the process. The authors further state that data analysis in a naturalistic inquiry is a twofold approach, the first being data analysis at the site or during the interview, the other occurring away from the site.

As each interview occurred, my questioning strategies became more refined, asking stem questions from the original set to evoke a thought process in the mind of the respondent hoping to yield a richer response. The results yielded thicker responses, enhancing the picture that was beginning to emerge. The data analysis of each interview lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics present in each university setting. Elaboration by each subject into the details of the context led to a deeper understanding for me of the personal construction of realities that existed in each setting.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state:

> The basic issue in relation to trustworthiness is simple: How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of? What arguments can be mounted, what criteria invoked, what questions asked that would persuasive on this issue? (p. 290)

Since all forms of research need to have a purpose, this study seeks to fill the gap in the literature for school-university partnerships developed specifically for the purpose of improving teacher recruiting, preparation and retention. The purposive sample used in this study was determined to be the Regents' Initiative Project Director at each A&M System University campus. This group was selected because of their "hands-on"

knowledge of the implementation and coordination aspects of the Regents' Initiative and their broad understanding of the university dynamics for which they were employed.

Lincoln & Guba (1985) outline several techniques for establishing trustworthiness in a study. These include the criterion of credibility, which include techniques such as prolonged engagement, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy and member checks. The criterion for transferability relies on the technique of thick description. Dependability relies on the dependability audit technique while the criterion for confirmability employs the technique of the confirmability audit.

I provided a personalized letter of introduction to each participant that included the purpose for the research study, permission to use anecdotal information obtained through an initial interview, either face-to-face or via telephone, follow-up informal interviews, and a release of information form. Recognizing the fact that multiple reality constructs may take place simultaneously, I established trustworthiness in this study by establishing interview and archival data that I analyzed and triangulated for verification and reliability. Quality checks were implemented by presenting written interview interpretations via Word documents submitted electronically. Each participant was asked to review the interpretive script of the interview and clarify areas that were inconsistent with the subject's recall.

Once the interview documents were finalized, I studied the responses of each subject and separated them by research questions establishing areas of commonality and areas of difference. I looked for significant factors impacting the outcomes of each area studied, e.g., leadership involvement, geographic area of the State, full time or part time

coordination of effort, etc. A matrix was developed to disaggregate the data into usable chunks of information that eventually would contribute to the thick descriptions of the Initiative.

Summary

Qualitative research methods were chosen and utilized for this study due to the nature of the study, the setting and the interest and personality of the researcher. Steps were taken and procedures followed in order to provide an in depth look at the implementation of the Regents' Initiative and record the perceptions of those charged with the responsibility of implementing the core components of the Initiative at each university such that a "best practices" document might be assimilated. As the project directors' statements were assimilated under each research question, emerging themes began to take shape and were categorized to provide a context for the analysis and summaries. Trustworthiness was then established through interpretation, thick description, triangulation and member checks. The final analysis rendered the detailed descriptions found in Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

THE FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter begins with a summary of findings followed by a brief description of each university within the A&M System and an historical overview of the Regents' Initiative. Next, the findings are presented in detail by providing an analysis of the project directors' responses, which contextualize the dynamics of the Regents' Initiative and the perceived forces necessary to implement change for the purposes of improving teacher recruitment, preparation and retention within a major university system.

Summary of Findings

For any dissertation, the heart of the research lies in the data. This qualitative study examines the data gathered from interviews with Texas A&M University System personnel who served for at least one full year in the capacity of Regents' Initiative project director. Out of fifteen persons who served in this role, twelve individuals met the requirements of this research project. However, only seven individuals agreed to participate in this research study.

The perceptions of these individuals with regard to implementing and managing the work of the Regents' Initiative within their institution provides a framework to better

understand the dynamics that are involved in creating a System-wide attempt to improve teacher preparation in terms of both quantity and quality. The emerging themes guided by the research questions ultimately present the data in terms of "successful practices" to hopefully serve other institutions of higher education that are interested in improving teacher preparation practices.

The Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education spanned a five year project period from 1999 to 2004 and encompassed the nine universities that comprise the A&M System, involving the administration in both higher education and public schools, hundreds of university, community college and public school faculty, several state agencies, thousands of university, community college and public school students and a host of support personnel. In order to develop meaning for the reader, the data has been organized into responses to each of three basic research questions that were stated in Chapter I. These are:

1. What are the successful practices in teacher recruitment within The Texas A&M University System as perceived by project directors of The Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education?

2. What are the successful practices of simultaneous improvement of quality and quantity in teacher preparation programs within The Texas A&M University System as perceived by project directors of The Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education?

3. What are the successful practices of a university-led teacher retention program within The Texas A&M University System as perceived by project directors of The Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education?

The major findings of this research study were developed through thorough analysis of interview responses, member checks, document reviews and triangulation. Research findings of this study revealed that the successful implementation of the Regents' Initiative involved key strategies to overcome challenges and develop processes for teacher recruiting, improved teacher preparation and teacher retention efforts.

Conclusions revealed that visionary leadership attributed to the successful development and implementation of the Regents' Initiative. The A&M System Board of Regents and university administration in collaboration with public school administration statewide identified the need and invested time, resources, and energy into an ambitious long-term plan aimed at moving the state in a positive direction with regard to teacher production trends. Such long-term plans are unusual and representative of vision and commitment by stakeholders. The Regents, community/school leaders, and university leaders' willingness to promote change worked to effectively communicate and seek endorsement from key statewide stakeholders to ensure that the commitment was maintained throughout the state and the System.

Open and ongoing communication between state, university, and school representatives was maintained in a systematic way regarding reporting progress and arising challenges. Of paramount importance to the successful attainment of A&M

System university teacher recruitment goals was the selection of the university teacher recruiter. Through stable and detail-oriented project leadership, the specificity of the Initiative and the steps necessary to bring about change were well defined, achievable, and measurable. System and university coordinators were selected and assigned to lead the project. These positions were maintained throughout the duration of the Initiative.

Adequate financial support for training, programs, administration, and retention efforts were provided to the A&M System universities for the purpose of Regents' Initiative implementation and support. In addition, institutional involvement was broadened by providing opportunities for interaction between arts and sciences faculty and college of education faculty through collaborative research grants, presentation conferences and symposia. Through regular reporting, publicized newsletters, and public presentations by project leadership to, among others, the A&M System Board of Regents multiple avenues were provided to build collaborative support and enjoy frequent acknowledgment of successes. Finally, the Initiative successes were celebrated at each university with all stakeholders and rewards were provided to those who made significant contributions to the effort, which helped to cement relationships and increase sustainability.

The Texas A&M University System

The Texas A&M University System is one of the largest systems of higher education in the nation. Through a statewide network of nine universities, seven state

agencies and a comprehensive health science center, The Texas A&M University System educates more than 101,000 students annually, conducts more than $500 million in externally funded research and reaches another 11 million people through outreach services each year. The flagship institution, Texas A&M University, was established as a Land Grant institution in 1876 and was the first Land Grant college in Texas. Land Grant institutions were established to serve the educational needs of the general population of the state and admit students from all counties in the state regardless of their economic background. Historically, these institutions are committed to research, teaching and service, and promotion and tenure of faculty is based on these tenets.

Texas A&M System Universities

Prairie View A&M University

Founded in 1876, Prairie View A&M University is the second oldest institution of higher education in Texas. This historically black university has an established reputation as one of the nation's top-producing universities for African-American engineers, nurses and educators. Prairie View A&M serves approximately 8,400 students from all parts of the world including China, Bangladesh, Bahamas, India and South Africa.

More than 78% of all PVAMU students receive some type of financial aid while pursuing baccalaureate degrees in 39 academic majors. PVAMU also offers 31 master's degrees and four doctoral degree programs through nine colleges and schools. The main campus has 90 buildings and is located on a 1,500 acre site in Waller County, 45 miles

northwest of Houston on State Highway 290. As a member of the Texas A&M University System, PVAMU is focused on teaching, research and service.

NASA recently recognized PVAMU by designating it as a national center for the study of radiation in space. This five-year, $6.5 million grant will help establish the university as a national leader of space technology. In other areas of research, PVAMU has developed a $3.6 million Future Aerospace, Science and Technology Center, funded by the U.S. Air Force Office of Scientific Research. This center focuses on the study of lightweight structural materials processing and has the potential to establish the university as a national leader in this emerging field. The center also will be involved in technology transfer to the U.S. Department of Defense, NASA, government contractors and small disadvantaged businesses.

Of further note worthy of mention is PVAMU's International Dairy Goat Research Center. It is well known among agricultural researchers for its studies in goat production and other farm operations research.

Tarleton State University

John Tarleton College was founded in 1899 as a two year institution. It became a member of The Texas A&M University System in 1917. Tarleton gained status as a university in 1973 and has experienced considerable growth in the past decade. Serving over 9,000 students, it is the largest non-land-grant agriculture university in the U.S. proudly educating more agricultural education teachers than any other institution in Texas and the nation.

Located near the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, Tarleton is a growing institution, known for its internationally recognized horse production program and innovative teacher education programs. The university has one of the largest and oldest public school improvement partnerships in the United States that benefits more than 50 area school districts.

Tarleton serves a geographical area in north central Texas providing an emphasis on water quality and other environmental science topics. Students come from more than 220 Texas counties, as well as 45 states and 17 foreign countries. Tarleton offers an MBA program at Fort Hood and a Clinical Laboratory Science Program in Fort Worth.

Tarleton State University was recently recognized for its Tarleton Model for Accelerated Teacher Education, which received special notice from the Association of Teacher Education for program excellence. Also, International Data Processing Management Association selected the Computer Information Systems Department as the outstanding four-year program in North America.

Tarleton’s five academic colleges include: Liberal and Fine Arts, Business Administration, Agriculture and Human Sciences, Science and Technology, and Education. In addition, the College of Graduate Studies offers both teaching and research-based master's degrees. The university offers a bachelor of science in hydrology, one of only four in the country, and an internationally recognized horse production program.

Tarleton, known widely for its innovative teacher education programs, also offers bachelor's degrees in nursing, dietetics, psychology, international agriculture and

interdisciplinary business, as well as a master's degree in environmental sciences. The university also offers an innovative horticulture/landscaping program with an emphasis in golf course management. Tarleton recently added a doctoral degree in educational administration to its curriculum through a collaborative partnership with Texas A&M University-Commerce.

With regard to research, the campus-based Texas Institute for Applied Environmental Research plays a national leadership role in environmental issues related to water quality. This program provides data for the 230,000-acre Upper North Bosque River watershed, which includes the university, the dairy and beef industries, environmental control agencies and governmental policy groups with water pollution.

Located 65 miles southwest of Fort Worth in the Erath County seat of Stephenville, population 16,000, Tarleton students experience the combination of a small-town atmosphere as well as proximity to Dallas/Fort Worth. Most university activities take place on Tarleton's centrally located, 173-acre main campus. A 600-acre university farm and the 1,200-acre Hunewell Ranch provide additional educational facilities. Recently, Tarleton also began offering programs at its new Granbury location, the Dora Lee Langdon Cultural and Educational Center.

Texas A&M International University

Texas A&M International University is located in Laredo, which is 156 miles southwest of San Antonio and is the county seat of Webb County. Laredo, with a population exceeding 200,000, is one of the fastest-growing cities in the state and nation.

The 300-acre campus is also home to an impressive variety of South Texas flora and fauna.

The state's newest university is home to over 4,500 students and offers 58 undergraduate, graduate or doctoral degrees from its 300-acre campus. TAMIU has become a visible barometer for change in South Texas and has emerged as a dynamic force in the area's economic, social and cultural growth, with many of its 10,000-plus graduates leading change in the region. As its name implies, TAMIU maintains an international focus in all its programs, affording students global learning opportunities from a faculty assembled from around the world, which helps to create a richly diverse and resonant learning experience.

Texas A&M International University sprang from the former South Texas ranch country in one of the state’s fastest growing areas. The recently completed Phase III campus expansion project, a $49.5 million construction project, increased campus facilities by nearly 60 percent. Included are a Student Development Center, Center for the Study of Western Hemispheric Trade, athletic fields, parking and Center for the Fine and Performing Arts. Now nearing completion, the Phase IV project received $21.4 million in funding from the 77th State Legislature and includes the Lamar Bruni Vergara Science Center featuring a planetarium. TAMIU also received $1.5 million in developmental support for its first Ph.D. program in International Trade and Business Administration, launched in the fall 2004.

The University includes three academic colleges: The College of Arts and Sciences, Business Administration and Education. The College of Business

Administration offers a program developed at the university, which is the nation's first master of business administration in international trade. Education certification and endorsement programs include provisional certificates in elementary and secondary education and endorsements in kindergarten and English as a second language. Professional certificates include elementary, counselor, gifted and talented education, secondary school administrator, supervision, reading specialist, educational diagnostician and superintendency. The Dr. F. M. Canseco School of Nursing offers the Registered Nursing, Bachelors of Science Nursing and the Masters of Science Nursing programs.

The primary focus of TAMIU research efforts is in international trade lead by the Center for the Study of Western Hemispheric Trade, which focuses on the study of trade among Western Hemisphere countries. The university is home-base for the Texas Center for Border Economic and Enterprise Development, a multi-pronged effort that brings leadership and support to economic development efforts through targeted research projects and technical assistance.

Augmenting research at the university are several outreach programs, which include the Dr. Eduardo M. Hinojosa Reading Research Center. This Center spearheads literacy efforts in partnership with local public school districts. Another outreach effort is the Bridge Program which provides at-risk high-school students a summer residential program with college-level courses, leadership and success training and work opportunities to help them transition to higher education in a nurturing environment that encourages success.

Texas A&M University

Texas A&M is located in College Station 90 miles northwest of Houston on state highway 6, 170 miles northeast of San Antonio and 165 miles south of Dallas/Fort Worth. College Station and the adjacent city of Bryan have a combined population of approximately 136,000. Texas A&M University, Texas' first and oldest land grant institution, serves a student population that approaches 45,000 and is internationally recognized for its leadership role in teaching, research and public service. It boasts one of the nation's largest full-time undergraduate student bodies, and its colleges of agriculture, business administration, engineering, geosciences and veterinary medicine are among the largest in the nation.

Texas A&M historically has been recognized as a leader among higher education institutions in Texas in terms of both retention and graduation of its undergraduate students. Texas A&M, steeped in tradition, leads the country in many cutting edge research and classroom technology applications. The university is also dedicated to the development and dissemination of knowledge in many diversified academic and professional fields.

Established in 1876 as the state's first public institution of higher learning, the university has a historic commitment to fulfill its mission as a land-grant/sea-grant/space-grant institution (one of a select few institutions nationally to hold all three designations). With a global perspective, it also has cooperative agreements for research and faculty-student interaction with more than 85 institutions in 35 countries. Texas A&M continues to be one of the nation's most popular institutions, attracting more than

16,000 applications for an entering freshman class of approximately 7,500 students. Texas A&M also is among the top five universities in the nation in granting engineering degrees to minorities and women.

Within its nine colleges and branch campus at Galveston, the university offers 139 fields of undergraduate study, 148 at the master's level, 96 at the doctoral level and professional degrees: doctor of veterinary medicine. More than half of all freshmen each year are in the top 10 percent of their high school graduating class and over 80% of all freshmen are in the top quarter.

The majority of Texas A&M's 2,500 faculty members are involved in academic scholarship and research. Expenditures resulting from sponsored research projects, which include those at affiliated state agencies, total more than $450 million annually. These activities are supported by A&M’s more than 2.4 million square feet of laboratory space, roughly the equivalent of 50 football fields, which are dedicated to research. The university ranks first in both state funding and institutional funding for research as well as being highly ranked nationally in federally funded research by National Science Foundation.

The George Bush Presidential Library Center, located on the A&M West Campus, opened in November 1997, drawing both national and international attention. Other new facilities include Reed Arena, a 12,500-seat special events center, the university's Student Recreation Center, which is considered the model for such facilities nationwide and an addition to the Sterling C. Evans Library.

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Founded in 1889 as East Texas Normal College, Texas A&M-Commerce initially focused on a curriculum that emphasized liberal arts and teacher training. In 1917 the school became a state institution. In 1965, its name was changed to East Texas State University. In 1996 the university joined the A&M System and became Texas A&M University-Commerce.

Commerce is located in Hunt County about an hour northeast of Dallas, where the campus occupies about 2,000 acres of land and serves a student population of more than 8,700. Texas A&M University-Commerce is one of the oldest public institutions of higher education in the state. Early on, the university made a name for itself as a leader in education, and to this day it is known as one of the most prolific producers of public school teachers and other educational professionals in Texas. The university also is home to the state's first bachelor's degree in computer science.

Texas A&M-Commerce plays a key role in the A&M System's growing presence in North Texas through not only the university's main campus but also providing access through a satellite location in downtown Dallas, a partnership with a school district in Rockwall, and the Metroplex Center in the Dallas suburb of Mesquite. The university also offers courses to residents of Central Texas through a partnership with Navarro College in Corsicana. A&M-Commerce is the state's leader in producing public school principals and, as a recipient of the Christa McAuliffe Showcase for Excellence Award, has been recognized as one of the finest teacher education programs in the country. In addition, A&M-Commerce faculty members are experts in fields ranging from

economics to early childhood education. One professor ranks as one of the top economists in the world, and another serves as a literacy advisor to “Sesame Street.”

A&M-Commerce offers more than 100 major fields of study in 26 academic departments through its colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business and Technology, and Education and Human Services, as well as its Graduate School. Long known for its teacher education program, A&M-Commerce has prepared teachers and administrators for public schools and institutions of higher education worldwide. Doctorates of education are awarded in educational administration and supervision, and in curriculum and instruction for elementary as well as for higher education. The doctor of philosophy degree is offered in educational psychology, English, and counseling. When the university launched its Bachelor of Fine Arts in New Media several years ago, it was the first program of its kind specializing in computer animation and visualization.

Researchers at A&M-Commerce are researching one of society’s most pressing issues, information security. In the sciences, the separation of metal ions using gel exclusion chromatography is being investigated, while research in environmental sciences looks at management strategies influencing the distribution of nutrients and the impact on performance and preference in livestock. In education, research ranges from teacher education, teacher attrition, and teacher beliefs and practices to public school and higher education administration and student learning.

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi

Established in 1947, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi is one of the state's fastest growing four-year universities and the only university in America located on its very own island. The university's 240-acre island campus is just minutes from downtown Corpus Christi, the eighth largest city in Texas and a major port and tourist destination. Many of TAMU-CC 8,500 students enjoy a multi-level 98,000-square-foot University Center and apartment-style living right on the waterfront of Corpus Christi Bay. Its palm tree-lined campus is surrounded by natural wetlands and the newly restored beach across from campus provides a "live" on-site laboratory for measuring coastal processes.

A&M-Corpus Christi focuses on allied health, applied technology, arts and humanities, business administration, environmental studies and teacher education. Through a $120-million building campaign, the university also offers the latest in instructional technology. A new 64,000 square foot Science and Technology building provides state-of-the-art laboratories, and plans for a new performing arts center and high tech College of Business building are underway.

The University was ranked as the top public regional university in Texas by *U.S. News & World Report* in its annual college guide in 1998, 1999 and 2001, and again recognized in 2002 as one of the top public master's level universities in the western United States. First year students benefit from the unique nationally recognized model learning communities program. The program helps students connect with other students and small learning groups by providing links between their classes and subjects.

