

**CAMPUS ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS INFLUENCING  
STUDENT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

A Dissertation

by

LAURA DAWN BOREN

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

December 2011

Major Subject: Educational Administration

Campus Environmental Factors Influencing  
Student Leadership Development and Civic Engagement  
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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	Bryan Cole
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**ABSTRACT**

Campus Environmental Factors Influencing  
Student Leadership Development and Civic Engagement. (December 2011)

Laura Dawn Boren, B.B.A.; M.S., Texas A&M University

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Bryan Cole

Higher education institutions are continuously called upon by society to prepare students to be engaged citizens. The purpose of this study was to identify campus environmental factors perceived to influence student leadership development and civic engagement that resulted in students' perceived capacity to create positive social change. The study was conducted at a public four-year comprehensive higher education institution regionally located in the south central region of the United States. This qualitative study examined undergraduate students' perceptions of personal leadership, influences on personal leadership development, and experiences with leadership and civic engagement. Following a naturalistic qualitative research method, interviews were conducted with ten undergraduate participants. Organization social system model and social change model of leadership development were used as conceptual frameworks for the study. The researcher determined from participant responses that peer and mentor relationships, community identity, personal identity, and democratic experiences were key environmental factors influencing student leadership development and civic engagement. Collegiate relationships with peers and faculty/staff mentors were a

primary influential factor to participants' university experiences resulting in their perceived knowledge of leadership and value for civic engagement. Identity as a campus community member and local community member was an environmental factor influencing participants' commitment to civic engagement. Participants who were engaged in their personal cultural heritage articulated a deeper understanding of leadership and had a greater commitment to engaging with ethnically diverse populations. Participants who experienced the tenants of Democratic values in their academic and co-curricular experiences had a deeper sense of empowerment to create positive social change. The conclusions drawn from the researcher's findings indicate the depth to which campus environmental factors influence student leadership development and civic engagement result in the level students build their leadership knowledge and capacity. The intent of the study was to gain an understanding of a campus environment through the constructed reality of individuals within the environment in order to determine factors that can be enhanced to improve leadership development and civic engagement.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, son, parents, and all my family and friends who supported me throughout this journey. Shane, your belief in me has pushed me higher than I could have ever imagined. Cooper, you are my sunshine. Always remember that you can achieve anything your heart desires.

“Be the change you want to see in this world.” – Gandhi

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

“In the United States, as in virtually any setting, societal need has been a driving force in the founding and evolution of higher education institutions” (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2008, p.1). As such, many higher education institutions espouse to foster a learning environment that influences individuals to become positive contributing members in a global society. Universities and colleges have made substantial contributions to the advancement of public well-being through education and research (National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2008, p. 1). The relationship between higher education institutions and the public has established expectations for higher education institutions to influence individuals to take social responsibility within the academic confines of the institution and beyond. “A widely acknowledged goal of higher education is to equip students to view their own society with some detachment, to compare it with other societies, to discover discrepancies between its aspirations and its realities, to gain perspective on its social problems and short comings, and to acquire the will as well as the political and technical skills needed to work for change” (Bowen, 1980, p. 49). The result of this well-defined goal described by Bowen is engaged citizens.

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This dissertation follows the style of *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*.

“Higher education’s civic mission should be reflected in an integrated approach to fostering students’ citizenship skills through both educational and co-curricular programs and activities and conscious modeling of good citizenship through external partnerships and activities” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 66). In earlier research on citizenship, Boyer (1987) stated that the result of not cultivating good citizenship when students are in college is a detachment to civic life after college (p. 246). “Because civic responsibility is inescapably threaded with moral values, we believe that higher education must aspire to foster both moral and civic maturity and must confront educationally the many links between them” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. xxi).

Higher education institutions by the nature of their organization design are considered a social system model. “As a social system, the school is characterized by an interdependence of parts, a clearly defined population, differentiation from its environment, a complex network of social relationships, and its own unique culture” (Hoy and Miskel, 2001, p. 22). Bruner (1996) provided context to the role of culture by stating, culture “provides the tools for organizing and understanding our worlds in communicable ways” (p. 3). Chaffee and Tierney (1988) established a framework for culture by identifying three general dimensions: structure, environment, and values. “The structural dimension [of culture] refers to various ways in which the organization accomplishes its activities, including programmatic, fiscal, and governance mechanisms” (Chaffee and Tierney 1988, p. 18). Chaffee and Tierney (1988) described structure as the formalized organization chart, processes by which activities are accomplished, and the formal and informal decision making. Structure includes the day-to-day operations

and long-term planning. The environmental dimension of organization culture includes “the objective contest of people, events, demands, and constraints in which an institution finds itself” (Chaffee and Tierney, 1988, p. 20). The environment is the process by which the organization members develop an understanding of the nature of the organization. Values are “the beliefs, norms, and priorities held by members of the institution” (Chaffee and Tierney 1988, p. 20). Values are further described as being as prevalent as to the extent of congruence among individuals and subgroups (Chaffee and Tierney 1988, p. 20).

### **Higher Education’s Role in Promoting Civic Responsibility**

Higher education institution subgroups primarily consist of faculty, administrators, and students. The U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2008) identified the 2007 fall enrollment in degree-granting institutions, by age, consisted of 75 percent millennial aged students. “The first millennial babies were born in 1982...and entered college in 2000” (Howe and Strauss, 2000, p. 309). “The best-known single fact about the millennial generation is that it is large. In total number, including all immigrants, Millennials may ultimately exceed 100 million members – nearly a third more than the Boomers” (Howe and Strauss, 2000, p. 74). “Since the undergraduate’s personal contacts are chiefly with fellow students, it is further assumed that a major portion of the students environment is determined by the characteristics of his fellow students” (Astin, 1968, p. 7-8). “From the point of view of the prospective college student, the stimuli provided by his peers may represent the most

significant aspect of the college environment” (Astin, 1968, p. 15). “Several [student development] theories take the view that growth in self-awareness during the college years and an emergent understanding of and appreciation for the roles of other people and obligations to them are central features of [personal] development” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 48). “William Perry (1970, 1981) sought to map conceptually the development he observed clinically in the ‘structures which the students explicitly or implicitly impute to the world, especially those structures in which they construe the nature and origins of knowledge, of value, and of responsibility.’ (1970, p.1)” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 34). “Although both Perry and King and Kitchener recognize the linkage between cognitive development and moral reasoning, they focus primarily on cognition and learning broadly defined” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 42). Kohlberg focused his research on moral reasoning. “Kohlberg sought to delineate the nature and sequence of progressive changes in individuals’ cognitive structures and the rules these individuals use to process information when making moral judgments” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 42).

One link to moral and civic maturity is in the form of leadership development. Higher Education Research Institute (1996) identified higher education as having an essential role in educating each new generation of leaders (p. 16). Individuals can become leaders through knowledge and skills development. “The process of leadership cannot be described simply in terms of the behavior of an individual; rather, leadership involves collaborative relationships that lead to collective action grounded in the shared values of people who work together to effect positive change” (Higher Education



Research Institute, 2006, p. 16). James McGregor Burns' theory on transformational leadership is in alignment with Higher Education Research Institute (1996) description of leadership development. Burns defined transformational leadership as "a process where leaders and followers engage in a mutual process of 'raising one another to higher levels of morality and motivation'" (Burns, 1978 & Komives, S., Lucas, N., and McMahan, 2007, p. 54).

"Citizenship is an especially relevant value for leadership development in a higher education setting, since most college and universities explicitly espouse educational goals for students such as 'social responsibility' and 'preparation for citizenship' in their catalogues and mission statements" (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 66). Ehrlich (2000) stated that there are three long-term outcomes resulting from students embracing citizenship: 1) commitment to social activism, 2) sense of empowerment, 3) community involvement (p. 13 – 14). Ehrlich (2000) described civic engagement as having two components: effective operation of social systems, and successful achievement of collective goals (p. xxv). "Civic responsibility is the sense of personal responsibility individuals should feel to uphold their obligations as part of any community" (Komives, Lucas, and McMahan, 2007, p. 20).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The higher education community is consistently called upon by numerous stakeholders to promote civic engagement among students (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 277). While the majority of research on civic engagement in higher education

is linked to environments of research universities, a civically engaged campus community is driven by the environment created by faculty and staff. Astin (1968) stated,

The fact that the student on the campus serves both as a recipient of stimuli and as a source of stimulation for his peers suggests an interesting hypothesis about the dynamics of college environments: To the extent that the stimuli provided by fellow students alter the behavior of the individual student; thus altering in turn the stimuli that he provides for others, college environments are in a process of continual change (p. 15).

Education institutions focus on teaching and learning technical skills in reading, writing, and speaking and very little formal training in listening, not to mention empathy, tolerance, teamwork, mediation, and other group skills that members need to collaborate effectively (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 5). Ehrlich (2000) examined influential college environment characteristics needed to sway student commitment to social activism. Ehrlich (2000) identified a core influence to student commitment to social activism,

[environment] is the positive effect of a commitment to social activism among the student body at the institution. This suggests that regardless of students' pre-college commitment to social activist goals such as helping others in difficulty and influencing the political structure, they tend to become even more committed to these goals if they attend a college where other students espouse a social activist mentality (p. 13).

Consequently, there is a need to understand better the environmental factors that influence student leadership development that can lead to enhanced civic engagement.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify campus environmental factors perceived to influence student leadership development and civic engagement that result in students' perceived capacity to create positive social change as identified by a select group of students at a public four-year comprehensive higher education institution.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions are designed to explore campus environmental factors perceived to influence student leadership and civic engagement that result in creating positive social change. The study utilized *A Social Change Model of Leadership Development* (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996) and A. Astin and H. Astin (2000) definition of leadership as the conceptual framework. The research questions are framed to address the influence of campus environmental factors on components of the conceptual framework related to leadership, civic engagement, and social change. The qualitative research approach examined the interdependent relationships between/among the factors as opposed to a standard linear independent method.

1. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students' development of self knowledge?

2. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence a students' development of leadership competence?
3. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students' civic engagement?
4. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students' perceived capacity to make positive social change?

### **Operational Definitions**

*Civic engagement* is defined as the commitment, empowerment, and involvement in volunteerism, community service, and/or interest in politics (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 4).

*Campus environmental factors* are the “objective context of people, events, demands, and constraints in which an institution finds itself” (Chaffee and Tierney, 1988, p. 20).

*Leadership competence* is the capacity to mobilize self and others to serve and to work collaboratively to create positive social change (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 19).

*Leadership development* is defined by Astin and Astin (2000) as the process by which (1) one gains self-knowledge to effect positive social change for the betterment of others, the community, and society, and (2) one gains the capacity to “mobilize self and others to serve and to work collaboratively” (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 19).

*Positive social change* is action which helps the institution/community to function more effectively and humanely (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 19).

*Self-knowledge* is the understanding of one's talents, values, and interests, especially as these relate to one's capacity to provide effective leadership (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 19).

*Social change* is a model of leadership development promoting values of equity, social justice, self knowledge, personal empowerment, collaboration, citizenship, and service from three different perspectives: the individual, the group, and the community/society (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 18 – 19).

*Transformational leadership* is the action of one or more persons engaging with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality by viewing their work from new perspectives, generating an awareness of mission or vision of the organization, and looking beyond their own interests toward those that will benefit the group (Hoy and Miskel, 2001, p. 415).

### **Assumptions**

1. The participants interviewed will understand the scope of the study, the language of the interview questions, will be competent in self-reporting, and will respond objectively and honestly.
2. Interpretation of the data collected accurately reflects the intent of the respondent.
3. The methodology proposed and described here offers a logical and appropriate design for this particular research project.

### **Limitations**

1. This study is limited to a select group of students at a regional public four-year comprehensive higher education institution located in south central United States.
2. This study is limited to the information acquired from the literature review and perspectives reflected in this study of the individuals interviewed.
3. Findings may be generalized only to the select group of students who attended the institution where the study was conducted.

### **Significance of the Study**

The intent of this study is to gain an understanding of a campus environment in order to determine those factors that can be enhanced to improve student leadership development and civic engagement.

### **Content of Dissertation**

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter I is an introduction of environmental factors influencing student leadership development and civic engagement. Chapter II provides a review of relevant literature on higher education as a social system model, student leadership development, civic engagement, social change, the social change model of leadership development, and social change outcomes. Chapter III describes the research methodology used in the study. Chapter IV is an analysis of the study results. And Chapter V provides a summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations for further research.

This study was conducted using a qualitative research approach. Regional institutions are the target audience for the study; however the researcher's findings from the study are limited to the institution where the study was conducted. Merriam (1998) stated "in a qualitative study the investigator is the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data" (p. 20). I am serving as the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing data. As such, the dissertation is written in first person as indicative of being the researcher.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

In 2008, 37.9percent of Americans between the ages of 25 – 64 held a college degree which ranked America fourth in the world for percentage of adults with degrees (Lumina Foundation for Education, 2002). America as a country is dependent upon an educated society for internal strength and global advancement. The American population must have higher education in order for continued prosperity and full participation from its citizens (Lumina Foundation for Education, 2002). “If today’s college graduates are to be positive forces in this world, they need not only to possess knowledge and intellectual capacities but also to see themselves as members of a community, as individuals with a responsibility to contribute to their communities” (Colby, A., Ehrlich T., Beaumont, E., Stephens, J., 2003, p. 7).

Boyer (1987), Higher Education Research Institute (1996), Ehrlich (2000), and Colby, A., Beaumont, E., Ehrlich, T., Corngold, J. (2007) call for higher education institutions to realign collegiate education to democratic values by engaging students in civic activity. This external call to action requires higher education institutions to strategically focus on student learning outcomes in a different light. Higher education institutions will have to shift from operating at status quo to leading community transformation locally, regionally, and globally in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Bardaglio and Putman, 2009, p. 5).



There is an interdependent relationship between higher education institutions and their environments. The call for higher education institutions to lead transformative change in order to meet social responsibilities in a consistently changing environment means altering traditional approaches of learning and outcome measures. Higher education institutions will have to strategically advance interdisciplinary studies with learning objectives designed to improve student leadership development and civic engagement.

As stated in Chapter I, the purpose of this study was to identify campus environmental factors perceived to influence student leadership development and civic engagement as perceived by a select group of students at a public, four-year comprehensive higher education institution. The literature review begins with examining organization behavior theory in order to gain a better understanding of higher education as a functioning organization. The review narrows the focus on the higher education organization as a social system model. The social system model was utilized to provide a broad framework to build knowledge of the theoretical process by which higher education institutions achieve the desired outcome of socially responsible global citizens. The social system model was used to create an understanding of the internal and external environmental influences contributing to the goal of graduating globally responsible citizens who are committed to social change. This study explored aspects of social change to build knowledge of methods to address greater social needs. The Social Change Model for Leadership Development created by the Higher Education Research Institute (1996) provided a framework to measure student leadership development and

civic engagement within a higher education institution. The social system model and the social change model for leadership development set the stage for connecting student population as the input and output to the system. Within the social system model, the transformation processes of student development and learning is the organization's primary function.

### **Social System Model**

Organization function can be characterized by three motivating factors: Growth, survival, and environmental control (Katz and Kahn, 1966). American higher education institutions are faced with competing internal and external demands which threaten the capacity for growth, survival, and environmental control (Dickeson, 1999). Higher education institutions are a functioning organization challenged by internal and external demands.

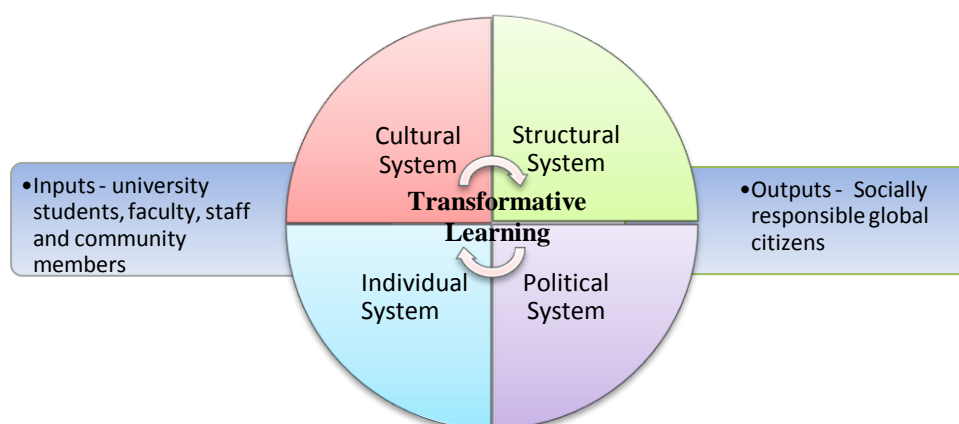
Katz and Kahn (1966) identified three classic organization models. The bureaucratic theory by Max Weber, public administration account by Luther Gulick, and scientific management by Frederick Taylor – as the most widely recognized organizational theories before the emergence of social system theory. Peterson (1985) stated that organization theory models have moved into emergent social system models which aid in addressing unique post secondary characteristics. Birnbaum (1989) identified higher education institutions as an open-system model within organization behavior theory (p. 34). I chose to utilize the open-system model because the model

links transactional relationships between an organization and its environment (Panchal, 2010).

A higher education institution is an organized social system within a defined environment. Contemporary organizational behavior theorists link higher education institutions to an open system model (Hoy and Miskel, 2001). The rationale for the open system model is due to the relationship and influence between the higher education organization and the environment. Utilizing the open system model, higher education institution organization primary inputs are students and faculty. The inputs flow through a transformative learning process that is influenced by the subsystems within the model. The outcomes of the higher education institution open-system model are community contributions by individuals who moved through the higher education system. “An open system is concerned with both structure and process; it is a dynamic system with both stability and flexibility, with both tight and loose structural relationships” (Hoy and Miskel, 2001, p. 20). A higher education institution as an open-system is interdependent on the environment which requires organizations to be adaptable and flexible to change in order to survive.

Hoy and Miskel (2001) defined an open system model as consisting of interdependent parts; clearly defined population; environment distinction; complex network of social relationships; and a defined culture (p. 22). Figure 1 illustrates the higher education organization open system model used for this study. For the purpose of this study, transformative learning has been added as the core process occurring across all individual systems.

Figure 1- Higher Education Organization Social System Model (Hoy and Miskel, 2001)



The social system model, open-system, illustrated in Figure 1, the higher education institution inputs are people: students, faculty, staff and community members. The transformation process is the student learning occurring as it pertains to leadership development and civic engagement within the cultural, structural, political, and individual systems. The organization outputs are graduates who are socially responsible contributing members to a global society.

Student leadership development and civic engagement is the applied measure to the open-system model framework. The sequence of this literature review will begin with examining the environmental influences, organization inputs, transformation learning process, and desired outputs. Students are the input for the open-system model framework in this study. As such, literature review on university student characteristics is included. The transformational learning process in leadership development and civic engagement is explored in the context of the four systems (cultural, structural, political,

and individual). Finally, social change, social change model of leadership development and social change outcomes are examined. This literature review provides context to higher education's role and responsibility to influencing social change through individuals who are socially responsible global citizens.

Higher education institution environment is influenced by institutional characteristics and desired student outcomes. Institutional characteristics can be in the form of academic excellence through teaching, learning, and campus experiences. "Education, or the teaching-learning function, is defined to embrace not only the formal academic curricula, classes, and laboratories but also all those influences upon students flowing from association with peers and faculty members and from the many and varied experiences of campus life" (Bowen, 1980, p. 33). Desired student outcomes described by Boyer (1987), "the college is committed, on the one hand, to serve the needs of individual students, celebrating human diversity in its many forms, encouraging creativity and independence, and helping students become economically and socially empowered" (p. 286). A higher education institution as an open-system model is influenced by external and internal environment subjected by culture and desired outcomes.

An organization is established by and affected by organizational structure and individual needs. Open-system theory identifies three stages of organization transformation within an environment (Katz and Kahn 1966). The first stage in an open-system organization is individuals coming together to address a common environmental problem. The second stage of development emerges as organizational infrastructure of

order begins to develop. The third state of open-system development is formalized organization purpose, processes, and outputs defined by bureaucratic expectations. “Bureaucratic expectations are formal demands and obligations set by the organization; they are the key building blocks of organizational structure” (Hoy and Miskel, 2001, p. 24). The established organizational expectations are used to define appropriate individual behavior within the organization. Individual behavior and organizational structure are infused. Individuals within an organization have their own individual needs, beliefs, and cognitive understandings of their roles and responsibilities. Organization behavior is influenced by individual needs and defined bureaucratic expectations.

### **Higher Education Open System Organization Model**

It has been established that social expectations exists for higher education institutions to serve regional needs and to graduate individuals who possess the knowledge, skills, and desire to civically engage. The “input” for bureaucratic expectations comes from external environmental influences and internal environmental systems. Strange and Banning (2000) researched the influence of physical environments on organizational structure, design, goals, values, and activities. “Physical theories and models focus on the external environment, whether natural or man-made, and on how it shapes behavior by permitting some activities while limiting or preventing others” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 47). In these models, physical surroundings encourage or constrain certain kinds of behavior depending on the physical and symbolic

characteristics of the setting as well as on the number and kinds of individuals in it” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 47). The campus environment (physical, human, and organization structure) influences cultural values, specifically student leadership development and civic engagement.

Individuals (students) influence the campus environment and vice versa.

“College impact models emphasize change associated with the characteristics of the institutions student attend (between-college effects) or with the experiences students have while enrolled (within-college effects)” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 18).

Student development is influenced by the characteristics of the institution.

“Intrapersonal changes may be due to physical maturation, environmental forces, or the combined effects of interactions between person and environment” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 17).

Learning is the intentional transformation process that occurs within the higher education institution environment. “Education should be directed toward the growth of the whole person through the cultivation not only of the intellect and of practical competence but also of the affective dispositions, including the moral, religious, emotional, social, and esthetic aspects of the personality” (Bowen, 1980, p. 33). Higher education institutions achieving social expectations of civic engagement operate within the core value of engagement. Virtues necessary for active engagement – “are the willingness to engage in critical self-examination and to form reasoned commitments, balanced by open-mindedness and a willingness to listen to and take seriously the ideas of others” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. xxvi).

## **External and Internal Environments**

External and internal environments shape the focus of higher education institutions. Higher education institutions are defined by and embedded in the geographic regions in which they are located. The relationship between colleges and universities and its regions is interdependent. “Their fates are intertwined and cannot be separated, meaning that universities must modify or even shed their traditional roles, and view themselves more integrally as stakeholders in the communities where they are located” (American Association of State Colleges and Universities [AASCU], 2006, p. 6). Bowen (1980) described higher education’s role as functioning under three guiding principles: Education, research, and public service (p. 7-8). The interdependent relationship between institutions and regions and the primary institutional functions calls to question the role higher education plays in shaping the region’s future.

American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU, 2006) provided historical context to the changing role of Higher Education.

In the Agriculture Age, colleges and universities studied and promoted innovations that increased crop yield. In the industrial Age, colleges and universities played a similar, pivotal role, developing and disseminating ideas about management science that increased productivity and profitability. In an age where the economy is driven by ideas, more is required from colleges and universities than merely creating and disseminating the ideas. Such an economy requires academic institutions to redefine the university model so that they are permanently engaged as



a full partner in the viability and vitality of the regions to which they are connected (p. 19).

To be permanently engaged is to be an active participant. Motivation for active participation implies shared purpose and meaning and requires leadership and civic engagement. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (Boyer 2000) *The Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University Reinventing Undergraduate Education*, suggested that higher education institutions must focus on fostering a campus culture of purpose and meaning for future student prosperity, institutional advancement, and social progression. Boyer's (2000) call to action was taken to the next level in the 2006 report from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU, 2006) which asked for regional stewardship through "Making Place Matter" by challenging the role of higher education institutions to a new university model. "One aspect of this new university model is that researchers, while pursuing their scholarly interests, would incorporate a strong notion of the public good. This new kind of university would not only engage in community service, but also would become more integrally involved in the economic, social, and cultural health of its community" (AASCU, 2006, p. 6). Bowen (1980) provided descriptions of environmental expectations that promote 'public good' and shaping the role of higher education, "(1) 'society' has goals that may be distinguishable from the interactive summation of individual goals; (2) education should be designed to shape individuals to serve the purposes of the nation – usually set forth by the government or by a party

leadership; and (3) research and related intellectual and artistic activities should be directed toward the achievement of national goals, including the solution of social problems” (p. 46).

The organization’s internal environment is influenced by the physical space, people, and the organization purpose for existing. “When discussing the ‘physical’ environment of an institution, one normally thinks of dormitories, laboratories, the library and other facilities directly connected with student life or with the academic program of the institution” (Astin, 1968, p. 84). The internal environment is not solely defined by physical attributions, but is defined by the processes by which organization members develop an understanding of the nature of the organization (Chaffee and Tierney, 1988, p. 20). “Environments are transmitted by people and that the college environment depends on the personal characteristics of the students, faculty, administration, and staff of the institution” (Astin, 1968, p. 7). An organization’s internal environment is ultimately defined by common purpose influenced externally and internally.

### **System Inputs**

In this open-system organization model, the student is considered the primary system input. Theoretically, the student goes through a transformational process, in this case personal growth, within the organization. “The concept [intrapersonal change] usually implies or presumes growth, or the potential for growth, toward maturity or toward greater complexity through differentiation and integration” (Pascarella and

Terenzini, 2005, p. 17). The transformational process influences aggregated characteristics gained by students through their personal growth as a result of attending college. “Authors of human aggregate models describe an environment and its influence in terms of the aggregate characteristics (for example, socio-demographic traits, goals, values, and attitudes) of its occupants” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 47). The environment has a reciprocating affect on the individual and the organization. “According to this view, individuals create or define environments even as these environments attract other individuals and help socialize them to maintain the interests, attitudes, values, and behaviors of all occupants” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 47). The point is the environment is defined by the organizational values which are influenced by the individuals within the organization.

“William Perry (1970, 1981) sought to map conceptually the development he observed clinically in the ‘structures which the students explicitly or implicitly impute to the world, especially those structures in which they construe the nature and origins of knowledge, of value, and of responsibility’ (1970, p.1)” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 34). From a broad perspective, “according to Learner, development involves changes in an organism that are ‘systematic, [organized, and] successive...and are thought to serve an adaptive function, i.e., to enhance survival’” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 17). There are two primary approaches to student development theory, cognitive and behavioral. “Although both Perry and King and Kitchener recognize the linkage between cognitive development and moral reasoning, they focus primarily on cognition and learning broadly defined” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 42). From another

perspective, “Kohlberg sought to delineate the nature and sequence of progressive changes in individuals’ cognitive structures and the rules these individuals use to process information when making moral judgments” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 42).

Students are the input and product of the higher education social system. The U.S. Department of Education (2010) reported 18.2 million students enrolled in degree-granting higher education institutions in 2007. Of the 18.2 million students, 59 percent were under the age of 25 resulting in the majority of enrolled students falling in the Millennial generation. Howe and Strauss (2000) identified the beginning of the Millennial generation was 1982 resulting in the first Millennial generation students entered college in 2000 (p. 309). The environmental factors influencing the majority of enrolled students are embedded in Millennial generation research. “The best-known single fact about the Millennial generation is that it is large. In total number, including all immigrants, Millennials may ultimately exceed 100 million members – nearly a third more than the Boomers” (Howe and Strauss, 2000, p. 74). Howe and Strauss (2000) project that sometime between 2007 and 2012, Millennials will break out as a majority national phenomenon (p. 310). This prediction was demonstrated in the recent United States Presidential election of Barak Obama. Generation research articulates a standard of four generations in existence at a time. Generation researchers theorize incoming generation groups take on characteristics of the outgoing generation group. This implies the Millennial generation has parallel characteristics of the G.I. Generation. Tom Brokaw christened the G.I. Generation as the “greatest generation” (Howe and Strauss, 2007, p. 23). “The most important link this ‘G.I. Generation’ has to today’s teens is in

the void they leave behind: No other peer group possesses anything close to their upbeat, high achieving, team-playing, and civic-minded reputation” (Howe and Strauss, 2007, p. 23). Society expectations have influenced K-12 civic education experiences of the Millennial generation. “The growing efforts by schools to teach citizenship and group skills indicate that adults want them to be more team- like” (Howe and Strauss, 2000, p. 180).

UCLA Higher Education Research Institute (2010) has headed a longitudinal study of freshmen called the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP). The results from the study “provide a comprehensive portrait of the changing character of entering students and the American society at large” (Higher Education Research Institute, 2010). Sax (2003) analyzed CIRP’s data in relation to college freshmen’s values and engagement in volunteerism. “Over the past decade we have witnessed a steady increase in the proportion of students participating in volunteer work” (Sax, 2003, p. 17). Sax (2003) CIRP analysis states, “Currently, a record high of 82.6 percent of freshmen report performing volunteer work during the year prior to entering college” (p. 18). CIRP data reinforces Howe and Strauss’s (2000) research on Millennial generation characteristics related to civic engagement which includes volunteerism. “Already, Millennial teens are hard at work on a grassroots reconstruction of community, teamwork, and civic spirit. They’re doing it in the realms of community service, race, gender relations, politics, and faith” (Howe and Strauss, 2000, p. 214). Researchers indicated that students under the age of 25, classified as the Millennial generation, have

been influenced by the environment to have strong values in civic engagement and leadership.

The majority of enrolled students in higher education institutions are within the Millennial generation. Howe and Strauss (2000) Millennial generation research indicated social environments influence collective group values in civic engagement and leadership. Intellectual growth of traditional aged (18-22) college student influences college environment. Developmental stage theory, known as cognitive development, theorizes how humans acquire, construct, and use knowledge. Higher education organizations play a critical role in the cognitive development of each student. “Several theories take the view that growth in self-awareness during the college years and an emergent understanding of and appreciation for the roles of other people and obligations to them are central features of development” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 48).

Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) stated that student development sequences move from

cognitive and affective simplicity to complexity, from personal non-responsibility to responsibility, from dependence through autonomy to interdependence, from impulsiveness to self-control, from immaturity to maturity, from external controls to internal controls and self-determination, from self-interestedness to a sense of fairness and responsibility for others, from instinctual to principled action ( p. 48).

## **Internal Subsystems**

### *Campus Culture Subsystem*

In order to manage environmental influences and social expectations of graduating students with strong leadership skills who are committed to civic engagement, institutions must understand, build, and foster a campus culture. “It is culture that provides the tools for organizing and understanding our worlds in communicable ways” (Bruner, 1996, p. 3). The dimensions of culture have been categorized into three elements: Structure, environment, and values by Chaffee and Tierney (1988).

“The structural dimension refers to various ways in which the organization accomplishes its activities, including programmatic, fiscal, and governance mechanisms” (Chaffee and Tierney, 1988, p. 18). Chaffee and Tierney described structure as the formalized organization chart, processes by which activities are accomplished, and the formal and informal decision making. Structure includes the day-to-day operations and long-term planning. The environmental dimension of organization culture includes “the objective contest of people, events, demands, and constraints in which an institution finds itself” (Chaffee and Tierney, 1988, p. 19). The environment is the process by which the organization members develop an understanding of the nature of the organization. Values are “the beliefs, norms, and priorities held by members of the institution” (Chaffee and Tierney, 1988, p. 20). Organization values separate the organization from other like organizations. Organization values permeate when there is value congruence among individuals and subgroups within the organization.

“We feel that undergraduates should be encouraged not only to understand how decisions are made at the college where they are enrolled, but also they should be asked, indeed expected, to participate as campus citizens as well” (Boyer, 1987, p. 246). “A college of quality is also guided by community concerns. It has goals that are greater than the sum of the separate parts and reminds students, in formal and informal ways, that there is an intellectual and social community to which they are inextricably connected” (Boyer 1987, p. 286). “The student’s subjective interpretation or impressions of his college environment depend not only on the particular patterns of environmental stimuli to which he is exposed, but also on his values, attitudes, abilities, previous experiences, and other personal characteristics” (Astin, 1968, p. 94).

#### *Campus Structure Subsystem*

Campus structure subsystem refers to the ways in which the organization accomplishes its activities, including programmatic, fiscal, and governance mechanisms (Chaffee and Tierney, 1988, p. 18). Chaffee and Tierney (1988) described structure as the formalized organization chart, processes by which activities are accomplished, and the formal and informal decision making. Boyer (1987) stated, “the undergraduate college, more than any other division of higher education, must be guided by a sense of common purpose; it must be sustained and nurtured by purposes and procedures that cut across the separate departments and divisions. In governance, there must be a voice for all, and integrity is the key” (p. 250). Student leadership skill development and civic engagement are nurtured through campus structure. Institutions, which integrate campus



community members (including students) in formal and informal decision making processes, foster an actively engaged environment. Institutions which do not integrate campus community members in decision making processes create a climate of confusion resulting in a lack of institutional loyalty (Boyer, 1987, p. 244). “In the end, good governance is to be measured not by the formality of the structures but by the willingness of individuals to bond together in support of larger purposes” (Boyer, 1987, p. 250).

### *Individual Subsystem*

Individual subsystem is the collective influence of the individual’s cognition and motivation within the organization. Cognitive aspects of individuals are needs, goals, and cognition (Hoy and Miskell, 2001, p. 25). “Cognition is the individual’s use of mental representations to understand the job in terms of perception, knowledge, and expected behaviors” (Hoy and Miskell, 2001, p. 25). Cognitive development results from the creation of meaning through context, relevance, and experience.

Darner (2009) studied “self determination theory as a guide to fostering environmental motivation” (p. 39). Self determination theory was developed by Ryan, Kuhl, and Deci (1997). Self determination theory explained the influence of personality development and behavioral self-regulation on human motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 68). Darner (2009) stated that the nature of learning was at the foundation of self determination theory (p. 42). Darner (2009) used Cole and Cole (1993) description of

learning as the method of construction knowledge through experiences in order to make meaning (p. 42).

Ryan and Deci (2002) explained that humans have an internal need to have coherence between their cognitive structures and their experiences (Darner, 2009, p. 43). The need for coherence influences human motivation which is the key to self determination theory. “Motivation concerns energy, direction, persistence and equifinality – all aspects of activation and intention” (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 69). Daniel Pink (2009) defined three elements to internal drive: Autonomy, mastery, and purpose. Variability in intrinsic motivation is influenced by social and environmental factors that either enhance or undermine behavior (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 70). Hamrick, Evans, and Schuh (2002) describe the influence of human interaction between students, faculty and other members of the institution as crucial to the learning process (p. 104). Astin (1993) stated student’s values, beliefs, and aspirations are influenced the most by peers during the undergrad years (Hamrick, Evans, and Schuh, 2002, p. 104). “The power of these accumulated experiences is to create two realities. One is a cognitive map for guiding behavior, making choices, and predicting outcomes. The other is an unarticulated emotional realm of hopes, fears, threats, aspirations, and confidence” (Miller, Bender, Schuh and Associates, 2005, p. 23).

### *Political Subsystem*

The political subsystem is the informal relationships that influence the social system. The political subsystem is the informal exchanges within the cultural, structural,

and individual subsystems. Hamrick, Evans, and Schuh (2002) referenced Berger (2000) identification of “competition for resources and conflict over priorities” as inherent political influences in an organization (p. 95). Hoy and Miskel (2001) classified political power as “illegitimate because it is behavior usually designed to benefit the individual or group at the expense of the organization” (p. 28). Berger (2000) identified three environment types: Competitive, casual, and cohesive (Hamrick, Evans, and Schuh, 2002, p. 96). Competitive environment is “characterized by a high level of political behavior, low collegiality, and a moderate level of the other behavioral dimensions” (Hamrick, Evans, and Schuh, 2002, p. 96). The informal relationships of the political subsystem are an important and inevitable component of the organization. The political subsystem can have a powerful influence on the organization outcomes.

### **System Outputs**

In light of environmental influences shaping higher education’s social role, a consistent expectation that is a “widely acknowledged goal of higher education is to equip students to view their own society with some detachment, to compare it with other societies, to discover discrepancies between its aspirations and its realities, to gain perspective on its social problems and short comings, and to acquire the will as well as the political and technical skills needed to work for change” (Bowen, 1980, p. 49). Student experiences in civic engagement and leadership development are essential to achieving societal expectations of higher education institutions. “Higher education’s civic mission should be reflected in an integrated approach to fostering students’

citizenship skills through both educational and co-curricular programs and activities and conscious modeling of good citizenship through external partnerships and activities” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 66).

Astin and Astin (2000) stated, “If the next generation of citizen leaders is to be engaged and committed to leading for the common good, then the institutions which nurture them must be engaged in the work of the society and the community, modeling effective leadership and problem-solving skills, demonstrating how to accomplish change for the common good” (p. 2). “If colleges and universities can demonstrate how to cultivate a sense of collective responsibilities for the good of the whole, they will not only bring about a long overdue transformation of higher education but also create the possibility of a more sustainable civilization” (Bardaglio and Putman, 2009, p. 34). Once again, higher education must reinvent itself with the intent to be civically embedded in the region for the future vitality of the communities in which it resides. “What do we mean by ‘reinvent’? In part, we mean a revitalized sense of civic mission and a renewed commitment to undergraduate teaching and learning” (Bardaglio and Putman, 2009, p. 53).

“The three functions of higher education are based mostly on a single unifying process – learning” (Bowen, 1980, p. 8). Learning takes on a new meaning as it relates to the reinvention of higher education’s role. “Learning, in this sense, means knowing and interpreting the known (scholarship and criticism), discovering the new (research and related activities), and bringing about desired change in the cognitive and affective traits and characteristics of human beings (education)” (Bowen, 1980, p. 8). The

Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2000) stated in *The Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University* report, “The campus must be a purposeful place of learning in which every student feels special connections” (p. 34). Personal awareness of connections cannot occur unless there is responsiveness to place and community (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2000, p. 34). The purposeful place of learning and awareness of connections is driven by the environment.

An environment that fosters community engagement is needed to redefine the role of higher education. Astin (1997) stated the following:

Being in a particular type of institution (for example, a research university) does not necessarily limit the effectiveness of undergraduate education; that is, although different types of institutions tend to have particular types of environments, there are notable exceptions, and it is the environment created by the faculty and the students – rather than the type of institution per se – that really seems to matter. (p. xxii)

“If habits of good citizenship are not cultivated when students are in college – if they are kept at arm’s length – it can hardly be surprising that later these same people remain detached from civic life” (Boyer, 1987, p. 246). “Because civic responsibility is inescapably threaded with moral values, we believe that higher education must aspire to foster both moral and civic maturity and must confront educationally the many links between them” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. xxi). A noticeable change in civic activity has

occurred in the past decade. “The notable upsurge of interest among students in social service volunteer programs, as well as institutional support for such efforts at every level of higher education, is testimony to the breadth of the sense that there is need for a change of direction, that academe must do more to educate for civic leadership and service” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 33).

### **Transformational Learning**

“Learning is a complex, holistic, multi-centric activity that occurs throughout and across the college experience” (Keeling, 2004, p. 8). Transformative learning is the process that occurs within the higher education open-systems model. “Adults, some of whom are students, constantly acquire information, examine its implications, apply it to areas of understanding and action that are personally significant, and reframe their perspectives as circumstances evolve through a process of transformative learning” (Keeling, 2004, p. 12). We use problem solving as a means to learning as a result of living in a world of continual and rapid change (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5). Jurgen Habermas (1981) identified four levels of problem solving and learning: Instrumental, impressionistic, normative, and communicative (Mezirow, 1997, p. 6). Communicative learning is the deepest of the four levels. Communicative learning is “understanding the meaning of what others communicate, concerning values, ideals, feelings, moral decisions, and such concepts as freedom, justice, love, labor, autonomy, commitment, and democracy” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 6).

Growth and development are outcomes to transformative learning (Merriam, 2004, vol. 55, pg. 60). Transformative learning occurs from experiences in problem solving that leads to a deeper personal understanding resulting in frame of reference change. “Communicative learning focuses on achieving coherence rather than on exercising more effective control over the cause effect relationship to improve performance” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 3). Intellectual, ethical, and moral reasoning converge into communicative learning.

Transformative learning is inherent within leadership development and civic engagement. Leadership development is the process by which (1) one gains self-knowledge to effect positive social change for the betterment of others, the community and society (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 16), and (2) one gains the capacity to “mobilize self and others to serve and to work collaboratively” (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 19). Civic responsibility is defined as the commitment, empowerment, and involvement in volunteerism, community service, and interest in politics. (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 4) The transformative learning that takes place at the deepest level through communicative learning allows for leadership development to occur resulting in a higher level of civic responsibility.

In order to achieve transformative learning through leadership development and civic engagement, individuals must have intellect, ethics and moral awareness. Perry’s theory of intellectual and ethical development and Kohlberg’s theory of moral development provide context to student development within a university environment as it relates to leadership development and civic engagement.

### **Perry's Theory of Intellectual and Ethical Development**

Perry's Theory of Intellectual and Ethical Development (1968) is a cognitive-structural theory focused on the transition of how individuals make meaning on a continuum consisting of nine positions (Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito, 1998, p. 131). "Perry saw development through his nine positions occurring as a result of assimilation and accommodation to environmental challenges" (Hamrick, Evans, and Schuh, 2002, p. 221). The nine positions are organized into sequential categories: Duality, multiplicity, relativism, and commitment.

The first two positions categorized as 'dualism' focus on the individual moving from viewing the world in absolutes to uncertainty. "Dualism (positions 1 – 2), individuals order their worlds in dualistic and absolute categories. In position 2, uncertainty about what is or is not true creeps in" (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 35). In the dualism phase, knowledge is viewed as facts provided by authorities resulting in learning occurring through information exchange (Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito, 1998, p. 131).

Individuals moving through positions 3 and 4, categorized as 'multiplicity', come to realize differences in perspectives and the entitlement to have different views. "Multiplicity (positions 3 – 4), the existence of multiple perspectives on any given issue, is recognized, although alternative perspectives may be considered temporary in areas where authorities still search for the answers" (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 35). Analytical thinking begins to occur in the multiplicity phase. "In position 4, others



holding an opinion contrary to one's own are no longer seen as simply wrong but rather as entitled to their views" (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 35).

An individual moving into positions 5 and 6 begins to strengthen their analytical skills by recognizing knowledge as contextual and not always suitable. Perry's theory stated that an individual moves from cognitive development into ethical development which is labeled 'commitment in relativism.' "Relativism (positions 5 – 6) recognition of multiplicity in the world leads to understanding that 'knowledge is contextual and relative' (King, 1978, p. 38)" (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 35). "Knowledge is now viewed more qualitatively; it is contextually defined, based on evidence and supporting arguments" (Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito, 1998, p. 132).

The final stage of Perry's intellectual and ethical development theory is the individual's personal values commitment and action. Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito (1998) explained that commitment in relativism means individuals are basing decisions on complex order of thought that includes linking decision outcomes to social content and balance of the subjective (p. 133). Intellectual and ethical development theory adds to understanding the transformative learning process that is occurring with students during the collegiate experience. The extent to which an individual reaches the highest level of intellectual and ethical development directly affects the level of activity within leadership development and civic engagement.

## **Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development**

An individual's ability to utilize moral reasoning influences the depth of personal leadership development and civic engagement. Kohlberg's theory of moral development lends perspective on how transformative learning in the form of moral development occurs. "Kohlberg (1972) stated that "the principle central to the development of moral judgment...is that of justice. Justice, the primary regard for the value and equality of all human beings, and for reciprocity in human relations, is a basic and human standard" (Evans, Forney, Guido-DiBrito, 1998, p. 173). Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory consists of six stages divided into three levels that focus on the cognitive development with relationship between self and society.

Level one is titled 'pre-conventional'. The first two stages in the theory of moral development level one are focused on cause and effect. In stage 1, moral development begins with "physical consequences determining whether behavior is 'good' or 'bad'" (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 42). Stage 2 moral development is focused on satisfying own needs, minimizing negative consequences for satisfying personal needs, and viewing the world in equal exchange or fairness (Evans, Forney, Guido-DiBrito, 1998, p. 174).

The second level, stages 3 and 4, of Kohlberg's moral development theory moves into the conventional aspect. An individual's behavior in stage 3 is guided by living up to expectations of others who influence one's social roles (Evan, Forney, Guido-DiBrito, 1998, p. 174). In stage 4, an individual moves toward "respect for authority as a social obligation emerges. Concern for maintaining the social order and meeting the

expectations of others governs moral judgments, and laws are recognized as necessary for the protection and maintenance of the group as a whole” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 42).

The third and final level in Kohlberg’s moral development theory is an individual operates at the highest level of social consciousness. Level three is post conventional with stages 5 and 6. In stage 5, “duty is seen as a social contract acknowledged to have an arbitrary starting point, with an emphasis on democratically agreed upon mutual obligations. Violations of the rights of others or the will of the majority are avoided” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 42-43). Stage 6 is the highest order of moral reasoning. One takes all individual viewpoints into considerations and attempts to make decisions. “Decisions are based on universal generalized principles that apply in all situations – for example, the equality of human rights or care and responsibility for others” (Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito, 1998, p. 175).

Transformative learning occurs throughout Perry’s Theory of Intellectual and Ethical Development and Kohlberg’s Moral Development Theory. Walker (1988) stated that exposure to higher-stage thinking and disequilibrium is two factors that contribute to moral development (Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito, 1998, p. 178). Higher-stage thinking is the process of pushing an individual to cognitively process one level above in order to foster individual cognitive development. “Disequilibrium, or cognitive conflict, occurs when individuals face situations that arouse internal contradictions in their moral reasoning structures or when they find that their reasoning is different from that of significant others (Kohlberg, 1976)” (Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito, 1998, p. 178).

Transformative learning occurs from an intellectual, ethical, and moral development perspective when an individual experiences higher stage thinking and disequilibrium.

In this study, higher education institution is the defined open system (social system) with students as the defined population. The higher education institution differentiates itself within the environment as a loosely coupled organization that is measured by the individuals within the organization engaging in the community. The transformative learning occurs within the context of student development through Perry's Theory of Intellectual and Ethical Development and Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory. The open system environment is divided into four interdependent sub systems: structural, cultural, individual, and political. The environment influences the level of transformative learning by the students, which influences the depth of leadership development and civic engagement.

### **Leadership and Civic Engagement**

The effectiveness of an organization is based upon the degree to which the outcomes are in alignment with expected outcomes defined by the environment (Hoy and Miskel, 2001, p. 30). "In the end, the goal of the undergraduate experience is not only to prepare the undergraduates for careers, but to enable them to live lives of dignity and purpose; not only to give knowledge to the student, but to channel knowledge to humane ends" (Boyer, 1987, p. 219). In other words, the desired higher education organization system outcome is for graduates to apply learned knowledge to their communities. "The institution that can help its student become a better-integrated

person, with a sense of command over his own destiny and a sense of how he fits into his complicated and mercurial social environment, will have achieved the most demanding and significant educational objective of our time” (Bowen, 1980, p. 36). The measure of organization success is graduates who demonstrate leadership through civic engagement in their communities.

## **Leadership**

Higher education institutions function within a social system organization behavioral model. The behavior model functions are interdependent upon environmental factors that are loosely coupled. As such, reciprocal leadership theory is in alignment with the higher education social system organization behavior model. Reciprocal leadership theory is described by Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (2007) as, “leadership is not just something that a leader does to followers; rather, leadership is a process that meaningfully engages leaders and participants, values the contributions of participants, shares power and authority between leaders and participants, and establishes leadership as an inclusive activity among interdependent people” (p. 53). Major leadership theories within reciprocal leadership theory are transformative, servant, and relational.

Transformative leadership theory was developed by James MacGregor Burns (1978). Transformative leadership is based on moral values of order, equality, liberty, freedom, and justice (Komives, Lucas, McMahon, 2007, p. 55). Burns (1978) described transformative leadership as the relational process between individuals focused on meeting a common purpose. “The end goal of transforming leadership is that both

leaders and followers raise each other to higher ethical aspirations and conduct”

(Komives, Lucas, McMahon, 2007, p. 54).

Servant-leadership theory was developed by Greenleaf (1977). The phrase “Servant Leadership” was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in *The Servant as Leader*, an essay that he first published in 1970. In that essay, he said:

The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first; perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions... The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types.

Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature.

The key factor in servant-leadership theory is the driving desire or motivation of the individual is focused on service, not position. Servant-leadership is about serving for the betterment of others and the community.

Relational leadership theory views “leadership and organization as human social constructions that emanate from the rich connections and interdependencies of organizations and their members (cf., Bradbury and Lichtenstein, 2000; Hosking et al., 1995)” (Uhl-Biehn, 2006, p. 655). The relational leadership model is “purposeful and builds commitment toward positive purposes that are inclusive of people and diverse points of view, empowers those involved, is ethical, and recognizes that all four of these elements are accomplished by being process-oriented” (Komives, Lucas, and McMahon,

2007, p. 74). Relational leadership is a purposeful, effective approach guided by relationship values and common good.

Higher education institutions must equip students to be future leaders. Students' curricular and co-curricular experiences provide the method for equipping for future roles in society. From this perspective, leadership is considered a process and not an inherent trait. The result of student leader preparation will be stronger communities. "They [students] must be able to ask the critical questions, grasp the big picture, and commit to an ethos of stewardship (how we live) and to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and professional training to make a real difference in the world (how to make a living)" (Bardaglio and Putman, 2009, p. 29). For the purpose of this study, leadership development is defined by Astin and Astin (2000) as the process by which (1) one gains self-knowledge to effect positive social change for the betterment of others, the community, and society, and (2) one gains the capacity to "mobilize self and others to serve and to work collaboratively" (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 19). A campus environment that fosters learning, innovation, and engagement will maximize student leadership development. "The student's image of his college is both a response to his environment and a potential determinant of his future responses" (Astin, 1968, p. 94).

### **Civic Engagement**

Civic engagement is defined as the commitment, empowerment, and involvement in volunteerism, community service, and interest in politics (Ehrlich (2000), p. 4). "The

United States – as a democracy that is diverse, globally engaged, and dependent on citizen responsibility – requires college graduates to have an informed concern for the larger good and the ability to understand and navigate morally complex issues in a dynamic and often volatile world” (AAC&U, 2009, p. 2). To gauge campus climates related to civic responsibility, Dey, Ott, Antonaros, Barnhardt, Holsapple (2010) conducted a study through the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Core Commitments: Educating Students for Personal and Responsibility by utilizing an instrument called the *Personal and Social Responsibility Inventory (PSRI)*. The PSRI measures civic responsibility based on a five-dimension definition. The five dimensions of civic responsibility are as follows:

(a) knowledge and support of democratic values, systems, and processes; (b) desire to act beneficially in community, broadly defined (such as campus, local, state, global, and so forth), and for the community's members; (c) use of knowledge and skills for societal benefit; (d) appreciation for, and an interest in those unlike oneself; and (e) personal accountability (Association of American Colleges & Universities [AACU], 2002; Astin & Sax, 1998; Bowen, 1997; Boyte & Hollander, 1999; Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, & Stephens, 2003; Ehrlich & Hollander, 1999; Guarasci & Cornwell, 1997; Patrick, 1991). (Thornton and Jaeger, 2008, pg. 161)

Respondents “strongly agree that recognizing and acting on one’s obligation to the larger community *should* be an essential – not optional – outcome of college” (AAC&U, 2009, p. vii). “It appears that the development of civic responsibility during



the college years is enhanced by students' degree of involvement during college – mainly, interacting with students and faculty through curricular and co-curricular activities” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 16). Ehrlich shared the following:

The more involved and connected students become during college, the more likely they will seek out forms of involvement in their communities after college. In other words, “civic education” is more than simply teaching students “civics”. Instead, education for citizenship can be accomplished more broadly by encouraging students to become active and proactive participants in the learning process by pursuing their own interests and making meaningful connections with students and faculty. (pp. 16 – 17)

The external environment, society, has established a clear expectation for higher education institutions to have an outcome of individuals who are able to lead and engage in their communities. Internal and external feedback loops are created to measure “discrepancies between actual and expected performance” (Hoy and Miskel, 2001, p. 31). Actual and expected performances may be measured internally through studying the systems in the transformation process. The external measure of actual and expected performances is embedded in the individuals and their engagement in local communities and society as a whole.

### **Social Change**

“It is frequently argued that the college or university itself, as a community of learners and researchers, should serve society in the capacity of social critic – as a center

from which ideas basic to social change would radiate” (Bowen, 1980, p. 49). Social change is the outcome from social justice, social activism and social movement. Social justice requires individuals to have knowledge, skills, and desire to work together collectively to influence positive change that benefits community and society. Social activism focuses on the individual taking intentional action to bring about change on a particular social, political, economic, or environmental issue. Social movement is a collective group action by individuals to create change on a specific issue. Social justice, activism, and movement collectively result in social change.

### **Social Justice**

“Social justice is concerned not in the narrow focus of what is just for the individual alone, but what is just for the social whole” (Capeheart and Milovanovic, 2007, p. 2). Social justice is comprised of common values, individual responsibility, and social awareness. Social justice is guided by common values that align with democratic principles. “Our democratic principles, including tolerance and respect for others, procedural impartiality, and concern for both the rights of the individual and the welfare of the group, are all grounded in moral principles” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. xxi). Etzioni (2004) characterized social justice as having four levels of individual responsibility that integrates individuals and communities. The first measure is individual responsibility to take care of self. The second measure is the individual’s one responsibility to assist others closest such as kin, friends, neighbors, and community members. The third level of responsibility moves to community expectations to take care of members within the

community. The fourth level of responsibility is to help other communities who are limited in helping themselves. Social awareness brings action for social justice. Social justice requires individuals to understand the interactions within and between people, discourse, meeting community needs, and attaining equality (Capeheart and Milovanovic, 2007).

Higher education institutions should be the place for students to learn citizen responsibilities to self and community resulting in knowledge and desire for social justice. “The goal is to help students see that they are not only autonomous individuals, but also members of a larger community to which they are accountable” (Boyer, 1987, p. 218). The learning environment influences student knowledge and engagement in social justice activity. Course curriculum and co-curricular experiences based on common learning objectives in moral and civic engagement is needed in order to achieve future social justice. “Included in the core knowledge we consider integral to moral and civic learning is knowledge of basic ethical concepts and principles, such as justice and equity, and how they have been interpreted by various seminal thinkers” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. xxvi).

Higher education institutions have been criticized for not cultivating a civically minded environment. “Some observers do see evidence of such disassociation on America’s campuses and have called for the regeneration of civic engagement and social responsibility” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 277). The counter criticism to the criticism of not cultivating a civically minded environment is the forcing values that are not shared by individuals within the community. “In advocating that education should

foster moral engagement, we are not suggesting that education institutions should promote any particular ethical viewpoint, except a commitment to democratic ideals, such as procedural fairness, respect for persons, and a willingness to engage in reasoned discourse” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. xxv).