At the forefront of education is the Early Childhood Development Center on campus, a collaborative effort between the University and Corpus Christi ISD. The center serves 132 children age three through third grade, providing opportunities for child development research, observation on how children learn best and the development of improved teaching techniques.

Texas A&M –Corpus Christi students select from 33 undergraduate majors, 25 graduate programs and two doctoral programs offered through four colleges. The College of Arts and Humanities has 12 undergraduate and seven graduate degrees, ranging from the arts to criminal justice to psychology. The College of Business offers six undergraduate and two graduate programs. The College of Education offers teacher certification in more than 30 areas as well as three undergraduate degrees, 10 graduate programs and two doctoral programs. The College of Science and Technology offers 12 undergraduate and six graduate degrees in areas from biology and computer science to nursing and environmental science. The Geographic Information Science (GIS) program is the only computer-based GIS program of its kind in the state, and is accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology.

Plans for the new Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico studies will bring world renowned scientists to the campus to further strengthen A&M-Corpus Christi's research on environmental issues facing the Gulf of Mexico, area wetlands, coastal waterways and beaches. Other centers on campus conduct research on biodiversity through scientific offshore diving expeditions, and aid in oil spill response, hurricane tracking and commercial shipping.

Texas A&M University-Kingsville

Texas A&M University-Kingsville, located 40 miles southwest of Corpus Christi and 120 miles north of Mexico, serves a multicultural student body of over 6,600 that is 62 percent Hispanic and includes students from 35 states and 43 foreign countries. Kingsville, with a population of 25,000, is home to the headquarters of the famed King Ranch. Founded in 1925 as South Texas State Teachers College, the university's name change in 1929 to Texas College of Arts and Industries signaled the broadening of its mission. A 1967 name change to Texas A&I University marked another transition. The university became a member of The Texas A&M University System in 1989 and changed its name to reflect membership in the A&M System in September 1993. The university has over 1,600 acres of land, including a 250-acre main campus with 82 buildings.

A&M-Kingsville consistently ranks among the country's top 10 producers of Hispanic engineers and has the only accredited program in natural gas engineering in the United States. Another national first is A&M-Kingsville's cactus farm, the only one of its kind in the nation devoted to agronomic studies. The university has nationally recognized programs in engineering, agriculture, wildlife and the sciences and is known for developing the nation's first doctoral degree in bilingual education. In addition, the university's Citrus Center developed the famous Star Ruby and Rio Red grapefruits, which are marketed under the name Rio Star and enjoyed around the world.

The university has 56 undergraduate degree programs, 60 graduate programs and four doctoral degrees in the Colleges of Agriculture and Human Sciences, Arts and

Sciences, Business Administration, Education, Engineering and Graduate Studies. A fifth doctoral degree in environmental engineering is awaiting approval by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The university features the region's only programs in engineering, human sciences and agriculture.

With state-of-the-art facilities and equipment, the university's 545-acre teaching farm gives agriculture students hands-on farming and ranching experience. A&M-Kingsville's bilingual education program, offering degrees at the master's and doctoral levels, was the first of its kind in the country and continues to be one of the strongest. Undergraduates in nearly all disciplines have an opportunity to participate in research projects.

The Natural Toxins Research Center (NTRC) boasts the largest collection of venomous snakes in the country and attracts researchers from around the world to its one-of-a-kind serpentarium. Research conducted at this facility focuses on the biomedical applications of snake venom and the geographical differences in venom. A&M-Kingsville's Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute and its Citrus Center both have international reputations, attracting scholars and research projects from around the world. The Welhausen Water Resources Center, through its membership in the International Arid Lands Consortium, is playing a role in the Middle East with its expertise in water conservation and development. The newly founded South Texas Environmental Institute plans to bring regional entities together to solve environmental questions through research.

Texas A&M University-Texarkana

Located on the border of Texas and Arkansas, Texas A&M University-Texarkana is an upper-level university serving over 1,500 juniors, seniors and graduate students-and provides the citizens of Northeast Texas and three neighboring states a convenient opportunity to earn a four-year or graduate degree. One of the three newest members of The Texas A&M University System, TAMU-T was first established as an upper-level center of East Texas State University at Commerce. The university received separate accreditation in 1980, and in September 1996 became Texas A&M University-Texarkana, a member of The Texas A&M University System.

Located 175 miles east of Dallas, Texarkana is a city of 50,000 at the northeast corner of the state sharing a state line with Texarkana, Arkansas. TAMU-T is located on the junior college campus of Texarkana College and benefits from this location and partnership by access to the college's full-service physical education center and new student center. TAMU-T occupies the A.M. and Welma Aikin Instructional Systems Center, which contains all classrooms, labs, staff, faculty, administrative and student services offices.

In fall 1997, TAMU-T built on a new addition to its main building doubling classroom space and added state-of-the-art instructional and faculty facilities. TAMU-T is a non-residential institution dedicated to offering career-oriented studies, awarding undergraduate and graduate degrees in the areas of business administration, arts and sciences, and education. Students in adjacent counties in Oklahoma and Arkansas attend

at in-state tuition rates. Historically 28 percent of its student body hails from Arkansas and approximately 68 percent is enrolled part-time.

In 1995, the university's new field-based teacher education program redesigned the way teachers are prepared for the classroom and won two national awards for innovation. In fall 1995, TAMU-T and Texarkana College cooperated to offer a joint four-year science specialization for elementary education majors by sharing faculty and facilities to prepare outstanding science teachers. TAMU-T counseling students since 1987 have achieved a 100 percent first-time passage rate on the licensed professional counselor exam.

TAMU-T students select from six degrees and 11 majors at the undergraduate level, four degrees and 11 disciplines at the master's degree level, and can obtain 29 graduate and undergraduate certifications and endorsements in the teaching profession. One of the university's fastest growing degree programs is the bachelor of applied arts and sciences, which can award college credit for learning experience gained at work. In addition, baccalaureate degrees in nursing and biology, and a master's degree in educational administration can also be obtained from TAMUT. In 1997, the university teamed with area public schools and community colleges to offer a new program called "Teacher Bound," which enables teacher aides to become fully certified classroom teachers.

West Texas A&M University

Located 12 miles south of Amarillo in the city of Canyon (population 13,000), West Texas A&M University is located on a 135-acre residential campus, with 42 buildings. WTAMU also boasts a horse research center, situated on 80 acres just north of the main campus, a recently completed $13.9 million event center and the 2,400-acre Nance Ranch and Research Feedlot. The university also is home to the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, the oldest and largest state-supported museum in Texas. The university's unique location in the heart of the Texas Panhandle position it as being easily accessible and creating affordability in obtaining bachelor's and master's degrees for many residents of Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico and Oklahoma, as well as Texas.

Established in 1910 as a teacher's college, WTAMU joined The Texas A&M University System in 1990 and today offers more than 60 undergraduate and 40 graduate degree programs in a friendly, safe environment that emphasizes the total university experience. Approximately 7,300 students from 30 states and 35 countries attend WTAMU each semester.

WTAMU offers more than 60 undergraduate and 40 graduate degree programs in a wide range of disciplines: agriculture, business, education, fine arts, humanities, natural sciences, nursing and social sciences. New and innovative programs have been implemented in communication disorders, environmental science, equine industry, instructional technology, integrated pest management, mass communications and music therapy. The university also is a leader in distance-learning technology; two complete graduate degree programs (business administration and instructional technology) and

approximately 150 WTAMU courses are available online, offering time- and place-bound students the opportunity to save on travel expenses and to receive an education they otherwise might not find possible. WTAMU also has established an honors program that enhances the curriculum for students seeking greater academic challenges and more in-depth research opportunities.

The WTAMU Feedlot Research Group conducts institutional and private research on the health, immunology, nutrition and behavior of feedlot cattle for the feedlot industry of the High Plains. The university's internationally known Dry-land Agriculture Institute assists researchers, educators, producers and others in developing practical and workable strategies to improve sustainability of dry-land agriculture systems worldwide. The Alternative Energy Institute has been involved in the development of renewable energy since 1974 and offers workshops and consulting for industry, governments and individuals throughout the world.

Historical Background for the Regents' Initiative

Partnership Development

In 1996, A&M System Chancellor Dr. Barry Thompson and Commissioner of Public Education Mike Moses agreed to establish the Partnership for Texas Public Schools. The Partnership, established through a memorandum of understanding (MOU), created the first state-level P-16 collaboration in Texas. The stated mission of the

Partnership was to improve coordination between the A&M System and its member institutions, the Texas Education Agency, and the public schools of Texas.

Chancellor Thompson and Commissioner Moses delegated the responsibility for creating the Partnership for Texas Public Schools to Dr. Leo Sayavedra (who was then serving as Deputy Chancellor) and Dr. Joe Neely, a Deputy Commissioner of the Texas Education Agency (TEA). Dr. Sayavedra and Dr. Neely worked together to create a shared executive position, which carried the co-title of Associate Vice Chancellor for Public Education and Assistant Deputy Commissioner for School-University Initiatives. Dr. William Reaves was named to the position, which was the first of its kind in the state.

In 1997, the efforts of the Partnership staff resulted in the establishment of the Council of School Executives, which was co-chaired by Chancellor Thompson and Commissioner Moses. The Council was made up of leaders from the A&M System and public schools. Nine current A&M System presidents and provosts took part in these initial conversations as did 15 prominent public school superintendents and state association executives. Based on critical state education issues, the Council recommended that the A&M System focus its efforts on improving teacher education and developing more meaningful partnerships with public schools in order to improve student achievement. The A&M System Deans Working Group assisted in the programmatic design. These efforts developed into the Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education.

Adoption of the Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education

In March 1999, The Texas A&M University System's Board of Regents unanimously passed a resolution establishing the Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education. Through the Board's action, teacher preparation was declared a priority of the A&M System in an effort to lead to long-term, systemic improvements in both increasing the quantity of candidates through recruitment and increasing the quality and effectiveness of the A&M System's teacher education programs. The Board of Regents' resolution also created the Institute for School-University Partnerships (ISUP) as the inter-System agency charged with the responsibility of implementing, coordinating and evaluating the Initiative.

Continued Support through Changes in Leadership

Mr. Howard Graves assumed the A&M System Chancellorship in August 1999. Upon being named Chancellor, Mr. Graves reorganized the A&M System and decided to focus the A&M System's efforts on two major initiatives: The Integrative Plan and the Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education. Chancellor Graves cited the reasons for the Regents' Initiative as:

- The explosive population growth in Texas;
- The national teacher shortage based on enrollment growth as well as replacement of retiring teachers; and

- The challenge of retaining teachers (approximately half of new teachers in Texas leave the field within five years).

The A&M System's universities, like most Texas institutions of higher education, were experiencing declines in teacher production. During the period from 1994 to 2001, system-wide production of teacher candidates decreased by over 14 percent so that by the end of the 2000 academic year, the A&M System universities were producing 300 fewer teachers compared to the annual production rates seven years prior. The Regents' Initiative established measurable production and performance targets for each university, establishing an accountability model which had never before been adopted by a U.S. university system. Furthermore, nine core strategies were agreed upon which would facilitate the universities' efforts. These core strategies were:

- Implementing teacher recruiting and scholarships.
- Developing public school partnerships.
- Developing community college partnerships.
- Implementing an academy for educator development.
- Implementing new teacher induction programs.
- Developing collaborative research.
- Engaging in curriculum alignment.
- Developing teacher leadership.
- Develop regional P-16 councils.

Through these core strategies, the A&M System universities agreed to increase teacher production by 33% over the five years from 1999 through 2004. Simultaneously,

the System universities agreed to increase the quality of its teacher candidates as measured by the number of passes for first time test takers on the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibility (PPR) portion of the Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES). This PPR was used as the performance measure because all Texas educator candidates applying for certification are required to take and pass this test. The System performance goal was to increase pass rates by 20 percent over the five-year period or attain an overall pass rate of 90 percent.

In addition to increasing the quantity and quality of teacher candidates, the Regents' Initiative also focused on targeted recruitment of candidates based on specific needs in Texas' public schools, i.e., African-American, Hispanic, mathematics, science, special education, bilingual, and technology. The System–wide goals were to increase teacher production in the following areas:

- Increase the numbers of African-American teachers by 90 percent.
- Increase the number of Hispanic teachers by 64 percent.
- Increase the number of math, science, technology and foreign language teachers by 250 percent.
- Increase the numbers of special education and bilingual teachers by 170 percent.

Public Support for the Regents' Initiative

Chancellor Graves, Vice Chancellor Sayavedra, and Commissioner of Education Jim Nelson (who had been appointed in late 1995 after the resignation of Dr. Mike

Moses) conducted a series of editorial board visits throughout the spring of 2000. The Regents' Initiative received prominent positive editorial coverage by major Texas newspapers after the announcement of the Regents' Initiative. The *Dallas Morning News* (September 11, 2000) reported, "The commitment from (The) Texas A&M (University System) should challenge other colleges and universities throughout the state. With the Texas population predicted to double over the next half-century, the chronic shortage of teachers will soon hit the crisis stage. Schools that offer teacher training cannot permit that to happen."

Equally positive coverage of the Regents' Initiative was demonstrated by articles in the *Houston Chronicle* (July 30, 2000), the *Austin American-Statesman* (March 26, 2000), the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times* (May 15, 2000 and September 17, 2000), and the *Stephenville Empire-Tribune* (April 18, 2000). Of special note, the establishment of the Regents' Initiative preceded the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's *Closing the Gaps* Initiative which challenges institutions of higher education in Texas to increase the numbers of minorities enrolled and increase undergraduate student performance as measured by retention and graduation rates.

External Support for the Regents' Initiative

Throughout the Initiative, progress reports were provided to the Board of Regents, the United States Department of Education, Texas Education Agency and the private foundations supporting the Initiative. In the fall of 2002, Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, and White House domestic policy advisor, Margaret Spellings, were briefed

in Washington D.C. about the Regents' Initiative by Dr. Sayavedra, Dr. Reaves and other A&M System representatives. In the *U.S. Secretary's Third Annual Report on Teacher Quality*, the A&M System is highlighted as a national model for teacher education reform. In the letter to the Institute for School-University Partnerships' staff that accompanied the report, Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education Sally Stroup said, "The comprehensive reforms undertaken…demonstrate a strong system-wide commitment to educational excellence. Your model should continue to produce positive results for Texas' teachers and students now and in the future."

The Regents' Initiative and the Institute's work also have been recognized by senior officials at the Education Commission of the States (ECS), the Education Trust, the National Association of System Heads, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the Leader to Leader Institute (formerly known as the Peter F. Drucker Foundation).

Achievements of the Regents' Initiative

The A&M System's goal was to increase teacher production by 33 percent over the five-year period; instead, the A&M System increased teacher production by over 50 percent. Additionally, the System achieved or made substantial progress toward increasing the number of teacher candidates in high-need teaching fields (science, math, bilingual, special education, and foreign language). Almost as important, the A&M System universities have united around a common goal – to improve teacher preparation and through that function, improve public school effectiveness.

Funding for the Regents' Initiative

An $11.6 million dollar United States Department of Education Grant initially funded the Regents' Initiative. The A&M System leveraged this grant with private foundations to build a system of support for the Initiative and its core strategies.

TABLE 2. Regents' Initiative Funding

Granting Agency	Amount Awarded
U.S. Department of Education Teacher Quality Enhancement	$11.6 million
Pew Charitable Trusts	$1.4 million
U.S. Department of Education Transition to Teaching	$1 million
Meadows Foundation Grant (two grants)	$700,000
Sid W. Richardson Foundation (two grants)	$150,000
Houston Endowment, Inc.	$3.9 million
TEA Special Education (5 grants)	$2.5 million
TEA Partnership for Texas Public Schools	$561,638
TEA Commissioner's Education Research	$716,400
TEA Teacher Recruitment Program	$409,863
TEA GED Program Evaluation	$54,800
Citigroup Foundation	$50,000
Total	$23,042,701

Consequently, federal and state government agencies and foundations contributed over $23 million to support the Regents' Initiative from September 1, 1999 through August 31, 2004. A total breakdown of the Regents' Initiative funding is illustrated in Table 2. Of these amounts, funds totaling almost $16 million were distributed out to the nine universities comprising the A&M System.

Research Questions

In order to gain a true understanding of the challenges presented by the Regents' Initiative at each System university, the researcher determined that the group of people responsible for implementing the Regents" Initiative probably had the best perspective, that being those that served as Regents' Initiative project directors. As the campus coordinator of the project responsible for collecting data, engaging faculty, and assimilating and submitting quarterly reports to their dean, university president and the System office, the Regents' Initiative project director possessed a unique perspective for knowing which things worked well and which things did not.

Each research question was comprehensive by design and relied on a series of more precise direct questions that focused on specific aspects of each research question. During the interview process the researcher encouraged elaboration with only slight variations in questioning technique, attempting to remain true to the process and the original purpose of the study. The first interview question attempted to identify the challenges of implementing a teacher recruiting program in the college of education

based on the perception of the project director. Each subsequent interview question was framed in a similar manner in order to determine specific responses that could lead to summative conclusions to answer the research questions.

Upon obtaining all of the response data from the interviews, an electronic document was created sorting the responses from each individual into bins for each interview question. A final document was printed out and each statement was cut and separated into individual pieces of paper. The statements were grouped into emerging categories or themes. From this process, "successful practices" emerged as perceived by project directors.

Research Question #1

What are the successful practices in teacher recruitment within The Texas A&M University System as perceived by project directors of The Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education?

Interview Question 1A – What are the challenges associated with implementing a teacher recruiting program?

The Regents" Initiative for Excellence in Education stipulated that each university within the A&M System would develop a teacher recruiting program and designate, or hire, someone to coordinate the teacher recruiting in each college of

education on at least a 25% release time basis. Recruiting targets, e.g., African American mathematics teachers, Hispanic science teachers, etc., were developed at the System level for each university with input from the respective university president, provost and dean of the college of education.

The myriad challenges associated with implementing a teacher recruiting program were common to most universities. However, some challenges were relegated to regional aspects of each university or some other facet common only to a particular university within the A&M System. An analysis of project director responses to the first interview question probing the challenges associated with implementing a teacher recruiting program yielded responses that were categorized into six headings. These were:

- Personnel challenges.
- Recruiting challenges.
- Program challenges.
- Challenges building organizational support.
- Administrative challenges.
- Program challenges.

The following is an elaboration on each category.

Personnel Challenges

One of the first responses to recruiting challenges given by 6 out of the 7 project directors pertained to hiring the "right person" in the recruiter position. Initially, each college of education dean was provided a budget that included a ¼ time recruiter. However, each university was required to provide matching funds, or "in-kind" funds, to supplement the project grants. Therefore, many universities elected to fulfill their matching requirements by hiring a full time recruiter while others assigned recruiting to an existing staff member by buying out 25% of the employee's time with grant funds. Ultimately, the degree of success that each university enjoyed in meeting or exceeding their recruiting goals was perceived to be strongly tied to the utility of the teacher recruiter.

One project director stated, "The key was finding the right person for the recruiting job. This person needed first hand knowledge of public education to be able to communicate the expectations and needs as wells as the rewards." Another project director stated, "Faculty at the university weren't adequately qualified to meet the recruiting position challenge; ¼ release time didn't get the job done." The majority of project directors expressed this sentiment. Getting the right person identified as the university teacher recruiter was deemed critical to achieving success through the Regents' Initiative.