### **Social Movement**

“A social movement is a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations engaged in a political or cultural conflict, on the basis of a shared collective identity” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 347). Four dimensions come together to create a framework for social movement. First, movements begin with social interactions between people sparked by an emerging issue. Second, awareness and knowledge of the issue begins to build among individuals. Third, gatherings begin to happen to address social concern. Fourthly, the environmental culture perpetuates social movement. This social movement framework is illustrated in Andrews & Biggs (2006) study of the 1960s sit-ins as a social movement. Andrews & Biggs (2006) confirmed that college students led protests in locations where there were more resources and support for activism (p. 753). Four characteristics make up social movement. Ehrlich (2000) articulates the four characteristics as:

1. Social movements are constituted by networks of informal interaction;
2. Social movement “requires a shared set of beliefs and a sense of belongingness.”  
That is, a movement must have a sense of purpose. “Instead of rigid ideology, a social movement may coalesce around a collective agenda or shared goal”;

3. Social movement needs something to move against (opposition);
4. Social movement is that its activity “occurs outside the institutional sphere and the routine procedures of social life.” That is, social movements are distinct from change efforts sponsored and administered by an organization” (p. 347).

Higher education institutions influence campus culture for social movement through organizational values, institutional structure, and environment influences. Clearly identified organizational values focused on leadership development and civic engagement influence student commitment toward social movement. Institutional structures that integrate students in decision making processes teach students how to interact with others and communicate thoughts and ideas to address community needs. Actively engaged campus community members create a cultural environment focused on engagement. This type of cultural environment influences student activism.

### **Social Activism**

Social activism is the continuous activity of individuals collectively addressing community needs beyond a one time commitment. Two campus characteristics that influence student commitment to social activism after college are described by Ehrlich (2000). “First is the positive effect of a commitment to social activism among the student body at the institution. This suggests that regardless of students’ pre-college commitment to social activist goals such as helping others in difficulty and influencing the political structure, they tend to become even more committed to these goals if they attend a college where other students espouse a social activist mentality” (Ehrlich, 2000,

p. 13). This statement by Ehrlich supports the importance of and the influence of campus culture. “Additional effects on the commitment to social activism include the positive effects of time spent attending religious services, performing volunteer work, attending classes and labs, and exercising or playing sports” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 14). Student engagement in campus life influences social activism after college.

Social change is the outcome of social justice, social movement, and social activism. Social justice provides the context to ‘why’ civic engagement is important. Social movement provides context to ‘whom’ and ‘how’ to create social change with civic engagement. Social activism is the ‘sustaining factor’ to civic engagement and social change. “In the end, the quality of the undergraduate experience is to be measured by the willingness of graduates to be socially and civically engaged” (Boyer, 1987, p. 278-279).

### **Social Change Model of Leadership Development**

Social change model of leadership development is designated to address environmental influences on transformative learning. The model design consists of three levels: individual, group, and community. The model is used to depict the interrelationship between the three components and is measured by desired leadership outcomes through civic engagement. “Numerous stakeholders have called on the higher education community to promote civic engagement among students” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 277). “Higher Education Research Institute go as far as to suggest that, ‘higher education plays a major part in shaping the quality of leadership in modern

society' (p. 1) and a growing number of scholars and professional associations have identified socially responsible leadership as a core college outcome (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2007; Astin & Astin, 2000; Hoy & Meisel, 2008; National Association of Student Personnel Administrators & American College Personnel Association, 2004)" (Komives, Dugan, and Owen, 2009, p. 12).

### **Campus Environment**

This generation of students, primarily the Millennial generation, will influence a change in the institutional environment. "College and universities will buzz with activity, change, new pressures, and new arguments" (Howe and Strauss, 2000, p. 311). Generational researchers claim that Millennials are fulfilling the role of the G.I. Generation. "No other adult peer group possesses anything close to their upbeat, high-achieving, team-playing, and civic-minded reputation" (Howe and Strauss, 2007, p. 23). The Boise State University 2002 NSSE study is an example that supports the notion of Millennial student population value on civic engagement. "Students who felt they had contributed more to the welfare of their community also felt the university was more helpful in providing the support they needed to thrive socially" (Belcheir, 2003, p. 5).

There is a correlation between student engagement in community and satisfaction with university environment. Researchers indicate that student engagement and campus environment is influenced by peers, peer groups, and a student's ability to adapt with changing environmental stimuli. "Since the undergraduate's personal contacts are chiefly with fellow students, it is further assumed that a major portion of the students

environment is determined by the characteristics of his fellow students” (Astin, 1968, p. 7-8). A college environment is stimulated by the culture of the student population. “From the point of view of the prospective college student, the stimuli provided by his peers may represent the most significant aspect of the college environment” (Astin, 1968, p. 15). “Finally, the single most important environmental influence on student development is the peer group. By judicious and imaginative use of peer groups, any college or university can substantially strengthen its impact on student learning and personal development” (Astin, 1997, p. xxii). Student learning and personal development are influenced by the changing environment. “In one sense, the student’s “image” of his college environment at a given point in time is simply his subjective response to a particular set of environmental stimuli; in another sense, it is a potentially important frame of reference for interpreting and responding to new stimuli” (Astin, 1968, p. 94).

Environment is an institutional characteristic that impacts student development (Astin, 1968, p. 2). The environment is the process by which the organization members develop an understanding of the nature of the organization (Chaffee and Tierney, 1988, p. 20). The “single most potent source of influence on leadership development among college undergraduates appears to be the amount of interaction that students have with each other” (Astin, H. and Leland, C., 1991, p. 12). Alexander Astin (1968) stated,

The fact that the student on the campus serves both as a recipient of stimuli and as a source of stimulation for his peers suggests an interesting hypothesis about the dynamics of college environments: To the extent that the stimuli provided by



fellow students alter the behavior of the individual student; thus altering in turn the stimuli that he provides for others, college environments are in a process of continual change (p. 15).

### **Transformational Leadership**

In times of great external pressure to redefine higher education's role, transformative leadership is essential to success. "Transformational leadership is the model for organizations facing intense external pressure where revolutionary change is a necessity for survival" (Smith, Montagno, Kuzmenko, 2004, p. 87). Transformative leadership influences three areas of organization culture: 1) the internal mindset of the people in the organization, 2) the culture among the people in the organization, and 3) the culture beyond the people in the organization (Tucker and Russell 2004, p. 106). "It [transformational leadership] is an appealing theory that yields insight into leadership differences and provides a model for leadership development" (Tucker and Russell, 2004, p. 103).

"According to Tracey and Hinkin (1998), transformational leadership is a process that motivates people by appealing to higher ideals and moral values, defining and articulating a vision of the future, and forming a base of credibility" (Tucker and Russell, 2004, p. 103). The transformational leadership may be applied as a method to address environmental influences on higher education through a valued approach of creativity, innovation, and engagement. In addition, transformative leadership provides the framework for civic engagement and social change. "Transformational leadership

appeals to higher motivation and adds to the quality of life in the people and the organization” (Tucker and Russell, 2004, p. 103). “A leader can be anyone-regardless of formal position-who serves as an effective social change agent” (Higher Education Research Institute, 2000, pp. viii, 2.) A transformational leader is motivated by a sense of mission, vision, and core values that strengthen the individuals within the organization and the organization as a whole. The transformational leadership “provides energy-producing characteristics that generate new changes for the organization” (Tucker and Russell, 2004, p. 103). Tucker and Russell (2004) identify three themes embedded in transformational leadership. The first theme is questioning assumptions and promoting non-traditional thinking. The second theme is role modeling for others. And the third theme is emphasizing self development and positive feedback to others (p. 104).

### **Components of Social Change Model of Leadership Development**

“The social change model of leadership development (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996)...was created specifically for college students, is typically cited as one of the most influential leadership models used in practice with college students (Kezar et al., 2006), and is consistent with the emerging leadership paradigm” (Komives, Dugan, and Owen, 2009, p. 13). Grounded in transformational leadership theory, the social change model of leadership development is the process by which (1) one gains self-knowledge to effect positive social change for the betterment of others, the community, and society (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 16), and (2)

one gains the capacity to “mobilize self and others to serve and to work collectively” (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 19). “Since our approach to leadership development is embedded in collaboration and concerned with fostering positive social change, the model examines leadership development from three perspectives or levels: the individual, ...the group,...the community/society” (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 19).

The first level in the social change model of leadership development is focused on the individual. The individual focus is based on three values: consciousness of self, congruence, and commitment. Consciousness of self is self awareness, acknowledgement, and mindfulness. “...a person with a highly developed capacity for consciousness of self not only has a reasonably accurate ‘self-concept’, but is also a good observer of his or her own behavior and state of mind at any given time” (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 31). Consciousness of self is foundational to leadership development. Without self understanding and self management, a person cannot lead self or others. Congruence “refers to thinking, feeling, and behaving with consistency, genuineness, authenticity, and honesty toward others” (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 36). The key to the value of congruence is understanding and consistency in following personal values. “Commitment is a decision of the heart and mind to follow one course of action rather than another (Fairholm, 1994 p. 122)” (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 41). Commitment is personal motivation to take action that is driven by self awareness and personal values. The three individual

values: Consciousness of self, congruence and commitment are interdependent and core to the foundation of leadership development.

The second level in the social change model of leadership is group. The social change model of leadership development builds from individual leadership to group leadership. The values guiding group leadership are collaboration, common purpose, and controversy with civility. Collaboration is the cornerstone to group leadership. “Collaboration multiplies group effectiveness by capitalizing on the multiple talents and perspectives of each group member and on the power of that diversity to generate creative solutions and action” (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 23, 48). Collaboration is built on high trust, relationships, and shared values and commitment. Common purpose means working with shared aims and values under a clear vision and goals (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 23). Common purpose is the glue that holds group leadership together and enables societal/community leadership. “It connects individuals to the group because it requires that each individual ultimately embrace a similar conception of what the group is trying to accomplish” (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 56).

Controversy with civility is the process of addressing community issues by effective means that promotes common purpose and shared values. Controversy with civility requires trusting relationships where “individuals must be willing to discuss their differences openly and to understand the true nature of their disagreements” (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 60). The process of controversy with civility is best depicted in Stephen Covey’s 4<sup>th</sup> Habit, “think win-win”, 5<sup>th</sup> Habit “seek first to

understand then to be understood”, and 6<sup>th</sup> Habit “synergy”. “It involves the exercise of each of the unique human endowments – self awareness, imagination, conscience, and independent will – in our relationships with others” (Covey, 1989, p. 216). Leadership development focused on group leadership is guided by collaboration, common purpose, and controversy with civility.

The highest form of leadership in the social change model of leadership development is community/society leadership which is focused on citizenship and change. “Citizenship is the process whereby the individual and the collaborative group become responsibly connected to the community and the society through the leadership development activity” (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 23). “Ultimately, by embracing the value of citizenship, each group member becomes committed to insuring that the group effort serves and benefits the service recipients themselves, the local community, and the society at large” (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 68).

### **Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL)**

The Social Change Model of Leadership Development is a nationally recognized leadership model. The effects of the model are measured through the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL). The MSL is a national study conducted by The National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs at the University of Maryland. The purpose of the MSL is:

to contribute to the understanding of college student leadership development—with special attention to the role of higher education in fostering leadership capacities. The study addresses individual institutional considerations while contributing to a national understanding of: student needs and outcomes, effective institutional practices, and the extent of environmental influence in leadership development. (National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs, 2009).

The MSL is a tool used by higher education institutions as a method to measure campus environments in the context of the Social Change Model of Leadership Development.

The social change model of leadership development provides a framework to guide purposeful interactions and evaluate the progression of student leadership development. The outcome to the social change model of leadership development is civic engagement. College environments are in process of continual change due to the constant movement of students (Astin, 1968, p. 15). The social change model of leadership fosters a transformative learning environment that aids individuals in building common individual, group, and citizenship values.

### **Social Change Outcomes**

Higher education institutions have a social responsibility and expectation to instill the values of democracy and civic responsibility among graduates. The core values of democracy drive the purposeful interactions and progression of student

leadership development within the social change model of leadership development. Democratic values – life, liberty, pursuit of happiness, common good, justice, equality, diversity, truth, popular sovereignty, and patriotism – were established as the foundation to the United States of America through the U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence. Guided by democratic values, the core individual outcome from social change is university students and graduates committed to civic responsibility. The commitment to civic responsibility involves university community members to foster a transformative learning environment committed to social activism, empowerment, commitment, and involvement. Civic responsibility is based upon an individual's civic values and behaviors. Ehrlich (2000, p. 10) stated that attitudinal and behavioral aspects of citizenship may be measured through commitment to social activism, sense of empowerment, and community involvement. These are the three dimensions of citizenship.

### **Social Activism**

“Commitment to social activism is defined in terms of the personal importance the student assigns to each of the following life goals: participating in community action programs, helping others who are in difficulty, influencing social values, and influencing the political structure” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 10). The environment influences the importance students place on social activism. “Among the characteristics of the college environment, two appear to be particularly influential. First is the positive effect of a commitment to social activism among the student body at the institution” (Ehrlich, 2000,

p. 13). The students and faculty activities and campus culture influence the campus environment. “Additional effects on the commitment to social activism include the positive effects of time spent attending religious services, performing volunteer work, attending classes and labs, and exercising or playing sports. Students who spend more time watching television, on the other hand, are less likely to develop a commitment to social activism” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 14). Social activism manifests itself within the campus environment through learned and modeled values placed on community development and service to others.

### **Sense of Empowerment**

“Sense of empowerment is derived from students’ level of disagreement with the statement, “realistically, an individual can do little to bring about changes in our society”. Students who disagree with this item (i.e., are more “empowered”) can be seen as exhibiting greater potential for involvement in civic life” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 10). Students’ sense of empowerment is learned through campus culture and peers. “One might reasonably hypothesize that the contributions to their communities that students perceive they are making through their service – learning experience might enhance their perceptions of their social efficacy, the belief that they can make a difference in their communities or their world” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 305). The integration of students with a diverse campus community population can also influence students’ sense of empowerment. “Students’ sense of empowerment is also positively influenced by several measures of involvement, including socializing with people from different racial



and ethnic backgrounds, discussing political and social issues, and attending religious services” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 14). Ehrlich’s research indicates that socioeconomic backgrounds influence the student population’s social activism. “In other words, attending a college that enrolls students from wealthier and more highly-educated families tends to promote students’ post-college belief that individuals have the ability to change society” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 14).

### **Community Involvement**

“Community involvement is a behavioral measure reflecting the number of hours per week respondents report engaging in “volunteer work/community service” during the past year” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 10). The university environment must support community involvement through curricular and co-curricular programs. Ehrlich’s research supported that the peer influence has the most profound effect on student’s community involvement. “With respect to the behavioral measure of citizenship – community involvement – only one measure of the college environment has a significant influence: The commitment to social activism among the students’ peers. In other words, attending a college where other students are highly committed to social activism tends to encourage students’ own involvement in their communities” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 14, 5pp). Astin’s “theory of involvement” explains the dynamics of student learning by engaging in experiences through the campus community. Experiences are driven by the academic and social environment (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 53). “He [Astin] assigns the institutional environment a critical role in that it offers students a wide

variety of academic and social opportunities to become involved with new ideas, people and experiences” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 53). “The student, however, plays the lead role in as much as change is likely to occur only to the extent that the student capitalizes on opportunities and becomes involved, actively exploiting the opportunities to change or grow that the environment presents” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 53-54). Student commitment to community involvement is a combination of institutional resources and the level of student effort to take advantage of resources (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 54).

### **Volunteerism**

“Astin (1993c) reports that community volunteer work, net of other variables, most strongly influenced students’ disposition to social activism” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 304). “A new Millennial service ethic is emerging, built around notions of collegial (rather than resistance against) civic institutions, and the tangible doing of good deeds” (Howe and Strauss, 2000, p. 216). “The pool of volunteers’ changes dramatically from high school to college and that volunteerism is very much situational determined, often dependent on specific course requirements and involvement in religious organizations or student group” (Sax, 2003, p. 20).

### **Community Service**

“We also discovered that the spirit of service is far from dead on our nation’s campuses.” (Boyer, 1987, p. 214) “They [Millennials] do, however, feel empowered to

make a difference in their local communities by getting involved in service activities through their schools, religious groups, or other organizations” (Sax, 2003, p. 18). The Corporation for National and Community Service (2006) reported in the College Students Helping America executive report, “The number of college students volunteering grew by nearly 600,000 from 2.7 million in 2002 to 3.3 million in 2005. In 2005, approximately 30.2 percent of college students volunteered, exceeding the volunteer rate for the general adult population of 28.8 percent” (p. 2). Students who actively volunteer and participate in community service personally benefit from their experiences. “The weight of evidence shows – conclusively, we think – that participation in community service in general, and service learning in particular, has statistically significant, and positive net effects on students’ sociopolitical attitudes and beliefs” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 45) “After controlling for a wide array of students’ pre-college characteristics (including race – ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, religious preferences, high school volunteer work, and pre-test scores on the outcome measure), as well as characteristics of the institution attended, the researchers found both service learning and generic community volunteer service produced statistically significant, positive, and independent effects on students’ commitment to social activism (Astin et al. 2000; Vogelgesang and Astin, 2000).” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 304).

## **Service Learning**

“We believe that service constitutes a vital part of an undergraduate education. It offers opportunities that cannot be obtained in any other way. And such an experience may be one of the first truly meaningful acts in a young person’s life” (Boyer, 1987, p. 214-215). Service learning is rooted in linking academic study with field study through community service. “Bolstered by Acts of Congress in 1990 and 1993, which created the Learn and Serve America program, the integration of community service with academic study has spread to schools everywhere” (Howe and Strauss, p. 216). Service learning is defined as “a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote learning and development (Jacoby and Associates, 1996)” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 304). “Service learning incorporates features found in both long established and more recent philosophical, curricular, and pedagogical literatures, such as “problem-based learning, collaborative learning, undergraduate research, critical thinking, multi-culturalism and diversity, civic awareness, leadership skills, and professional and social responsibility” (Zlotkowski, 1998, p. 4)” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 304).

## **Interest in Politics**

“Political awareness or activity and sociopolitical views are part of a larger domain that might be characterized as “participating in a democratic society” (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 277). Researchers have indicated an emerging perceived growth in

cynicism and estrangement with politics in past decades (Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005, p. 304). However, a shift in political interests is occurring among college students.

“Millennials are following a generation (GenXers) that has seen politics as unimportant, and show signs of wanting to re-civilize public life” (Howe and Strauss, 2000, p. 231).

Millennial researchers have articulated that students in the Millennial generation “expect to spend more time on politics and government than Boomers now do” (Howe and Strauss, 2000, p. 233). Howe and Strauss (2000) stated “young voters will emerge as a new powerhouse, surprising most older people with their activism and determination. Youth voting rates will rise” (p. 315). College and university campus environments are a place to engage students in developing their core belief systems in politics.

### **Conclusion**

“In general terms, we believe that a morally and civically responsible individual recognizes himself or herself as a member of a larger social fabric and therefore considers social problems to be at least partly his or her own; such an individual is willing to see the moral and civic dimensions of issues, to make and justify informed moral and civic judgments, and to take action when appropriate” (Ehrlich, 2000, p. xxvi). “Conditions in our rapidly changing world require that each of us become effective members of our groups and communities in order to work with others toward needed change and for common purpose” (Komives, Lucas, and McMahon, 2007, p. 112). Higher education institutions have a responsibility to the regions they serve to provide a transformative learning environment that allows students to develop leadership

skills in order to prepare them to be civically engaged, socially responsible global citizens.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

Chapter III establishes the research method for the study. This chapter begins by providing the theoretical framework used to guide the study. The study's methods for research design, data collection, and data analysis is provided. The process for theory development is outlined. Finally, the anticipated limitations of the study and role of the researcher are shared.

#### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify campus environmental factors perceived to influence student leadership development and civic engagement that result in student's perceived capacity to create positive social change as identified by a select group of students at a public four-year comprehensive higher education institution.

#### **Research Questions**

The research questions were designed to explore campus environmental factors perceived to influence student leadership and civic engagement that result in creating positive social change. The study utilized *A Social Change Model of Leadership Development* (Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), 1996) and A. Astin and H. Astin (2000) definition of leadership as the conceptual framework. The research

questions were framed to address the influence of campus environmental factors on components of the conceptual framework related to leadership, civic engagement, and social change. The qualitative research approach examined the interdependent relationships between/among the factors as opposed to a standard linear independent method.

1. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students' development of self knowledge?
2. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence a students' development of leadership competence?
3. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students' civic engagement?
4. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students' perceived capacity to make positive social change?

### **Research Method**

This qualitative study may add a rich perspective to the environmental factors influencing student leadership development and student civic engagement at a four-year public institution located in the south central region of the U.S. This study was designed to better understand the complex interactions between the environment and students through a qualitative follow up to a recent campus quantitative study called the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL) which focused on college student leadership development. I strategically selected a qualitative study as a follow up to the MSL



because the qualitative study enriches the survey results by providing additional context to the interrelationships between the environment and the individuals as they relate to student leadership development and civic engagement. A naturalistic inquiry was conducted through individual interviews with a select group of then currently enrolled undergraduate students at the regional institution.

The intent of the study was to gain an understanding of a campus environment through the constructed reality of individuals within the environment in order to determine factors that can be enhanced to improve student leadership development and civic engagement. I chose the naturalistic qualitative research method for this study because the theoretical framework aligns with the study's objective.

Leadership development can be a broad concept. In order to create clarity, I utilized a leadership development description defined by Astin and Astin (2000) and Higher Education Research Institute (1996). Leadership development was defined in this study as the process by which (1) one gains self-knowledge to effect positive social change for the betterment of others, the community, and society (Astin and Astin 2000), and (2) one gains the capacity to “mobilize self and others to serve and to work collaboratively” (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 19).

The research questions are framed to address the participants' perceived influence of campus environmental factors on components of the conceptual framework related to leadership, civic engagement, and social change. Accordingly, research questions 1 – 3 were framed to address the perceived influence of campus environmental factors on components of leadership development, leadership competence, and civic engagement.

Research question 4 addressed participants' perceived influence of campus environmental factors on their perceived capacity to make positive social change.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Constructionist was the qualitative research paradigm used in this study. "Users of this paradigm are oriented to the production of reconstructed understandings of the social world." (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 184). The constructionist research paradigm allowed me to build an understanding of the university environment through the social knowledge of students. Constructivism is the creation of relativism through the construction of realities from participants in the qualitative study. "We do not construct our interpretations in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language, and so forth" (Schwandt, 2001, p. 30). The researcher using the constructivism paradigm creates meaning through interpretation of exchanges and interpretation of the study's participants. "There is not a single objective reality but multiple realities of which the researcher must be aware. Extended research leads to a rich awareness of divergent realities rather than to convergence on a single reality" (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, and Allen, 1993, p. 12).

Grounded theory is the theoretical approach used for the method of this study. Grounded theory was developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967). Grounded theory is "derived from data, systematically gathered and analyzed through the research process" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 12). Theory is extracted from the data gathered and is the result of this research method. "Essentially, grounded theory

methods are a set of flexible analytic guidelines that enable researchers to focus their data collection and to build inductive middle-range theories through successive levels of data analysis and conceptual development” (Charmaz, K., 2005, p. 507). Grounded theory is a well developed set of procedures, a concept-indicator model of analysis, which includes induction, deduction, and verification resulting in theory (Schwandt, 2001, p. 110). “Theory derived from data is more likely to resemble the “reality” than is theory derived by putting together a series of concepts based on experience or solely through speculation (how one thinks things ought to work)” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 12). “A grounded theory approach encourages researchers to remain close to their studied worlds and to develop an integrated set of theoretical concepts from their empirical materials that not only synthesize and interpret them but also show processual relationships” (Charmaz, 2005, p. 508). Grounded theory connects relationships from data that creates meaning and understanding.

### **Research Design**

Naturalistic inquiry is the research approach utilized in this study. Naturalistic inquiry is a methodology focused on understanding and portraying social action from firsthand experiences (Schwandt, 2001, p. 173). “Naturalistic findings are literally created through the hermeneutic-dialectic interaction between and among the inquirer and various implicated groups. The interaction leads to destruction and reconstruction all around; the hope is that consensus may be achieved on some emergent construction that provides stimulus and guidance for action...Egon G. Guba” (Erlandson, Harris,

Skipper, and Allen, 1993, p. xiv). The researcher conducting a naturalistic study is interested in the events that naturally occur in the environmental setting (Bogdan and Biklen, 1998, p. 4-5). I chose naturalistic inquiry as the approach to this study because the process constructs social reality through the application of interpersonal settings. The naturalistic approach provided the context needed to better understand the environmental influences affecting student leadership development and civic engagement.

### **Site**

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching classifies the research site as a medium four-year, primarily non residential university. The research site location was identified by the Chronicle of Higher Education (August 27, 2010) in the South Central region. This site was selected for two reasons. First, I am currently serving as the chief student affairs officer for the institution and believe this study will provide understanding for future actions needed to enhance the environment given the institution's mission, vision, core values, and strategic plan. Second, the institution's regional service area is culturally rich and diverse which adds value to the study of understanding environmental factors influencing the student population and campus community. Third, regional institutional research of this kind will add value to the field.

The interview location was in the student union facility. The interview site was selected because the facility is a common gathering location for students. The interview room was located in the lower level of the facility next to student organization offices

and food court area. The location was easy for the participants to find. The office is a student resource center with reading chairs, coffee tables, bookshelves, and two small computer desks. The office has recently been renamed the Center for Student Leadership and Community Engagement. I thought the space was ideal for the interviews due to the location and focus of the office.

### **Respondents**

The 2009 MSL respondent characteristics were used as a tool to develop a participant selection criterion. The selection criterion was influenced by gender, race, and class standing. I also benchmarked the institution's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) common data set as a reference tool for establishing participant selection criterion. I asked colleagues for student recommendations. The purpose for utilizing colleague recommendations was to strengthen the sample by minimizing the relationship between the participant and me, as the researcher.

### **Sampling**

Purposive sampling was used in choosing the participant group. "Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). Colleagues who made student recommendations notified the students that I would be contacting them via e-mail and/or text messaging. I inquired with a few individuals about being a study participant for my dissertation prior to

officially requesting their participation. Twelve individuals were invited to participate in the study. All twelve accepted the invitation. Ten participants completed the interviews. Two dropped out of the process by not attending their scheduled interviews.

The study participants were invited utilizing electronic technology. Participants were invited via an introductory e-mail from me. 58 percent (7) of the invited participants immediately accepted the e-mailed invitation. I sent a second e-mail invitation to the 5 who did not respond within 48 hours. One individual immediately responded to the second e-mail and accepted the invitation. I sent phone text messages to the remaining four individuals asking them to read my e-mail invitation. Three of the four immediately responded with confirmation. Interviews were scheduled in blocks of time that best met the participant's schedule during a two-week period. Electronic technology was used as the primary means of communication to confirm individual participation and schedule interviews.

Interview preparation consisted of corresponding with participants and establishing confidentiality procedures. Once participants were confirmed, I followed up with a formal e-mail letter describing the purpose of the interview with details on the interview time, date, and location. Participants received an e-mail reminder prior to the interview. "Early in the interview you try to briefly inform the subject of your purpose, and make assurances (if they are necessary) that what is said in the interview will be treated confidentially" (Bogden and Biklen, 1998, p. 103). For confidentiality and data analysis purposes, I developed an alias identifier for each participant. The key for the assigned alias to participant was kept separated from the data in a secure location. At the

completion of interviewing the ten participants, I determined that saturation had been achieved as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) because I was not gaining new information from participant responses.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection was gathered through personal interviews, observation field notes, and a reflective journal. As the researcher, I conducted the interviews, constructed the observation field notes, and kept the reflective journal. This three prong approach creates triangulation which “improves probability that findings and interpretations will be found credible” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 305). Lightfoot and Davis (1997) described the purpose of triangulation, “Using triangulation, the researcher employs various strategies and tools of data collection, looking for the points of convergence among them” (p. 204).