Through the interview process, it became clear that each project director learned something substantial about teacher recruiting that they did not know initially. Several project directors stated that teacher recruiting is a "full time job" and it requires

"complete devotion" by someone who possesses the skills and attributes necessary to attract students and persuade them that teaching careers are in their future. Many of the project directors spoke of teacher recruiting and the Regents' Initiative with clarity through gazing thought as if they were speaking of war related experiences, which they had survived.

In many ways, implementing a university-based teacher recruiting program where one had not previously existed could be described in war related terms. Based on interview responses, it is important to get the right "scout" aboard. Next, a strategic plan had to be developed, which took into consideration the strengths and weaknesses of the institution as well as the teacher candidate availability in its partner schools. Also, it was important to develop intelligence about the recruiting fields. The person responsible for teacher recruiting in the college of education had to relate to the students that he or she recruited, having walked the walk. The recruiter needed knowledge of public schools from a teaching perspective as well as from a student perspective. In addition, the recruiter needed knowledge of higher education and the ability to communicate the navigational aspects of college admissions to students whose parents may have never been there.

Another personnel challenge communicated by project directors was the development of a recruiter accountability system that shaped the recruiting behavior. This entailed developing a daily routine, reporting protocols and a "sales pitch." Due to the lack of recruiting knowledge possessed by the project directors, most recruiting

procedures were borrowed from other university generalist recruiters or athletic recruiters.

"There was no training available for us; we had to learn on the go!" stated one enthusiastic project director. Another offered, "Accountability for the recruiter is vital. This should include constant communication between the recruiter, the immediate supervisor and ultimately the [college of education] faculty." Basically, the teacher recruiting position was a new concept that required defining more precisely at each university to fit within the norms of daily practice.

Recruiting Challenges

Initially, the university leadership agreed to specific performance and production goals that would be "aggregated-up" into a total for the System. However, as teacher recruiting strategies began to develop in each college of education, it became abundantly clear to many project directors that some universities would have significant challenges meeting their institutional recruiting goals in some categories.

For example, the System goals for increasing African American teachers by 90 percent seemed more achievable for some universities than others due to such factors as the proximity of the regional institution to recruitment populations and specific teaching needs of the public schools within the service area. One project director stated, "It became a challenge for us to reach established target goals in "high-need" fields (special education, bilingual) or recruiting for ethnicity in a predominantly Hispanic

environment." Another project director offered, "Advising/career planning with regard to teacher recruiting is difficult – matching real labor markets with student interests; for example, kinesiology vs. mathematics."

Targeting diverse populations led to other discoveries. One project director said that his experience in recruiting minorities made him realize that many of them possessed a general lack of preparation for college work. He said that the academic disparity seems to stem from an inferior educational experience common to many minorities in public schools. This problem was further exacerbated by the fact that many minority recruits came from low-income homes and were required to work to help the family make ends meet.

One project director said, "Much of our time is spent on prime recruiting targets [African American, Hispanic, high-need teaching fields] that are first generation college goers. The challenge is that most of these students are not adequately prepared to be successful at the university level." When asked to elaborate on the "not adequately prepared" phrase, the response was that many of the targeted students have not experienced enough rigor at the high school level (failing to take the necessary courses or advanced courses such as advanced placement, advanced mathematics or science), experience low class rank or fail to achieve the required minimum score on SAT/ACT necessary for being considered for admission. In other words, recruiters were expending excessive amounts of time recruiting students who had little chance of being accepted into their university or being academically successful if accepted.

Building relationships surfaced as a key recruiting concept and a foundational piece for developing a good recruiting base, especially with Hispanic families. Several project directors emphasized the importance of the teacher recruiter "developing relationships" with the families of Hispanic recruits. This entails discussing the university program protocols with the matriarch of the family in many cases. Because this requires time and effort, it is perceived that more personnel are needed who are dedicated to teacher recruiting, especially for Hispanic recruits.

Another perceived recruiting challenge experienced by some project directors was overcoming a public perception that seems to pay political lip service to valuing teachers but fails to provide a lucrative enough salary structure to be convincing. It is common knowledge that the average pay for Texas' teachers ranks among the lowest in the nation. Recruiters overcame many of the "low pay" arguments by focusing on other teaching benefits such as medical coverage, teacher retirement, extended holidays, a national demand for teachers, and a 185 day teaching contract, which leaves extended time in the summer to pursue other interests.

Scholarship Challenges

Each university received a significant amount of scholarship dollars annually to assist them in the recruiting of minorities and high-need teaching field candidates. However, as the recruiters became aware of student financial aid stipulations (many of the targeted recruits qualified for financial aid), they soon discovered that the

scholarships used to recruit the students became a hindrance to some. Several students' experienced a decline in financial assistance reduced by the amount of the scholarship award due to restrictions placed on them by their primary student financial aid package.

However, the most common scholarship challenge expressed by project directors was discovering the most effective method of using the scholarships to maximize the benefits for the university toward accomplishing the recruiting goals. Although there was over $3 million in scholarships divided among the 9 universities over a five year period, the annual scholarship allocation per university averaged $66 thousand. This amount covered scholarships awarded in the fall, spring and summer semesters of each year that averaged just over $1,000 annually per student.

One project director stated, "Our strategy became how we get the most 'bang for our buck' using the recruiting scholarships." Another said, "Developing the criteria for awarding scholarships initially was a challenge. At first, we awarded our scholarships as if we were trying to meet a quota. Recruiting for quality, like NCAA athletic recruiting, came later with the introduction of Blue Chips."

The Blue Chip recruiting project developed out of the perceived need by Institute staff to raise the level of prestige associated with teaching to a similar status as that of NCAA athletic recruits. Each year, each A&M System university was required to select a particular number of recruits based on such selection criteria as class rank, GPA, high-need teaching field, and recommendations from personal references. A brochure was developed, published and distributed to state legislators, superintendents, principals, state agencies, universities presidents and provosts and the media.

Each university established its own method of celebrating the Blue Chip selections by introducing students at home football or basketball games or by hosting a special luncheon event in their honor. However, providing special recognition to teacher recruits proved not to be enough incentive for some recruits as head to head recruiting competition from other colleges within the university caused some students to pursue other degrees funded by more lucrative scholarship offerings.

"Scholarships change students' minds about what they decide to major in," expressed one project director. While another stated, "Heavy recruiting in our city creates competition between recruiting universities, therefore more difficult to recruit locals for our university."

According to project directors, there was a significant amount of pressure being applied to the universities by the Institute for School-University Partnerships (ISUP) to develop a teacher recruiting pipeline through partnership development with public schools and community colleges. The ISUP was the System office charged with the responsibility of directing the work of the Regents' Initiative. However, many project directors indicated that more resources in the form of recruiting support and scholarships were needed to be successful long range as indicated by the following statement, "It is a challenge to expand the geographic area for recruiting due to time and resource constraints. These must be addressed in a fundamental way." This statement and others indicated that there was a perceived short-sided approach to the scholarship issue. Apparently, many directors believed that more scholarship dollars could have yielded better results.

Challenges Building Organizational Support

According to the project directors, the challenge of building organizational support was central to institutionalizing teacher recruiting. Each university possessed unique challenges in developing faculty engagement for the Initiative. One project director stated that "navigating the political winds that create territorial boundaries between institutions, agencies, etc," can be extremely challenging. "Overcoming university compartmentalization to produce a united teacher recruitment front" was an expressed challenge of one director. However, another director stated, "I am not sure that compartmentalization is the problem. It could very well be related to a management-leadership dichotomy. There seems to be much more management and attempts at efficiency as opposed to [creating] a big picture view from a leadership perspective."

"Creating university buy-in was a challenge. Some departments lacked ownership of teacher recruiting," stated one project director. Another director alluded to the difficulty and time consuming aspects of relationship building within the university, indicating that most university faculty focus on the things for which they are rewarded. "Anything auxiliary to that usually goes undone," he stated. "It is almost axiomatic that it will be difficult to achieve other desired goals if healthy, productive relationships are not a priority," he continued.

The mannerisms and expressions exhibited by many of the project directors when verbalizing their frustration with developing university buy-in indicated that they may have encountered resistance in the beginning of the Regents' Initiative, going against the university tradition of allowing students to self select educational careers. This tradition

is evident in such project director phrases as “you can recruit them, but will they have what it takes on game day,” “teaching is a calling,” “not everyone can be a teacher.”

One of the most startling recruiting challenges was discovered when two separate project directors revealed testimonies of some of their more promising student recruits. Apparently, several recruited students, who were near the top of their graduating class, stated that their high school counselor attempted to discourage them from entering the teaching profession. They said that their counselor told them that with their ability, they could be anything that they wanted to be and not to waste their talents on teaching. The illusion created by these statements indicates that there is something demeaning or less glamorous about becoming a teacher, at least in the minds of some practicing educators. Obviously, more must be done to educate educators about the benefits of being a teacher.

Administrative Challenges

There were numerous administrative challenges created by implementing a teacher recruiting program including documentation, record keeping, data collection, reporting and operationalizing the recruiting strategies. As with any effort involving people and change, one can expect a significant amount of resistance. The Regents’ Initiative brought about enormous changes for many faculty and staff that were assigned functional support roles for the Initiative. According to one project director, the Regents’ Initiative was a difficult concept for some faculty to grasp. He described the Initiative as

"an octopus that kept growing tentacles." Another director stated, "Dedicating resources, people, effort, time, measuring products, etc. is a management challenge especially on top of other tasks in which one ordinarily engages."

Initially, the operational budget for each university, prepared by System leadership, became problematic. The funding for the Regents' Initiative, though extensive, was piece-milled together from several funding sources (See Table 3, Regents' Initiative Funding, P. 95). To further complicate budgeting issues, the fiscal agent responsibilities were divided between the A&M System office, the Texas A&M Research Foundation and A&M System universities. Because of differences in business practices and operational policies of the fiscal agents, it fostered confusion among university project teams concerning rules for reimbursement.

For the United States Department of Education Teacher Quality grant, the main grant for the Regents' Initiative, the System elected to use the A&M Research Foundation as the fiscal agent. However, some universities were given the option of subcontracting through their university business office for these grant funds while others elected to contract through the Research Foundation.

For those universities subcontracting for funds, backup documentation was not required when they submitted their monthly expenditure reports to the Research Foundation because their budgeted funds were sent directly to the university annually from the Research Foundation. However, for the universities contracting through the Research Foundation, supporting documentation was required when they submitted requests for reimbursement. As a result, these universities followed Foundation

guidelines for allowable expenditures, which did not always align with university allowable expenditures.

Further, initially, the A&M System business office did not have the internal capacity to handle grants and contracts. However, the System office agreed to be the fiscal agent for several of the smaller grants. However, there were differences in the allowable reimbursable expenses for travel between the System office and the Research Foundation, which created confusion and frustration for project directors and their team members.

With regard to documentation, some project directors indicated that there was a perception among teacher recruiters that the data gathering and record keeping aspects of recruiting required by the ISUP became “problematic because of the length of time necessary for recruiters to document their activity.” She went further, “It robbed from the relationship building time needed to develop public school partners." However, most project directors indicated that tracking recruiting contact data by ethnicity and “high-need” teaching fields as well as documenting progress was a necessity for building a true teacher recruitment pipeline.

Another administrative challenge stemmed from changes in project team members, which was a result of natural attrition at most universities. However, regardless of the cause of the attrition, the result was the same at each institution. Each time a change occurred, it delayed the development of that particular aspect of the Initiative at that institution. Because of the complexity of the Regents’ Initiative, those

universities that were able to maintain a fair degree of consistency in their project team membership were better able to manage institutional success early in the Initiative.

Program Challenges

Throughout the interviews with the project directors, they seemed fairly at ease talking about the Regents' Initiative. Most answered each question confidently, but occasionally became critical of their institution with regard to addressing challenges presented by the Regents' Initiative. However, a common criticism of the Regents' Initiative from project directors was the perception that it was a "one size fits all" in terms of design. Many project directors claimed that the Initiative success was based on common recruiting goals and targets that failed to account for regional and institutional differences, which they felt contributed to the degree of success that each institution was able to achieve.

For example, teacher recruiting for ethnicity in the Texas Panhandle seems to be more challenging than recruiting for ethnicity in South or East Texas. However, each university shared equal responsibility of increasing minority populations by the same percentage; 90 percent increase in African American teachers and 64 percent increase in Hispanic teachers. Depending on the benchmark teacher production number for each university (the number of teachers produced in 1999 for each ethnic category), increasing African American teachers by 90 percent may or may not have been a challenge. Or, increasing Hispanic teachers by 64 percent may have been more

challenging in north Texas as opposed to south Texas, where the majority of the population is Hispanic.

Another example focuses on the Institute recommendation that each university provide an opportunity for partnering high school juniors and seniors to participate in a summer teaching camp organized and implemented by the university and funded by a Texas Education Agency System-wide grant. The purpose of the summer camp program was to provide an extended opportunity for high school students to become acclimated to the campus and thus use it as a recruiting tool. However, the summer camp program did not work for some of the universities. The reasons for the lack of success vary, but the results were basically the same; poor attendance.

In other instances, the summer teaching camp was a huge success as these programs were supplemented by funds generated through tuition to the camp. At one university, they were able to recruit more than 80 percent of the students that attended their summer camp into their freshmen class. Other universities coordinated their summer camp efforts with the Texas Association of Future Educators and were co-funded to provide a focus on leadership. Attendance at these dual purpose camps was high due to the publicity surrounding the event, communication with the participating school districts, strong relationships that had been forged with the public school partners and strong university campus leadership,

One project director described their summer camp situation as a “concept that didn’t work for us as it was designed – the idea didn’t seem to be popular here to future students – very low attendances rates.” Another project director stated, “The teacher

recruitment model implemented by the Regents' Initiative didn't really fit our situation. I am not sure of which changes would have made it better – perhaps allocating a little more money to the university recruiters."

One university possessed recruiting characteristics different from any other university in the System in that they were an upper level institution only, serving juniors and seniors. Their high school recruiting program benefited the community college with which they shared a common campus, not the university directly. However, the relationship that the two higher level institutions enjoyed promoted recruiting for both colleges because of the cooperation and dedication of the staff assigned to the project.

Interview Question 1B – What are the challenges associated with improving quantity and quality simultaneously in the teacher preparation program?

The responses to interview question 1b were subcategorized into the following three groups: simultaneous improvement challenges, collaboration challenges and accountability challenges.

Simultaneous Improvement Challenges

One of the most challenging aspects of the Regents' Initiative was the simultaneous improvement model implemented to increase the quantity of teacher candidates matriculating through the college of education while improving the quality as measured by the scores of first time test takers on the state Pedagogy and Professional

Responsibility ExCET exam. This test was chosen as the common evaluation tool because all students, regardless of the teaching field of study, must pass this exam to become certified in Texas. Although all of the colleges of education within the A&M System concerned themselves with preparing graduates for the ExCET test and improving graduate ExCET sores prior to the Regents' Initiative, the Initiative provided a System-wide focus on accountability by encouraging each institution to immerse themselves in a culture of evidence.

Most of the colleges of education within the A&M System concerned themselves with preparing graduates for the ExCET test and improving graduate ExCET scores prior to the Regents' Initiative. However, the Initiative provided a System-wide focus on accountability by encouraging each institution to become immersed in a culture of evidence that documented their progress. To raise the accountability bar further, the Institute published the aggregated teacher production and performance data as well as individual university performances in each domain.

This process created a sense of urgency for the A&M System universities to improve their teacher preparation programs. To do this, some faculty members at each institution had to change their thinking. One project director stated, "Adding value to teacher preparation while recruiting for numbers is a challenge." Another said, "We had to overcome the perception that increasing quality means decreasing quantity based on the idea that quality means more time with students. We needed a paradigm shift."

Another quality challenge was evidenced in this statement, "…our secondary undergraduate students receive their content instruction in another college leaving

quality of content knowledge acquisition outside of our control. Attempts have been made to dialog with faculty in these colleges to align course content to the state standards but academic freedom continues to prevail."

Another improvement challenge that universities faced was navigating the bureaucratic approval channels to introduce new courses. One project director declared, "Change at the university level is difficult. It requires working through the quality controls at the university to introduce a new course that would improve teacher preparation." This sentiment was voiced by others but included the dimension of finding and affording new faculty. One director stated, "Had we been able to recruit the necessary numbers of special education [teacher] recruits to meet our goals, it would have required adding three new faculty to serve them." Another stated, "We also have the lack of ability to increase full time faculty very much which causes us to rely on adjunct faculty to fulfill many teaching assignments."

When asked why adjunct faculty created quality problems for universities, project directors stated that there were fewer controls over adjunct faculty because they were not in the tenure track professoriate and it became more difficult for the university to control the taught curriculum. For A&M System universities that have gone to a post baccalaureate program for secondary teacher candidates, there also appeared to be faculty shortages as evidenced by this statement, "…recruiting post graduates into the program and finding qualified faculty having Ph.D.s [is challenging.]"

According to the project directors, one of the most significant learning environments for teacher candidates was the field based student teaching programs. Yet,

it became increasingly difficult for A&M System universities to improve this aspect of their teacher preparation program because it was challenging to find faculty who were willing to work out in the field. Another project director said that it was challenging to "maintain a field based program because it is labor intensive" while another stated that "it is difficult to improve the field based aspects of student development because of factors involving travel, time, costs, etc."

Another dimension shared by virtually all A&M System universities that challenged improving the quality of teacher candidates while increasing quantity was summed up by this director's statement, "Most students enter our university with very low SAT scores averaging a combined score of around 800. At the same time, they have high school GPAs of 3.4 or higher. Therefore, there is a mismatch. Students are not fully prepared for university academic life. Even coming from the community college setting, by enlarge, they are still behind."

Collaboration Challenges

The number one challenge listed by one project director was "developing collaboration between departments." Developing ownership of teacher candidate academic performance and spreading teacher recruitment over all departments became a formidable challenge. One director stated, "We had to determine that the result of ExCET scores was a 'we' challenge rather than a 'you' challenge. Initially, [Regents' Initiative] goals were too ambitious. The university perception was there's no way – how are we going to increase the numbers of teacher candidates in high need fields, like

math, and instill quality as well?"

Other universities had difficulty convincing the faculty in the other colleges to "accept the teacher recruiting challenge as a university function rather than a college of education function." One project director offered, "It requires team leadership because of the time requirement necessary to implement a change process. There needs to be a stronger buy-in at the beginning of the change process, especially with the people who will be implementing the change with students or teachers."

Collaborating with faculty members in other colleges within the university, community college faculty or public school partners was identified as a challenging venture. As one project director put it, "it is difficult building bridges from community colleges to universities – it's a challenge getting the stakeholders to understand that they are stakeholders and then focusing on both dimensions at the same time."

Another director stated, "There are challenges in implementing any program of this type – communicating the goals, involving all of the stakeholders, time and resource constraints – the Regents' Initiative helped us overcome most of the resource challenges." Another director submitted, "…putting theory into practice is a challenge. And, it takes time to develop relationships, respect, build on trust, and diversity."