Personal interviews served as the primary source of data gathering. The personal interviews were semi structured to allow consistency and flexibility in information gathering. “The researcher explores a few general topics to help uncover the participant’s view but otherwise respects how the participant frames the structures and responses” (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, p. 108). The interviewing method used for this study can be classified as ethnographic interviewing. “Ethnographic interviewing elicits the cognitive structures guiding participants’ worldviews” (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, p. 112). Interview questions were strategically developed based off of the literature review and results from the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL).

The interviews were conducted on campus in a setting comfortable to the student participant in order to create a natural intrapersonal setting. Bogdan and Biklen (1998), states:

Qualitative researchers go to the particular setting under study because they are concerned with context. They feel that action can best be understood when it is observed in the setting in which it occurs. These settings have to be understood in the historical life of the institutions of which they are apart. (p. 4)

The interviews began with me introducing myself, sharing the purpose of the study, describing the process, and obtaining formal consent to participate in the study and audio record the interview. “Since the respondent has been selected by the investigator on purpose, it can be assumed that the participant has something to contribute, has had an experience worth talking about, and has an opinion of interest to the researcher” (Merriam, 1998, p. 84). Establishing rapport with respondents is essential to building an understanding from the participant’s perspective (Fontana and Frey, 2005, p. 708). Rapport opened the door to a more open dialog between the participants and me.

A set of questions used to guide the interviews were strategically developed and organized (see Appendix A) by the researcher. The interview questions were designed to answer the study’s research questions and informed by the literature review. I deliberately guided the participants through an inquiry flow that started with general inquiry to in-depth personal perspective back to general inquiry. For example, I purposely asked the participants to tell me about themselves as an opening question in



order to get the participant to relax and open up. After the first two interviews, I figured out that the participants and I did not share the same vocabulary interpretations. I altered a few questions in order to reach the information I was trying to obtain from the participant. For example, I originally planned to ask participants to describe their personal mission and values. The participants seemed to struggle with the terms “personal mission” and “values”, so I altered my verbiage to more descriptive questions that inquired about what they stand for and how did they figure out that they stood for those points. My intent was to minimize potential intimidating questions and increase rapport with participants.

The second mode of data collection was in the form of observation field notes. The observation field notes were developed before, during, and after each participant interview to capture the environmental surroundings, thoughts, ideas, reflections, and general observations that cannot be obtained in the audio recordings. “This written account of the observation constitutes field notes, which are analogous to the interview transcripts” (Merriam, 1998, p. 104). My field notes guided my participant observations; follow up questions and data analysis.

The third mode of data collection was in the form of a reflective journal. After each interview, I reflected on the interview by making notes of how the participant responded, thoughts on how to improve the flow of information, observations of potential themes. The reflective journal became a process improvement tool for me. I shared some of my reflections with a faculty colleague who was a qualitative researcher and who served as a mentor throughout the process. I made tweaks to my interview

question list in order to open the communication lines and create a common lexicon between the participant and me. I learned that phrases such as “civic engagement” and “personal values” became stumbling blocks for the respondents. My reflective journal is presented in Appendix B.

### **Data Analysis**

“Analysis begins with the first interview and observation, which leads to the next interview or observation, followed by more analysis, more interviews or fieldwork, and so on. It is the analysis that drives the data collection” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 42). Interview transcripts, field notes and reflective journal were used as tools for my data analysis. The audio tapes of the interviews were transcribed. “The process of preserving the data and meanings on tape and the combined transcription and preliminary analysis greatly increases the efficiency of data analysis” (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, p. 149). Participants were asked to review their individual transcripts for accuracy. I reviewed the transcripts for context and interrelationships. “Naturalistic inquiry is very dependent upon context. This stems from its fundamental assumption that all the subjects of such an inquiry are bound together by a complex web of unique interrelationships that result in the mutual simultaneous shaping...” (Earlandson, et. al. 1993, p. 16).

The constant comparative method of data collection and comparison was the strategy I used during this study. The personal interviews, field notes, and reflective journal were my data collection processes. I began noting recurring patterns developing

through my reflective journaling. The transcript reviews were a core piece to the data analysis process. I strategically used note cards as a tool for extracting shared constructions from the transcripts. The shared constructions were analyzed using the constant comparative method developed by Glasser and Strauss (1967) and modified by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The constant comparative method consists of unitizing data, categorizations, and identifying patterns. The note cards of shared constructs extracted from the participant interview transcripts were unitized first. Units had two characteristics. “First, [units] should be heuristic, that is, aimed at some understanding or some action that the inquirer needs to have or to take” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 345). Second, the unit characteristic must be able to stand by itself, in other words, the unit characteristic must be interpretable as a sole unit (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 345). Unitized data will “...arise intuitively or from some more elaborate algorithm... [that will] serve as the basis for defining categories” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 344). After the data (note cards) were unitized, the data units were categorized. “The essential tasks of categorizing are to bring together into provisional categories those cards that apparently relate to the same content; to devise rules that describe category properties and that can, ultimately, be used to justify the inclusion of each card that remains assigned to the category as well as to provide a basis for later tests of replicability; and to render the category set internally consistent” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 347). “Look for key issues, recurrent events, or activities in the data that becomes categories of focus” of the data analysis (Bogden and Biklen, 1998, p. 75). Bogden and Biklen (1998) go on to state “...work with the data and emerging model to discover basic social

processes and relationships” (75). Data analysis was guided by the categorization process and by the Lincoln and Guba (1985) rules guiding the “...stop collecting and processing decision. There are four criteria to inform such a ‘stop’ decision (Guba, 1978): [1] ...exhaustion of sources, [2] ...saturation of categories, [3] ...emergence of regularities, and [4] ...overextension” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 350). Data analysis moves into relationship development. “The statements of relationship explain who, what, when, where, why, and how, and with what consequences an event occurs” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 22). The relationship formulation becomes a logical, systematic, and explanatory process (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 21).

### **Quality of Study**

Trustworthiness was established through prolonged engagement, keeping a reflexive journal that logs rationale for methods used during each interview, allowing participants to review transcribed record of interview for accuracy, and having a peer debriefing (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Prolonged engagement establishes trustworthiness because it “...requires the investigator to be involved with a site sufficiently long [enough] to detect and take account of distortions that might otherwise creep into the data” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 302). I established relationships with the campus community through employment. My prolonged engagement through employment allowed for a level of trustworthiness within the environment. The reflective journal logging rational methods used for interviews enabled the researcher to utilize an additional data collection mode. The reflective journal served as a triangulation

technique. The triangulation technique improves probability that findings and interpretations will be found credible (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 305). “If the investigator is to be able to purport that his or her reconstructions are recognizable to audience members as adequate representations of their own (and multiple) realities, it is essential that they be given the opportunity to react to them” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 314). Participants were asked to review transcripts for accuracy in order to strengthen the trustworthiness of the study. Peer debriefing was used as a technique to establish credibility (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 308). A faculty member at the regional institution with qualitative study knowledge and experience served as a peer debriefing during the study. The measures taken to established trustworthiness insured a quality study.

### **Theory Development**

“In most forms of case studies, the emerging themes guide data collection, but formal analysis and theory development do not occur until after the data collection is near completion” (Bogden and Biklen, 1998, p. 73). “Once concepts are related through statements of relationships into an explanatory theoretical framework, the research findings move beyond conceptual ordering to theory” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 22). Developed theory from the study “... explains some relevant social, psychological, educational, or other phenomenon” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 22). Emerging themes began to develop during data collection. The emerging themes continued to develop

during data analysis. The emerged themes provided insight for the researcher to draw research findings and conclusions.

### **Limitations of Study**

“A discussion of design strategies and trade-offs is necessitated by the fact that there is no perfect research design” (Patton, 1980, p. 95). This study was limited to a four-year public institution located in the south central region of the U.S. The study participants were limited to traditional aged (between 18 – 24 years) students. The research questions were designed from a narrowly defined definition of leadership. The themes derived from the data analysis were limited to the boundaries of the institution. In other words, generalizations or conclusive claims were not made.

It is also important to recognize the potential bias of me as the researcher. I was employed by the institution where the study was conducted. There was a distant linkage between me and the participants through my administrative role. Triangulation methods and peer debriefings were incorporated to minimize the risk of bias and strengthen the quality of the study.

### **Role of Researcher**

The role of the researcher is to conduct a well thought-out and executed study. Marshall and Rossman (1999) outlined the researcher’s role as deploying the study, being efficient, building trust with the participants, employing reciprocity, and ensuring ethics. This study was designed to gain understanding from the participants in a short

period of time. “When the researcher will be minimally intrusive and present for a short period of time, building trusting relations must proceed in conjunction with gathering good data” (Marshall and Rossman, 1999, p. 80). I, as the researcher, made contact with the participants, interviewed the participants, and followed up with the participants after the interviews. There was a basic level of trust built between the participants and me prior to the interviews due to our common connection to the institution. The role of the researcher is to uphold high ethical standards. My goal was to provide as much information as possible to the participants to build rapport and create a mutual learning environment for the both of us. This approach created reciprocity. I took appropriate measures to make certain the confidentiality of the participants was upheld. Ensuring an ethical approach to the study made the participant interaction and data collection a quality process.

### **Summary**

The intent of this study was to gain an understanding of a campus environment in order to determine those factors that can be enhanced to improve student leadership development and civic engagement. Participants were selected through a purposeful sampling method. Interviews, field notes, and a reflective journal were the data gathering methods. Data analysis followed the constant comparative method outlined by Denzin and Lincoln (2005). Theory development followed data analysis. The methods used to complete this study support qualitative research standards.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **STUDY AND FINDINGS**

#### **Introduction**

Chapter IV presents the researcher's analysis of data as it relates to identifying perceived campus environmental factors perceived to influence student leadership development, through self knowledge and leadership competence, and civic engagement that result in student's perceived capacity to make positive social change as identified by a select group of students at a public four-year comprehensive higher education institution. The chapter includes institutional background and the study's participant demographics. The researcher's questions are answered through data gathered and analyzed. The intent of this study was to gain an understanding of a campus environment in order to determine those factors that can be enhanced to improve student leadership development and civic engagement resulting in increased student perception of capacity to create positive social change.

#### **Institution Background**

The study was conducted at a regional institution located in the north east region of Oklahoma. Following is the institution's historical background and current status as outlined in the university's undergraduate catalog (NSU, 2010).

Northeastern State University's history began in 1846 when the Cherokee National Council authorized establishment of a National Male Seminary and National



Female Seminary to fulfill the access to education stipulation in the Treaty of 1835 between the United States and the Cherokee Nation. Erection of the buildings for the two seminaries began in 1847 and the Cherokee National Male Seminary opened on May 6, 1851. The Cherokee National Female Seminary opened the following day. Cherokee representatives brought in teachers from Newton Theological Seminary and Yale to lead the male seminary and teachers from Mount Holyoke to lead the female seminary (Agnew, 2009, p. 3). Northeastern State University's Undergraduate Catalog provides historical reference to the institution.

With the exception of a period between the end of the fall semester 1856 and the beginning of the fall semester 1871, these institutions were in continuous operation until 1909. On March 6, 1909, the State Legislature of Oklahoma passed an act providing for the creation and location of Northeastern State Normal School at Tahlequah, Oklahoma, and for the purchase from the Cherokee Tribal Government of the building, land, and equipment of the Cherokee Female Seminary. The educational program of the normal school consisted of four years of high school and two years of college level study. As previously authorized by an act of the Legislature, the State Board of Education, then the governing board of the college, took action in 1919 to change the normal school to Northeastern State Teachers College and to provide for a four-year curriculum leading to the bachelors degree. In 1939, the Oklahoma Legislature authorized that the name of the institution be changed to Northeastern State College. A constitutional amendment adopted in 1941 created The Oklahoma State System of Higher

Education, of which Northeastern State College and all other state-supported institutions of higher education are integral parts. The system is coordinated by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. In the 1950s, Northeastern emerged as a comprehensive state college, broadening its curriculum at the baccalaureate level to encompass liberal arts subjects and adding a fifth-year program designed to prepare master teachers for elementary and secondary schools. By the early 1970s, the functions of the institution had been broadened to include degree options in the field of teacher education at both the baccalaureate and master degree levels as well as new programs in liberal arts, business, and selected service areas. The approval of several new certificate and degree programs in non-teaching areas added a significant dimension to the role of Northeastern. In 1974, the Oklahoma Legislature authorized that the name of the institution be changed to Northeastern Oklahoma State University. The Northeastern State University College of Optometry opened in 1979 and made history when its first doctoral graduates received their degree in the spring of 1983. The official name of the University was changed by act of the Oklahoma Legislature in 1985 to Northeastern State University. (NSU, 2010)

Northeastern State University is Oklahoma's fourth-largest public four-year institution and one of six regional institutions governed by the Regional University System of Oklahoma board. The university serves as a learning hub in northeastern Oklahoma formed by three campuses – the main campus in Tahlequah and branch campuses in Muskogee and Broken Arrow – which together serve over 9,500 students

annually. Northeastern State University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and School. The university is comprised of 5 colleges: Business and Technology, Education, Liberal Arts, Science and Health Professions and Oklahoma's College of Optometry. The institution confers eleven bachelor degrees, four master degrees and one doctorate of Optometry degree. The institution is governed by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and the Board of Regents of the Regional University System of Oklahoma. Locally, the University is under the direction of the President who is subject to the supervision of the two boards of regents.

The study was conducted on the Tahlequah campus. The Tahlequah campus is the only residential campus among the three campus locations. The Tahlequah campus annual student population averages 6,500. The average class size is 24. There are eight residence halls housing 1,200 students. University student activities include 80 recognized student organizations, ten NCAA Division 2 athletic sports teams, intramural sports, and a Greek community.

The eleven county areas surrounding the institution populate 78.6 percent of the student body. The majority of the institution's service area falls within the 2nd Congressional District. According to the Gallup Healthways Well-Being Index, the 2nd Congressional District ranks in the 4th and 5th quintile in evaluations of life, emotional, physical, health, and basic access (Gallup, 2010). A few of the counties within the institution's service area are identified as high poverty levels and low education attainment. Cherokee County, the location of the Tahlequah campus, population has

25.3 percent below poverty level, 76.7 percent with high school degree, and 22.1 percent with Bachelors degree or higher (retrieved May 1, 2011 from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/40/40021.html>).

### **Participant Demographics**

The participant cohort was created to capture the institution's traditional aged undergraduate student population. Gender, race, and class standing were the specific demographics explored. The institution's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) common data set was used as an additional reference tool for establishing participant selection criterion. A tenured faculty member in the communications studies department in the College of Liberal Arts and a staff member in the Center for Tribal Studies assisted with identifying and recommending potential participants for the study. The recommended participants were invited to participate in the study. Ten undergraduate students completed the interview process for this qualitative study. Participants were asked to fill out a personal information sheet prior to beginning the interview for the purpose of capturing general demographics. Table 1 outlines participant demographics compared to the university demographics reported in the 2010 fall IPEDS report.

Table 1 – Participant Demographics

		Participant percentage	University percentage
Gender			
	Male	50	38.7
	Female	50	61.7
Ethnicity			
	Caucasian	20	59.6
	American Indian	30	28.7
	African American/Black	10	5.5
	Hispanic/Latino	10	2.1
	Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	10	1.6
	Middle Eastern	10	n/a
Age	< 25	100	60
Enrollment			
	Full Time	90	73
	Part Time	10	27
	Transfer	10	38.2
Residence			
	On Campus	20	20 (Tahlequah campus)
	Off Campus	80	80
First Generation		50	n/a

The participants in this study represent a cross section of the institution's student population through demographics and campus community involvement. The following profiles provide background and context of the participants.

### **Participant A Profile**

Participant A is a Hispanic male from a small rural town sixty-five miles away from the university. Participant A is the youngest of five siblings. He describes his family as low socioeconomic and shared that he moved out of his family's home at age 16. At the time of the interview, Participant A was 21 years old, in his fifth semester at the university, and classified as a sophomore. Participant A is a first generation college student. He is enrolled full time and lives off campus. Participant A is a Physical Education major. He aspires to become a teacher and cross country coach. His career aspirations were inspired by a high school teacher and track coach who served as a mentor to him during his teenage years. "I feel I can make a great impact on younger kids, I can do so much for them." Participant A works two jobs and identified involvement in five different recognized student organizations. He is most active in a collegiate chapter of a national fraternity. He stated, "I try to get involved in as many organizations and try to be a leader as much as possible". Participant A describes himself as a person who gets "stuff" done, self disciplined and self motivated. Descriptive words he used in describing his leadership style are aggressive, communicator, and serious. Participant A describes a leader as the "top dog", a person everyone looks to and relies on to get the job done. Participant A's first engagement in

community service was after he pledged his fraternity. His service experiences have primarily focused on community clean-ups and food pantry work.

### **Participant B Profile**

Participant B is a 22 year old, fifth year senior and international student from Tokyo Japan. He is the youngest in his family with one sibling. He is not a first generation college student. Participant B chose the University for its science and health professions academic programs. Participant B describes his collegiate experience as a metamorphosis from a quiet non engaged freshman to a very active campus community member. He has selectively involved himself in a wide array of campus community experiences that range from working as a residence advisor to shadowing faculty members conducting research to actively participating in recognized student organizations focused on philanthropy and service. He is self motivated and is not hindered by potential barriers. For example, the previous summer, Participant B sought an intern experience in Africa on his own initiative. His Africa experience has influenced an aspiration to join “Doctors Without Borders” upon completion of medical school. Participant B links academic pursuit and career aspirations to social causes associated with medical research. He has chosen to become a medical doctor “because I can really help out people in a really different dimension than any other job that exists.” Participant B describes having a natural interest in helping people from a young age. His first recollection of community service was as a young boy tagging along with his

mother and sister. He describes himself as a person who is naturally drawn to helping others.

### **Participant C Profile**

Participant C is a 21 year old senior from a rural town 70 miles south east of the university. He will graduate with a bachelor's degree in Communications Studies at the end of the academic year. Participant C classified himself as a white male. Participant C is a first generation college student raised by a single parent for most of his life. Participant C was selected to be part of a four year undergraduate scholarship cohort called the President's Leadership Class. During his time on campus, he has been actively involved in student government, student activities program board, and orientation programs. Participant C works on campus. He spends a significant amount of time volunteering in the Communications Lab assisting fellow students with speech writing. In his time in college, he has developed a passion for helping students stay in college and graduate. His career aspiration is to work in corporate training and eventually move into motivational speaking. Connecting to people is the motivating factor for Participant C's career aspirations. When asked about social issues that move him, Participant C immediately identified feeling passionate about standing up for injustices related to children and animals.



**Participant D Profile**

Participant D is a 20 year old female junior majoring in public relations and communication studies. She grew up in the same town as the university. She currently lives on campus. She is the older of two children in her family and follows her parents in attending the university. Participant D is a member of the United Keetoowah Band of the Cherokee Indians. Participant D is actively engaged in a collegiate chapter of a national sorority, student activities program board, and orientation programs. She was selected to be a part of a four year undergraduate scholarship cohort called the President's Leadership Class. Participant D researched type of career options before deciding on a major. Some influencing factors for selecting a major were her "desire to work with people, make lots of money, dress cute, and travel." Participant D describes herself as having high confidence and is not affected by concern for what others will say. Participant D describes her approach as one who questions issues in order to address problems and find solutions. Participant D has been working with Special Olympics for many years. She finds herself focused on helping other people succeed every chance she gets.

**Participant E Profile**

Participant E is a twenty-two year old senior part-time commuter student from a small rural community eight miles away from the university. Participant E is a mass communications major with an emphasis in public relations and visual communication. She shared that she was highly encouraged by her parents and grandparents to attend

college. She is a first generation college student. Participant E is a Native American student who is actively engaged with Native American organizations and activities on and off campus. Her campus engagement began her second year of college after joining a Native American sorority. Since that time she has become an active member of several recognized student organizations who focus on Native American student population and culture. Since high school, Participant E has had continuous involvement in the Cherokee Nation Tribal Youth Leadership Council. Participant E dreams of creating a media for Native American issues. She wants to show what Indian people are doing now (today) as opposed to focusing solely on the past. Participant E has a strong cultural awareness and has a passion for addressing Native American issues.

### **Participant F Profile**

Participant F is a fifth year senior math major with career aspirations of being an electrical engineer. Participant F selected electrical engineering as a profession because he wants to create a way to improve low socioeconomic communities. His career aspirations were influenced by his international travel to Africa. There he realized the need for water and electricity in poverty stricken areas. Participant F grew up in a small rural community ninety miles northwest of the university. Participant F reacquainted with an older high school friend when he arrived at college. This person connected Participant F to a local chapter of a national fraternity and the university's Baptist Collegiate Ministries (BCM). Participant F became engaged in several student organizations and programs. He referenced the student activities programming board

and extended orientation camp. Participant F is a musician. His musical talent is his unique niche. Most of his time is spent coordinating BCM praise and worship programs for a variety of target student groups. Participant F identified himself as ethnically white, first generation student. The majority of his community engagement is through his religious activity and fraternity affiliation.

### **Participant G Profile**

Participant G is a twenty-one year old female transfer student from a small town sixty miles south of the university. Participant G is a communications study major and desires to work for the government in foreign relations. She is actively involved in the Student Foundation board, student government, and the Baptist Collegiate Ministry (BCM). She has decided to dedicate her life work helping people. Participant G places a strong emphasis on her religious identity. Participant G identified her ethnicity as Middle Eastern. She has traveled to Asia and Haiti on mission trips. Participant G identified her greatest passion is working through an international Christian relief organization focused on providing water, food, shelter, medicine and other assistance to aid individuals who are suffering.

### **Participant H Profile**

Participant H is a twenty-two year old male in his senior year majoring in computer science. His ethnicity is African American/black. Participant H is from a large city 256 miles south west of the university. He was recruited to the university to

play collegiate sports. He relinquished his athletic scholarship after his first year. He is involved in the Association of Black Collegians, a local chapter of a historically black national fraternity, and the student activities programming board. Participant H works on campus in the IT department. He is religiously active. Participant H is the youngest of three boys in his family. His family has three generations of preachers. Participant H feels his calling is service. He has a strong sense of responsibility to inspire others through mentor relationships. Participant H stated that he is consistently put in positions to lead groups to accomplish tasks and to keep people motivated in some capacity. Participant H is very reflective in nature. He described himself as a thinker, analytical and indecisive at times. He is passionate about access to education.

### **Participant I Profile**

Participant I is a twenty year old junior from a bedroom community to the closest metropolitan city sixty miles west of the university. Participant I has been actively engaged in her Native American tribal community, Cherokee, since she was a youth. She was raised in a home where the Cherokee language and native crafts are part of their daily lives. Participant I continues to be involved in the Cherokee Nation youth summer programs and youth council. She is majoring in American Indian Studies with an emphasis in Language Vitalization. Her goal is to attend law school. After obtaining a law degree, Participant I would like to work for the Cherokee Nation. Participant I focuses on academics and involvement in the Native American student organizations

during the academic year. She works during the summer. Her passion is helping Native Americans identify with and be proud of their culture.

### **Participant J Profile**

Participant J is a junior speech pathology major from a small town ninety miles south of the university. She lives off campus but is in close proximity to the campus. Participant J identified herself as a twenty year old ethnically white female. She was accepted into the President's Leadership Class scholarship cohort her freshmen year. She is actively engaged in a collegiate chapter of a national sorority, student government association, and academic organizations within her major. Participant J identified special needs children as her area of specialty. She works on campus in an administrative office as a student assistant. Participant J identified herself as a "really social person" who puts others first. She is passionate about giving women the right to choose to have a baby. Most of her community engagement is through her sorority affiliation.

The institution has a rich history built on values of education and equality among men and women. The participants in this study represented traditional aged undergraduate students who each brought unique perspectives to perceived environmental factors influencing their perceived leadership development, civic engagement, and capacity to make positive social change, based on their personal experiences. The participants provided insight to understanding campus environmental

factors perceived to influence student leadership development and civic engagement that result in student's perceived capacity to create positive social change.

### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify campus environmental factors perceived to influence student leadership development and civic engagement that result in student's perceived capacity to create positive social change as identified by a select group of students at a public four-year comprehensive higher education institution.

### **Research Question Findings**

The research questions are designed to explore campus environmental factors perceived to influence student leadership and civic engagement that result in creating positive social change. The study utilized *A Social Change Model of Leadership Development* (Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), 1996) and A. Astin and H. Astin's (2000) definition of leadership as the conceptual framework. The research questions are framed to address the influence of campus environmental factors on components of the conceptual framework related to leadership, civic engagement, and social change. The researcher utilized a qualitative research approach to examine the interdependent relationships between/among the factors as opposed to a standard linear independent method.

1. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students' development of self knowledge?

2. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence a students' development of leadership competence?
3. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students' civic engagement?
4. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students' perceived capacity to make positive social change?

**Research Question 1 – What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students' development of self knowledge?**

The first research question addressed the campus environmental factors perceived to influence students' development of self knowledge. This study utilized Chaffee and Tierney's (1988) definition of campus environmental factors as the "objective context of people, events, demands, and constraints in which an institution finds itself" (p. 20). This study utilized the definition of self knowledge as the understanding of one's talents, values, and interests, especially as these relate to one's capacity to provide effective leadership (HERI, 1996, p. 19). Campus environmental factors perceived to influence students' development of self knowledge was investigated through questions related to personal definitions of leadership and personal core values, influences on personal definitions of leadership and core values, approaches to addressing problems, and personal motivation and experiences influencing self knowledge.

Individuals within a campus community are an influencing environmental factor (Chaffee and Tierney, 1988). Participants identified campus community members as student peers, mentors, faculty, and academic and student organization advisors. Campus community members were consistently identified by participants as contributors to the participants' development of self knowledge. Individuals external to the campus community were identified as significant influences to mentoring participants' development of self knowledge. Participants' pre existing mentor relationships with individuals such as family, former teachers and coaches were identified as ongoing contributors to their development of self knowledge. Although the pre existing relationships were not within the campus community boundaries, their influence on the participants filtered into the environment through the participants. Campus community members and pre existing mentor relationships were the most cited environmental factors influencing participants' development of self knowledge within the campus community.

Student peers were the most frequently referenced environmental factor in the context of campus community members that influenced participants' development of self knowledge. The interactions with peers shaped participants' opinions and values. Upperclassmen were instrumental to the participants' integration into campus life. Participants connected to upperclassmen through common interests. Participant F shared that during his first semester in college he reconnected with a person a few years older than himself who was from the same hometown. The upperclassman introduced Participant F to his fraternity and faith based ministry which charted his college career.



Most of the participants identified upperclassmen as mentors. “I looked to upperclassmen as role models and for inspiration” (Participant J). Participant D described her peer environment as supportive and engaged in common student activities. Participant L reflected on the influence of student peers by stating, “Seeing fellow students active in service inspires me to do more.” Student peers, through their relationships with the participants, were an environmental factor influencing student development of self knowledge.