According to project directors, building support for collaboration in any educational change endeavor is difficult because it requires time, resources, personal commitment, and an understanding by all stakeholders of the goals and their role in achieving success. Institutional Leadership was cited as a key to making this happen. Directors indicated that the leadership must demonstrate the importance of an

educational improvement model like the Regents' Initiative by committing his or her personal time, directing university resources toward programmatic functions and demonstrating value for the program by building in a reward system for participants who embrace the changes and demonstrate excellence in goal attainment.

Accountability Challenges

The nine universities that comprise The Texas A&M University System provide educational opportunities to a diverse population across the state. The Regents' Initiative was designed as an improvement model that measured its success using common variables such as the number of African American teacher candidates, Hispanic teaching candidates, mathematics majors and science majors, produced by each institution. The goals were common to all universities regardless of the population that they served.

Initially, this raised some concern with university presidents and the deans of the colleges of education. Some indicated that the goals were too lofty and would be difficult to achieve. Following a period of negotiation, an agreement was reached by all stakeholders and the Initiative began to take shape. But, as the Regents' Initiative progressed, some universities struggled to meet their production and performance goals. However, in the end, the Initiative was very successful surpassing the original goal of improving teacher production by 33 percent by improving teacher production more than 50 percent.

Simultaneously, the universities were also working to improve the student performance on the state Pedagogy and Professional Responsibility (PPR) ExCET.

According to project directors, the universities embraced this dual accountability model because they were all subject to accreditation changes that were being mandated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board through the Closing the Gaps Campaign. This increased accountability raised the awareness level for all stakeholders and prompted most universities to begin preparing students by implementing a pre-test prior to actually taking the ExCET.

"Accreditation reaffirmation coupled with the Regents' Initiative has increased awareness at the university level of teacher preparation and ExCET tests because we are being evaluated on these criteria," stated one project director. Another stated, "The University wanted to do both because of the state accountability model – we began tracking both with the Regents' Initiative." Others chimed in with phrases like, "It was challenging to focus on both dimensions simultaneously, however it must be done precisely this way in order to improve the profession in a high stakes environment," and "Statistically, when there is an effort to increase quality, there is typically a decrease in quantity. However, we increased our teacher graduate numbers without decreasing the quality. We posted a 100 percent pass rate on the PPR ExCET in the last year of the Regents' Initiative."

At least two project directors expressed dissenting opinions about the reliability of the Regents' Initiative accountability model. One stated, "There is a need, supported by research, for a more balanced and realistic approach to accountability. I think everyone in education supports accountability, but it is difficult for many to support an accountability system in Texas that is so narrow and based exclusively on test

performance,"

Another important perception gained about the complexities of simultaneous improvement and the accountability of the Regents' Initiative was voiced in the following comments: "Initially, the grant proposal was too complicated and too difficult to understand – we had to make it simple," and "I think we were given training or at least some instruction. However, the project directors were at different levels of understanding and the universities' operations were different. Therefore, a one-size-fits-all training was not effective. We did have to learn on the run, though."

During the third year of the Regents' Initiative, an external evaluation was designed and administered by the ISUP to determine the effectiveness of the implementation at each university. Outside evaluators from within the state and across the nation were solicited to serve on or lead evaluation teams. Each team consisted of two to three outside evaluators, at least one educational consultant from within the state and at least one Institute staff member. There was also one System employee who was charged with coordinating each visit and traveled with each team to the evaluation site. The external evaluation teams visited each university over the course of several months and conducted interviews with leadership and faculty, reviewed supporting documentation and discussed each protocol criteria before creating the evaluation document.

One project director offered, "The external evaluation process at the end of the third year of the Initiative helped the universities understand and internalize the process at a more significant level of understanding and helped us determine where we were in

relation to accomplishing our five year goals." It became clear through the interview process that the external evaluations served as a compass for every university and as a result significant progress was made during the final two years of the Initiative. According to project directors, this occurred primarily because the participants gained a deeper understanding of the Initiative during the external evaluation and, consequently, performed at a higher level during the final two years of the project.

Interview question 1C – What are the challenges associated with a university led teacher retention improvement program?

Upon analysis of the interview responses for question 1-C, three themes emerged. They were: Curriculum challenges, support challenges and logistical challenges. Creating a university led teacher retention program proved to be one of the most challenging parts of the Regents' Initiative.

Curriculum Challenges

According to project directors, one of the most challenging aspects of implementing a teacher retention improvement program under the Regents' Initiative was determining how the university could lead a teacher retention effort once the students graduated and accepted teaching positions all across the state and nation. Initially, there it was unclear at the System level how many students remained in close proximity to the degree granting institution following graduation.

In 2002, Dr. Lisa O'Dell, Texas A&M researcher and internal evaluator for the

Regents' Initiative, revealed the findings of a study that she conducted, commissioned by Dr. Reaves, ISUP Executive Director, to determine where teacher candidates reside and work once they graduate from the respective A&M System university. Her study revealed that 60 to 70 percent of the graduates settle in one of two places; within 50 miles of their hometown or within 50 miles of their degree granting university. This information helped the universities understand student leaver patterns and determine the feasibility of professional participation in a university led teacher retention program.

The Regents' Initiative required the universities to appoint a university representative to coordinate teacher induction. One of the first challenges for the coordinator was to determine the type of teacher induction/retention program that would be implemented to provide assistance to new teachers. According to project directors, the program had to be valued by the participants, remain cost efficient and at the same time generate enough revenue to support the program at the university. The next step was to develop a curriculum that would deliver timely support to the novice teachers and provide incentives to encourage the novice teacher to participate. Several years prior to the Regents' Initiative, Texas A&M University Corpus Christi had developed a novice teacher program called Strategies Of Success (SOS). Many A&M System universities elected to use this program as a model.

However, additional challenges emerged. One project director stated, "It was challenging to provide an integrated approach to acclimate teachers to the profession. We wrote the graduate curriculum to make the induction program count toward the Master's degree. Therefore, the navigation of the political process to deem it worthy of a

graduate degree was a challenge. It is a time intensive process requiring someone to write it, usually on their own time."

One director reminisced about the process stating, "The program must then be approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board – Staffing is also a challenge. Graduate programs require PhDs to teach – more costly," he added. From the body language and facial expressions, one could conclude that he had just communicated an experience that was out of the ordinary and required full commitment, immense energy, coordination and collaboration.

Another challenge offered by a project director was "to create an induction class that provides necessary content and blends with teacher needs, such as developing a balanced approach to skills development and new teacher feedback." Being a relatively new concept for university faculty, developing a new teacher induction program that "fit" into the university paradigm was considerably challenging. Of the nine core strategies of the Regents' Initiative, teacher induction required more time to develop than any other because of the logistics involved, the new course constraints (if developed) required of universities and developing faculty to embrace and coordinate the program aspects.

Logistical Challenges

Developing a novice teacher program for teacher graduates led by the university became a logistical nightmare for many project directors when they began to consider the assortment of possible locations where graduates could begin his or her teaching

career. Even if half of the graduates were to reside within a fifty-mile radius, bringing students to the university once or twice per week to attend graduate classes in the traditional sense created a logistical challenge. When one factored in the course costs for graduate level novice teachers on a beginning teacher's salary, the challenge increased dramatically.

To further exacerbate an already formidable challenge for universities, "most of the variables related to teacher retention are associated with public schools, not the university," one project director exclaimed. "The lack of faculty availability to address individual needs of students [coupled with] the lack of resources beyond that offered by the Regents' Initiative is overwhelming," another stated. The frustration that this challenge seemed to evoke was quite visible in the facial expressions exhibited by project directors during the interviews. It was as if the university had received another un-funded mandate that appeared impossible to implement even though most of the project directors agreed that teacher retention was necessary for at least the first two years of a novice teacher's career.

Support Challenges

According to project director interview responses, the challenges for building support for a university led novice teacher program were numerous. It required leadership, institutional commitment, curriculum development immersed in research based practices, partnership development, stakeholder buy-in and resource development.

Statements from project directors citing support challenges include:

- "Novice teachers are reluctant to give up salary for continued university led support."
- "It is challenging to create perceived support that is valued by the new teacher."
- "There is a lack of legislative support either through a statewide dialog or state led financial support."
- "Teacher retention needs more air time than it is currently getting."
- "Individual assistance for beginning teachers was at a premium. Because of logistics, we had to focus on teacher induction in general terms through symposiums and conferences."
- "…most of the graduates [in our area] have a couple more jobs in addition to teaching. Therefore, it is difficult to schedule quality induction time that is university led."

Many project directors indicated that teacher retention was not as much a priority for their institution as teacher recruitment. The primary reason given was that the System leadership at the ISUP placed more emphasis on teacher recruiting than it did on teacher retention.

Interview Question 1D – Are there other challenges worthy of mention?

Project directors were provided an opportunity to offer additional comments concerning other perceived challenges brought about by the Regents' Initiative, which

did not particularly pertain to teacher recruiting, preparation or retention. A common theme surfaced that emphasized the perceived complexity of the Regents' Initiative. This complexity may have created an atmosphere that promoted misunderstanding and miscommunication between the System office and some coordinators at the university level as evidenced by this statement, "If we had understood the big picture from the beginning, life would have been easier."

The Regents' Initiative contained many moving parts, or core strategies, which were occurring simultaneously and, though they were coherently connected on paper, some at the university level failed to assimilate the "big picture". The Institute for School-University Partnerships attempted to minimize misunderstanding by conducting system-wide trainings for new project team members at least one time per year from 2002-2004. However, the general concepts, goals, programs, and processes may have been compromised due to attrition, which brought about changes in campus project teams.

The Regents' Initiative was a massive undertaking that involved hundreds of people across a university System that is literally spread across the state of Texas. Early on, an inputs-processes-outputs implementation model was used by System leadership to continuously improve the effectiveness of the Initiative. Although attempts were made to minimize changes during the course of the academic year, changes were made by the System office if deemed necessary. This process created implementation problems for the university project teams when the communication failed to flow from the Institute directly to the project director. One action that may have contributed to this dilemma

was a short-lived change from the originally scheduled monthly face-to-face deans' and project directors' meetings to a less time intensive format through video-conferencing. Further, the face-to-face meetings were reduced to once per quarter.

In addition, the ISUP created an electronic communications system, called a monthly management memo, with the expressed purpose of providing necessary information to the project teams in a timely and efficient manner. The management memo was sent via email to each dean of the college of education and each project director as well as posted on the management website for the entire project team to view. However, this form of communication did not facilitate discussion or interactivity among the group, therefore, miscommunication was proliferated by individual interpretations of the communiqués. Also, the information did not always circulate monthly, which may have caused gaps in the communication process.

In 2003, when the external evaluations occurred on each university campus, the process created a learning climate whereby project teams were able to collectively determine the university's progress toward successfully achieving the Regents' Initiative goals. When discussing the external evaluations with the project directors, comments such as, "…we were too casual about addressing the difficult parts" and "we failed to emphasize the specifics of the deliverables" were fairly common throughout the System.

However, one project director stated that his university possessed a factor that was considered by him to be strength uncommon to most of the other universities in that they were able to maintain the same project team members throughout the Initiative. This statement rings true in light of other comments like, "Having to change project

directors was a challenge that made all problems harder to manage." Another added, "It took too long for our university to figure it out. Just as we were concluding the Initiative, we were beginning to understand all of the aspects of it and how they worked together to form a unified effort."

In summary, communication problems created challenges that were compounded by the fact that nine university project directors, under the supervision of their respective deans, were managing a project that increasingly took on the characteristics of the university as the system moved from a centralized to a more decentralized management approach. This is significant due to the fact that most of the universities are located in remotely different parts of the state, possessing different organizational cultures and operate under different leadership agendas. However, each project team eventually took ownership of their outcomes and was able to achieve significant progress toward each Regents' Initiative goal.

Research Question #2

What are the successful practices of simultaneous improvement of quality and quantity in teacher preparation programs within The Texas A&M University System as perceived by project directors of The Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education?

Interview Question 2A - What are the processes involved in implementing a teacher recruiting program?

Upon careful analysis of the project director responses to this question, the researcher made the determination that all responses fell into one of six categories. These categories are:

- Hiring processes.
- Recruiting processes.
- Building support processes.
- Communication processes.
- Incentive processes.
- Monitoring and reporting processes.

Hiring Processes

When project directors were asked to relate the processes of implementing a teacher recruiting program, the most common "first" response was, "Get the right person on board." This comment was rather general in nature but it spoke volumes about the hidden meaning of the phrase. In other words, the amount of success that the university enjoyed in teacher recruiting was directly correlated to the successful characteristics of the person that was hired to coordinate the recruiting effort. When asked which characteristics were necessary for successful teacher recruiting the project directors' answers were amazingly similar. The responses indicated that the recruiter should possess skills in the following four areas:

- Interpersonal skills.
- Professional skills.
- Organizational skills.
- Educational knowledge.

Interpersonal skills

Project directors indicated that effective teacher recruiting required their recruiter to connect with their audience. This meant that he or she had to be able to make an indelible impression rapidly. They referred to these skills as interpersonal skills. These skills denoted the individual's ability to physically present themselves professionally and informally, communicate verbally, make eye contact, use appropriate facial expressions

and body language and place others at ease. They also enabled the teacher recruiter to quickly and enthusiastically attract high school, community college and university students in order to gain their confidence and hold their attention while teaching careers were presented to them in a favorable light.

Professional skills

According to project directors, students respected the successful teacher recruiter because he or she presented themselves confidently and professionally. Although it became necessary for the teacher recruiter to speak in the informal register when recruiting high school students, he or she had to simultaneously be able to maintain an air of professionalism. Ultimately, the professionalism of the recruiter gained the confidence of the recruit and helped to strengthen the relationship between the two in order for the recruit to make an informed, committed educational decision.

Organizational skills

According to project directors, recruiting students into the teaching profession required many connected steps with communication at the hub of activity. Teacher recruiters within The Texas A&M University System communicated with thousands of students each year during the Initiative in order to recruit a few hundred. Early in the Initiative, teacher recruiters were required to develop monthly recruitment reports and submit them to the Institute, their dean and their project director.

The report was straight forward detailing whether a contact was made by mail, email, phone or face-to-face meetings. The reporting data was stored in an electronic database, which recruiters were required to establish and maintain for the purpose of tracking contacts and recruitment activity. The database contained personal information for each contact that indicated their teaching field of interest, ethnicity, home mailing address, email and phone number. In addition, the recruiters logged each time contact was made with a student and a brief description of the event. This helped the recruiter track the level of activity that he or she had with a particular student.

Other teacher recruiter skills that were necessary for successful operations were the ability to organize a calendar, plan events and locate and access educational resources. Recruiting events, such as career days, discover teaching days, and summer camps, required planning months in advance of the event. Brochures, flyers, post cards and letters were created, labeled and mailed to prospective recruits weeks ahead of scheduled activities. Therefore, organizational skills were a critical attribute of the successful teacher recruiter.

Educational knowledge

Personality, professionalism and the ability to organize surfaced as necessary recruiting skills, but in order to provide professional services to student recruits and maintain a professional relationship with them, the recruiter had to provide them with accurate and timely information. According to project directors, each successful teacher

recruiter possessed tacit knowledge of educational processes of both public schools and higher education. Although it was not necessary for the recruiter to have had teaching experience, it was important for the recruiter to understand the roll of the teacher in different educational settings, and be able to communicate the necessary steps to becoming a teacher to the recruit.

In addition to having educational knowledge of the teaching profession, it was important for the recruiter to be able to communicate the navigational processes of higher education including application, admittance and enrollment. This also encompassed a broad understanding and knowledge of financial aid and scholarship availability. Successfully walking student recruits through the process of applying for financial aid or assisting them in the admissions process created a bond between the recruiter and the student recruit that transferred to the institution.

Recruiting Processes

In the early stages of the Regents' Initiative as the teacher recruiting processes were being developed, most of the recruiting strategies employed were based on those common to the generalist recruiting efforts that occur on most university campuses. This entailed attending high school recruiting fairs, community college transfer days and events common to general recruiting. However, for the recruiting efforts to become successful specific to developing a teacher candidate pipeline, the strategies became

concentrated rather than broad based. This involved a one-on-one evangelistic method of recruiting students.

"Face-to-face contact is most important in recruiting students in this area. The culture demands it," stated one project director. Another stated, "It is necessary to identify real contacts and develop a process from beginning to end, connecting recruiting and retention in the process. Each university has its own unique richness with diversity." This statement refers to a recruiting process used throughout most of the institutions but most effectively in the southern part of the state where most of the area is densely populated with Mexican Americans. According to project directors, Hispanic recruits required the most intensive recruiting efforts because of their strong family orientation and cultural connectedness to family decision making. Often, student recruits were required and felt obligated to solicit input from family members about their educational decisions. Sometimes this required several meetings involving recruiting home visits.

Another strategy that seemed to have potential in theory, but, in reality did not significantly increase student recruits. Instead, it increased the workload for the teacher recruiters with very little payoff. The strategy involved disseminating TexasTEACH recruiting brochures, prepared by the System office, in a broad-based effort to provide pertinent general information about how to become a teacher in Texas. TexasTEACH was the official name of the Texas A&M University System teacher recruiting network, which included the universities, partnering community colleges and partner schools. The brochure also included average teacher salary information and motivational quotes from Texas' teachers of the year. The brochures were mass mailed to partner schools and

community colleges, distributed at recruiting events and given out during high school and community college visits.

The brochure had an attached perforated postcard tear-off that solicited the student's contact information, his or her A&M System university of interest and the teaching field of interest. The recruit was expected to fill out the postcard and send it postage free to the Institute for School-University Partnerships. Upon receipt of the postcard, ISUP personnel keyed the recruit contact information into a database, uploaded the information into individualized university reports and distributed it to the respective university recruiter. Once the university teacher recruiter received the information, he or she sent the potential recruit a packet containing information about the university and a letter of acknowledgement inviting a continued relationship. However, this process fell short of yielding high returns for the time invested and the approach was abandoned by many university recruiters in favor of more promising practices.

According to project directors, the following teacher recruiting processes seemed to be the most effective for building a university teacher recruiting pipeline.

- Engaging students early in the recruiting process. According to project directors, junior high is not too soon to begin recruiting and counseling students about high school course selections in preparation for college.
- Developing opportunities for face-to-face meetings with individual students and their families.

- Designing recruiting programs that target students within the university's regional service area.
- Developing recruiting scholarships through grants, business/ education partnerships, private funders, philanthropists and alumni associations.
- Spreading recruiting resources, including scholarships, to reach as many students as possible.
- Creating summer teaching camps to provide high school juniors and seniors a week long opportunity to visit the university, stay in a dorm, dine at a campus cafeteria, visit education classes, meet with student advisors, meet the dean of education, learn about campus traditions, experience campus culture and be involved in educational activities.

Building Support Processes

According to project directors, recruiting students to become teachers required collaborative support to be successful. Developing teacher recruits in isolation from other colleges on campus created recruiting conflicts and competition. This caused the student recruit to become disoriented and frustrated. Therefore, a collaborative approach was developed through the Regents' Initiative, which involved implementing a communications campaign explaining the goals of the Initiative to college of education and arts and sciences faculty members.

Many university faculty members across System institutions, over 440 during the scope of the Initiative, were invited to participate in an organization called the Academy for Educator Development. Academy membership was determined by annual selections made by the university president. Members were invited to participate in collaborative educational research via requests for proposals. Submissions were evaluated by an Institute review panel and awarded points based on the merits of the proposal and collaborative design. Mini-research grants, funded through the Regents' Initiative, were awarded to Academy members submitting successful proposals ranging from $3 thousand to $15 thousand.

These activities brought arts and sciences, college of education, public school and community college faculty together in an effort to conduct educational action research. The researchers were then invited to present their findings at one of the two conferences held annually by the Institute for the purpose of showcasing action collaborative research; the Partnership Conference and the Chancellor's Conference.

The Partnership Conference brought public school, community college and university personnel together to discuss educational issues in a general session/breakout session format featuring nationally renowned education speakers. Breakout sessions concentrated on resolving pressing and critical educational issues through research and panel discussions. In the last two years of the Regents' Initiative, the Partnership Conference expanded to include participants of both the Texas State University System and the University of Texas System.

The Chancellors' Conference focused on the leadership audience of the educational partnership entities. Through this conference, using a similar format as that used at the Partnership Conference, educational leaders, including the Chancellor of the A&M System, university presidents, provosts, deans, faculty, community college presidents, community college faculty, public school superintendents, principals and teachers were brought together to participate in educational dialog on critical issues facing teacher preparation institutions and the challenges of public schools. During the breakout sessions, researchers in the Academy had yet another opportunity to share their research findings and discuss other potential educational research topics.

A third annual conference hosted by the Institute for School-University Partnerships was the Texas Teachers' Forum. This conference was designed to bring the "best" Texas educators together from all areas of the state to discuss critical teacher education issues with university professors and deans. The teacher participants had each been selected by their peers as a regional or state Teacher of the Year. In a regional discussion format, these teachers had an opportunity to discuss critical educational issues impacting public school classrooms with A&M System deans of the colleges of education, Academy members and teacher recruiters. The Texas Teachers' Forum proved to be one of the highlights of each year.

Conference presentations, professional development activities and presentation visits by Institute staff to national agencies and nationally recognized educational consultant groups, such as Education Trust, Education Commission of the States, National Association of System Heads, Secretary of Education Rod Paige and others

helped to create opportunities to inform outside educators and educational entities about the Regents' Initiative and put it in the national spotlight. However, the most critical aspect of building support for the Regents' Initiative came through the university project team members working directly with future teacher club sponsors, public school counselors, Texas Teachers of the Year and university faculty members, building trusting relationships while communicating the importance of teacher recruiting as a shared responsibility.

Communication Processes

One of the more critical processes of implementing a teacher recruiting program at the university level was the development a communication strategy that frequently put the Initiative in front of stakeholders. Early in the Regents' Initiative, a communication specialist was hired by Dr. Reaves at the ISUP to coordinate communication and develop publications for the purpose of disseminating to all parties of interest. This person developed and coordinated all communication regarding the Initiative to the universities and the general public. Some of the teacher recruitment System communication tools that were developed include:

- A monthly electronic newsletter delivered as a PDF email attachment to all stakeholders. The newsletter included interesting teacher stories, System recruiting highlights, progress towards Regents' Initiative goals and a System recruiting event calendar.

- An electronic monthly management memo sent to each member of the Regents' Initiative project team at each university and a memo posted to the Institute project website.
- A Texas A&M System teacher recruiting brochure in high color targeting high school and community college students.
- A color Regents' Initiative Annual Report brochure disseminated to all stakeholders, Texas legislators, superintendents of public schools, state education agencies including the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Education Agency informing them of the System progress toward meeting the Regents' goals.
- Annual proceedings document brochure from the Texas Teachers' Forum disseminated to all stakeholders.
- Public service announcements in drama format promoting the need and fulfillment of becoming an educator in Special education, math and/or science.
- Motivational teacher recruiting videos of Texas Teachers of the Year in story line format streamed on the TexasTEACH website and sent on a CD in a mass mailing to every school district in the state.

Each communication tool was designed to establish the Regents' Initiative as a permanent educational reform movement that involved all state educational entities. Even though communication problems plagued the Initiative intermittently due to

attrition of project team members and university leadership changes, the project directors seemed to appreciate the Institute's communicative efforts through professional means.

Incentive Processes

A very important process of implementing the teacher recruiting program on the university campus involved incentivizing the recruit. Although many types of incentives exist that one can use to attract students to their university's educational program, according to project directors, monetary incentives seemed to work best in the Regents' Initiative. Based on directors' estimates, between 60 and 80 percent of the students attending the A&M System's regional universities do so with financial assistance. The term financial assistance used here describes an array of financial aid including private student loans, government assistance loans, grants, stipends and loan forgiveness financial aid and scholarships. Most financial aid reported by A&M System university students consisted of student loans and loan forgiveness scholarships.

According to project directors, many students make decisions about which university they will attend based on the out of pocket expense to them or to their parents. Further, students make decisions about their career choice based on scholarship availability. Comments to support this claim were common among directors. "Scholarships attract the students to our campus," and, "We offer incentives and scholarships to students who are interested in teaching in high-need teaching fields. There was no significant difference reported by project directors in the effectiveness of

the scholarship based on the size of the award to be large amounts to create enough incentive to help students make a decision about teaching," are among them.

A strong part of the Regents' Initiative recruiting process included developing teacher recruits at the partnering community colleges. This program, called the Community College Teaching Scholars, funded by Texas based foundations Houston Endowment and the Meadows Foundation, is designed to recruit community college students who are interested in teaching through screening and advisement. To further incentivize them, the students that maintain 12 hours and a 3.0 grade point average are paid a performance stipend ranging from $300 to $800 at the end of each semester. As the student concludes his or her community college curriculum (two years), the Teaching Scholars received a transfer scholarship of at least $1000 per year toward expenses incurred at the receiving A&M System university provided that they maintained full time student status and a 3.0 grade point average.

The main source of scholarships throughout the Regents' Initiative was through a United States Department of Education teacher recruitment grant. These scholarships were awarded to students at the university level who agreed to teach in high-need teaching fields for the same period of time for which they received scholarships. These were called loan forgiveness scholarships. If a student fails to meet their obligation, they must repay the scholarship amount plus interest to the Department of Education. However, most students in the A&M System recruited into teaching through this scholarship method have met their obligation to teach.

Monitoring and Reporting

The final teacher recruitment process that emerged in this study was monitoring and reporting. Monitoring in this instance had two characteristics for recruiting purposes; monitoring data and monitoring people. According to project directors, it was important to implement and maintain a data monitoring system throughout the recruiting process to inform recruiting efforts and to inform stakeholders of progress toward recruiting efforts. The data gathered for the Regents' Initiative tracked student recruit information such as ethnicity, teaching field of interest, financial aid, home town, high school attended, phone contact, face-to-face contact, email address, etc. This data provided the analyst with an array of information primarily used to determine best recruiting practice, successful recruiting fields, quantity of students recruited into high-need teaching fields, and tracking ordinary results vs. outstanding accomplishment.

The second aspect of monitoring involved the teacher recruiter and other university staff in relationship building strategies that involved monitoring student progress during the educational process. According to A&M System teacher recruiters, students typically submit an application for admission to the university of their choice, wait for a letter of acceptance, possibly counsel with an assigned advisor, attend freshman orientation, register for classes and then they are basically on their own. The Regents' Initiative provided a strategy for cutting through this process and fast-tracking students by encouraging universities to develop a team to assist them with the admissions process. It was known as the Rapid Response Team. The team consisted of

the university teacher recruiter, a representative in the university's admissions office and a representative in the registrar's office.

Although it proved to be ineffective in most universities due to implementation barriers, the idea was based on the theory that having insiders at the university become part of a team dedicated to processing student recruits who were future teacher candidates would increase their status and create the perception that future teachers were important. University admissions, especially for first generation college goers, can be intimidating for even the most sophisticated of students because of the lack of familiarity that the student may have with the campus and the process, lack of personal relationships with university staff, and a lack of knowledge and understanding of the university culture. Expertise in these areas requires emersion in the environment and time to develop.

According to project directors, successful teacher recruiting processes incorporated ways to assist the student in navigating the university culture by creating communication channels with him or her on regular intervals either through email, phone contact or organized social events. Providing assistance and encouragement and maintaining a genuine relationship with each student throughout his or her education, including through graduation and job placement, created strong bonds between the student and the institution. These types of activities helped to improve student retention and graduation rates by instilling a sense of community and belonging within each recruit and provided the necessary motivation and support to get through a challenging educational or personal situation.

Reporting was an equally important activity and helped to cement the recruiting efforts. As mentioned earlier with monitoring, recruitment reporting in the Regents' Initiative also served two purposes; internal and external. After the data had been gathered, interpreting it and putting it into language that created an understandable image for others was critical. In order for teacher recruiting to become a university-wide enterprise, it was important for the recruiter to communicate to all stakeholders frequently and equally. According to project directors, reporting facilitated a variety of functions including:

- Providing updates and overviews of the university recruiting effort.
- Delineating recruiting strategies that built understanding contextually.
- Highlighting recruiting successes.
- Acknowledging those that made significant contributions to the effort.
- Communicating goals or areas of needed improvement.

Disseminating recruitment reports externally, or outside each university community, was also deemed important. Regents' Initiative recruiting activity reports were aggregated at the System level and monthly reports were generated and disseminated back to project directors and college of education deans and simultaneously posted on the project website for access by the project teams. These reports, which contained System totals as well as individual university recruiting information, provided a compass for those responsible for recruiting implementation. It

also served as an internal accountability system that provided timely feedback informing the universities of progress toward the goals.

Collecting and entering recruiting data was time consuming and inexact as a science. Because of the labor intensive nature of data collection, initially it was unclear to many university teacher recruiters why it was important to collect contact data and secondly, it was unclear how the data would help them. However, as the project progressed, data collection became more important as data interpretation began to inform recruiting activities. University teacher recruiters began concentrating their efforts more on the higher pay-off strategies, e.g., face-to-face, public school partnerships, regional recruiting activities, etc.

The second audience for external reporting was outside the university System and included state agencies, foundations, legislators and partnering entities. Since the Regents' Initiative was the first of its kind ever attempted by a university system within the state, and some national education spokespersons ascribe to the belief that it was the first of its kind in the nation, it became important to Institute leadership to inform the general public and state and national educational entities of the A&M System's progress toward its teacher production goals. To further facilitate external reporting, the Institute hosted lunch and dinner briefings in Austin, the state capitol, and invited legislators, policy makers, educational agency executives and other prominent educational and business leaders to showcase the System's collaborative efforts to increase teacher production and reform teacher preparation in its member institutions.

A prospectus report was created by the Institute with support from the member universities, and disseminated throughout the state and nation. Although the report was actually initiated after the first 18 months of activity, it was titled the Regents' Initiative Annual Report and it contained a review of the Initiative, a narrative of the goals and objectives, an explanation of the core strategies and it demonstrated progress through colorful charts and graphs. This report became a symbol for the successful implementation of the Initiative and was viewed by many project directors as exemplary work.

Interview Question 2B – What are the processes involved with improving quantity and quality simultaneously in the teacher preparation program?

Inquiry into the processes involved with improving quantity and quality simultaneously in the teacher preparation program yielded responses that were classified into three categories. These are:

- Professional development and Alignment.
- Quality recruiting.
- Broadening involvement.

The following interpretation of the findings is based upon the interview responses triangulated with existing Regents' Initiative documents and process data.

Professional Development and Alignment

One of the goals of the Regents' Initiative was to increase both the quantity and quality of teachers prepared by A&M System universities. It was determined early that quality improvement with regard to secondary teaching may prove difficult given that the students selecting to become certified in a secondary level teaching field received the majority of their content instruction from arts and sciences faculty. This posed an accountability problem for the colleges of education because, under ordinary circumstances, the colleges of education have no impact on the quality of instruction provided by arts and sciences faculty, particularly in mathematics and sciences. To help resolve this issue, the Academy for Educator Development was created as one of the core strategies of the Regents' Initiative. Designed to engage arts and sciences faculty into the teacher recruiting and preparation discussion, a series of professional development activities and collaborative research opportunities were initiated across the System.

The focus of the professional development activities was to establish an alignment process that crossed high school, community college and university lines. A program called the Academic Roadmap was implemented to facilitate the curriculum alignment process. Educators from area high schools, partnering community colleges and A&M System universities came together to bridge the gaps discovered in the curriculum. In addition, the standards guiding instruction at all three levels were reviewed and discussed to create a common understanding of the barriers that hindered the alignment process and collaboratively develop solutions to the problems.

The alignment discussions were not limited to the taught and tested curriculum for the purposes of preparing students for community college and university settings. They also encompassed aligning teacher preparation classes with state standards for teacher certification. Part of the quality accountability for the Regents' Initiative involved increasing the acceptable standards for first time test taker passing rates on the state Pedagogy and Professional Responsibility ExCET exam at each institution to 90 percent or increase passing rates 20 percent annually until a 90 percent rate was achieved. To accomplish this, university faculty diligently revamped the course content of teacher preparation courses to include state standards and incorporate, where appropriate, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills transferability. This could not have been possible without the creation of the Academy for Educator Development at each university.

As one project director put it, "The implementation of the Academy for Educator Development helped to get our arts and sciences faculty involved with both quality and recruiting for quantity." The Academy for Educator Development was something special in the view of the project directors. Comments about the Academy flowed off project directors' tongues as if they were exhaling fresh air. Another offered, "The implementation of the Academy for Educator Development was a major development in promoting teacher recruitment on campus."

The work of the academy did not end with the alignment and recruiting process. Professional development activities in pedagogy and content delivery continued throughout the Initiative. To further validate the professional development of Academy

members, collaborative research mini-grants were established to incentivize arts and sciences faculty to not only value educational research but also participate in action research. One university arranged to transport arts and sciences faculty to area high schools on busses to spend the day observing teachers in action so that they would have a better understanding of the challenges that face public school teachers.

At one university, a research project involving a public school teacher and a university faculty member created a change in the curriculum at both institutions as they teamed up to align their curriculum and participate in co-teaching situations. A healthy professional and personal relationship resulted that benefited the students and staff at both institutions.

Quality Recruiting

Another critical process for simultaneously improving quantity and quality of teacher recruits as identified by project directors involved recruiting for quality. As one project director put it, “Casting a larger net does not necessarily improve quality.” But instead, “Establish as a recruiting criteria to go after the top ten percent in graduating classes.” It became more evident to several project directors early in the Regents’ Initiative that recruiting for quality ups the ante and changes the recruiting strategy. Every college and university recruits the top ten percent of high school graduates increasing the competitiveness at this level. Recruiting quality requires developing more scholarship resources to be effective.

To answer the call for quality, the System developed the “Blue Chip Recruit.” Each university was to designate at least 11 high school recruits in its inaugural year as Blue Chips. The criteria, although expanded by individual universities, included high grade point averages, class rank, participation in extracurricular events and interest in high-need teaching fields. The students were photographed, grouped by university and highlighted in a glossy brochure published by the Institute. The brochure was disseminated throughout the A&M System, sent to Blue Chips’ parents, their superintendent and principal, district legislator and state media clearinghouses. Each university was encouraged to host an event for the Blue Chip recruits and give them special status on the university campus.

In subsequent years, the Blue Chip recruits were to include community college Teaching Scholars from the partnering community college. The Blue Chip recruiting program helped recruit some high school students in the top ten percent of their graduating class. However, there were no scholarships specifically associated with the Blue Chip recruits and thus it full potential was never attained, as perceived by some project directors.

Broadening Involvement

The project directors prolifically communicated the importance of broadening university, public school and community involvement in recruiting and preparing teachers. According to project directors, for many years, the colleges of education had worked in isolation at the university, as did other colleges on campus. Preparing teachers

was generally seen as the main purpose of the university's college of education. On project director explained the dilemma this way, "Why should others colleges that are deeply rooted in content break rank and engage in an activity that is owned by another college?"

Arguments can easily be made for keeping the status quo, cited some project directors. Others contended that breaking the mold of tradition and navigating the political entrenchment of bureaucracy to change the daily routines of individuals in order to increase involvement was no easy task. However, it became evident to many project directors that, for the Regents' Initiative to reach maximum potential in their institution, it was necessary for it to become a university and community enterprise.

To address the issue of developing community, the Regents' Initiative, as a core component, established the President's Advisory Council at each university to create an influence and encouragement for university leadership to accept the role of change agent. These councils, led by the university president, consisted of university provosts and deans, community college presidents, public school superintendents, community and business leaders for the purpose of identifying and addressing teacher recruiting, preparation and retention needs through a partnering effort. The level of involvement and implementation of the President's Advisory Council varied from institution to institution, but there was a strong correlation between presidential involvement and university success as measured by the goals of the Regents' Initiative.

Working to develop support from within the institution became an important charge as well. From strengthening field-based programs to building trusting

relationships with arts and sciences faculty, the project directors agreed that an informed and involved university faculty engaging all colleges and embraced by the university leadership has unlimited potential to change the collaborative cultures on campuses to the benefit of all. One enthusiastic project director stated, “It is important to involve public schools, students, student bodies, faculty, parents of public school students, public school classroom teachers, administration, business community and presidential advisory committees.”

Another project director offered this process, “Develop community college partners and implement articulation agreements between the institutions and work to ensure quality. The articulation agreements are only a necessary document. Successful implementations of agreements are achieved through the building and maintaining effective relationships with key stakeholders.” What a profound statement! Education is a people business that requires people behaviors. Bureaucracies, though often spoke of in a negative light, are comprised of people. However, often the bureaucratic paradigm empowers people to create policy, which seems to choke creativity and eventually exclude the human element when change needs to occur.

For example, universities typically reward three areas of activity for promotion and tenure; teaching, research and service. These three areas are weighted differently at different A&M System institutions depending on the mission of the university. The traditional method for attaining promotion and tenure involves teaching a full load, four classes per semester, devoting a portion of time in research as evidenced by the number

of publications in refereed journals and service, which is loosely defined in most institutions.

However, there was little or no place in promotion policy at most universities across the A&M System that valued collaboration in educational research among colleagues prior to the Regents' Initiative. The reasons vary, but the fundamental philosophy that prevailed was that educational research lacks vigor and fails to provide transferability because of the difficulty in recreating the dynamics of a unique environment.

One arts and sciences faculty member at an A&M System institution was challenged by colleagues upon submission of an educational research project funded through the Regents' Initiative. However, after several letters were written to the committee by high-ranking state educational officials stating the value of the educational research project, it was allowed. Based on a review of Regents' Initiative External Evaluation documents, at least one other university reviewed its promotion and tenure policy to include allowing collaborative educational research to be submitted for consideration in a faculty member's portfolio. But, this said, wholesale change in the promotion and tenure process of A&M System universities long term to include educational research may require another high profile initiative.

Interview Question 2C – What are the processes involved with a university led teacher retention improvement program?

The perceptions of the project directors regarding the processes for implementing a university led teacher retention program were categorized into three main areas:

- Implementation processes.
- Professional development and communication processes.
- Incentivizing processes.

The following findings represent researcher interpretations of the project directors' responses.

Implementation Processes

The Regents' Initiative core strategy of a university led novice teacher retention program seemed to be a problematic topic for some of the project directors and yet rather easy for others to discuss. As each project director attempted to communicate his or her perceptions of university led teacher retention efforts, the comments fit into one of two categories; "what we should have done" or "what we did." This is important to disclose because in their perception, their university either experienced success or still had unfinished business in this area.