Mentors were identified by the study’s participants as a contributing environmental factor influencing their development of self knowledge through their mentor relationships. Mentors were described as individuals who challenged participants’ self awareness, thoughts, and values. Campus community members and external personal network members were two sets of populations identified by participants as mentors. Participants identified academic and activity advisors as the most common campus community member mentors. Participants identified individuals outside the campus community as on-going contributors to their personal growth through their mentor relationship. These external personal network members influencing the participants’ personal development of self knowledge were identified as family, former teachers and former coaches. Participants described their mentors as role models who influenced their personal values and as individuals who emulated personal characteristics each participant aspired to exercise. Participants’ described mentors as individuals who had demonstrated an ability to overcome obstacles. Participants shared that their mentors pushed them to achieve more than they imagined. For example,

Participant A described his greatest mentor, a high school coach, as a person who influenced and inspired his collegiate activities. “She pushed me to the limit, and she showed me all the good works out” (Participant A). Participants consistently felt encouraged by their mentors. Participants described their mentors as passionate in endeavors and empowered to speak up. When asked to describe a mentor, Participant I stated “a mentor is a leader who does not create more followers, but creates more leaders.” Participant F summarized by stating, “Mentors invest in my life.”

Faculty were campus community members identified as an environmental factor influencing participants’ development of self knowledge through discovery of their personal and academic interests, talents and values. The university’s faculty members were consistently cited as significant in connecting participants to campus life. Faculty members in the participant’s academic major were identified most influential in connecting to the campus culture. “Faculty members are always there for me. They won’t hold your hand and do it for you, but they are going to help you as much as they can to strive to make you a better person in the classroom in order to reach your goals” stated Participant A. Several of the participants described a unique closeness to faculty by using words such as friends, highly committed, and dedicated. Participant C described his relationship with one of his faculty members by stating, “She takes time to know her students. Once she knows you, she takes that and just pushes it. She is like just throwing gas on a fire, just that little piece of you, and just makes you feel great. She makes you feel like you can do anything.”

Academic and student organization advisors were campus community members identified as environmental factors influencing participant development of self knowledge through personal interactions related to co-curricular experiences. Academic and student organization advisors were noted for engaging the participants in conversations, assisting with problem solving, and encouraging the participants to become stronger leaders through experiences. Participant E felt her Native American cultural heritage has taught her to refrain from speaking up. Participant E's student organization advisor, a fellow Native American tribe member, has taught her to use her voice for the benefit of herself and others, resulting in Participant E gaining a secure sense of self knowledge. Academic and student organization advisors contribute to participants' learning through intentional interactions and common experiences. Participant B talked about his student organization advisor assigning common book reads for the student organization officers as an approach to promote leadership, personal development, and shared language among the student organization officers. Participant F described his interactions with his academic advisor as life changing by stating, "My faculty [academic] advisor brought to light my passion for people." Academic and student organization advisors are environmental factors who influence student development of self knowledge through their relationships and interactions with the participants.

Pre-existing relationships through family, former teachers, and coaches were commonly identified as individuals who had ongoing influences in participants' value development outside the campus community environment. The participants' external

relationships were external environmental factors influencing the campus environmental factors. All of the participants identified family members, former teachers, and coaches as individuals who mentored and continued to contribute to their personal growth. Participant C credited his mother for helping him establish his personal core values. Participant D described her parents as the instigators for her to have the courage to take action on her dreams. Participant A shared that his high school track coach was instrumental in helping him discover himself and his values in education and serving others. The continued relationships with individuals outside the university environment influenced participants' personal development of self knowledge.

University events in the form of institution programs, academic courses, and student organization activities emerged as specific environmental factors influencing participants' development of self knowledge. Institutional programs were identified as an environmental factor influencing participants' development of self knowledge. Orientation programs, community service programs, leadership seminars, and scholarship programs were most commonly identified as institution programs influencing their personal growth. Six of the ten participants identified the institution's orientation program as contributing to their acclimation to the campus community and to their first reflections of their talents, values and interests. When asked about service experiences, participants identified university coordinated service programs as their primary method for engaging in community service. Participants' reflected personal lessons gained from their community services influenced their personal development of self knowledge. Participant A shared that he came to realize the importance of

organized activity in communities to address community needs. Participant B identified a higher sense of responsibility to the individuals served after participating in university sponsored community service programs. Leadership seminars were identified as a campus event influencing participants' development of self knowledge. Participants D and F both identified university sponsored leadership seminars as their first formal exposure to leadership concepts and intentional practices. University scholarship programs designed to integrate co-curricular experiences into the program were identified by Participants C, D, and F as influential in their leadership development. Institutional programs consisting of orientation programs, community service programs, leadership seminars, and scholarship programs were most commonly identified as environmental factors in the form of events that contributed to participants' development of self knowledge.

Academic courses designed with group projects were identified as an environmental factor influencing participants' development of self knowledge. Participants identified academic experiences in problem solving, proposing change, and providing input as environmental factors contributing to their development of self knowledge. Participants described courses that challenged them to problem solve as their favorite type of academic experiences that resulted in greater personal growth. Participants who had academic course experiences that were experientially based articulated a greater sense of personal empowerment. Two participants identified personal growth and connection to courses that incorporated service learning in the course curriculum. Participant J's experiences in her Speech Pathology clinic service

field hours led to a deeper sense of validation that her field of study aligned with her personal values and a deeper personal commitment to her community through her field of study. Participant C was asked for input on course instruction from a university curriculum committee. His ideas were implemented into the course content. The inquiry and action from a university committee made him feel valued and able to make positive change. Academic course curricula that engaged participants' through problem solving and service were identified as influential on participants' personal growth in self knowledge.

Student organizations were an identified environmental factor contributing to participants' development of self knowledge. Participants who immediately engaged in one or more student organizations the first semester articulated an easy transition into the campus culture due to feeling connected. Participants who did not engage in a student organization the first semester articulated struggles with adjusting to and engaging in campus life. Participant F shared that he strategically joined as many organizations as possible in order to maximize his collegiate experience. The participants' collective campus involvement included membership and officer positions in University recognized student organizations, affiliations with national Greek organization, memberships in scholarship programs, and campus jobs. Personal values and interests appeared to be influenced by peer groups. Greek organizations and ethnic organizations appeared to have a stronger influence on participant's articulation of personal values and interests. Their organization experiences have been the training ground to learn good and bad approaches to leading. Participant F shared that he is involved in a student

organization focused on faith based ministry. His intern experience with the faith based organization has taught him to appreciate the behind the scenes logistics and has increased his awareness to the hard work that goes into event planning. Participant G shared an experience where she felt unequal treatment within her organization. She approached the organization advisor and student officers about the issue which resulted in changing organization behavior. Participant G felt like she was able to make a positive change because the environment allowed her to speak up. Participant A reflected on lessons learned from his involvement in student organizations, "Take it slow, know what you are doing, keep your head on straight, don't get stressed out and you will be good." Experiences in student organizations were identified as environmental factors influencing participant development of self knowledge. Through personal growth participants gained self knowledge by interacting with others, experiencing organization challenges, and learning how to influence change.

Peer expectations and personal commitments emerged as environmental factors that influenced participants' development of self knowledge. Participants identified peer expectations as an influencing environmental factor in their engagement in campus culture. Peers were consistently identified as influencing participants choice in organization involvement, academic course experiences, and personal growth related to identifying values, talents, and interests. Participants desire to create and maintain relationships with peers created an environmental factor of peer expectations which resulted in an environmental demand on participants.

Personal commitments were identified as an environmental factor demand due to the environment requiring participants to balance multiple responsibilities: academics, work, and campus involvement. Most of the participants shared that they were required to work to supplement their living and school expenses. Participants identified a perceived environmental expectation to maximize personal engagement in academics, work and campus involvement. Participants' personal understanding of their talents, values and interests were expanded through their academic, work, and campus involvement experiences. Peer expectations and personal commitments were identified as environmental factor demands influencing participants' development of self knowledge.

Three environmental factors were identified as constraints to participants' development of self knowledge – minority integration, competing priorities, and student disengagement. Minority integration was identified by minority participants as an environmental factor constraining their development of self knowledge due to perceived lack of minority faculty and staff and minority student segregation. Participants identified competing priorities as an environmental constraint to their development of self knowledge due to their multiple responsibilities. Student disengagement was identified by participants as an environmental factor influencing development of self due to perceived lack of community care by fellow students. The three constraining environmental factors were identified by participants as influencing their personal growth.



Participants identified minority integration as an environmental factor constraint. Although all of the participants identified a campus mentor, minority participants articulated a desire to engage with younger university professional role models of the same ethnicity and gender. Participant H identified that there are not many individuals in leadership positions that he could relate to as a minority male. The lack of minority faculty and staff members created an environmental constraint toward minority participants' development of self knowledge because of a missing role model relationship. Participant F described the student body as "friendly, but segregated." Minority participants identified inner ethnic "cliques" within their peer groups and within the active student body. Participant H stated, "Campus community has more of a cultural grouping versus integration." Participant I shared in her interview that the campus Native American student population was divided or "cliquish". Cultural divide was based on a person's percentage of Native American blood and the depth to which one was raised within the Native American cultural traditions. "So with the full-bloods I don't fit in, because I am white. But if I go where the white kids are I don't fit in because they know I am Native" (Participant I). The lack of integration between and within ethnic populations was identified as an environmental constraint influencing minority participants.

Competing priorities was identified as a constraining environmental factor influencing participants' development of self knowledge. Participants reflected that they often felt pulled between their multiple responsibilities. Those who were involved in multiple student organizations articulated frustration when they had to choose one

organization over another. Participant I shared that she held officer positions in two organizations. Participant I felt she had competing priorities with her multiple organization officer roles when she had to prioritize one organization over another when asked to participate in university sponsored activities. Participants who worked to support themselves felt limited in their abilities to participate in university activities and student organizations. Participants with strong home connections spent more time away from the university. Participant E attended school part time due to her responsibilities with work and home. Participant J shared that she had more competing priorities as she has academically matriculated. Competing priorities emerged as a constraining environmental factor influencing participants' development of self knowledge.

Perception of student disengagement emerged as a constraining environmental factor influencing participants' development of self knowledge. Student disengagement was portrayed through participant description of a general student body sentiment of not caring and lack of connection to institution priorities. Participants' communicated frustration with student disengagement. Participants articulated a desire for the general student body to be committed to the institution versus a small group of active students. Participants' described their circle of friends as engaged but described the larger student population as complacent. There was a belief that a small group of the student population engaged in campus life. The remaining student population was described as not involved beyond going to class. Participant J felt the student body "doesn't care" and is not engaged in campus life. Student connection to the institution's mission and priorities was lacking. Participants identified that they had visually seen the

institution's mission, vision, and core values printed. However, participants could not articulate the institution's mission, vision or core values when asked. Participants who did not work on campus did not have knowledge of the institution's purpose and priorities. Those who were employed as student workers had slightly better insight to the institution's organizational direction. Participant H shared that through his campus work experience, he has seen the institution move toward working collaboratively and less in silos. Two participants who were immersed into university student life through their scholarship programs, student activities, and institutional employment were dissatisfied with their perceived value as a student. Participants C and J both shared feelings of institutional discontent with examples of administration not following through on stated intentions which gave them the impression that students were not valued. Participant J stated "It almost feels like there is just a lot of talk and no action." Specific examples given were dilapidated student housing, parking, and fitness center. Participant B articulated a disconnection with the university as an international student because he did not have university support in his transition. The perceived lack of institutional value in students led to student disengagement in campus life. Disengaged students was identified as a constraining environmental factor affecting the ability for the university to influence their personal development of self knowledge.

The environmental factors influencing participants' development of self knowledge were connected to campus community members, university events, environment expectations, and perceived environment constraints. Campus community members consisted of student peers, mentors, faculty, and academic and student

organization advisors. Campus community members and external mentors influenced participants' development of self knowledge. University events influencing participants' self knowledge development were institutional programs, academic courses, and student organization activities. Participants' identified peer expectations and personal commitments as environmental demand factors influencing their self knowledge development. Constraining environmental factors influencing participants' development of self knowledge were minority integration, competing priorities, and student disengagement. All of the identified environmental factors influenced participants' discovery and development of their personal talents, values, and interests.

Consciousness of self is a fundamental value in leadership (HERI, 1996, p. 31). Leadership development is the process of being self aware. In other words, Kabat-Zinn (1994) stated that the leadership process of being self aware moves a person from 'doing' to becoming a person more in touch with what is happening at that moment (HERI, 1996, p. 32). The campus environmental factors perceived to influence participants' process of applying self knowledge to leadership were common community values, campus immersion, and mentor interactions.

Common community values emerged as an environmental factor influencing participants' self knowledge through their reflections on personal values. Common community values shared by the participants were relationships, caring for others, personal responsibility, and faith. Relationships were articulated by the participants in the form of family and friends. The value of relationships was described in the form of acting with respect, kindness and love. Participant E shared that the result of loving one

another creates a good atmosphere. “If you love one another, you are going to work well with each other,” stated Participant E. Caring for others was a consistent value shared by most of the participants. The value of caring for others was articulated through descriptions of standing up against prejudices. Participant C stated, “I do not like other people making people feel small because of their inabilities or deficiencies.” The value of caring for others was consistently articulated through descriptions of standing up for others and service to others. Personal responsibility became a consistently repeated value. Participant C described personal responsibility as commitment and ownership. The value of faith was articulated through religious belief and articulations of hope as a guide. “All of the experiences that I’ve been through, even if they are bad, I have always realized that there is a silver lining” stated Participant I. Common community values were an environmental influence on participants’ application of self awareness to leadership.

Environmental factors influencing participants’ application of self knowledge to leadership development was influenced by participants’ immersion in campus experiences and influenced by interactions with mentors. These environmental factors emerged as participants were asked to define leadership and influences on their development of their leadership definition. Participants’ responses to defining leadership created a continuum. Participants with less exposure to campus experiences and campus community member mentor relationships were more likely to describe leadership as a position versus personal traits. Participants with less immersion in campus experiences and less interactions with mentors did not link their reflected self

knowledge to their reflections of leadership. One participant could not articulate a personal leadership definition. Participant A reflected “Leadership, to me, means being top dog, the person that everybody is going to go to, that everybody can rely on.” Participant A defined leadership as a way to be recognized for hard work and success. Participant G followed suit by immediately translating “leadership” to “leadership position.” Participant C reflected that his younger views of leadership were hierarchal based on position. Participant C was able to articulate traits of leadership but did not connect leadership to his personal self.

Participants with more in-depth campus experiences and stronger campus community mentor relationships demonstrated congruence between their self knowledge reflections and their descriptions of leadership. Participant F viewed his leadership approach from the perspective of a servant, a helper, and a facilitator. Participant I stated “We are all leaders. We just lead in different ways.” Participant E echoed Participant I’s thoughts by saying, “Anyone can be a leader and, everybody is a leader in one particular point.” Participant E described a role of a leader is to step out of personal comfort zone and to speak up or take action. Environmental factors influencing participants’ self knowledge leading to leadership development were the depth of campus experiences and mentor interactions.

### **Research Question 1 Summary**

Campus environmental factors perceived to influence student development of self knowledge were evaluated utilizing Chaffee and Tierney’s (1988) definition of

campus environmental factors as the “objective context of people, events, demands, and constraints in which an institution finds itself” (p. 20). This study utilized HERI (1996) definition of self knowledge as the understanding of one’s talents, values, and interests, especially as these relate to one’s capacity to provide effective leadership (p. 19).

Campus environmental factors perceived to influence students’ development of self knowledge were extracted from participant interview questions related to personal mission, values, and definition of leadership; influences on development of personal meanings of mission, vision and leadership; approaches to addressing problems; and personal motivation and experiences. Campus environmental factors perceived to influence participants’ development of self knowledge are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2 – Research Question 1 Summary

<b>Objective context</b>	<b>Campus Environmental Factor</b>
Individuals	Student peers – Upperclassmen were most cited environmental factor as influencing integration into campus life and development of personal values.
	Mentors – Individuals who continuously challenged participants’ to grow in self awareness, personal values and personal talents.
	Faculty members – Academic major faculty members were most cited as connecting to campus culture and exposing participants to new thoughts and ideas.
	Academic and student organization advisors – Identified as influencing development of self knowledge through challenging and supporting participants in co-curricular experiences.
	Pre-existing relationships (beyond campus community) – Identified as ongoing external influences affecting participants’ campus community engagement and personal development of self knowledge.

Table 2 (continued)

<b>Objective context</b>	<b>Campus Environmental Factor</b>
Events	Institution programs - Orientation programs, community service programs, leadership seminars, and scholarship programs were most commonly identified as institution programs that contributed to participants' development of self knowledge
	Academic courses - Participants identified academic experiences in problem solving, proposing change, and providing input as environmental factors contributing to their development of self knowledge.
	Student organizations - Experiences in student organizations were identified as environmental factor influencing participant development of self knowledge through personal growth participants gained by interacting with others, experiencing organization challenges, and learning how to influence change.
Demands	Peer expectations – Participants' desire to create and maintain relationships with peers created an environmental factor of peer expectations as a demand on participants.
	Personal commitments - Personal commitments were identified as an environmental factor demand due to the environment requiring participants to balance multiple responsibilities: academics, work, and campus involvement.
Constraints	Minority integration - The lack of integration between and within ethnic populations and lack of minority faculty and staff mentors was identified as an environmental factor constraint influencing minority participants
	Competing priorities – Participants identified competing priorities as an environmental factor constraint to their development of self knowledge due to feeling pulled between their multiple responsibilities.
	Student disengagement – Participants identified student disengagement as an environmental factor constraint influencing development of self knowledge due to a perceived general student culture of not caring and lack of connection to institution priorities.

The purpose of this study was to identify perceived campus environmental factors perceived to influence student leadership development and civic engagement that result in students' perceived capacity to create positive social change. The first level of



student leadership development and civic engagement is knowledge of self. Knowledge of self entails an understanding of one's talents, values, and interests (HERI, 1996). Environmental factors influencing participants' self knowledge were campus community members consisting of student peers, mentors, faculty, and academic and student organization advisors; university events narrowed to institutional programs, academic courses, and student organization activities; environmental demand factors of peer expectations and personal commitments, and; perceived constraining environmental factors in the form of minority integration, competing priorities, and student disengagement.

Participants' application of self knowledge to leadership development was evaluated based on the congruence between described values and action. Participants' who demonstrated higher levels of congruence between their self knowledge and personal actions were more engaged in the university community thus influenced by the campus environmental factors. The influence of campus environmental factors on participants' self knowledge and leadership development was demonstrated through participants' consistent responses resulting in common community values. Mentors were a vital contributor to participants' personal development of values, talents and interests and to aiding participants in leadership development. Participants were more likely to apply their self knowledge in the form of leadership actions when mentors were involved. The influence of campus environmental factors on participants' development of self knowledge and participants' application of self knowledge to leadership development increased as participants were more engaged in the university.

**Research Question 2 – What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students’ development of leadership competence?**

The second research question addressed campus environmental factors perceived to influence student’s development of leadership competence. This study utilized Chaffee and Tierney’s (1988) definition of campus environmental factors as the “objective context of people, events, demands, and constraints in which an institution finds itself” (p. 20). Leadership competence is defined by HERI (1996) as “the capacity to mobilize oneself and others to serve and work collaboratively” (p. 19). A student’s ability to mobilize self and others is driven by commitment and collaboration. Commitment is grounded from within and is based on one’s values and passion (HERI, 1996, p. 40). “Commitment involves the purposeful investment of one’s time and physical and psychological energy” (HERI, 1996, p. 40). Commitment leads to common purpose which leads to collaboration. Collaboration is the process of getting people together to work in new ways to achieve a common goal (Winer and Ray, 1994, p. 9) (HERI, 1996, p. 51). Participants answered interview questions related to environmental influences on their development of leadership knowledge, actions taken to address social issues, methods taken to address problems, campus experiences when empowered to make change, service experiences and motivation, perception of university community, and university related events influencing participants’ leadership capacity. Campus environmental factors perceived to influence participants’ leadership capacity were cultural heritage, tragedy response, event coordination, travel abroad, institutional service commitment, extrinsic reward systems, and competing priorities.

Cultural heritage was a campus environmental factor influencing participants' leadership competence development. Forty percent of the university's undergraduate student population self identify minority ethnic status in admissions data collection. Participants' cultural heritage influenced their institutional involvement and peer interactions. Participants D, E, K and H were actively engaged in service activities that celebrated their individual cultural heritages and addressed cultural population needs. Participant D was actively engaged in the United Keetoowah Band (UKB) of the Cherokees. She served as the 2009 UKB Princess which involved service in various aspects of the tribe's community. Participant D represented UKB in university functions throughout her year as reigning princess. Participant E has been actively engaged in service within the Cherokee community since she was a young child. Her Cherokee heritage has guided her collegiate engagement and service related to Native American social issues. Participant E was very active in the university's Native American student population. Participant I grew up in a Cherokee native language home. Her cultural heritage has guided her interests in university service to the Cherokee tribe and Native American people. Most of Participant I's campus activities and academic studies were linked to her cultural heritage. Participant H has been a campus leader in coordinated university student lead activities linked to Black Heritage. He shared that he has consistently returned to his home town to volunteer with the local Juneteenth celebration. Cultural heritage was an environmental factor influencing participants' leadership competence due to their increased mobilization of themselves and others to

engage in academics, campus activities and local service linked to their cultural backgrounds.

Tragedy response emerged as another campus environmental factor that influenced participants' development of leadership competence. When tragedy directly affected a known person or group, participants were more likely to have interest and desire to mobilize. Participants' were motivated to immediate response when a friend was facing a tragic situation. Participant D shared that her first engagement in a social cause was related to fundraising for a high school friend's medical bills from his cancer treatments. Supporting cancer research has become a regular activity for Participant D. Participant J had a collegiate friend facing deportation due to challenges with immigration laws. As a result, Participant J developed an interest in aiding individuals who had been illegally brought into the U.S. as children to become legal citizens. Several participants referenced coordinating and participating in fundraising activities to cover medical expenses for friends who had been in life threatening accidents. When participants had friends facing tragic situations that warranted large group action, the participants became engaged in movements to address the need. Participants articulated their experiences supporting individuals dealing with tragedy influenced the participants' personal social service interests. Tragedy response was a campus environmental factor that influenced participants' experiences in mobilizing themselves and others to address needs which resulted in developing leadership competence.

Event coordination was a campus environmental factor influencing participants' development of leadership competence. The institution's environment allowed students

to plan and coordinate campus-wide programs for students. Participants' shared campus experiences where they were empowered to plan and execute university sponsored student events. Participants who had experience coordinating university student events had a higher commitment to mobilizing others toward a common goal. Experiences with coordinating university supported student activities influenced participants' commitment to take on additional campus event planning responsibilities. Participants' who had experiences with event coordination articulated personal values, skills and commitment to engaging peers in achieving group goals. Event coordination was a campus environmental factor influencing participants' development of leadership competence.

Travel abroad was a campus environmental factor influencing participants' development of leadership competence. The institution provided opportunities for international travel through affiliated university organizations. Participants who had traveled abroad for service had a higher level of committed to engage peers in local community service. Participants with travel abroad experiences had a deeper sense of civic responsibility and commitment for social change. Participant G described her experience in Haiti as "humbling". She articulated the importance of global humanity and a new appreciation for American prosperity. "It makes me so much more thankful to live where we do...to have a home, air conditioning, family, friends, vehicles, refrigerators. It makes you so much more thankful for the little things, for sure" stated Participant G. Participant F participated in a university recognized student organization mission trip to Africa. His travel abroad experience influenced his community service work and his career aspirations. Both Participant G and Participant F shared their

traveling experiences through faith-based mission work has expanded their desire to serve. Travel abroad was a campus environmental factor influencing participants' development of leadership capacity through global exposure which resulted in participants' higher level of personal commitment to leadership and service within the university community.

Institutional community service commitment was a campus environmental factor influencing participants' development of leadership competence. All of the participants had participated in community service as undergraduates at the institution. Participants' collegiate community service experiences were linked to recognized student organization affiliations or university coordinated events. Food drives were the most common reported type of service by the participants. Participants reported that several recognized student organizations partner with community agencies. Participant I shared that one of her organizations regularly volunteer at Help in Crisis, a local nonprofit organization established to provide support and resources to victims of abuse in the community. Participant C volunteered with a student organization that walks dogs with the Humane Society. The outcomes from the participants' service experiences were a deeper sense of responsibility and desire to serve. Participant A shared that he has taken on several organization leadership positions charged with community service coordination. All of the participants described internal positive feelings of satisfaction after serving. Participant C shared that his first community service experience was "the moment he realized the empowering feeling of helping others." Participant J articulated feelings of empowerment after identifying a community issue, coordinating a response

and taking action. Participant J reflected that she has made personal commitments after community service experiences to not contribute to the problem being addressed. The example she shared was she will no longer litter after participating and coordinating land cleanup projects. Institutional community service commitment was an environmental factor influencing participants' leadership competence through their experiences with university organized service projects.

Extrinsic reward systems were identified as a campus environmental factor demand and constraint. Participants' shared their involvement in university supported activities were enticed by extrinsic rewards. Participants were accustomed to engaging in university sponsored activities with incentive programs and were used to receiving personal and organizational recognition status for campus engagement. Participant H had a philosophical issue with the extrinsic rewards associated with motivating individuals to participate in community service. He felt the extrinsic reward system took away from the moral responsibility to sacrifice and serve others. Participant H stated, "I guess a lot of people that do community service, do it for the recognition." Extrinsic reward systems for participation in campus activities were identified as a motivating factor for participants. The university environment influenced participant expectations to receive recognition for engaging in campus activities. Some participants identified extrinsic reward systems as an environmental constraint to participants' leadership competence because the extrinsic reward system contradicts value driven action. Extrinsic reward systems were an environmental factor influencing participants'

engagement in campus activities which provided experiences in developing leadership competence.

Competing priorities were identified by participants as a constraining environmental factor influencing their leadership competence. Competing priorities were described as academic expectations, work, involvement in multiple organizations, and balancing relationships. Participant J stated “I struggle with finding a balance between taking care of others versus myself.” Participant C stated “sometimes you just get distracted with things, until they are in your face.” Participant I described competing priorities held her engagement back when she had to choose one organization activity over another. The balance between academic expectations, co-curricular involvement, and relationship responsibilities were identified as barriers to participants’ taking action to mobilize themselves and others to address a situation or cause. Competing priorities was a constraining campus environmental factor influencing participants’ experiences resulting in developing leadership competence.

Campus environmental factors perceived to influence participants’ development of leadership competence were cultural heritage, tragedy response, event coordination, travel abroad and institutional community service commitment. The common thread among the five environmental factors was the connection to people through experiences and commitment. Experiences that pushed participants’ to engage with others beyond a surface level resulted in a stronger commitment to serving others. Participants who had more exposure to service experiences that challenged their paradigms had a higher sense of personal responsibility and were more intrinsically motivated to continue in serving



others. Extrinsic reward systems served as a motivator for participants' to engage in campus activities. Yet, extrinsic reward systems were perceived to take away from the intrinsic motivation needed to build leadership competence. Cultural heritage, tragedy response, event coordination, travel abroad, and institutional service commitment were environmental factors influencing participants' to expand their self knowledge and develop their leadership competence.