The evidence used to develop this conclusion was a researcher observation of facial expressions, body language and voice inflections during the interview. Project directors who perceived that they were delivering bad news frequently paused during

their responses as if they were searching for something positive to say while those whose university had implemented some form of teacher induction successfully delivered their responses with a lighthearted confident brogue. Likewise, uncertainty in responses accompanied a frown and searching glances while fluid responses were paired with smiles and eye contact. As Regents' Initiative documents and external evaluation information was reviewed by the researcher, there was an abundance of evidence to suggest that the university led teacher retention/induction program was one of the more difficult pieces of the Regents' Initiative for universities to implement and one of the most under funded.

When the Regents' Initiative was rolled out in 1999, only one university in the A&M System had a program specifically designed to target the retention of teachers. The program was created by Texas A&M Corpus Christi as a post baccalaureate teacher recruiting program that enabled the students to earn an income as the teacher of record while they were on a probationary certificate. As the System declared teacher retention/induction a component of the Regents' Initiative, other universities were encouraged to review the Corpus program and attempt to use it as a model. However, the Corpus teacher induction program did not represent a fit for all universities within the A&M System. There were specific institutional and regional nuances that helped the program attain success in the Corpus area. Also the program was labor intensive and designed by a person who had a passion and zeal for working with novice teachers. Also, most of the teachers prepared by the institution found jobs in local school districts, which increased the likelihood of participation and local support.

Therefore, many university project teams geared their efforts toward teacher recruiting and the Academy for Educator Development rather than teacher induction. One project director indicated that teacher induction muddied the water for an already complicated and multi-faceted Initiative. Another project director indicated that his university graduated students that were primarily hired by local districts that had a remarkable teacher retention rate and did not value a university based teacher retention program that was grounded in more course work. However, eventually, most of the universities attempted to implement some form of teacher retention effort ranging from graduate course development toward a Masters degree to a seminar program utilizing local teachers and administrators in a breakout session format to interact with novice teachers while providing leadership and mentoring on pressing issues.

Professional Development and Communication Processes

As the project directors individually began synthesizing the question of processes with regard to a university led teacher retention program, the researcher observed that most of them had begun to understand the types of activities that “should” take place rather than those that “did” take place. However, most project directors indicated that the impetus for teacher retention began with a shift in emphasis from teacher recruiting to teacher retention during the latter stages of the Regents’ Initiative. As the Initiative concluded, many universities had begun implementing some aspect of teacher retention and recognized the importance of university led processes toward establishing a successful university led teacher retention program.

One project director exclaimed, “We need to convince public schools that teacher recruiting and teacher retention is collaborative work.” Another offered that, “we need to develop a belief system throughout the colleges of education that teacher retention efforts led by the university are important. It is our obligation and it is needed.” The passion represented in the words of these individuals revealed that they had begun to create a personal vision for “connecting the dots” on teacher retention.

The project directors were familiar with the literature and research concerning teacher retention and they had knowledge of teacher attrition rates and the reasons given by most teachers for leaving the profession. Most project directors revealed that more evangelistic collaboration between educational entities and educators within those entities should create a grassroots cry for support of novice teachers by creating more awareness through collaborative professional development.

One project director concluded that “the reasons both students and teachers leave the profession are due to personal experiences rather than cognitive processes or knowledge.” This statement indicates that the decisions to “quit” being made by educators and teacher candidates are driven by the affective domain. One project director was eager to state that “university personnel in charge should recognize the affective domains that contribute to teacher retention and understanding and maximizing the contributions of the emotional mind is essential, not ancillary. There is a substantive and building culture of evidence that supports this.” Others cited professional development within the leadership ranks as a necessary component as well. Some concurred that

public school leadership as well as university leadership fails to recognize the powerful effects of emotion in decision-making as it pertains to teacher retention.

Another perceived process of professional development improving teacher retention indicated by project directors involved learning more about the behavior of first year teachers. As a result, more collaborative action research developed between university professors and public school teachers. The researchers were encouraged to disseminate their findings throughout educational circles to spawn more critical research and involve more subjects. However, one of the drawbacks to much of the educational research done collaboratively by A&M System universities and their public school participants was that the educational environments, though similar, contained a host of uncontrollable variables that made experimental duplication virtually impossible. Also, the problems encountered by researchers who attempted a more scientific approach became problematic because of the ethical issues associated with control groups in public education.

Incentivizing Processes

Another process that project directors indicated as an important component of a university led teacher retention program is providing incentives for novice teachers who participate in induction programs. According to project directors, many students express disinterest in continuing education after graduation. Immediately returning to the university to participate in a teacher induction program presented some real logistical problems for many new teachers including:

- The added workload of course material to the time intensive job of preparing lesson plans for first year teachers.
- The added expenses of tuition, books and travel costs to a tight budget because of low beginning pay for first year teachers.
- Reluctance to give up nights or Saturdays to prepare for and attend classes.
- The lack of energy and time necessary to travel to and engage in university course work because of the emotional drain induced by first year teaching.

Some of the solutions that were created by A&M System universities in response to these problems included developing partnerships with local independent school districts to provide teacher induction professional develop at one of the public school facilities as an extended day activity. This enabled the novice teachers to attend the professional development activities with a minimal drain on time and travel expense. This method also enabled participating individuals to enlist the support of other novice teachers on campus by attending the sessions together.

One project director offered that incentives were provided to faculty and students alike, indicating that there was some reluctance on the part of university faculty to participate in the new program. In the case of one university led teacher induction program, the professional development sessions were taught by both university faculty and qualified veteran teachers within the partnering public school district. The subject matter topics were determined by the novice teachers in concert with the instructor

thereby enabling the professional development to be timely and of great interest to the participants while aligning with course standards. Other incentives that this type of partnership provided include school district participation in the financing of the professional development by defraying the costs for each individual and partnering in the cost of the course instructors. Also, the university awarding course credit to participants toward the attainment of the Masters degree created an added incentive.

Interview Question 2D – Are there other teacher recruiting, preparation and retention improvement processes worthy of mention?

There were three additional comments made by project directors that were somewhat controversial yet interesting depending on one's perspective. All three comments involved some aspect of leadership that they felt contributed to the overall success of the Regents' Initiative. The first statement defined the role of the university president in implementing the Regents' Initiative. The director simply stated, "The Regents' Initiative required administrative priority in the president's office – prioritizing resources to make this successful on a university campus."

Another project director focused on System leadership as he stated, "This type of initiative, with so many moving parts, required a bull headed leader, someone driven that didn't take 'no' for an answer. For example, initially, the grant was rejected by USDE. However, due to the tenacity of the A&M System Associate Vice Chancellor, he was able to get USDE officials to reconsider funding the Initiative. That's how driven he

was." It was interesting to learn how close this project was to never coming to fruition. Other project directors whether they concurred with the leadership strategies employed by the Associate Vice Chancellor or not agreed that his passion for excellence and his tenacious spirit contributed greatly to the success of the project.

One project director cited another leadership as a contributing factor to his university's success in the Regents' Initiative. "The Continuity of our university Regents' Initiative project team played a major role in our success. The fact that the university teacher recruiter, the community college director and the Regents' Initiative project director all had four to five years devoted to the project was no accident." The project director making this statement was a veteran in higher education understanding the importance of continuity in growing and maintaining a knowledge base among the team members that inevitably paid large dividends at the end. This contrasts the practices of some of the A&M System universities' that struggled during periods in the Regents' Initiative when progress was impeded because project teams were fragmented due to the lack of relationship and commitment imposed by the attrition of team members.

Research Question #3

What are the successful practices of a university-led teacher retention program within The Texas A&M University System as perceived by project directors of The Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education?

Interview Question 3A – What are the benefits derived from implementing a teacher recruiting program?

The responses of project directors regarding the benefits derived from implementing a teacher recruiting program were sorted into three main categories:

- Benefits to the university.
- Benefits to the educational community.
- Benefits to the teaching profession.

The following is a detailed discussion of these findings.

Benefits to the University

The Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education became a USDE heralded national model for teacher preparation reform in the fall of 2004. By that time, the universities had experienced enough constructive feedback from its public school and community college partners to attribute much of their teacher recruiting, preparation and retention successes to the Regents' Initiative. One project director exclaimed that the Initiative "has been an image builder for the college of education on campus and has

added to the prestige of teaching as a profession." Another attributes current university growth to the Initiative. "The university is growing at a rate of four to six percent a year. The only college that has had as increase in enrollment is the college of education. All other colleges have remained rather flat or experienced a decline in enrollment over the past few years."

One stated that the "changes brought about by the Regents' Initiative were internalized." Another project director provides proof of internalization by stating, "It has provided an internal motivational factor to track recruits as a result of the System emphasis on aggregated totals. We have a sense of accomplishment making a contribution to the whole." The previous statement touched on issues of the human spirit, teamwork and motivation as factors that promoted internalization, at least for that particular institution.

One cited the fact that the Initiative "increased the number of education majors, which gave the college a new sense of prestige, which caused buy-in by the administration." This statement created an interesting perspective in light of other director comments concerning the importance of institutional leadership in implementing the Regents' Initiative. It speaks to the compartmentalization issue that exists in many higher education institutions, which was alluded to in an earlier comment by a project director.

Other comments citing benefits to the university included one that indicated that some of the impact of the Initiative provided the university an opportunity to address specific needs of classrooms throughout the state. Another similar comment revealed

that the teacher preparation improvement strategies evoked by the Regents' Initiative "increased the learning capacity of public school students because of the increased teaching ability of our teacher graduates."

These comments revealed an interesting dynamic that seemed to occur covertly as the Initiative gained strength. It was a perceived connection to the larger educational picture by the Regents' Initiative project teams as if their collective vision moved from peering inside to looking outside their respective institutions in an attempt to further comprehend the impact that they have had on the educational communities that they serve.

Benefits to the Educational Community

One of the benefits of teacher recruiting led by the university was the establishment of collaborative groups both within the university and within the educational community. These collaboratives were created for one purpose and shared a common mission, that of teacher recruiting. Although every educator did not engage in the recruitment of individuals into the teaching profession, everyone seemed to support the ideas and activities required to generate teacher recruits.

One project director beautifully stated that "a shared focus brings an understanding of how important education is to our schools and communities which we so proudly serve." Another stated that "university-wide teacher recruitment brings focus to a shared value that is important to schools, colleges and communities." "It increases the closeness of the learning community through recruiting and collaborative meetings"

stated another. He continued with a profound addition, “The relationships established through the Regents’ Initiative still remained after the Initiative was gone.”

According to project directors, building relationships should be at the core of what schools and universities do because they are engaged in a “people” business. However, reality offered some evidence that the relationship component so desperately needed in educational settings was often sacrificed in lieu of efficiency and process. One posited this thoughtful comment about the benefits of university-wide teacher recruiting, “It connects the interdisciplinary aspects of departments within the university.” The researcher suggests that this comment bears further consideration for all university personnel.

Benefits to the Teaching Profession

The comments recorded from project directors concerning the benefits of university led teacher recruiting to the teaching profession were numerous. However, the message basically contained two parts; benefits with regard to recruiting for larger numbers of quality candidates and benefits with regard to the high-need fields including diversity recruiting. The following presents a short discourse into each.

Recruiting for numbers

All project directors interviewed in this study indicated that the Regents’ Initiative brought more teachers into the A&M System teacher candidate pipeline. Prior to the Regents’ Initiative, university colleges of education within the A&M System were

relegated to serving those students who self selected to become a teacher. Little thought was given to teacher recruiting because teaching was commonly viewed among educators as a "calling." Similarly, just as many people believe ministers are "called" into the clergy, it is fairly common to hear educators speak of the teaching profession in a similar manner. Therefore, according to project director comments, these norms and cultural mores have prevented A&M System universities from developing a teacher recruiting mentality prior to the Regents' Initiative. The Initiative brought panache to the teaching profession with a recruiting strategy that accentuated the positives of the profession while providing substantial financial support to those recruits willing to pursue high-need teaching field.

Blue Chip recruiting, established early in the Initiative, created instant credibility for selected teacher recruits in the A&M System. By capitalizing on a universally understood term previously used exclusively in athletic nomenclature, the Blue Chip teacher recruiting program elevated the status of the teaching profession among university students within the A&M System. As one project director stated, "Because of the focus on Blue Chip recruiting, we were able to produce higher quality candidates, students who were motivated to excel in the classroom."

Another critical recruiting component of the Regents' Initiative that benefited the teaching profession was the community college Teaching Scholars Program. This program, funded by two private Texas foundations, created partnerships between A&M System universities and feeder community colleges to produce cohorts of teacher candidates through a selective recruiting process at the community college level. In most

cases, the university employed the community college director.

This person had the responsibility of recruiting and advising students through an office on the community college campus called the Teacher Development Center. Students were attracted to the program via the advising process and then selected individuals were screened and provided an opportunity to become a cohort member if they were considered full time and pursuing a “high need” teaching field. The benefits of becoming a cohort member included an opportunity to earn a performance stipend at the end of each semester for retaining full time status and a 3.0 grade point average.

“We have increased the number of teacher candidates mostly through increased transfers from the community colleges.” This is a noteworthy statement due to the difficulty in creating these partnerships early on. According to some project directors, university deans had issues with partnering with the community colleges because of a perceived competition that existed between them over freshmen recruits.

Another problem with this partnership was the perceived dilemma that university colleges of education had no control over the quality of preparation provided the community college to the Teaching Scholars. However, through faculty development grants, professional development was implemented at the community college to address alignment issues between the institutions. That being said, a couple of community college teacher recruiting partnerships failed to produce the results enjoyed by others due to regional recruiting constraints that undermined the university efforts. For example, one university truly had no feeder community college. As a result, the partnership that was established presented a distance barrier from the community college

to the university. Therefore, as students in the cohorts attained enough hours at the community college to transfer to the university, they began dropping out of the program in favor of a closer university option.

Recruiting for high-need and minorities

One of the production goals of the Regents' Initiative involved recruiting for high-need teaching fields and recruiting minorities. Prior to the Regents' Initiative, teacher candidate self-selection was the norm. But, that changed as the high profile Regents' Initiative took root and recruiters learned more about the individuals and the cultures from which they were recruiting. As a result, many universities met or exceeded their recruiting goals with regard to specific "high-need" targets and minority recruiting.

One project director stated, "We have contributed to the total of needed teachers in the state, especially in high-need areas." Another project director offered, "We experienced a drastic increase in the number of public school teachers that were produced. Many of these were attributable to active recruitment by the teacher recruiter."

As the numbers of teachers produced throughout the System increased, it became evident to project teams that many of the recruiting strategies employed as a result of the Regents' Initiative were very effective. "Funds from the Regents' Initiative enabled the recruiting effort and facilitated changing the demographics of students in the college of education." This comment mirrored comments made by other project directors and there was a general consensus that the benefits of teacher recruiting through the Regents' Initiative were experienced throughout the System.

Interview Question 3B – What are the benefits of improving the quality of teacher candidates simultaneously in a teacher preparation program?

An analysis of project director responses regarding the benefits of improving the quality of teacher candidates simultaneously in a teacher preparation program yielded four categories or areas of benefit. They are:

- Changes.
- Collaboration
- Internalization
- Prestige
- Validation

The following is a detailed interpretation of responses in each area.

Changes

Project directors concurred that change is difficult for most organizations because change involves people. It was clear to the project directors at the outset that the Regents' Initiative would bring about change. However, it was unclear to them at the time what the changes would be and the degree to which the change would impact the organizational culture. The Regents' Initiative goals were focused on teacher production and performance targets influenced by teaching shortages that were occurring in the Texas public schools during the decade of the mid to late 90's. Simultaneously, universities within the Texas A&M System were experiencing declines in teacher production. Further research of these phenomena by the Institute revealed that there were

several factors occurring in concert that impacted the shortages and declines.

The teacher shortage was impacted by a number if issues including, low pay, increased responsibilities, increased accountability, attrition of novice teachers and "baby boomer" teacher retirement. University teacher production declines were impacted by a negative public campaign and media bombardment of the perceived increasing difficulties of the profession including low pay. Also, some public school teachers were engaging in an open display of job dissatisfaction witnessed by their students. Therefore, students, especially bright and talented students, were counseled into other more lucrative and rewarding professions during degree and career planning sessions with the school counselor.

The Regents' Initiative was designed to meet the challenge of reversing these trends head-on. Simply revealing the problem would not cause change to occur. Public school administration was aware that they were experiencing teacher shortages but had done little to reverse the trend. Universities were aware of their declining teacher production numbers but had revealed no systemic strategies to correct the situation. As one project director put it, "The Regents' Initiative occurred at the right time." As a result, the universities benefited from the changes that occurred. "The Regents' Initiative brought attention to the needed changes in the teacher preparation program. We were able to better educate our students by aligning the standards required at the high school level and community college level with our taught and tested curriculum," one stated.

To go further, another stated, "The process initiated the alignment of our practice with the standards for core curriculums and the State Board for Educator Certification

standards." Through the alignment process, another profound institutional discovery occurred as evidenced by this statement, "Through the alignment process we increased the knowledge of standards alignment with our teacher graduates." This process increased the visibility and the importance of alignment to the standards for all stakeholders. It improved the overall teacher preparation process in most A&M System universities. One project director stated, "A few courses were added because of a disconnect we discovered as a result of faculty in different colleges at the university talking to one another." The communication process was improved and awareness created action among faculty members.

Collaboration

Collaboration is a term that was used repeatedly by project directors to describe many activities related to the Regents' Initiative. As a result of these collaborations, relationships developed, learning occurred and changes took place. A component of the Regents' Initiative designed specifically to increase collaboration and involvement of arts and sciences faculty in improving teacher preparation was the Academy for Educator Development. Appointed by university presidents, the prestige of becoming an Academy member elevated the teacher preparation agenda to a new level. It increased university educational research collaborations through relationship development brought about by awarding research grants to projects that met criteria established by the Institute in collaboration with the deans of the colleges of education. Researchers were provided an opportunity to showcase their findings by attending conferences hosted by the

Institute for School-University Partnerships. In support, one director stated, “The Academy for Educator Development created a climate for change that had not happened before. Conferences offered by the Regents’ Initiative have increased good will and encouraged participation of the Academy members.”

Another stated, “The Regents’ Initiative research grants led to collaborations between departments and public schools. The intangible value will be difficult to assess because of the depth of the collaborations. Relationships were forged that facilitated positive interaction between departments and personnel – taking the time necessary to show appreciation, through acknowledgment and reward, for our efforts.” This statement represents only a small sampling of the positive regard that was expressed by the project directors over the benefits of implementing the Academy for Educator Development. As a result of these forged relationships, more students were identified in the arts and sciences than ever before who wanted to become teachers. The collaboration also created “a greater understanding of public schools and their needs” among university faculty members.

Internalization

The Regents’ Initiative began almost simultaneously with the Texas Higher Education Board’s “Closing the Gaps” initiative in 2000. In many ways, one leveraged the implementation of the other in A&M System universities. Occurring at about the same time was a new set of state standards for educator certification. Though these incidents combined to create the environment necessary for change, only the Regents’

Initiative contained accountability factors that were common across the A&M System.

The Regents' Initiative required the universities to count the number of students recruited, prepared and certified in high-need areas and track students in the teacher production pipeline by teaching interest and ethnicity. This created an internalization process that caused universities to focus on other factors. "It forced the university to pay attention to naturalistic circumstances of students, such as why they dropped out, why they failed and why they transferred to other institutions."

Many university teacher recruiters and project directors developed improvement strategies to address student retention which were shared throughout the System. One strategy that paid off for most universities was inviting upper classmen that were former teacher recruits to assist with teacher recruiting events. This created a natural link to the college of education for freshmen recruits and also helped to foster relationships with individuals differing in age and levels of education and who possessed the same basic goals. As a result, "more students are staying successful through graduate school" one director stated.

Prestige

Prestige was a factor that was valued by many faculty members in higher education according to the university project directors. It may be attributable to a deep human desire by most individuals to be loved, accepted and appreciated by peers. The Regents' Initiative increased the prestige for university participants due to the wide spread positive publicity that it received at the local, state and national levels. "The

Regents; Initiative provided a statewide perspective with good press. It raised the status of the A&M System in external environment and was often a topic of discussion at state meetings," described one project director. Others cited prestige issues observable in the university environment at the president and provost levels as well as the faculty level. Generally, the prestige factor may have significantly impacted teacher preparation performance at most of the A&M System universities.

Validation

The external validation of a job well done by members of the public school community was not an expected benefit of the Regents' Initiative, according to one project director. "We received feedback from our local school districts constantly on the quality of the teacher candidates that we produced" A comment offered by another project director indicates that public schools value the work being done at the university to improve teachers being prepared to enter area public schools. He states, "Our teacher graduates are recognized by our public schools as good teachers." One project director theorized that "better teachers produce better student results in public schools, which in turn produces higher teacher retention rates." This statement adds a new perspective to the teacher retention issue in public schools.

Interview Question 3C – What are the benefits associated with a university led teacher retention effort?

A thorough analysis of the project director responses regarding the benefits

associated with a university-led teacher retention effort yielded three categories of responses. These are:

- University impact.
- Improved teacher retention.
- Strengthened partnerships.

The following is a detailed description of researcher interpretations of project director responses concerning the benefits of a university led teacher retention program.

University Impact

Project directors were prolific with their responses when asked to describe the benefits of a university led teacher retention program. The most significant responses, in terms of university internalization of the reform effort, seemed related to an impact that the program had on the university. One project director stated, “We always felt responsible for how our graduates would succeed in the field, but increased retention efforts gave us direction for accepting true accountability. More importantly, our graduates realized that the university did not want to forget them, and that we will always be a resource for them in all aspects of their careers.” Variations of this comment were duplicated by many project directors indicating to me that an awareness or enlightenment occurred that impacted faculty thinking at the university.

One project director revealed a proactive change that was made at the university as a result of faculty and leadership becoming more aware of teacher retention issues. He stated, “We became more proactive by addressing many teacher retention issues early by

providing field-based experiences early in the students' course of study." Other statements indicated that program changes at the undergraduate level brought about by implementing a formal teacher retention program helped them to better prepare teacher candidates by addressing novice teacher issues early as well providing more continuity between theory and practice.

Another benefit cited by many project directors was the increased enrollment of novice teacher graduates into Masters level programs. As a result, some A&M System universities began implementing longitudinal studies to tract teacher graduates for up to four years after graduation. Initially, these studies relied on data generated by the State Board for Educator Certification. But, at least one project director indicated that his university has begun looking at other more productive and informative ways of obtaining this information. The universities used this data to inform the effectiveness of the teacher preparation programs at the university by identifying the retention rate of teachers produced at their university and the reasons for both teacher longevity and teachers leaving the profession prematurely.

Others cited the mentoring aspects of their teacher induction program as having benefited both novice teachers and teacher preparation faculty. The teacher mentors, selected differently throughout the System, were considered experienced master teachers and were assigned to provide assistance, leadership and support to the novice teacher. The mentor used a variety of means to provide support including face-to-face meetings, phone conversations, seminars, group sessions and physically assisting the teacher in tasks that seemed to be overwhelming to the novice. The teacher mentors, in many cases,

provided feedback to the university for the purpose of improving teacher preparation in areas of concern. Most of the A&M System universities developed feedback loops that provided a continuous stream of information used to improve teacher preparation and teacher retention.

Improved Teacher Retention

According to many project directors, the efforts of their university toward implementing a teacher retention program paid dividends by increasing the teacher retentions rates of their first year teachers. One director boasted that their program had impacted first year teacher retention rates locally to over 80 percent. Another project director stated, “It has caused us to re-think the way we do business with regard to our field-based experiences. We have moved from a student teaching experience format to a yearlong internship. Thus far, with the post baccalaureate internship program we have a very high retention rate.”

This program provided on the job support through a yearlong internship of coursework that was primarily field-based and deeply rooted in educational “theory to practice” philosophy. University sponsored field-based experiences for teacher candidates, whether they are pre-service or post-graduation, especially when coupled with university and partnering school support, impact teacher candidates and novice teachers in a positive way.

One director explained an innovative program that was developed at her university specifically to improve teacher retention. She stated, “One of the spin-offs of

this effort was that we created a professional development school where university seniors are actually employed by the school district working under a master teacher." Another project director stated, "We have developed a system for making teacher induction a force that creates support for new teachers."

The programs generated at the university level as a result of the Regents' Initiative seemed to have significantly impacted university led partnerships for the purposes of professional development. One project director exclaimed, "A year out from inception, we are essentially losing no students – who are more experienced and confident in handling teaching challenges." Although there are many unanswered questions about how universities can impact teacher retention, at least some of them are being answered by A&M System universities as a result of the Regents' Initiative teacher induction programs.

Strengthened Partnerships

The final category of project director responses concerning the benefits of a university led teacher retention program is strengthened partnerships. Partnering in this context refers to public school partnerships. Although many universities throughout the nation maintain partnerships with public schools for the purposes of teacher preparation, most are loosely coupled and serve as professional development schools for student teachers. Few partnerships exist where faculty members of both educational entities interact on a regular basis and provide constructive feedback to one another for the purpose of program change in order to impact student and teacher performance.

The A&M System universities, through the Regents' Initiative, developed public school partnerships to create a bridge between the public schools and the university, especially in the area of teacher support. One project director indicated that the increased visibility of university faculty in the local public schools cemented their relationship and helped them build a close personal relationship with public school teachers that impacted the teacher preparation and retention processes. Another stated that their teacher retention partnerships increased the awareness among regional public school educators of their university programs.

Other benefits described by project directors included more partnering schools hiring their teacher graduates, and growing interest in university graduate programs, increased flexibility at the university level in delivering program content and increased acknowledgements from partnering schools that the A&M System university graduates are better prepared.

Interview Question 3D – Are there other benefits associated with improving teacher recruiting, preparation and retention efforts?

There were only a few project directors that responded to this question. However, the statements offered lend more credible evidence that the Regents' Initiative created a beneficial environment for change for at least some of the A&M System universities.

"We have internalized some of the components from the Regents' Initiative – the Academy for Educator Development, teacher recruiting and educational action research," offered one project director. Another spoke of the "good press" that

recognized the statewide scope of the Regents' Initiative being beneficial for their regional institution. One director experienced an epiphany stating, "The concept of using universities to lead in affecting student outcomes in public schools was wonderful! It made us feel good to know that we were positively impacting the students that we served."

The benefits of the Regents' Initiative as perceived by the project directors were many. Although every benefit was not common to all universities, it was clear that all universities experienced some benefit from participating in the Regents' Initiative. The established relationships between faculty members, program changes, research collaborations and partnering aspects of the Initiative were consistently revered among project directors as lasting benefits.

Summary

The data for this study, gathered through interviews, document reviews and observations revealed that the Regents' Initiative was considered by project directors to be a visionary educational reform initiative that was challenging yet rewarding. According to project directors, successful implementation required committed leadership, adequate resources, clear communication, relationship building and providing rewards those who put forth Herculean effort toward the project goals.

The findings revealed that personnel selection was critical to the successful attainment of Initiative goals by university project teams. According to project directors, operationalizing teacher recruiting was challenges and required collaborative

management in order to concentrate recruiting activities for the purpose of achieving recruitment targets.

The Regents' Initiative teacher preparation program improvement strategies helped universities accomplish increasing both the quality and quantity of teacher candidates matriculating through the program. This was done by focusing on the recruitment of higher achieving high school and community college students and focusing on the alignment of course curriculum to state standards and implementing a practice Pedagogy and Professional Responsibility ExCET exam for students seeking state teacher certification.

To increase the visibility and awareness of teacher recruiting and preparation issues within the university, an Academy for Educator Development was created to engage arts and sciences faculty into the teacher recruiting effort. The Academy became involved in teacher recruitment and improved teacher preparation efforts by participating in collaborative research grants, presentation conferences and symposia.

The Regents' Initiative also influenced university leadership to accept the role of change agent through the establishment of the President's Advisory Council on each university campus. These councils consisted of university presidents, provosts and deans, community college presidents, public school superintendents, community and business leaders. The purpose of the Presidential Advisory Council was to identify and address teacher recruiting, preparation and retention needs through a partnering effort. Also, universities broadened their support internally by providing professional development opportunities for university faculty in order to create awareness and

support for the teacher recruiting and preparation goals established by the Regents' Initiative.

Another strategy that strengthened the support for the Regents' Initiative was the communications campaign that elevated the status and level of public visibility for the Initiative. System coordinator meetings were held periodically to review practices, discuss challenges and advance program implementation strategies in each university. In addition, the development of brochures, websites, management memos, proceedings documents, press releases and electronic newsletters helped to inform participants of the progress being made toward goal attainment.

Project directors identified reporting mechanisms both internally and externally as a key factor in insuring the success of the Regents' Initiative. A variety of reporting venues were established by the ISUP to create organizational transparency and keep the university project teams, legislators, state agencies, funders and the general public informed of the progress being made toward the Regents' Initiative goals. As universities became familiar with reporting data, some institutions determined that they wanted to establish other internal data gathering mechanisms that would allow them to understand more about the teachers that they prepared for purposes of program improvement.

Finally, the Regents' Initiative created the proper climate for A&M System universities to engage in a shared vision toward a common goal. The recruitment, preparation and retention of teachers were noble and practical causes. The Regents' Initiative helped the Texas A&M University System collaboratively fill a need for Texas

public schools. Although the Initiative has concluded, by overcoming the challenges and internalizing the processes, the A&M System universities will continue to reap the benefits of their efforts.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Chapter V, the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations are presented based on researcher interpretations of the data, which were colored by researcher experience, the researcher constructs developed during the interviews and the research environment during the research process. Following the summary of findings, a discussion of the conclusions, recommendations for practice and recommendations for further research are offered.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to discover the resulting successful practices of the Texas A&M University System's Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education and provide researcher interpretations of the challenges, process and benefits of implementing a teacher recruiting, preparation and retention program that is rooted in simultaneous teacher preparation improvement of both quantity and quality. The conclusions provide the reader with a schema for processing the content and understanding the findings as presented. The conclusions were derived from information provided by the project directors during the interviews and triangulated with documents created during the Regents' Initiative.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posited as a basis for this study.

1. What are the successful practices in teacher recruitment within The Texas A&M University System as perceived by project directors of The Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education?
2. What are the successful practices of simultaneous improvement of quality and quantity in teacher preparation programs within The Texas A&M University System as perceived by project directors of The Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education?
3. What are the successful practices of a university-led teacher retention program within The Texas A&M University System as perceived by project directors of The Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education?

Summary of Findings

The key findings in this study are based on the researcher interpretations of interviews with Regents' Initiative project directors that served at least two years in this capacity. The reliability of researcher interpretations was achieved through member checks and triangulation with existing Regents' Initiative documents and artifacts. The summary of findings consists of three areas: Successful practices in teacher recruitment,

successful practices in simultaneous improvement of quality and quantity in teacher preparation programs and successful practices of university-led teacher retention program within The Texas A&M University System as perceived by project directors of The Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education.

Successful Practices in Teacher Recruitment

The successful practices in teacher recruitment as a core strategy of the Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education were based on researcher interpretations of perceptions provided by project directors through interviews. The best practices emerged through researcher analysis of the perceived challenges, processes and benefits of implementing teacher recruiting, simultaneous quality and quantity improvement of teacher preparation and university led teacher retention practices as demonstrated through the Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education.

The university project directors cited the importance of hiring the "right" person as the teacher recruiter as critical to the success of the teacher recruiting program. Teacher recruiting routines were developed collaboratively and recruiting strategies were implemented that targeted the teacher needs of the school districts in the universities' service areas. Teacher recruiters developed personal professional relationships with the student recruits, which created connectedness and commitment. Incentives in the form of scholarships and performance stipends were provided to teacher candidates as recruiting incentives to become teachers.

Program support in the university was developed by creating opportunities for Arts and Sciences and Education faculty to collaborate on educational research through "mini" research grants awarded to members of the Academy for Educator Development. To further create both internal and external support for the program, the teacher recruiting effort was operationalized through the development of a common data gathering methodology, quarterly recruitment meetings and a System led reporting protocol.

Teacher recruiters targeted students within the university's regional service area in junior highs and high schools and community colleges by advising them of course requirements and prerequisites that could better prepare them for teaching careers. Teacher recruiters created opportunities to meet with the student and their family to cultivate their interest in teaching careers. Through the use of recruiting scholarships and performance stipends, many students were persuaded to pursue teaching careers, most in "high-need" fields.

Summer teaching camps were offered to interested high school juniors and seniors from partnering school districts, which provided additional opportunities and incentives for students to become more acquainted with the university and teaching as a career choice. The universities' teacher recruiters also promoted educational careers by participating in "Discover Teaching" days at partnering community colleges. These events provided community college students the opportunity to visit face-to-face with teacher recruiters, learn more about the degree requirements necessary for transfer and

discover more about teaching professions including salary, common benefits and areas of highest need.

The teacher recruiting benefits enjoyed by most of the universities included increasing the prestige of the college of education in the university setting through collaboration, increased enrollment and recruiting goal attainment. Also, the educational community was benefited by the university bringing focus to a shared value that is important to schools, colleges and communities; quality teachers. Most importantly, teacher recruitment benefited the teaching profession by enabling A&M System universities to produce more quality teachers in high-need teaching fields and increasing the number of minority teachers across the state.

Successful Practices in Improving Both Quality and Quantity in Teacher Production

The Texas A&M University System developed an infrastructure that supported teacher preparation improvement through core strategies rooted in quality. To measure the incremental improvement of teacher candidates, the A&M System established a culture of evidence documenting teacher preparation improvement for each university through data gathering, assessment and systemic reporting to internal and external stakeholders. The System employed a dichotomous approach to improving teacher candidate quality. On the recruitment front, the Blue Chip recruiting strategy enabled universities to focus their recruiting efforts on high performing high school and community college students, thereby increasing the quality of candidates in the teacher

candidate pipeline.

On the back side, the measure of excellence for teacher candidates was their performance on the state certification Pedagogy and Professional Responsibility ExCET test. The performance standards that A&M universities set through the Regents' Initiative was 90 percent passing rates for first time test takers or 20 percent improvement over the previous year's pass rate. To further increase student performance, universities engaged in curriculum alignment strategies with public schools and feeder community colleges to ensure instructional alignment with the state and national standards and increase the likelihood that transfer students' course selections would articulate with university degree requirements.

To influence improvement of secondary teacher candidates, the System engaged Arts and Sciences faculty at each university through professional development activities at System hosted conferences and symposia. Academy members became further involved in teacher recruitment and preparation through System sponsored collaborative research grants. The relationships that were formed between Academy members as a result of these activities became a celebrated tenet of the Regents' Initiative that remained after the Initiative ended.

Successful Practices in University Led Teacher Retention

The Regents' Initiative exerted pressure on A&M System universities to become actively involved with teacher retention issues and develop working relationships with local and regional school districts for the purpose of improving teacher retention. Due to

regional differences in teacher retention issues, e.g., geographic proximity to school districts, differences in teaching demands and assignments, cultural and socio-economic issues, university led teacher retention programs throughout the System differed from institution to institution. However, one commonality that existed was the professional development component geared to these regional differences.

Some universities implemented a professional development component that was embedded in rigorous graduate level course work leading to a Masters degree for the participant. Others delivered the professional development in partnership with school districts granting course credit and offering stipends to participants. Two universities provided professional development to novice teachers in a symposium format on Saturdays developing the agenda and discussion topic in collaboration with the novice teachers in order to provide relevancy and timeliness to the training and support. Some universities enlisted master teachers as mentors for the beginning teachers, providing classroom, organizational and moral support to the novice in critical times of need.

Although most of the university led novice teacher support was concentrated within school districts in close proximity to the universities, all programs reported increased teacher retention rates as a result of their direct involvement with their public school partners in providing flexible professional development designed to meet the needs of the participants. In addition, the university benefited from the teacher retention efforts by increasing awareness among public school teachers of university programs and available support for teachers.

Conclusions

Researcher conclusions determined that the Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education was one of the first attempts by a large American university system to address teacher quantity and quality simultaneously through systemic reform of teacher preparation through recruitment, preparation and retention strategies involving every university within the System. Established in 1999 as a five year grant funded reform initiative, the Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education was created to answer a call for more and better teachers. Events leading to this Initiative included increasing teacher shortages in Texas public schools, declining teacher production rates within the A&M System and increased state and federal standards for student achievement. The Regents' Initiative was a leap of faith towards conclusions drawn by Burstein et al. (1999) and Peel et al. (2002) that the growing teacher shortage may be best achieved by encouraging educational agencies to develop alliances and partnerships to determine strategies and share resources to collaboratively achieve the desired outcome.

Clearly, leadership plays a fundamental and critical role in developing the recruiting plan and moving the organization in a successful direction (Edens, Shirley, & Toner, 2001). Conclusions revealed that the A&M System leadership was visionary in creating an Initiative involving collaborations with state agencies and statewide schools, identifying the needs and investing time, resources, and energy into an ambitious long-term plan aimed at moving the state teacher production totals in a positive direction. Such long-term plans are unusual and representative of vision and commitment by

stakeholders. Conclusions revealed that leadership played an important role in the successful development and implementation of the Regents' Initiative. System and university leadership influenced resource allocation, which basically determined the things that were deemed important in the university culture. The accomplishment of Regents' Initiative goals was directly related to the commitment of university leadership to remain connected to the Initiative and participate in the development of school-university partnerships.

Further, a premature departure from central decision-making by top leadership diminishes the likelihood of school-university partnership success (Edens, Shirley, & Toner, 2001). In the one instance where little or no attrition of project team members occurred, the university consistently achieved its goals, met reporting timelines early and internalized the Regents' Initiative strategies and core components with the least amount of friction. The critical mass of university faculty and the Regents' project team remained consistently committed to the goals of the Initiative throughout the duration of the project.

According to Peel and Walker (1995) the essential aspects of establishing functional school-university partnerships include development of clear common goals, support of mutual trust and respect, maintenance of open communication, and ongoing clarification of shared responsibility by all stakeholders. Through this study, researcher conclusions support the tenets of Peel and Walker's (1995) research. The Regents' Initiative provides a successful example to other institutions of higher education and higher education systems that combined efforts involving visionary leadership,

consistency of purpose, adequate funding and collaborative shared responsibilities can create the proper atmosphere for successful institutional and programmatic change.