Leadership development is the process by which one builds knowledge and skills to create positive social change based on principles of equity, inclusion and service (HERI, 1996, p. 12). Research question 2 explored campus environmental factors perceived to influence student's leadership competence. Leadership competence is defined by HERI (1996) as "the capacity to mobilize oneself and others to serve and work collaboratively" (p. 19). The university environmental factors influencing participants' leadership capacity were cultural heritage, tragedy response, event coordination, travel abroad, institutional service commitment, extrinsic reward systems, and competing priorities. The university environmental factors influencing leadership competence inspired participants to create personal and collective commitment toward a common purpose. Participants increased commitment to serving others and created common purpose through their experiences related to cultural heritage, tragedy response, event coordination, and travel abroad. Cultural heritage influenced participants' connection to the university community. Ethnic minority participants' were intentional in their engagement and service connected to cultural communities. Ethnic minority participants' appeared to have a deeper commitment to serving others and common

purpose to create positive social change. Campus events planned and led by participants created a deeper sense of responsibility to serve others. Community service projects coordinated through the University provided participants with experiences in working with others for a common purpose for the betterment of others. Community service projects resulted in participants strengthening their self knowledge of service values and increasing motivation for future service. Environmental factors provided participants experiences engaging with social issues through community service and travel abroad. Participants were motivated by positive feelings from helping others in need. Participants who found a personal connection to their community service experience articulated intrinsic motivation to serve. Participants' demonstrated a strong sense of self knowledge and a commitment to collaboration through their campus involvement. Participants gained leadership development through their campus experiences influenced by environmental factors of cultural heritage, tragedy response, event coordination, travel abroad, institutional service commitment, extrinsic reward systems, and competing priorities.

### **Research Question 2 Summary**

Campus environmental factors perceived to influence student development of leadership competence were evaluated utilizing Chaffee and Tierney's (1988) definition of campus environmental factors as the "objective context of people, events, demands, and constraints in which an institution finds itself" (p. 20). This study utilized HERI (1996) definition of leadership competence as "the capacity to mobilize oneself and

others to serve and work collaboratively” (p. 19). A student’s ability to mobilize self and others is driven by commitment and collaboration. Commitment is grounded from within and is based on one’s values and passion (HERI, 1996, p. 40). “Commitment involves the purposeful investment of one’s time and physical and psychological energy” (HERI, 1996, p. 40). Commitment leads to common purpose which leads to collaboration. Collaboration is the process of getting people together to work in new ways to achieve a common goal (Winer and Ray, 1994, p. 9)(HERI, 1996, p. 51).

The campus environmental factors perceived to influence student’s leadership competence were cultural heritage, tragedy response, event coordination, travel abroad opportunities, and commitment to service. Extrinsic reward systems and competing priorities were identified as environmental factors demands and constraints. These influencing environmental factors pushed participants to apply their self knowledge (the understanding of one’s talents, values, and interests) resulting in development of leadership competence. Environmental factors influencing participants’ development of leadership competence are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Research Question 2 Summary

<b>Objective Context</b>	<b>Campus Environmental Factor</b>
Individual	Cultural heritage - Cultural heritage is the curricular and co-curricular university experiences driven by ethnicity.
	Tragedy response - Tragedy response is the co-curricular university experiences guided by individual or group tragedy.

Table 3 (continued)

Objective Context	Campus Environmental Factor
Events	Event coordination - Event coordination is the opportunity for participants to build management skills and leadership knowledge.
	Travel abroad - Travel abroad is the experience of traveling out of the country for curricular and co-curricular purposes.
Demand/Constraints	Extrinsic reward system - Extrinsic reward system is a formal method designed to motivate participants to engage in program or activity.
	Competing priorities - Competing priorities are the multiple responsibilities participants identify as barriers to focusing on developing leadership competence.

Leadership development occurred through participants' campus experiences influenced by environmental factors of cultural heritage, tragedy response, event coordination, travel abroad, and institutional service commitment. Participants' connection to their cultural heritage connected them to a sub population within the university community which led to common purpose and shared values with others. Experiences through responding to others in need through tragedy response, travel abroad, and institutional service commitment provided participants an outlet to gain knowledge of community needs and gain skills in mobilizing to address the needs of others. Participants who had experienced campus event coordination had a higher level commitment to the institution and student body. Their campus event coordination experiences resulted in ownership to the university community. Participants' built

knowledge and skills through their campus experiences influenced by the environmental factors resulted in a stronger commitment to equity, inclusion, and service.

Campus environmental factors perceived to influence student's leadership competence required participants to have knowledge of their personal values, talents, and interests and a high level of commitment to work with others toward a common purpose. Campus environmental factors enabled participants to strengthen their leadership abilities by allowing participants to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and their passions through interactions with other individuals.

### **Research Question 3 – What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students' civic engagement?**

The third research question explores campus environmental factors perceived to influence students' civic engagement. Campus environmental factors are the "objective context of people, events, demands, and constraints in which an institution finds itself" (Chaffee and Tierney, 1988, p.20). Civic engagement is defined as the commitment, empowerment, and involvement in volunteerism, community service, and interest in politics (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 4). Participants' perspectives and experiences were obtained through interview questions related to personal community service and volunteer experiences, motivation to be civically engaged, perceptions on connections between civic engagement and social issues, campus events that have influenced self knowledge and leadership capacity, and perceptions on creating positive social change. The university environmental factors influencing participants' development of civic

engagement were Millennial generation population, student cognitive development level, campus citizenship, local community identity, and political disengagement.

Millennial generation population was a campus environmental factor influencing participants' civic engagement. All of the participants' age, outlook, and experiences were in alignment with characteristics of the Millennial generation population.

Participants shared a common outlook on the importance of engaging in communities.

Eight of the ten participants had experienced volunteering as youth. Their youth experiences were linked to family activities in their local communities and faith based service. Consistent with Millennial generation, participants entered into the university with K-12 public school volunteer and community service experiences. Participants' applied their Millennial generation value for volunteerism and community service upon entering the University. Participant H shared his youth service experiences with feeding the homeless guided his co-curricular activities. Participant H's commitment to the social issue of homelessness has resulted in him coordinating campus activities to bring awareness to the issue. Participant F's commitment to volunteer and service within the Native American community was developed through her youth experiences in the Cherokee Youth Council and continued in her collegiate experiences in the University Native American Student Association. The Millennial generation population was an environmental factor influencing civic engagement due to the collective population commitment to volunteerism and community service.

Student cognitive development level was a campus environmental factor influencing participants' civic engagement. Participants' cognitive development phase

influenced their depth of understanding and commitment to civic engagement. Participants' who demonstrated a higher level of cognitive development in their interview appeared to have deeper perspective and commitment to their role and responsibility as community members. The term civic engagement was a new concept to participants. Most of the participants' struggled with providing a definition of civic engagement. Participant G described civic engagement as "being involved with the place you are in." Participant J defined civic engagement as "doing for others." Students' cognitive development level influences the congruency of their actions to their articulated values. Participants' congruence between their articulated values and their actions related to civic engagement developed into a campus environmental factor due to the influence of the collective student cognitive development level on the general student population culture for civic engagement.

Campus citizenship was a campus environmental factor influencing participants' civic engagement. Participants' clearly identified as a campus community member. The majority of participants' community engagement activities were linked to the university. Participants' commitment to campus community was demonstrated through their campus involvement in volunteer and community service activities. Participant C volunteered in an academic communications lab as a tutor because he found value in helping people overcome their public speaking fears. He described his role as "giving individuals the tools to empower them to be successful." Seven of the ten participants interviewed volunteered with university orientation programs to assist new students with transitioning into the university. Participants' had a high commitment to supporting

fellow students and the campus community. Participant D shared her motive for campus volunteerism and community service, “You need to give back to your campus and you need to give back to your community.” Participants’ identity as campus community members results in a commitment to campus citizenship. Campus citizenship was a campus environmental factor influencing participants’ civic engagement.

Local community identity was a campus environmental factor constraint to participants’ civic engagement. Participants did not identify themselves as local community members. Participants identified themselves as community members of the towns they graduated high school. Participants J and H both shared their continued commitment to civic engagement in their home towns in which they graduated. Participants J and H return home for annual community service projects and community celebrations. Participants were not active in civic related activities in the local community even though most lived and worked in the local community. The lack of local community identify resulted in a campus environmental factor constraint to participants’ civic engagement beyond the university borders.

Political disengagement was a campus environmental factor barrier influencing students’ civic engagement. Participants’ political disengagement was demonstrated in the missing themes of collective responsibility and commitment to social activism. Participants’ were not politically active. Participants’ motivation for civic related activities was driven by personal desires to connect to individuals. “Making a difference” was a repeated reason for personal motivation. Feelings of accomplishment and personal satisfaction from helping others influenced participants’ civic engagement.



Civic related activities were based on personal motivation rather than collective responsibility for common good. Participants' did not demonstrate personal action to civic engagement beyond organized campus programs. When asked about passion for social issues, most participants did not have an identified passion for a social issue that influenced them to action. There was a consistent gap between participants' linkage between their civic engagement activities and the larger social issue. Most participants could not identify social issues linked to their volunteer and community service. The social issue gap leads to missing commitment to social activism. Participants' did not share a collective responsibility and commitment to social activism which resulted in political disengagement. A campus environmental factor barrier influencing students' civic engagement was political disengagement.

Leadership development is the process by which one gains knowledge and skills to create positive social change based on principles of equity, inclusion, and service (HERI, 1996, p.). The campus environmental factors perceived to influence participants' civic engagement were Millennial generation population, student cognitive development and campus citizenship. Participants' leadership development in relation to civic engagement was demonstrated in their commitment and collaboration reflected in the Millennial generation and cognitive development environmental factors. The influence of Millennial generation and cognitive development level environmental factors allowed participants to build leadership knowledge and skills in working collaboratively through their commitment to the campus community. Participants' knowledge and skills were reflected in their roles and responsibilities within the campus

community. Participants' characteristics of the Millennial Generation fostered a campus environment of service to others using a collaborate approach. Participants' cognitive development level influenced their personal development of self knowledge and aided them in creating congruence between their values with their actions. Participants were gaining leadership knowledge and skills through their campus citizenship. Leadership development was demonstrated in participants' commitment to the campus community and in their collaborative approach to achieve shared goals with common purpose.

### **Research Question 3 Summary**

Campus environmental factors perceived to influence student development of leadership competence were evaluated utilizing Chaffee and Tierney's (1988) definition as the "objective context of people, events, demands, and constraints in which an institution finds itself" (p. 20). This study uses Ehrlich's (2000) definition of civic engagement which is the commitment, empowerment, and involvement in volunteerism, community service, and interest in politics. Participants were actively engaged in volunteerism and community service elements of civic engagement. The third element of civic engagement, interest in politics, was not a part of the participants' civic engagement activities. The campus environmental factors perceived to influence students' civic engagement are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4: Research Question 3 Summary

Category	Campus Environmental Factor
Individual	Millennial generation population – The Millennial generational characteristics of service and collaboration influence the campus environment.
	Student cognitive development level – The level of students’ cognitive development collectively influence the campus environment and culture.
Events	Campus citizenship – The identification to the campus community resulting in commitment to civic engagement that benefits the campus community.
Demand/Constraints	Local community identity – Participants do not identify themselves as members of the local community which results in limited local civic engagement.
	Political disengagement – The environment does not influence students to politically engage.

Campus environmental factors perceived to influence participants’ civic engagement were Millennial generation population, student cognitive development level, campus citizenship, local community identity, and political disengagement. The participants were classified as Millennial generation. The value, commitment and action related to community service and volunteerism were in alignment with Millennial generation research conducted by Howe and Stauss (2000). Student cognitive development level was an environmental factor due to the influence of peers to one’s development of self knowledge and personal action. Student cognitive development

level determined the depth of understanding, commitment, and involvement in civic engagement activities. Student cognitive development level became a campus environment factor influencing student's civic engagement. Participants identified themselves as campus community members and identified themselves as community members of the city or town they considered home. Participants did not connect themselves to the local community where the University was located. As such, participants' primary civic engagement activities had direct linkage to the university community. Participants' were disconnected with their role as contributing members to the community in which they lived and worked. Campus citizenship was an environmental factor influencing participants' civic engagement. Local community identity became a constraining campus environmental factor in students' civic engagement. Political disinterest was discovered as a campus environmental factor barrier to participants' civic engagement. Political disinterest emerged through response gaps in identifying with a sense of collective responsibility and commitment to social activism. Participants did not identify a common value of political activity or addressing social needs through political action. The Social Change Model of Leadership Development (HERI, 1996) identified controversy with civility as a group value. "Controversy with civility recognizes two fundamental realities of any creative group effort: that difference in viewpoints is inevitable, and that such differences must be aired openly but with civility. Participants perceived conflict as negative resulting in a low comfort level. The majority of participants articulated their approach to conflict was to

avoid or to discuss with an authority figure. Participants had not experienced participating group mobilization to address a social need.

The campus environmental factors perceived to influence participants' civic engagement were peer influenced and university structured activities to promote civic engagement. However, there were campus environmental factors hindering participants' development of a deeper sense of commitment to approach issues on a collective effort. The campus environmental factors perceived to influence participants' civic engagement promoted the beginning stages of collaboration. However, the campus environmental factors did not foster the higher levels of collaboration which include empowerment through trust and the value of diversity to generate creative ideas (HERI, 1996, p. 23). The result of the campus environmental factors perceived to influence students' civic engagement was actively engaged students within subsets of the university but not collectively. Common purpose focused on social activism was not a campus environmental factor. Participants' shied away from controversy in their leadership experiences. Participants were not accustomed to addressing university concerns as a united group utilizing controversy with civility as a method to social change. The campus environmental factors perceived to influence students' civic engagement provided a framework for participants to engage in community service and volunteerism.

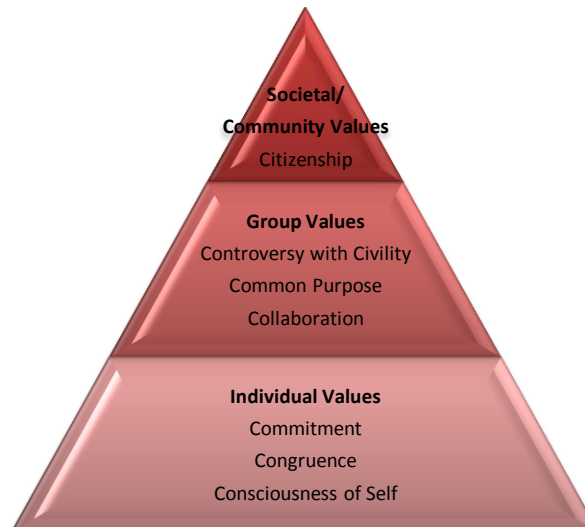
Leadership development permeated through the participants' responses to values and actions for civic engagement. Their commitment to campus community service and volunteerism resulted in deeper self knowledge and increased action to serve others. Participants' activism was limited to campus community and not motivated by politics.

Overall, the campus environmental factors perceived to influence students' civic engagement allowed students to gain knowledge and skills related to commitment, collaboration, and common purpose.

**Research Question 4 – What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students' perceived capacity to make positive social change?**

Research question four was designed to explore campus environmental factors perceived to influence students' perceived capacity to make positive social change. Campus environmental factors are the “objective context of people, events, demands, and constraints in which an institution finds itself” (Chaffee and Tierney, 1988, p. 20). Social change is the desired outcome from students' maximizing their leadership and civic engagement capacity. Social change is the process of effecting “positive change for the betterment of others, the community, and society” (HERI, 1996, p. 16). This study utilized the Social Change Model of Leadership (HERI, 1996) as a framework for measuring student perceived capacity to create positive social change. Figure 2 illustrates The Social Change Model of Leadership's (HERI, 1996) seven critical values of leadership.

Figure 2: The Social Change Model of Leadership Development's (HERI, 1996) seven critical values of leadership



The Social Change Model of Leadership is based on seven critical values (HERI, 1996, p. 22-23):

Individual values:

1. Consciousness of self – “awareness of personal beliefs, values, attitudes and emotions that motivate one to take action” (p. 22).
2. Congruence – alignment of thoughts and behavior with consciousness of self (p. 22).
3. Commitment – “psychic energy that motivates the individual to serve and that drives the collective effort” (p. 22).

Group values:

4. Collaboration – work with others in a common effort that is empowered through trust and guided by the value of diversity (p. 23).
5. Common purpose – shared aims and values (p. 23).
6. Controversy with civility – exchange of different viewpoints in an open and respectful manner (p. 23).

Societal/Community value:

7. Citizenship – “the individual and the collaborative group become responsibly connected to the community and the society” (p. 23).

Individual values of consciousness of self, congruence, and commitment; group values of collaboration, common purpose, and controversy with civility; and, societal/community value of citizenship were reflected in the environmental factors influencing students’ self knowledge (research question one), leadership capacity (research question two), and civic engagement (research question three). Research question four further explores environmental factors influencing students’ perceived capacity to make positive social change guided by the three components (individual, group, and society/community) of the Social Change Model of Leadership (HERI, 1996). Participants’ provided insight to environmental factors influencing their perceived capacity to make positive social change through interview questions focused on personal perceptions of leadership, passion for social cause(s), action taken for social cause(s), campus experiences in creating change, community service and volunteerism experiences, motivation for civic engagement, and campus events influencing capacity



to make social change. Propensity to act individually, silence, and democratic dormancy were the three environmental factors influencing participants' perceived capacity to make positive social change. Propensity to act individually refers to action motivated by self interest resulting in a lack of collective action. Silence refers to limited open dialog experiences with the campus community, collective avoidance with controversy, and missing individual and community value of diversity. Democratic dormancy refers to the inactive practices of social responsibility, self governance, and political activity. Propensity to act individually, silence and democratic dormancy were campus environmental factors perceived to influence participants' perceived capacity to make positive social change.

Propensity to act individually was reflected in participant responses to civic engagement activities motivation and engagement. Participant A described his motivation for engaging in leadership roles and involvement in service activities was influenced by his desire to be recognized as a campus leader. Propensity to act individually environmental factor was demonstrated through descriptions of personal motives, connection to social issues, and engagement in larger social issue. Participants' responses to their motivation to participate in civic engagement activities were driven by personal feelings of satisfaction and feelings of personal achievement. For example, Participants D and G shared their personal feelings of satisfaction when completing community service projects. Participants' did not identify common purpose shared by peers or campus environment as a motivating factor for civic engagement. Participant C shared that he had not experienced participating in a peer movement to create change on

an issue of concern. There was a gap with participants' connection to social issues. The majority of participants did not identify a passion for a particular social concern. Participant J was the only participant who articulated a social passion. However, Participant J articulated that she was not engaged in activism related to her social passion. Participants' could not connect their campus civic engagement experiences to related social issues. As such, participants had not intentionally experienced or engaged in creating positive social change. Participants' responses to campus experiences related to addressing a social issue and problem solving indicates the campus environment does not have a culture of social activism. Participants' decisions on campus and community involvement were driven by peer influence and university coordinated programs. Propensity to act individually emerged as an environmental factor influencing participants' perceived capacity to create positive social change through their articulated motives linked to individualism versus a common purpose, by their lack of connection to a personal social passion and their inexperience in social activism. The campus environment does not cultivate a common purpose for participants to identify. The campus environment fosters the propensity to act individually through the acts of individuals and lack of common purpose. Propensity to act individually was an environmental factor influencing participants' perceived capacity to create positive social change reflected in a lack of common purpose for a greater good.

Silence was an environmental factor influencing participants' perceived capacity to create positive social change. The environmental factor of silence was demonstrated by participants' limited open dialog experiences within the campus community, their

collective avoidance with controversy, and missing individual and community value of diversity. Participant G shared her approach to addressing conflict was to speak to the person individually. Participant G was not comfortable exchanging differences of opinions that were controversial in nature in a group setting. The campus community members were not actively engaged in ongoing open dialog that could be perceived as controversial. Participants did not identify campus experiences with debate or exchanging different opinions on controversial topics to find common ground. As such, silence surfaced as an environmental factor limiting participants' perceived capacity to create positive social change through dialog and debate. Participants' shied away from addressing conflict with peers and taking action that may be perceived as controversial. Participant J was not actively engaged in her social passion because of the controversial nature of the subject. Participant J stated "I don't want to be judged or looked down upon because there are strong opinions opposite of mine regarding my personal opinions on women's right to choose." The value of diversity demonstrated through exchanging of diverse ideas was missing in the participants' responses. The institution appeared to not foster student engagement in vocalizing contrasting perspectives and opinions in group settings. Participants provided examples of addressing controversy within the campus community in a private setting. Participants had experiences with controversy. However, there was a lack of desire to engage in controversy. Participants' did not identify campus experiences with engaging in controversial subjects. The campus environment is not fostering open and diverse dialog on social issues. The silent environment limits participants' perceived capacity to create positive social change. A

campus environmental factor of silence influenced participants' lack of perceived capacity to create positive social change.

Democratic dormancy was an environmental factor influencing participants' perceived capacity to create positive social change. Democratic practices of social responsibility, self governance, and political activity were not evident in participants' campus experiences. Participants' engagement experiences were primarily influenced by personal motives and peers rather than by a sense of social responsibility to the campus community. Participants' had limited experience in influencing social change through student governance. Participants' consistently looked to positional leadership for guidance rather than focusing on shared wisdom and talent from peers and from creatively utilizing campus resources to achieve social objective. Participants' political experiences were minimal. The value of citizenship was not demonstrated in participants' articulated responses. The campus environment was dormant to democratic practices. The environmental factor of democratic dormancy was demonstrated as influential to participants' perceived capacity to create positive social change through the lack of participants' campus experiences and personal motives to create change utilizing democratic values.

Leadership development is the process by which one gains knowledge and skills to create positive social change based on principles of equity, inclusion, and service (HERI, 1996, p.18). The environmental factors influencing participants' perceived capacity to make positive social change resulted in participants' not maximizing their leadership development. Propensity to act individually, silence, and democratic

dormancy were the environmental factors influencing participants' perceived capacity to make positive social change. Participants' identified themselves as individual members of the campus community and articulated ownership to acts of service within the university. Participants' civic engagement was limited to internal student organization activities and university sponsored programs. Participants' did not have campus experiences of addressing community needs through collective common purpose. Participants' were not actively engaged in mobilizing to address community needs. The depth of leadership development was limited by the environmental factors influencing participants' perceived capacity to make positive social change.

#### **Research Question 4 Summary**

Research question four examined campus environmental factors perceived to influence participants' perceived capacity to make positive social change. Campus environmental factors are the "objective context of people, events, demands, and constraints in which an institution finds itself" (Chaffee and Tierney, 1988, p. 20). Social change is the process of effecting "positive change for the betterment of others, the community, and society" (HERI, 1996, p. 16). The campus environmental factors perceived to influence participants' perceived capacity to make positive social change were propensity to act individually, silence, and democratic dormancy and are outlined in Table 5.

Table 5: Research Question 4 Summary

<b>Perceived capacity to make positive social change</b>	<b>Campus environmental factors</b>
Individual/Events	Propensity to act individually – action motivated by self interest resulting in a lack of collective action.
Demands/Constraints	Silence - limited open dialog experiences within the campus community, collective avoidance with controversy, and missing individual and community value of diversity.
	Democratic dormancy – inactive practices of social responsibility, self governance, and political activity.

The campus environmental factors of propensity to act individually, silence, and democratic dormancy influenced participants' perceived capacity to make positive social change. Participants were influenced to engage in leadership and civic activities that had personal benefits. Participants were not actively engaged in mobilizing others to address community concerns. Participants were not accustomed to exchanging different viewpoints with the sense of controversy with civility. The campus environment did not engage participants in controversial dialog to address social issues which resulted in a silent environment. Participants identified as a campus community member, however they were not compelled to take citizenship responsibilities. Although participants were gaining self knowledge and building their capacity to create positive social change through their campus experiences, the campus environment did not promote democratic values of social responsibility, self governance and political activity. Participants did not articulate common purpose and social responsibility for the larger campus

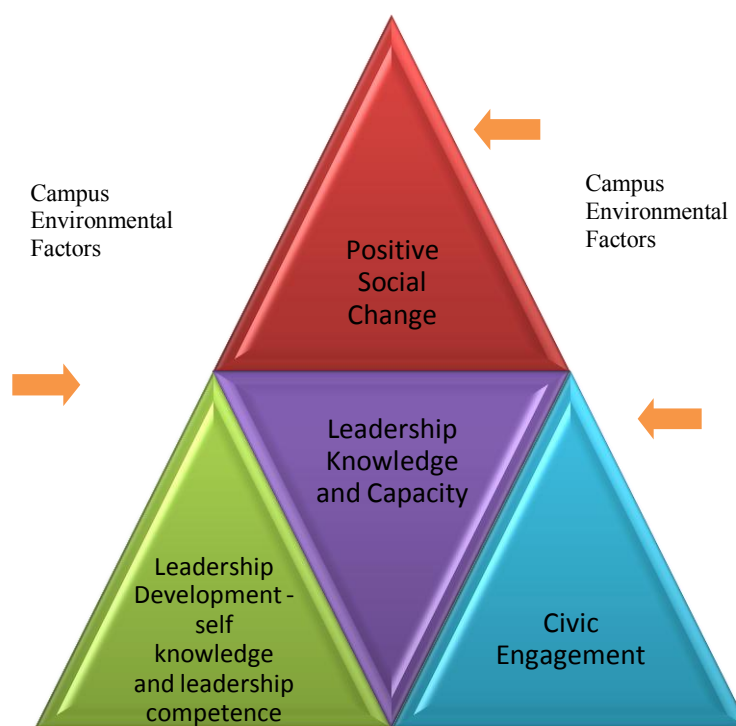
community. Participants did not have experience in engaging in self governance and political activity to achieve a common objective or address a community need. As such, the campus environment was dormant in promoting democratic values. Participants' were not actively engaged in creating positive social change. While limited, the campus environmental factors of propensity to act individually, silence and democratic dormancy contributed to the participants' activism.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to identify campus environmental factors perceived to influence student leadership development and civic engagement that resulted in student's perceived capacity to create positive social change. Campus environmental factors were "the objective context of people, events, demands, and constraints in which an institution finds itself" (Chaffee and Tierney, 1988, p. 20). The campus environmental factors influence student leadership development. Student leadership development is the process by which one gains self knowledge and gains capacity to mobilize self and others to serve and work collaboratively to effect positive social change for the betterment of others, the community, and society (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996). There is an interdependent relationship between students' leadership development and civic engagement. Students' leadership knowledge and capacity build as they increase their civic engagement. Civic engagement is the commitment, empowerment, and involvement in volunteerism, community service, and interest in politics (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 4). The desired outcome of

campus environmental factors perceived to influence student's leadership development and civic engagement is students' actively engaged in creating positive social change. Positive social change is the action which helps the institution/community to function more effectively and humanely (HERI, 1996, p. 19). The intent of this study was to gain an understanding of a campus environment in order to determine those factors that can be enhanced to improve student leadership development and civic engagement. Figure 3 provides an illustration of this study.