Krajewski (1996) stated that the leader is the chief enculturation agent and owns the responsibility for developing and nurturing a collaborative culture. Conclusions determined that A&M System leadership collaboratively set and clearly defined teacher recruiting goals for the System and for each university, which became the driving force behind the System's teacher recruitment effort. Also, the Initiative clearly delineated the types of collaborations and partnerships necessary to ensure teacher recruitment success. This strategy is supported through research by Burstein et al. (1999) who determined that school-university partnerships can offer a practical solution to recruiting, preparing and retaining teachers.

One of the main reasons cited in the literature for failings of school-university partnerships is the entrenched practices of both bureaucracies, i.e., implementation of effective practices are impacted by organizational calendars, lack of administrative commitment, time constraints, resources, and the extraordinary amount of energy and time required by both parties to create and sustain bureaucratic change (Burstein, Kretschmer, Smith, & Gudoski, 1999). Researcher conclusions yielded that the A&M System universities initially and periodically experienced the challenges cited in the literature by Burstein and others. However, the commitment demonstrated by institutional and System leadership coupled with a shared sense of responsibility throughout the System for the success of the Initiative combined to create a unique atmosphere for success enabling the universities to find solutions around bureaucratic

challenges through collaboration and information sharing among and between the member institutions.

Krajewski (1996) contended that building on others' strengths, consistently communicating the vision and modeling shared decision-making increases the achievement growth for all. Burstein et al. (1999) stated that higher education leadership must recognize, understand and value the potential in developing school-university partnerships for the purposes of collaborative teacher and administrator research and field-based experiences by modeling partnership outreach. Conclusions yielded that the core components of the A&M System's Regents' Initiative promulgated partnership development with state agencies, public schools and community colleges for the purposes of recruiting, preparing and retaining teachers.

In order to increase both the quantity and quality of teachers prepared by A&M System universities, it became necessary for project directors to look beyond the walls of the College of Education to broaden the impact. For secondary certification areas such as mathematics, science, language arts and social studies, most undergraduates spend the majority of their higher educational experience in the colleges of arts and sciences (Szuminski, 1993; Darling-Hammond, 1994a). Further, the arts and sciences faculty are generally grounded in content rather than pedagogy. Therefore, to help resolve this issue, the A&M System created the Academy for Educator Development as one of the core strategies of the Regents' Initiative. It was designed to engage arts and sciences faculty into the teacher recruiting and preparation discussion through a series of professional

development activities in pedagogy and content delivery and collaborative research opportunities initiated across the System.

To further validate the professional development of Academy members, collaborative research mini-grants were established to incentivize arts and sciences faculty to not only value educational research but also participate in it. Conclusions revealed that these activities cemented the relationships between the college of education faculty and the arts and sciences faculty creating a larger impact area that accelerated the progress toward the quantity and quality goals.

The focus of the Regents' Initiative professional development activities was extended to alignment processes that crossed high school, community college and university boundaries. To align the university curriculums with the taught curriculums in high schools, the Academic Roadmap Project was implemented to facilitate the alignment process. Educators from area high schools, partnering community colleges and A&M System universities came together to bridge the gaps that were discovered in the curricula. In addition, the standards guiding instruction at all three levels were reviewed and discussed to create a common understanding of the barriers that hindered the alignment process and collaboratively developed solutions to the problems. Conclusions revealed that the alignment process was valued by the university participants and resulted in changes in many professors' course syllabi improving content preparation for teacher candidates.

Researcher conclusions also revealed that implementing teacher recruiting in the Colleges of Education and broadening university involvement in teacher recruiting

through the Academy for Educator Development was considered novel by project directors. Conclusions further revealed that recruiting through the College of Education and the Academy resulted in drastically increased teacher production rates in A&M System universities and higher performances rates by teacher candidates on ExCET exams. The program strategies employed by the Regents' Initiative helped fill the void in the research literature concerning specific university based programs designed to increase the quantity and quality of teacher candidates simultaneously through direct recruiting supervised by colleges of education and involving Arts and Sciences faculty through improving educational content mastery of teacher candidates.

To increase the quantity and quality of teacher candidates, the Regents' Initiative focused on targeted recruitment of candidates in junior highs, high schools, community colleges and universities. The recruitment targets were based on specific teacher needs in Texas' public schools, i.e., African-American, Hispanic, mathematics, science, special education, bilingual, and technology. According to Rose & Gallup (2000), most recruitment efforts focus on attracting people into the teaching profession in general, or into teaching positions in targeted public schools or districts.

The overall A&M System goal was to increase teacher production by 33 percent over the five-year period. Instead, conclusions indicated that the A&M System increased teacher production by over 50 percent during the five grant period. Additionally, the System achieved or made substantial progress toward goals of increasing the number of teacher candidates in high-need teaching fields (science, math, bilingual, special education, and foreign language). Almost as important, the A&M System universities

united around a common mission – to improve teacher preparation and through that function, improve public school effectiveness.

A holistic “one size fits all” approach to teacher recruiting and teacher retention practices proved not to be the best strategy due to the unique regional aspects of individual universities and university cultures within the A&M System. For example, along the southern border of Texas where larger concentrations of native Hispanic and Mexican immigrant populations are located, teacher recruiting was more time consuming and labor intensive than that experienced by other university teacher recruiters in the A&M System. This was attributed to the perceived necessity of the student recruit to involve his or her family into the communication and decision making process. Although teaching careers are highly regarded among Hispanic families, most Hispanic teacher candidates were unwilling to relocate into other “needy” areas of the state because of their close family ties.

In west Texas, the Regents’ Initiative diversity targets and “high-need” fields created limitations because the regional teacher needs of public schools did not mirror the needs of public schools in the larger urban populations in north, north central and southeast Texas. Due to these regional differences and limited resources available at each institution, it became increasingly important for the teacher recruiting program in each university to specifically target the regional teacher shortages in their service area rather than pursue the university targets established by the Regents’ Initiative. Since all university teacher production totals were aggregated into a System total, overall System

teacher production goals were achieved or exceeded in most areas. However, a few universities failed to achieve specific university teacher production goals in some areas.

Although the latest federal mandate increases the pressure for public schools and universities to partner and collaborate in order to meet the sweeping changes ordered by the legislation (Sunderman, G. L. & Kim, J., 2004), there exist few successful examples of school-university partnerships created for the purpose of systemic educational reform of teacher preparation combined with teacher recruiting and retention. Most school-university partnerships are created for professional development schools. Theoretically, these partnership schools provide clinically supervised opportunities for field-based experiences for the teacher candidate toward the end of the undergraduate experience. Ironically, the most common criticism by participants of professional development schools associated with these types of partnerships is the lack of supervision and relevant feedback (Burstein, Kretschmer, Smith, & Gudoski, 1999; Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

Professional development schools have also attracted criticism over the years for the entrenched structure that perpetuates them (Pajak 2001). However, Burstein, et al. (1999) submits that vested interests by the participating partners should create a rich environment for success. The researcher's conclusions support Burstein's theory. The Texas A&M University System, in concert with the State and federal agencies and private foundations, created the appropriate environment for change by collaboratively assessing and identifying the educational needs of public schools with regard to teacher shortages and choosing an area of improvement in which the universities could make a positive impact. Through the Regents' Initiative, the A&M System universities were

provided strategies and financial resources to enable them to overcome the teacher production declines that were occurring System-wide, which, in turn, positively impacted State-wide teacher shortages.

According to Peel, Peel, & Baker (2002), tenure and academic freedom become the stalwarts of the professoriate that dictate the direction of independent action; therefore to create organizational movement, ordinarily, it is necessary to do so by decree. Conclusions revealed that, although the Regents' Initiative was viewed by most university project directors as a top down mandate, most also agreed that the Initiative required dictatorial leadership initially to properly motivate universities to action. However, the researcher concluded that as the Initiative progressed and university project teams gained a better understanding of the processes, they soon became accustomed to working together toward common goals and consequently, decision-making became more collaborative in nature.

In most of the literature embodying teacher retention, there exist some basic assumptions concerning beginning teachers. All new teachers have two jobs (Fideler & Haselkorn, 1999); teachers have to teach and they have to learn to teach. Most urban districts provide some kind of support to beginning teachers, usually in the form of mentoring, though loosely defined. These teacher induction initiatives are part of a larger effort to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools by focusing on the recruitment, preparation, retention, and renewal of teachers (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996). Conclusions revealed that the efforts of The

Texas A&M University System through the Regents' Initiative support the Commission's report.

With regard to the A&M System's teacher retention efforts under the Regents' Initiative, the researcher concluded that there were considerable benefits experienced by the universities, public school partners and novice teachers. University novice teacher outreach programs created an awareness of university programs among public school teachers in the university service area that increased teacher participation in these programs. Also, the researcher concluded that partnership connections to public schools were enhanced through university efforts to support novice teachers. Conclusions also revealed that university efforts to aid and assist the novice teacher through mentoring, seminars, or professional development positively impacted teacher retention and increased the first year teacher retentions rates. This finding supports conclusions by other researchers that there is no question that teacher retention programs through an induction model have merit (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

However, the researcher also concluded that most project directors perceived that teacher retention was more the role of public schools rather than universities because most of the variables affecting novice teacher retention are controlled by the school district and more specifically the campus principal. This conclusion parallels Fullan's (2003) suggestion that there are many factors outside of university control after teacher candidates leave the institution. Basically, according to Fullan, in most scenarios, disconnections exist between the university college of education and the public school sector. For example, researcher conclusions revealed that it was difficult or impossible

for each of the A&M System universities to provide personal novice teacher support to every teacher graduate due to logistics, i.e., distance from the university and finding faculty at the university willing to provide novice teacher assistance because of the time intensive nature of the task and extensive travel involved. Therefore, novice teacher support was mainly delivered through programs to partnering public schools in closer proximity to A&M System universities or through professional development activities offered on the university campus.

Conclusions also revealed that one of the most successful novice teacher programs in the A&M System included both mentoring and graduate course work leading to a Masters degree. Sustainability of the program was rooted in the regional demand for teachers, ease of program accessibility to participants and participant program costs assessed by the university. The researcher also concluded that the individuals selected to coordinate novice teacher activities on each university campus played a critical role in creating a successful program. In one instance, a university teacher induction coordinator traveled to area public schools several times a week and personally placed flyers in novice teachers' boxes informing them of university led novice teacher support activities and campus based seminars. The personal attention provided to the novice teachers by the university coordinator created a connection between the novice teacher and the university. This type of personal attention appeared to be valued by the novice teachers.

In summary, researcher conclusions revealed that the Regents' Initiative increased the prestige for university participants due to the wide spread positive

publicity that it received at the local, state and national levels. It raised the status of the A&M System in external environments and was often a topic of discussion at state meetings. It also increased awareness and appreciation for the Initiative internally at the president, provost and faculty levels. Across A&M System universities, the prestige factor may have significantly impacted teacher preparation performance due to the lure of the high profile initiative fostering university faculty volunteerism in the later stages of the Regents' Initiative. The researcher concluded that collaborations among faculty members in other colleges within the university, through fellowships and mini-research grants, fostered relationship building that many project directors indicated would not have occurred otherwise. According to Gayton (1997), educational partnerships should approach the development of relationships in the same manner as any well run organization in the public or private sectors, whereby stakeholders collaborate in the development of policies and practices. Teacher preparation must rise to such a level of importance that all stakeholders recognize that any one educational entity may not be able to adequately impact teacher candidates enough to create a spiraling improvement cycle.

Finally, conclusions revealed that System and university leadership involved with the Regents' Initiative established celebratory events at each A&M System university campus for the purpose of recognizing significant contributions of individuals toward Regents' Initiative goal attainment. This activity reflected conclusions by Sergiovanni (1996) and Klenke (2003) that leadership must recognize the important contributions that individuals make toward achieving collaborative goals in order for any

educational initiative to reach full maturity The A&M System celebratory events, called dissemination events, involved participants from partnering public schools, community colleges, university faculty, legislators, local politicians, System administrators and other stakeholders and brought proper closure to the Regents' Initiative. As an added benefit, a certificate of appreciation, signed by the governor, and an American flag recently flown over the state capitol building were presented to each College of Education Dean.

Recommendations for Best Practice

Synergism catalyzed by collaboration and the combined creative energies and assumed responsibilities of individuals can create a climate suitable for simultaneous organizational goal attainment and personal goal attainment (Boone & Bowen, 1987). Shared decision-making creates shared ownership when the vision is communicated clearly and effectively. Also, shared resources through partnering provide each educational entity a degree of equity into the partnership and access to greater resources.

However, building support for collaboration in any educational change endeavor involving school-university partnerships may be challenging due to time requirements, changes in routines, limited financial resources, institutional commitment, individual stakeholder buy-in and participant understandings of the processes required to achieve goals. The human spirit, however, cannot be measured in these terms. Therefore, it becomes imperative for leaders evoking change in universities to properly motivate individuals to collaborate on educational issues and then harness the energy emitted by

their collective creativeness and channel it toward organizational goal attainment. The Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education represents such an example.

The following recommendations for best practice represent conclusions drawn by the researcher based on Regents' Initiative project director interview responses triangulated with Regents' Initiative documents, archival data and A&M System reports and publications. The reader must draw conclusions as to whether these recommendations are applicable to other universities or university systems engaged in teacher preparation and school-university partnership development.

The following represent recommendations for best practice in developing school-university partnerships for the purposes of teacher recruitment, improved teacher preparation and teacher retention.

- It is recommended that universities interested in improving teacher recruitment, preparation and retention develop school-university partnership advisory councils that include university leadership, community college and public school administration, business and community leaders to collaboratively assess regional educational needs impacting teaching and learning, gain consensus for the desired outcomes, determine goals, objectives and strategies, set timelines and secure necessary resources sufficient enough to attainment goals.
- It is recommended that educational entities entering into school-university partnerships to improve teacher recruitment, preparation and retention develop project teams with clearly defined roles, skill sets and

job descriptions for leaders and coordinators. Team members should carefully be selected and desired outcomes and processes communicated effectively.

- It is recommended that universities establish benchmarks for teacher production and evaluate university performance toward goal attainment through existing data collected by the university, university system or state agencies to insure alignment with existing reports and improve comprehension by stakeholders. It is also recommended that, midway through the initiative, external evaluation teams be employed to objectively assess institutional progress toward goals and provide relevant constructive feedback to project teams of the findings.
- It is recommended that universities arrange curriculum alignment sessions with high school and community college faculty in core subject areas in the university's service area to identify gaps in instruction and areas in university faculty syllabi that fail to align with state and federal educational standards.
- To broaden institutional involvement, it is recommended that university leadership consider establishing an academy of faculty members that receive special status through incentives and perks that will promote collaborative research and an appreciation for teacher recruitment, preparation and retention practices. It is also recommended that academy faculty be provided opportunities to present the findings of their research

to peers and other education professionals and to be considered for best practice if applicable.

- It is recommended that universities engaging in teacher recruiting, preparation and retention initiatives establish routine project monitoring practices through reporting protocols collecting data that will inform management decisions and communication to stakeholders.
- It is recommended that universities seeking to implement teacher recruiting through their College of Education develop partnerships with regional public schools and school districts providing incentives for partnership participation by giving priority to district juniors and seniors to enrollment opportunities to summer teaching camps and provide scholarships to those students interested in teaching in “high-need” teaching fields. It is also recommended that universities implement a recruiting strategy that elevates students that meet established criteria to an exclusive status on campus, similar to the A&M System’s Blue Chip Recruit.
- It is recommended that universities collaboratively celebrate successes and provide rewards for individuals and universities that have exhibited stellar performances toward project implementation and goal attainment.

Each of these concepts represents powerful strategies that have the potential to transform existing university teacher preparation programs into higher producing and more accountable programs. However, when attempted in concert, though challenging,

they can provide a framework for systemic teacher recruitment, preparation and retention strategies that impact public schools and institutions of higher education in a very positive way.

Recommendations for Further Research

In order for educational reform movements involving teacher preparation to build on previous successes of similar reforms, it is imperative that rigorous educational research continues in the area of partnership development, teacher recruiting, preparation and retention and collaborative strategic planning towards a common goal. The following are recommendations for future study germane to this research.

- It is recommended that additional studies be developed that measure the impact of novice teachers on student performance.
- It is recommended that more research be developed on school-university partnerships to measure their impact on both teacher preparation and student achievement.
- It is recommended that further research be done in the area of measuring and defining student attrition during undergraduate studies and identifying effective strategies for properly retaining students in colleges and universities.
- It is recommended that further research be done that measures the affects of scholarships on career decision-making processes of high school, community college and university students.

- It is recommended that more research be done in the area of identifying effective and cost efficient methods of retaining teachers beyond their first five years in the profession.
- It is recommended that continued research be done in the area of teacher preparation to identify more effective teacher preparation practices leading to more successful teaching experiences of novice teachers.

In addition to identifying further research topics that address teacher preparation and partnership development issues, educators are encouraged to increase their participation in legislation development that supports educational partnerships and improved teacher preparation. One of the major inputs required to increase educational reform is additional funding for educational research and institutional capacity building. Vast resources are needed to provide professional development of “best practice” to university faculty and program development that is research based.

Most university programs are entrenched in bureaucratic practices that require Herculean efforts to change. The reasons for this entrenchment varies somewhat by institution, however, one reason is that the success of large bureaucratic programs, like teacher preparation, require adherence to state mandates and licensure requirements. The processes and procedures necessary to maximize the uniformity and consistency of these programs eventually become institutional or departmental policy in order to create sustainability of program quality during periods of university teacher attrition or leadership transition. However, this creates program inflexibility.

As federal and state mandates address the highly qualified teacher, it becomes increasingly challenging for universities' traditional teacher preparation programs to compete with alternative certification programs. Had university programs been able to adapt to the changing needs of students and mid-career professionals more readily, it may never have been necessary for alternative certification programs to become a dominating force in educator preparation. Although there are many quality alternative certification programs in existence, the fact that they are in existence is the basis for my argument.

Final Thoughts

As Texas and other states become more diverse and state resources fall short of increased budget demands, it will be increasingly important for public schools to provide successful educational experiences that result in better opportunities for the children that they serve. Educators will increasingly be challenged with classroom diversity, increasing standards for student academic performance and limited resources. Therefore, teacher recruiting, preparation and retention will increasingly be priorities for public schools and universities. It will be difficult if not impossible for educational entities to work in isolation to solve these growing challenges.

Also, increased accountability, higher standards for student performance and reduced resources may leave public schools and public universities unable to function at their highest capacities. Therefore, it will become increasingly important for these educational entities to come together to collaboratively align with state, national and

regional educational needs of their constituents, and combine resources and shared ideas to overcome the immense challenges facing them. As our state and nation face diverse challenges never experienced before, it becomes increasingly important to identify outdated and ineffective teacher preparation practices so that the resources can be redirected towards program improvement.

Perhaps it is time for a new paradigm for teacher development that maximizes the learning potential of student teachers in an extended field-based experience where courses of study are delivered contextually while in the clinical teaching environment, thereby increasing the likelihood of novice teacher success. It stands to reason that increased novice teacher effectiveness should increase student performance, thus increase teacher satisfaction, which should increase teacher retention. The domino effect that teacher preparation has in increasing student achievement impacts all aspects of the educational setting including educational levels and environments. The importance of teachers can never be minimized especially when assessing their impact on the economy and continued growth of this great state and this great nation.

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