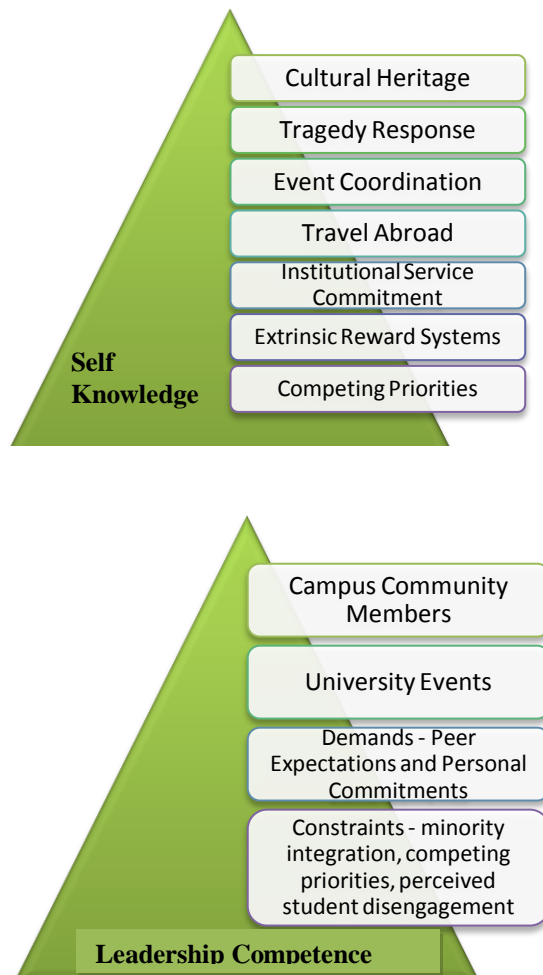
Figure 3: Campus environmental factors perceived to influence student leadership development and civic engagement resulting in students' perceived capacity to make positive social change





Higher Education Research Institute (2000) defined student leadership development as the process by which one gains self knowledge and gains capacity to mobilize self and others to serve and work collaboratively to effect positive social change for the betterment of others, the community, and society. Leadership development has two components, self knowledge and leadership competence. Self knowledge is the “understanding of one’s talents, values, and interests, especially as it relates to the student’s capacity to provide effective leadership” (HERI, 1996, p. 19). Environmental factors influencing participants’ development of self knowledge were campus community members – student peers, mentors, faculty, academic and student organization advisors; and university events – institution programs, academic courses, and student organization activities. Campus environmental factors that were perceived by participants as demands were peer expectations and personal commitments. Constraining campus environmental factors hindering participants’ development of self knowledge were minority integration, competing priorities, and perceived student disengagement. Three key indicators that student leadership development was occurring as a result of campus environmental factors were participants’ level of engagement in co-curricular experiences, connection to peers within the campus community, and interactions with campus mentors. Figure 4 provides an illustration of the campus environmental factors perceived to influence student leadership development.

Figure 4: Campus environmental factors perceived to influence student leadership development



Participants' development of leadership was reflected in the alignment between their articulation of personal values and their leadership description. Common personal values shared by the participants were relationships, caring for others, personal responsibility, and faith. Participant I stated "Leadership to me is being able to know

what you believe in, like the principles that are your basic beliefs, and being able to stand up for them.” Participant C shared “leadership is doing something for the right reasons.” Participants’ responses to leadership definition and personal values revealed the influence of campus environmental factors of campus community members, university events and peer expectations. The campus environmental factors of campus community members, university events, and peer expectations fostered participants’ to engage experiences that challenged them to build their self knowledge resulting in participants’ understanding of their individual capacity for leadership based on their talents, interests and values.

Participants identified campus environmental factors constraining their leadership development were personal commitments, minority integration, competing priorities, and perceived student disengagement. The participants’ personal commitments limited their full engagement in leadership development opportunities. Minority integration was identified as limited within the campus community resulting in limited exposure to individuals from different ethnic backgrounds. Competing priorities and perceived student disengagement were campus environmental factors limiting participants’ leadership development through campus engagement beyond class attendance. Constraining campus environmental factors influenced the progression of participants’ leadership development.

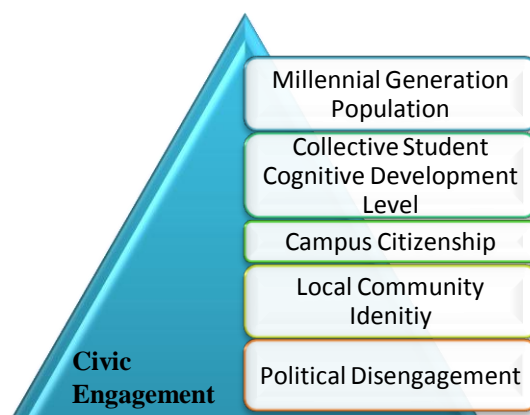
The second component to leadership development is leadership competence which is defined as “the capacity to mobilize oneself and others to serve and to work collaboratively” (HERI, 1996, p. 19). Campus environmental factors perceived to

influence participants' leadership competence were cultural heritage, tragedy response, event coordination, travel abroad, institutional service commitment, extrinsic reward systems, and competing priorities. The campus environmental factors influenced participants to practice congruency between their values and interests with their actions. Participants were engaged in mobilizing themselves and others to celebrate and support their cultural heritage. Connections to individuals through tragedy response, event coordination, and travel abroad expanded participants' commitment to leadership and civic engagement. Institutional service commitment created an environment for participants' to engage in civic activity. Extrinsic reward systems and competing priorities limited participants in self initiative to mobilize. Participant's descriptions of leadership were consistent with their personal approaches to mobilizing others to achieve an objective. Participant H described his approach to leading a group to address a problem; he established group expectations for working together and achieving desired outcomes. Participant C described himself as a person who brings people together to achieve a clear objective. Gathering individual and group input, listening, and involving others was a common approach shared by most participants. Participant D reflected that she "has learned to focus on the large or whole [group] rather than a small, select few." Participant I shared a personal lesson learned was "I had to condition myself to realize that they [group members] have just as much of a right to an opinion as organization officers." Participant F learned through his leadership experiences that making a significant change requires finding common ground with those who the change will affect. The campus environmental factors influenced participants' leadership capacity

by connecting students to common purpose within subsets. Participants' were gaining leadership development experiences within the university environment through the relationships and activities.

Civic engagement is the commitment, empowerment, and involvement in volunteerism, community service, and interest in politics (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 4). Campus environmental factors perceived to influence participants' civic engagement were Millennial generation population, collective student cognitive development level, campus citizenship, local community identity and political disengagement. Figure 5 illustrates campus environmental factors perceived to influence student civic engagement.

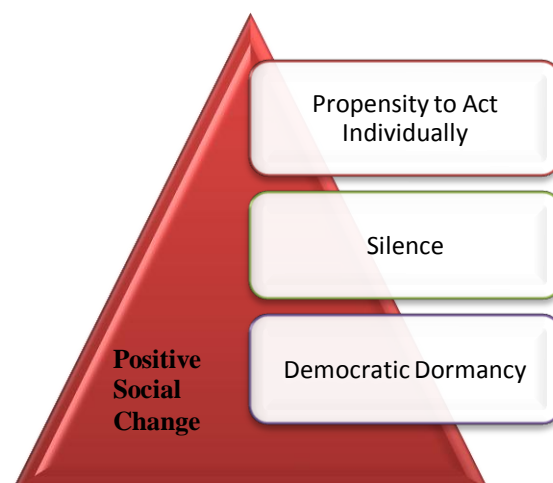
Figure 5: Campus environmental factors perceived to influence student civic engagement



The participants represented the institution's age majority of the undergraduate college population which is within the Millennial generation. The participants' civic engagement experiences prior to attending the university and their values toward civic engagement were in alignment with Howe and Strauss (2000) Millennial generation research. Participants' commitment to volunteerism was demonstrated by their participation in community service programs connected to the university. Participants' identity as campus community members was reflected in their engagement in the university community. However, participants did not identify themselves as members of the local community. Their volunteer and community service efforts were linked to university sponsored program, through university recognized organizations, and to their home communities. Participants' civic engagement activity was limited to volunteerism and community services. Political activity to create social change was not a part of the participants' civic engagement activity. Sense of empowerment to create social change was missing in participants' responses to campus experiences. Empowerment is a critical factor to political activity. As such, political disengagement became a constraining campus environmental factor influencing participants' civic engagement. The campus environmental factors fostering participants' civic engagement were Millennial generation population, collective student cognitive development level, and campus citizenship. The lack of identity to the local community and political disengagement were environmental factors hindering participants' civic engagement activity.

The desired outcome of student leadership development through civic engagement is positive social change. Social change is the process of effecting “positive change for the betterment of others, the community, and society” (HERI, 1996, p. 16). This study utilized the Social Change Model of Leadership (HERI, 1996) as a framework for measuring student perceived capacity to create positive social change. The Social Change Model of Leadership is based on seven critical values categorized into three levels: individual, group, and societal/community (HERI, 1996, p. 22-23). The individual values of consciousness of self, congruence, and commitment are fundamental to leadership development leading to civic engagement. The group values of collaboration, common purpose, and controversy with civility enable individuals to influence positive social change. Citizenship is the societal/community value that moves individuals to the highest level of community commitment through activism. Figure 6 illustrate campus environmental factors perceived to influence students’ perceived capacity to make positive social change.

Figure 6: Campus environmental factors perceived to influence students perceived capacity to make positive social change



Campus environmental factors perceived to influence participants' perceived capacity to make positive social change were propensity to act individually, silence, and democratic dormancy. Participants' focus on individual rewards and gains from leadership and service experiences. Participants' motivation for engaging in campus experiences came from personal gain and peer influence. The study found that participants were not actively engaged in creating positive social change. Participants' engaged in university coordinated activities. Many participants' had experiences leading university student groups in organized activity that benefited the campus and local community. However, the participants' experiences were not driven by individual or group desire to create social change to benefit others. Collective common purpose was missing in the environmental influences. Participants' did not have personal connections to social issues. Most could not articulate a personal social passion that influenced their civic engagement. Propensity to act individually was a dominate campus environmental factor influencing participants capacity to create positive social change. Silence was another campus environmental factor influencing participants' perceived capacity to create positive social change. Participants' were not engaged in open dialog that brought controversy. Conflict was avoided by the participants. Participants' did not have university experiences that challenged the campus culture. The campus environmental factor of silence hindered the Social Change Model of Leadership's values of common purpose, controversy with civility, and citizenship. Democratic dormancy was a campus environmental factor influencing participants' perceived capacity to create positive social change. Participants' were not engaged in democratic practices of social



responsibility, self governance, and political activity. Responses to motivation to serve were guided by principles of social responsibility, but were not driving participants' civic engagement activity. Participants' did not have campus experiences in initiating change through self governance and political activity for the betterment of themselves or others. The campus environmental factor of democratic dormancy influenced participants' idleness in social activism experiences. Overall, the campus environmental factors of individualism, silence, and democratic dormancy limited participants perceived capacity to create positive social change.

Bowen (1980) stated "education, or the teaching-learning function, is defined to embrace not only the formal academic curricula, classes, and laboratories but also all those influences upon students flowing from association with peers and faculty members and from the many and varied experiences of campus life" (p. 33). Students' creating positive social change is a result of a progressive and interdependent learning process aimed at leadership development through self knowledge and competence influenced by civic engagement. Campus environmental factors influence students' leadership development, civic engagement, and perceived capacity to create positive social change. This study identified campus environmental factors that fostered and limited student leadership development and civic engagement.

The findings in this student provide the opportunity for Student Affairs administrators to examine campus environmental factors perceived to influence student leadership development and civic engagement resulting in students' perceived capacity to make positive social change. The research findings indicate intentional efforts toward

minority integration; intentional efforts toward student's personal cultural heritage identity development; intentional student integration with campus and local communities; and utilizing democratic values will enhance campus environmental factors perceived to influence student leadership development and civic engagement. This study provides a framework for Student Affairs practitioners to utilize as a means to increase student leadership knowledge and capacity.

In Chapter V, the researcher addresses the study's four research questions by drawing conclusions from the study and identifying findings from the conclusions. The researcher's recommendations from the study's recommendations will provide insight for the university and Student Affairs practitioners to address the intent to determine factors that can be enhanced to improve student leadership development, civic engagement, and creating positive social change. Chapter V will conclude with the researcher's future study recommendations and final thoughts.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

#### **Introduction**

Chapter V brings this study together by reviewing the purpose of the study and research questions, providing a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations for practice. Conclusions are reviewed in light of relevant literature. The chapter concludes with recommendations for further research and final thoughts regarding the study.

#### **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify campus environmental factors perceived to influence student leadership development and civic engagement that result in students' perceived capacity to make positive social change as identified by a select group of students at a public four-year comprehensive higher education institution.

#### **Research Questions**

The research questions were designed to explore campus environmental factors perceived to influence student leadership development and civic engagement that result in creating positive social change. The study utilized *A Social Change Model of Leadership Development* (Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), 1996) and A. Astin and H. Astin's (2000) definition of leadership as the conceptual framework. The

research questions were framed to address the influence of campus environmental factors on components of the conceptual framework related to leadership, civic engagement, and social change. The researcher utilized a qualitative research approach to examine the interdependent relationships between each factor as opposed to a standard linear independent method.

1. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students' development of self knowledge?
2. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence a students' development of leadership competence?
3. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students' civic engagement?
4. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students' perceived capacity to make positive social change?

### **Summary of Research Questions and Findings**

Following are findings generated from participant responses to the research questions.

1. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students' development of self knowledge?

Finding #1 – Peers are the most influential campus environmental factor influencing students' integration into campus community and development of personal values related to leadership and civic engagement.

Finding #2 – Campus community mentors serve as a significant campus environmental factor challenging students to grow in self awareness, personal values, and personal talents.

Finding #3 – Relationships with faculty members are vital to students’ personal development. Faculty members within participants’ academic major are a campus environmental influence in students’ environmental perceptions and exposure to new thoughts and ideas.

Finding #4 – Academic and student organization advisors are an instrumental campus environmental factor that engages students’ in developing talents, strengthening values, and identifying interests.

Finding #5 – Institutional programs are a campus environmental factor needed to provide intentional structure for students’ to learn, experiment, and solidify personal values, talents and interests.

Finding #6 – Academic courses designed to foster critical thinking and reflection through open dialog results in a campus environmental factor influencing students’ development of self knowledge.

Finding #7 – Student organizations are an essential campus environmental factor for students to challenge, explore, and solidify their leadership values, interests, and talents.

Finding #8 – Minority integration is an essential environmental factor for students’ to connect and learn from each other resulting in higher levels of trust and creativity to achieve common purpose through collaboration.

Finding #9 – Students’ competing commitments and priorities result in environmental constraints to engaging in leadership development, civic engagement, and creating positive social change.

2. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students’ development of leadership competence?

Finding #1 – Students’ who identified with a cultural heritage articulated a greater sense of social responsibility to their identified cultural community. Cultural heritage is an environmental factor influencing students’ commitment to mobilize themselves and others to serve and work collaboratively for community benefit.

Finding #2 – Students’ were compelled to mobilize and respond to individuals who were in tragedy situations. Tragedy response is an environmental factor influencing students’ to civically engage to address the needs of others.

Finding #3 – Experiences planning and executing campus events allows students’ to build their knowledge and skills to work collaboratively with others toward a common purpose. As such, event coordination is an environmental factor influencing students’ development of leadership competence.

Finding #4 – Students’ with experiences traveling abroad had a deeper level of commitment to civic engagement and a broader awareness of social issues. International travel is a campus environmental influence on students’ civic engagement.

Finding #5 – Extrinsic reward systems initiate students’ community engagement but

limit self motivation to take action. Extrinsic reward systems are a campus environmental factor constraining students' intrinsic motivation to mobilize to address social issue.

3. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students' civic engagement?

Finding #1 – The current undergraduate student population represents the civic engagement characteristics of the Millennial generation. The Millennial generation population is a campus environmental factor influencing students' civic engagement.

Finding #2 – The collective student cognitive development level influences the student population's culture toward civic engagement. Student cognitive development level is a campus environmental factor influencing students' civic engagement.

Finding #3 – Students' are more likely to become civically engaged when they connect to the community. Community identity is a campus environmental factor influencing students' civic engagement.

Finding #4 – Students are more likely to embrace and engage in political activity if they are in a campus environment that emulates democratic values. Political activity is a campus environmental factor influencing students' civic engagement.

4. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students' perceived capacity to create positive social change?

Finding #1 – Students' had a propensity to act individually versus as a collective group which influenced their perceived capacity to create positive social change. The campus environment placed emphasis on individual accomplishments versus collective group achievements through recognition programs.

Finding #2 – The university culture was not conducive to students engaging in controversial dialog to address social concerns or create change. Students were not comfortable engaging in dialog that had conflict potential resulting in their lack of engagement in creating change. Silence was a campus environmental factor constraining students' perceived capacity to create positive social change.

Finding #3 – Students were not driven by social responsibility and were not empowered by self governance and political activity. Democratic dormancy was a campus environmental factor constraining students' perceived capacity to create positive social change.

Higher education has been called upon to lead community transformation by preparing graduates to be socially responsible global citizens (Bardaglio and Putman, 2009, p. 5). Graduates must possess knowledge and intellectual capacities and must take on contributing roles within their communities (Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, Stephens, 2003, p. 7). Birnbaum (1989) identified higher education institutions as a social system organizational model. Transformational learning occurs within the higher education



social system organization. Social expectations exist for higher education institutions to serve regional needs and to graduate individuals who possess the knowledge, skill, and desire to civically engage. Higher Education Research Institute (1996) stated:

Higher education has a vital role to play in educating each new generation of leaders. Effective leadership is an especially acute issue in modern American society, given its increasing complexity and the fluidity and its myriad social, economic, political and educational problems (p. 16).

The intent of this study was to gain an understanding of a campus environment in order to determine those factors that can be enhanced to improve student leadership development and civic engagement which may influence students to make positive social change. Conclusions drawn from findings below are organized consistent with the outline of Chapter II in order to make appropriate links to relevant literature.

### **Organization Environment**

The organization environment is made up of cultural, structural, individual and political subsystems (Hoy and Miskel, 2001, p. 24). Students, faculty, staff and community members are primary influences of the organization environment. The researcher designed this study to focus on the campus environment's influence on student leadership development and civic engagement as it relates to the organization's desired outcome of graduating socially responsible global citizens.

The cultural subsystem is the organization values influenced by environment,

human, and organization structure. Bruner (1996) stated that culture aids individuals in understanding the environment in communicable ways (p. 3). The cultural environment dimension of organization includes “the objective contest of people, events, and demands and constraints in which an institution finds itself” (Chaffee and Tierney, 1998, p. 20). The environment is the process by which the organization members develop an understanding for the nature of the organization. The research findings identify relationships with campus community members were essential to participants’ development of self knowledge and essential to participants’ integration into the campus community. The university environment fosters individual relationship development. The university culture does not foster common purpose through community identity.

Organization values influence the university culture. Values are the “beliefs, norms, and priorities held by members of the institution” (Chaffee and Tierney 1988, p. 20). Kuh and Whitt (1988) stated,

“Culture is described as a social or normative glue (Smircich 1983) – based on shared values and beliefs (see Pascale and Athos 1981) – that holds organizations together and serves four general purposes: (1) it conveys a sense of identity; (2) it facilitates commitment to an entity, such as the college or peer group, other than self; (3) it enhances the stability of a group’s social system; and (4) it is a sense-making device that guides and shapes behavior” (p. 161).

The research findings indicate that the university community functions independently from the local community. The university and local community disconnect emerged

through the lack of student identification as local community members and through the lack of academic service learning experiences.

The structure subsystem is the “various ways in which the organization accomplishes its activities” (Chaffee and Tierney, 1988, p. 18). Participants’ identified that they gained a portion of their leadership knowledge through seminars and classes offered by the institution. The majority of community service activities the participants were engaged in were coordinated through recognized student organizations or university sponsored programs. Only three out of ten individuals interviewed had experienced academic service learning. There is an institutional gap related to incorporating service learning into academic experiences. Participants shared that most of their self knowledge development has come from co-curricular experiences and peer interactions. The university environment provides formal structured experiences in student leadership development and civic engagement, but apparently is limited in contributing to students’ perceived capacity to create positive social change.

The individual subsystem is the collective influence of the individual’s cognition and motivation within the organization. Cognitive aspects of individuals are needs, goals, and mental understanding of expected behaviors (Hoy and Miskell, 2001, p. 25). Motivation is influenced by autonomy, mastery, and purpose (Pink, 2009). Intrinsic motivation is influenced by social and environmental factors (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 70). Extrinsic motivation is influenced by extrinsic rewards. The researcher determined from the findings that peers were the most prevailing influence on the participant’s perception of the university’s cultural environment related to leadership. Advisors, both

academic and organization, were the second most influential to the participants integration into the university's culture. The participant's perspective on leadership ranged from positional descriptions to skills and characteristics. Most of the participants identified university sponsored programs as one method to build their personal knowledge of leadership. However, most participants identified personal experiences, peers and mentors as most influential in their development of self knowledge. The university environment does not create intentional exchanges as a means to aid students in their personal development of self knowledge. The participants who had been exposed to community service and organized activity prior to attending the university had deeper insight into leadership. The cultural environment has established a student peer expectation to participate in community service through organized events. However, the community service events were missing the reflection component essential to transformative learning. The missing element of reflection was confirmed by the lack of participant knowledge on the linkage between the community service works they had performed to the social issue. The researcher's findings indicate extrinsic motivation initiated student civic engagement activity. The university environment fosters a culture of community service activity through structured programs that motivate participant involvement by an extrinsic reward system. In addition, the researcher's findings demonstrate student's intrinsic motivation was guided by individual rewards linked to personal achievement and feelings of satisfaction. The researcher interpreted that the research findings established environmental gaps in minority integration and community value for diversity. The result of extrinsic motivation, gaps in minority integration and

community value of diversity is low community trust. The university environment is missing a culture of common purpose and collective action due to the university structural culture being driven by extrinsic motivation coupled with a low community trust.

The political subsystem is the informal exchanges between organization members within the cultural, structural, and individual subsystems of the organization. Berger (2000) categorized political environments into three types: Competitive, casual, and cohesive (Hamrick, Evans, and Schuch, 2002, p. 96). The university's political subsystem appeared to be a casual political environment based on the lack of student governance and political disengagement. Political disengagement and democratic dormancy were environmental factors influencing participants' lack of political civic engagement and lack of activism to create positive social change. The political subsystem within the social system model of higher education institutions (Hoy and Miskel, 2001) does not appear to have an influence on students' leadership development and civic engagement. The university environment did not utilize self governance and political activity as a means to create community change. Environmental shifts in self governance and political activity will need to occur in order for student leadership development and civic engagement to be enhanced.

Transformational learning is the process that occurs within the university for students. Keeling (2004) stated that transformational learning is the process of acquiring information, examining implications, applying it to areas of understanding, and taking actions that are personally significant and result in reframing personal perspectives (p.

12). The researcher's findings showed that participants' identity to their own cultural heritage influenced their transformational learning experiences. The researcher identified that the study results revealed a deeper transformative learning in leadership knowledge and in civic engagement values occurred when students' have exchanges with others from different cultural backgrounds. Participants' who had experiences interacting with individuals from different countries and from different backgrounds reflected their personal definition of leadership was internalized as personal characteristics versus positional roles. The participants' responses were interpreted as the university environment is not conducive to exchanges of neither controversial dialog nor contributing to activism. The university environment is not fostering student transformative learning through exchanges of controversial dialog and through activism experiences. Transformative learning in leadership development and civic engagement takes place when students have 1) self knowledge of their cultural heritage; 2) exchanges with individuals with diverse backgrounds; 3) participate in controversial dialog; and 4) experience activism.

### **University Students**

The social system model for higher education (Hoy and Miskel, 2001) used in this study focused on students as the system input and output. Student development theory focuses on the cognitive and behavioral development of individuals within a university setting. Perry's theory of intellectual and ethical development is a cognitive-structural theory that explains how individuals make meaning on a continuum of nine

positions organized into four categories: Duality, multiplicity, relativism, and commitment. The participant descriptions of leadership and values and their described experiences and skills related to leading indicate the group has collectively reached Perry's third category level of relativism. Participants demonstrated knowledge building as more qualitative and contextually defined based on evidence and supporting arguments as described by Evans, Forney, and Guidu-DiBrito (1998, p. 132). Participants' collective action in the area of civic engagement indicates the environment may not support student development at Perry's highest level of development, commitment. Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development consists of six stages divided into three levels that focus on the cognitive development with relationship between self and society. The majority of the study's participants demonstrated the higher levels of cognitive development described in Kohlberg's theory. This higher level of cognitive development was exhibited as participants described leadership and personal values and experiences of group communication and feedback while achieving a group goal and addressing problems. However, very few of the participants reached Kohlberg's sixth stage which is the highest order of moral reasoning in which individuals make decisions after taking in other's view points (Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito, 1998, p. 175). The collective student cognitive development level was not influencing the highest level due to environmental barriers linked to missing community values in diversity and democracy.

The study participants were all members of the Millennial generation. Millennial generation characteristics identified by Howe and Strauss (2000) were reflected in the

participants. Those characteristics included community service, team oriented, and faith based. Howe and Strauss classified Millennial generation members as having strong values in leadership and civic engagement. The participant's shared values of relationships, caring for others; personal responsibility and faith are in alignment with the Millennial generation descriptions. There is a discrepancy between the participants' characteristics and Millennial generation descriptions related to activism. Howe and Strauss (2000) indicate that Millennials are engaged in grassroots reconstruction of communities and have an active interest in politics. Local community activism, connection to social causes and interest in politics were not reflected in the participants' articulated values and actions. Students' collective characteristics towards activism, social causes and politics are not being triggered through the university environment.

### **Leadership**

Transformative, servant and relational leadership theories were reviewed in the literature review due to the theories constructs aligned with the definitions of student leadership development, civic engagement and social change utilized in this study. Participants did not specifically identify a leadership theory when asked about leadership. However, most of the participant responses were grounded in relational leadership theory. Themes that emerged from the participants' responses to leadership theory were empowering others, creating a shared vision, standing up for others, taking responsibility, and communicating effectively. Komives, Lucas and McMahon (2007) describe relational leadership as having a commitment toward positive purposes,



including people of diverse view points, empowering those involved, and making ethical decisions (p. 74). The research findings showed that the university environment strength was individual relationships between community members. The university environment fosters relational leadership theory.

### **Civic Engagement**

Ehrlich (2000) civic engagement is defined as commitment, empowerment, and involvement in volunteerism, community service, and interest in politics (p. 4). The Association of American College and Universities (AAC&U) stated that college graduates must “have an informed concern for the larger good and the ability to understand and navigate morally complex issues in the dynamic and often volatile world” (p. 2). Civic responsibility is the knowledge and support of democratic values; desire to act beneficially in and for communities; apply knowledge and skills for social benefit; appreciation for diversity; and, personal accountability (Thornton and Jaeger, 2008, p. 161). The researcher interpreted that the research indicated democratic values were not immolated through the university environment. Student culture of social responsibility, self governance, and political activity was missing as a result of the university not intentionally fostering democratic values through institutional culture, structure and environment.

## **Social Change**

Social change is the outcome from social justice, social movement, and social activism. “Social justice is concerned not in the narrow focus of what is just for the individual alone, but what is just for the social whole” (Capeheart and Milovanovic, 2007, p. 2). Participants practiced social justice principles within their sub communities within the institution. The participants identified responsibility for taking care of others closest to them such as family and friends and organization members. Social justice was identified as a social issue that many participants connected to as a passion. However, the deeper levels of social justices that calls upon responsibility for social awareness, understanding interactions within and between people, discourse, meeting community needs, and attaining equality (Capeheart and Milovanovic, 2007) was not a part of the participants’ cognition. The researcher determined that the research findings revealed students’ were more apt to engage in social change when they had a personal connection to the need and there was a compelling sense of emergency linked to the need. The university environment did not evolve around collective group actions toward social change. Based on participants’ responses to interview questions on engaging in addressing social issues, it is interpreted that the result of students having limited experience with creating social change was a lack of confidence and perceived limited ability.

Ehrlich (2000) defined social movement as a network of informal interactions between people based on a shared set of beliefs and sense of belongingness with a sense of purpose moving against opposition (347). Social movements are not influenced,

sponsored or administered by a formal organization. The Egypt Revolution in the spring 2011 is a recent example of social movements. Participants did not identify experience in social movements. The researcher's findings indicated the university environment culture was inclined to foster individual versus collective acts. The individual culture of the university influences students' sense of community belonging. Students were not exposed to social movement experiences as a result of the university's culture toward individual acts and lack of collective community identity.

Social activism is the continuous activity of individuals collectively addressing community needs beyond a one time commitment. Ehrlich (2000) stated that students are more likely to engage in social activism if they attend a college where other students espouse a social activist mentality (p. 13). Researcher's findings verify student peers were the most influential environmental factor for students. The researcher's findings also revealed students were not engaged in social activism. Students were not actively influencing social activism within the campus community. Researcher's findings discovered that students were not engaging in controversial dialog nor were students active in self governance. There is an interdependent relationship between/among students' disengagement with social activism and controversial dialog and self governance. Environmental factors created the tendency for students to act individually versus collectively.

### **Social Change Model of Leadership Development**

The social change model of leadership development created by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI, 1996) was designed to create a framework to achieve life-long civically engaged individuals through a strategic approach to student growth in leadership in order to create social change. The social change model of leadership development builds from three interconnected levels: Individual values, group values, and citizenship.

The individual values focus on consciousness of self, congruence, and commitment. A person is not able to move through the model without a firm foundation in the individual values. The study participants had a strong sense of self knowledge based on their responses to their personal values and perceptions of leadership. Campus environmental factors perceived to influence participants' development of individual values focused on consciousness of self, congruence, and commitment were campus community members, institutional programs, academic courses, and student organizations. Participants' development of self knowledge related to individual values came from their experiences linked to the identified campus environmental factors.

The second level, group values, place emphasis on collaboration, common purpose and civility. Participants articulated a high value on collaborative relationships as they shared experiences of working with others in an environment of trust and respect. However, the researcher interpreted that the research findings revealed collaboration occurs within sub communities within the university as community identity, social responsibility, and collective actions were not existing environmental factors. HERI

(1996) defined common purpose as working with shared aims and values under a clear vision and goals (p. 23). Participants' responses identified that students' mobilize with common purpose during times of tragedy. Participants' responses also established that students' experiences with event coordination led to students gaining leadership knowledge on creating common purpose as a leader.

Controversy with civility is the process of addressing community issues by effective means that promotes common purpose and shared values. Controversy with civility means discussing disagreements openly and with respect. The researcher's findings discovered that campus environmental factors influence democratic dormancy resulting in students not engaging in practices of controversy with civility. The researcher's findings implied campus community members collectively avoid controversy. The university environmental culture was silent in controversial dialog. The result of the university environment not engaged in controversial dialog was a lack of engagement in democratic values.

The highest level of attainment in the social change model of leadership development is citizenship. "Citizenship is the process whereby the individual and the collaborative group become responsibly connected to the community and society" (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 23). The researcher interpreted that the study's findings indicated that students were not achieving citizenship, the highest level of leadership development. The researcher's findings indicated the campus environment was not fostering student connection to social responsibility resulting in students not engaging in self governance and political activity to create social change. Students'

lack of citizenship experiences limited their leadership development which influenced their low perception for personal capacity to create social change.

### **Social Outcomes**

Bowen (1980) described public expectations of higher education institutions to create public good by shaping individuals to serve the purposes of the betterment of the nation and to engage in research and intellectual and artistic activities that support achievement of national goals, including solutions for social problems (p. 46). In order for higher education institutions to meet public expectations, universities must foster environments for students to build knowledge, skills and desire to be civically engaged. Civic engagement is the commitment, empowerment, and involvement in volunteerism, community service, and interest in politics (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 4). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) stated “participation in community service in general, and service learning in particular, has statistically significant, and positive net effects on students’ sociopolitical attitudes and beliefs” (p. 45). The researcher’s findings indicated that students were gaining leadership development and engaging in civic activities through the formal university structured environment. The researcher’s interpretation of the study found students’ leadership development and civic engagement experiences influenced their attitudes and belief in personal leadership and service responsibilities. Campus environmental factors fostered students to build their leadership knowledge and civic engagement experiences. However, the researcher determined that the campus

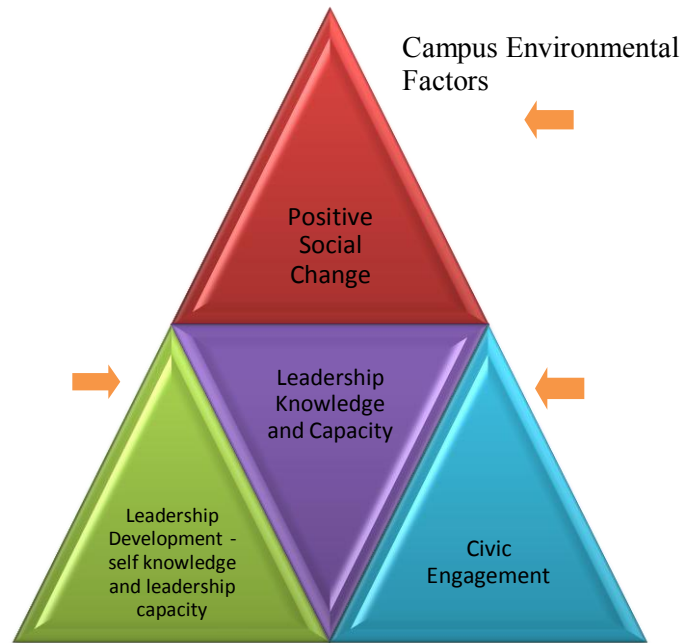
environmental factors were not fostering informal student activism toward addressing social issues.

College graduates need to have a sense of empowerment and a commitment to social activism. The researcher found that students had a limited sense of empowerment which resulted in a lower perceived capacity to create positive social change. Students' limited sense of empowerment was influenced by the campus environmental factors related to organizational cultural values for democracy and the community environment that fostered individual action versus collective action. The researcher interpreted the that the participant's responses revealed campus environmental factors were not conducive to valuing diversity and exchange of differing opinions to fulfill a common purpose and drive collective action.

## **Conclusion**

The external environment influences the function of the higher education institution internal environment. This study followed Birnbaum's (1989) identification of higher education institutions as a social system organization model. The researcher examined campus environmental factors perceived to influence student leadership development and civic engagement that result in student's perceived capacity to create positive social change. Figure 7 illustrates the variables of this study.

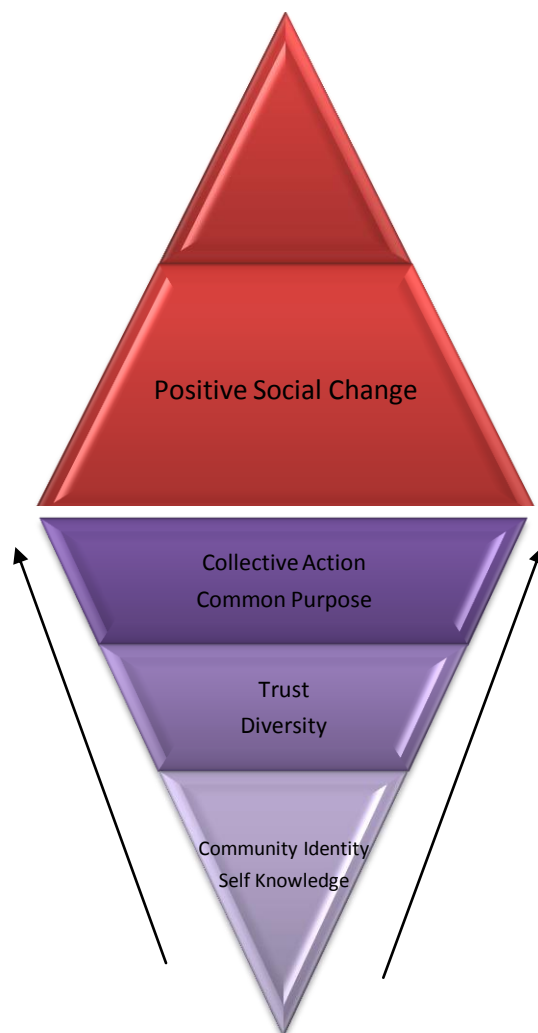
Figure 7: Study variables



Students' leadership knowledge and capacity is influenced by their leadership development and civic engagement. The researcher's conclusions are illustrated in Figure 8.



Figure 8: Students' leadership knowledge and capacity leading to positive social change



The conclusions that can be drawn from the researcher's findings indicate the depth to which campus environmental factors influence student leadership development and civic engagement result in the level students' build their leadership knowledge and capacity. Figure 8 illustrates that the components of student leadership knowledge and capacity derived from the study are hierarchical in nature. As students achieve higher

levels of student leadership knowledge and capacity, the result is engagement in positive social change.

As noted in Birnbaum's (1989) social system organization models are characterized by a high number of interdependent variables. Within that theoretical framework, the researcher's study illustrates the interdependency between/among variables influencing student leadership development, civic engagement, and perceived capacity to make positive social change. The researcher's findings from this study suggest Student Affairs practitioners focus on three key variables in order to leverage student leadership development and civic engagement in order to increase students' perceived capacity to make positive social change. The first key variable is to focus on students' personal connection to cultural heritage and minority integration. The researcher found that students' who identified with their cultural heritage and who were engaged with diverse populations had a higher level of leadership knowledge and capacity. The second key variable is to focus on students' identity as a campus and local community member. The researcher determined from the study that those students' who identified themselves as campus and local community members were more likely to civically engage. The third key variable is to utilize democratic values as the framework for engaging students in social responsibility, self governance and political activity. The researcher indicated that focusing on these three key variables will contribute to those campus environmental factors that result in higher levels of student leadership development and civic engagement resulting in increased perceived capacity to make positive social change.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

The intent of this study was to gain an understanding of a campus environment in order to determine those factors that can be enhanced to improve student leadership development and civic engagement. Following are recommendations based on the literature reviewed, data analysis, research questions findings, and conclusions.

1. The university should create freshmen and sophomore cohort groups linked to faculty and staff in order to intentionally influence freshmen and sophomore development of self knowledge through community engagement.
2. The university should encourage academic course instruction that engages students in open dialog and creative problem solving in order to foster values and experiences in collaboration and controversy with civility.
3. The university should strategically increase the number of minority faculty and staff in order to increase minority students' development of self knowledge through mentor relationships.
4. The university should foster integration of ethnic populations within the campus community to enhance the value of diversity and creativity.
5. The university should expand student opportunities to engage in event coordination in order to foster a learning environment for leadership.
6. The university should increase opportunities for students to travel abroad in order to expand students' consciousness of self and commitment to leadership, civic engagement, and social change.

7. The university should examine new methods for engaging students in leadership development programs and civic engagement activities in order to shift from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation.
8. The university should aid students with identifying themselves as local community members in order to increase individual responsibility to the community.
9. The university should foster an environment of open dialog, exchange of different opinions, and value of diverse viewpoints in order to create a community value of controversy with civility.
10. The university should cultivate student activism by teaching and creating an environment guided by democratic values of social responsibility, self governance, and political activity.
11. Student Affairs practitioners should focus on students' cultural identity development upon the students' entry into the university community beginning with orientation programs.
12. Student Affairs practitioners should take intentional steps to assist students' with identifying themselves as university and local community members utilizing community partnerships with civic organizations and city governing bodies.
13. Student Affairs practitioners should utilize the Social Change Model for Leadership Development as the framework for student leadership development programs and civic engagement activities.
14. Student Affairs practitioners should incorporate intentional practices of teaching students how to be social activists in order to create positive social change.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The intent of this study was to gain an understanding of a campus environment in order to determine those factors that can be enhanced to improve student leadership development and civic engagement. This study was conducted at a regional institution which adds a unique perspective to the literature due to the mission and purpose of a regional university. Following are recommendations for future research:

1. Research the effects of academic course instruction on student leadership development and civic engagement. Research on academic course instruction's effect on student leadership development and civic engagement would provide insight to the influence of instruction beyond academic content.
2. A study on the value of minority integration into campus community on student leadership development would provide insight into increasing community values of collaboration and common purpose.
3. Research in the effects of students' travel abroad experiences to social activism would provide perspective to higher education's commitment to providing global experiences for students.
4. Factors contributing to students' intrinsic motivation to create positive social change would be a valuable study to influence higher education's institutional practices in creating a learning environment that promotes social activism.
5. A study on higher education institutional practices related to teaching students democratic values and fostering an environment based on democratic values of social responsibility, self governance, and political activity would provide insight for

institutions to use in meeting societies call to action for university graduates who are socially responsible citizens.

### **Final Thoughts**

While completing this study, the world has experienced dramatic natural disasters and complete cultural shifts through social activism in foreign countries. The call for leadership and civic engagement within the country and globally is more relevant now than ever before. Boyer (1987), Bowen (1980) and Ehrlich (2000) are among the many who have called higher education institutions to action on actively engaging in regional service while graduating individuals who are socially responsible global citizens.

Higher education institutions must focus on campus environmental factors perceived to influence student leadership development and civic engagement in order to contribute to positive social change in the world.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

#### **PURPOSE STATEMENT**

The purpose of this study is to identify campus environmental factors influencing student leadership development and civic engagement that result in student's perceived capacity to create positive social change as identified by a select group of students at a public four-year comprehensive higher education institution.

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research questions are designed to explore campus environmental factors influencing student leadership and civic engagement that result in creating positive social change. The study utilized *A Social Change Model of Leadership Development* (Higher Education Research Institute (HERI), 1996) and A. Astin and H. Astin (2000) definition of leadership as the conceptual framework. The research questions are framed to address the influence of campus environmental factors on components of the conceptual framework related to leadership, civic engagement, and social change. The qualitative research approach examined the interdependent relationships between/among the factors as opposed to a standard linear independent method.

1. What perceived campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students' development of self knowledge?
2. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence a students' development of leadership competence?



3. What campus environmental factors are perceived to influence students' civic engagement?
4. What campus environmental factors influence students' perceived capacity to make positive social change?

### Interview Questions

#### Intro questions:

1. How long have you attended NSU?
2. What is your academic classification?
3. What is your major?
4. Describe your campus involvement and work.

#### Leadership development:

*Leadership competence* is the capacity to mobilize self and others to serve and to work collaboratively to create positive social change (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 19).

*Leadership development* is defined by Astin and Astin (2000) as the process by which (1) one gains self-knowledge to effect positive social change for the betterment of others, the community, and society, and (2) one gains the capacity to “mobilize self and others to serve and to work collaboratively” (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 19).

*Self-knowledge* is the understanding of one's talents, values, and interests, especially as these relate to one's capacity to provide effective leadership (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996, p. 19).

*Social change* is a model of leadership development promoting values of equity, social justice, self knowledge, personal empowerment, collaboration, citizenship, and service from three different perspectives: the individual, the group, and the community/society (Astin, 1996, p. 18 – 19).

1. What does leadership mean to you? (RQ 1, 3)
2. Describe your personal mission. (RQ 1)
3. Describe your personal values. (RQ 1)
4. Who or what influenced the development of your personal definition of leadership, mission, and values? (RQ 1, 2, 3, 4)
5. Do you have a passion for a specific social cause? (If no, what social causes attract your attention?) (RQ 3, 4)
  - a. If so, how did you develop this passion? (RQ 3,4)
  - b. What actions have you taken to address the social issue? (RQ 2, 4)
6. When you see a problem or issue within a group, organization or community how do you go about addressing it? (RQ 1, 2, 3, 4)
7. What motivates you to address the problem or issue? (RQ 1, 2, 3)
8. What actions have you taken to strengthen your leadership skills and knowledge? (RQ 1, 2)
9. Describe your vision of your role in your future community. (RQ 1, 2, 3, 4)

10. How has the campus environment (people, culture, physical space) influenced your experiences and vision of your future community role? (RQ 3, 4)
11. Describe a campus experience when you were empowered to make change. (RQ 1, 2, 3, 4)

Civic engagement:

*Civic engagement* is defined as the commitment, empowerment, and involvement in volunteerism, community service, and interest in politics (Ehrlich, 2000, p. 4).

1. Describe your first community service experience. (RQ 1, 2, 3, 4)
2. How old were you the first time you were active in community service? (RQ 4)
3. Are you active in service outside of campus? (RQ 4)
  - a. If so, what entities do you volunteer? (RQ 4)
  - b. Share your service activities. (RQ 4)
  - c. What motivates your involvement? (RQ 4)
4. Are you active in service through a campus outlet? (RQ 4)
  - a. If so, what campus outlet(s)? (RQ 4)
  - b. Share your service activities. (RQ 4)
  - c. What motivates your involvement? (RQ 4)
5. What keeps you motivated to serve? (RQ 1, 2, 3)
6. How does your service affect the larger social issue? (RQ 3)
7. How did you gain your knowledge of the larger social issue? (RQ 1, 3)
8. What does civic engagement mean to you? (RQ 3, 4)

9. How does the campus environment (people, culture, physical space) influence your knowledge of civic engagement? (RQ 1, 2, 3, 4)
10. How does the campus environment (people, culture, physical space) influence your desire to be civically engaged? (RQ 3, 4)

Campus environment:

*Campus environmental factors* are the “...objective context of people, events, demands, and constraints in which an institution finds itself” (Chaffee and Tierney, 1988, p. 20).

1. What do you believe NSU’s purpose and priorities are? (RQ 1, 2, 4)
2. How would you describe NSU’s organizational values? (RQ 1, 2, 4)
3. Describe the student body. (RQ 1, 2, 4)
4. Describe student values. (RQ 1, 2, 3, 4)
5. How did you develop your insight to NSU’s purpose, priorities and organizational values? (RQ 1, 2, 4)
6. How have NSU faculty and staff influenced your knowledge of NSU? (RQ 1, 2, 4)
7. How do the buildings and grounds influence your experience? (RQ 1, 2, 4)

## APPENDIX B

### REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

#### **Saturday, September 18, 2010**

##### *Participant A Interview – 1:30 p.m.*

I was a little nervous before the interview. I was worried that I wouldn't ask the right questions to get the information need for the study. I created a participant folder that had the participant information sheet, consent form, information sheet, and copy of the OHRP brochure. Participant A asked questions about dissertations in general. He didn't have an understanding of the doctorate degree process. I think it may have been the first time he ever talked to a person about how a doctorate degree is obtained. I reviewed the intent of the study and the interview process. I reviewed the content of the consent form, had him review it and sign. I gave him the information sheet, brochure and copy of the consent form. I should have given him the documents before I reviewed the interview process so that he could follow along with me. I did inform him that I would be taking notes in addition to the recording. I used two types of recorders, digital and tape. This was at the request of my transcriber.

The participant demonstrated non verbal signs of not being comfortable at first. His arms were crossed. He appeared closed up. Once we got into the interview, his nonverbal communication opened up. I immediately figured out that he was not familiar with the terminology I was using. I had to figure out descriptive words that he understood. Example: describe your personal mission or values that describe you, he translated into "what motivates me". His description of leadership started in a positional description. He used the word "top dog". I need to ask more questions like "share a time when..." He connected his leadership experiences to organization involvement. His enthusiasm increased as he described individuals who he perceived as great leaders. Participant A shifted many of the questions from himself to organization examples. This makes me think that maybe he identifies himself as a part of a larger group, rather than an individual. Initial themes that seemed to be a consistent message from the interview are: role modeling, responsibility, "get things done", need of others to be successful, self motivated, self disciplined. It appeared that extrinsic awards are the current initial motivator for community service. Participant A described the reason why he coordinated and participated in community service was linked to school and national fraternity awards. He didn't seem to be able to describe the study body. I think I need to ask the question in a different way, maybe "how would you describe student life to a potential new student?".

Potential limitation to this study may be participants responding based on what they think I want to hear only the good. I will be intentional to establish in the next interviews to address that their responses should be based on their perspective and experiences, not what they think that I want to hear.

### **Sunday, September 19, 2010**

Participant B is scheduled to arrive at 1 p.m. I have arrived to our agreed location early to ensure that I am set up and the environment is comfortable. Participant A showed up early yesterday which cut the prep time I had allocated short. I am interviewing the participants in the University Center. We are meeting in a small space located in the basement of the building where students gather for dining and student organizations. The space was recently redecorated into a comfortable seating area with books and resources on leadership and community engagement. There are two graduate assistants who work in this space. They have agreed to allow me to borrow it for my interviews. I selected this spot because it is casual and comfortable. We are able to sit in overstuffed chairs facing each other. There are two small computer desks in the corner. I am strategically not sitting behind a desk for the interview because I want to create a comfortable, non administrative, environment. I thought this location was ideal because the University Center is the hub of student gathering. My personal office is located in another building.

The interviews are primarily scheduled on the weekend and in the evenings. I selected this time frame because of it not being normal university business hours. One participant requested a morning interview due to her schedule. I may have one more request daytime, still waiting on a response.

Due to my professional role, I tend to dress in business attire. I have strategically dressed in t-shirt and jeans to attempt to separate my professional role from my researcher role.

#### *Participant B Interview – 1 p.m. University Center*

Participant B showed up on time. He had read the detailed email from me and was familiar with the information we reviewed. It went much better this go around with reviewing the process. I did share that I wanted him to answer questions based on his thoughts and experiences not what he thought I wanted to hear. I did have to reassure him several times that there were no wrong answers. He appeared to have a deeper understanding or ability to articulate meaning and experiences with leadership and civic engagement. I need to do a better job articulating civic engagement. So far, both participants have asked me to define civic engagement. I have not done the best job describing civic engagement because I was worried that I would skew their thoughts. I need to articulate a simple, yet descriptive, articulation of civic engagement.

Potential finding – the phrase civic engagement is not known or understood by the participants. Is this reflective of the campus environment?

I decided to ask Participant B to be apart of my study after a brief interaction with him. Participant B shared that he had traveled abroad this summer and volunteered at a medical clinic in Malawi Africa. I have observed him around campus, but not gotten to know him. I thought his involvement and experiences would add value to my study.

*Participant C – 3 p.m., University Center*

Participant C showed up at scheduled time. We reviewed the interview process. His nonverbal communication demonstrated comfort with the environment and interview. He sat still in the chair throughout the interview. His facial expressions showed close to tearful emotions when he spoke of individuals that he admired. I had to really focus on the content of what he was saying at those moments so that I wouldn't tear up. Some themes of leadership that emerged from Participant C's interview are relationships, helping others, taking action, empowering, and communication. The participant self identified that he had been afforded opportunities for leadership development and civic engagement that many other students have not. There is disconnection between the positive experiences he described for himself and his described perception of an overarching negative campus culture. He articulated a general student feeling of not being listened too or cared about from a campus culture perspective. Yet, he gives credit to faculty and staff members who have changed his life. "I would literally not be here today and who I am today because of..." He had not thought about how his personal convictions link to social concerns. For example, he described being very passionate about addressing issues of injustice to individuals, specifically related it to protecting his niece and animals. He had not thought about the social concerns of child welfare and animal cruelty.

*Participant D – 5 p.m., University Center*

Participant D interview began at 5 p.m. The participant was very precise with answers. She was a quick talker. She had a very open communication style. She articulated that she was very comfortable sharing her thoughts and opinions. When I explained that I wanted her to answer questions based on her thoughts, not what she thinks I may want to hear, she immediately stated that she had no concerns about the potential issue. It was evident that her internal drive was influenced by her parents from a very young age. She did not describe leadership as positional but relational (my word). Her themes on leadership are equal treatment, non - discriminating, taking action, and helping others. She gave off a sense of confidence in herself.

**Monday, September 20, 2010**

*Participant E – 5:30 p.m., University Center*

The demeanor of Participant E was a little more timid than the past participants. Reflecting on the interview, I realize that I was intentionally soft with my approach. I learned once in a sales training that you should mirror the demeanor of the client. I find myself doing that with the person sitting in front of me. I have been lightly studying the role of Native American women and indigenous culture. The participant's descriptions and views were similar to literature I have read. I find it so intriguing. Her descriptions were different, yet similar themes of overcoming obstacles, non positional, trust, respect, honesty, "love one another". She was reserved yet confident. A theme that may be emerging is the inability for participants to clearly articulate their personal values. The

consistent theme of not linking a social issue to service continued in this interview. Parent and church are two themes that are emerging as consistent influences in leadership development and civic engagement.

*Participant F – 5:30 p.m., University Center*

Participant F appeared to have a strong sense of self. I wonder if his self confidence comes from his experiences and age. Participant F had a strong understanding of leadership and service. I find it interesting that most of his leadership and service experiences come from faith based activity. Do students engaged in faith base programs develop leadership knowledge through service at a higher rate than others? Communication seemed to flow well between us. Participant F answered all of the questions with ease. He gained significant personal knowledge through his international travel. Is there linkage with international experiences?

### **Tuesday, September 21, 2010**

*Participant G – 6:45 p.m. University Center*

The influence of international travel on personal leadership and views on service seem to becoming a theme. Participant G shares common characteristics as P-F with faith based experiences. I find it interesting that Participant G is the first to articulate a specific social cause that she intentionally supports. She is very intentional and selective with her university engagement. Participant G was very thoughtful in her answers. I feel like the interviews are getting easier.

*Participant H – 8:30 p.m. University Center*

Participant H is one of the few participants that I have had interactions related to work. I was concerned that he might feel uncomfortable with interviewing with me. My professional position did not seem to hinder Participant H providing honest insight to his experiences. His family and community network influencing his outlook on leadership and service make me think that external influences may need to be recognized as contributors to the campus environment. I find it interesting that Participant H goes back to his hometown for service. Participant H has a great sense of his personal cultural history. It appears that his commitment to his culture guides his service practices. He has the most depth of knowledge and passion for service among the participants interviewed so far.

### **Wednesday, September 22, 2010**

*Participant I – 5:30 p.m. University Center*

Participant I was very involved in Native American culture. Most of her time is spent studying and participating in cultural enhancing activity. I found myself intrigued with her knowledge and passion for Native Americans. Participant I started engaging in cultural activity as a youth. How do these intentional cultural activities have long term impact? Participant I shared struggles with not being fully accepted into the Native American culture because of being considered “half blood”. She articulated campus segregation experiences within the Native American community. How does the NA



cultural environment within the university influence leadership and service? She has strong family support. How does family support influence leadership development? Participant I had a great sense of personal leadership characteristics and commitment to service to her culture.

*Participant J – 7:30 p.m. University Center*

Participant J surprised me with her hidden passion for women health issues. However, she was afraid to act on her passion because of concern for how she would be treated by her peers. She articulated a belief that change was more talk than action on campus. Is talk and no action an environmental culture? Participant J was committed to her hometown community. Along with many of the other participants, she did not identify with the local community. I'm to the point where I am receiving consistent answers.

## VITA

Ms. Laura Dawn Boren received her Bachelor of Business Administration degree in meetings and destination management from Northeastern State University located in Tahlequah, Oklahoma in 1994. She entered the College Student Personnel Services program at Northeastern State University in January 1998 and received her Master of Science degree in December 1999. Ms. Boren completed her Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from Texas A&M University in December 2011. Her research interests include higher education law and policy, quality in education systems (TQM), leadership and civic engagement. Ms. Boren has presented at several regional and national conferences on higher education law and policy and strategic approaches to quality improvement in higher education. She has facilitated numerous student leadership development workshops and classes.

Ms. Boren currently serves as the Dean of Student Affairs at Northeastern State University. She has been in this position for the past five years. Her leadership role as the senior student affairs officer has allowed her to contribute to university-wide strategic planning; initiate intentional efforts to improve student learning and retention; instigate movement toward healthier campus community; and guide student community engagement.

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