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SHARED PARTNERSHIP IDENTITY BETWEEN
FACULTY AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

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by
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Abstract

This dissertation explored the role of organizational identities, social identities and communication in how faculty and community partners perceived and enacted partnerships for student learning. This dissertation contributes a set of characteristics of Partnership Identity that were present in five faculty-community partnerships. The study involved 19 members of five faculty-community partnerships.

This research was grounded in theories of organizational identity, social identity, and communication/negotiation. The major questions explored in this study were whether faculty and community partnerships have identities similar to organizational identities, and if so, what are their key characteristics? This study also explored what factors are associated with Partnership Identity development. The research questions were: (1) how faculty and community partners perceived the organizational identities of their employing institutions; (2) how faculty and community partners perceived their social identities within the context of the partnership; (3) the relationship between faculty and community partners’ social identities and how they communicated/negotiated with one another.

The unit of analysis in this study is a partnership between faculty and community partners. Three partnerships were selected from a private liberal arts college and two partnerships were selected from a public land-grant university. To understand each partnership, I studied the perceptions of its members. Data collection included multiple interviews with 19 faculty and community partners, observations of partnership meetings, interviews with relevant administrators at partners’ employing organizations, and analysis of partnership-related documents. Participants were interviewed to understand how they viewed their employing organizations and themselves with regards to their work with the partnership, how they
communicated with partners, and how they viewed aspects of the partnership. Interview transcripts were analyzed for patterns of similarities and differences across all five cases.

The partnerships differed in terms of how partners viewed and experienced their partnerships. Differences in whether partners had a unified mission, established nurture norms, developed organizational structures (informal or formal), held expectations to continue the partnership, and articulated the partnership as a distinct and identifiable entity were associated with those partners who felt a sense of “we” within the context of their partnership. Partnerships that exhibited these five characteristics were labeled as having a Partnership Identity, and those who exhibited none to few of the characteristics were labeled as being Without Partnership Identity.

Factors that were associated with Partnership Identity included partners’ following a collaborative style of communication, and discussing shared credit and recognition, and future projects. Partnership Identity may be important for the successful functioning and longevity of faculty-community partnerships because how partners make sense of who they are together may influence their behaviors, commitments, and plans to maintain the partnership.
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CHAPTER 1: PROBLEM STATEMENT AND STUDY PURPOSE

Building Theory about Faculty-Community Partnerships

In 1998, George, a junior faculty member in the engineering department at Western University (WU) contacted Gray Horse, a nonprofit organization that coordinated student volunteers for construction projects in Native American communities. George considered his participation in the project ideal. Gray Horse would coordinate all aspects of the construction project, from making camping and food arrangements to gathering construction materials and establishing relationships with the communities with whom the group would be working. All that George needed to do was to recruit students and show up for two weeks.

The summer work provided synergies for George’s academic work interests: he could advance research about the green building technologies that used unskilled, volunteer labor, a burgeoning research interest of his. The summer project also provided George with the satisfaction of teaching students through real world application. He witnessed his students’ enthusiasm for construction, grow and he noticed improvements in their understanding of the engineering concepts he had taught them earlier that year. Not least of all, it felt good to be out on the reservations contributing in tangible ways. George felt a sense of accomplishment after only a few weeks, whereas his teaching and research work at the university provided a more abstract and delayed sense of satisfaction.

In 2001, however, George decided to establish his own partnership with a single tribal community. Although Gray Horse’s coordination of the project and its volunteers made George’s involvement easier, George felt his students’ education and his professional development could be better served through the formation of his own partnership with a single tribal community. By
establishing his own relationship, he could develop a more comprehensive curriculum for his students, which would begin in the fall semester and continue through the spring in preparation of the construction project. He could embed his own research on sustainable engineering technologies as well. Furthermore, George had just moved to Eastern State University (ESU) from WU as a tenure track professor, and he needed to secure research grants from external funders. He anticipated that developing a single long-term partnership with a tribal community could provide the type of relationship necessary to benefit both his own work and meet the infrastructure needs of the community.

At the same time George was looking to develop his own partnership, administrators from Red Clay Tribal College (RCTC) and the tribe’s Housing Authority approached George with the idea of forming the Tribal College Building Initiative (TCBI) to build community buildings on their campus. The college, the administrators proposed, would serve as a politically neutral, institutionally stable, long-term organizational partner that could facilitate educational, research, and outreach activities for TCBI faculty.

The TCBI partnership has constructed four structures that serve tribal community needs. George now also advises the RCTC Board with regards to the strategic planning for physical infrastructure. The partnership has also had a profound impact on George’s work and time. In 2002, he developed a three-course series that supported the design, development and summer construction of strawbale buildings on the reservation. In 2003, he received additional funding from the university to support the course, and in 2006, he received a large, three-year grant for educational research on the effectiveness of his class in teaching sustainability principles. Each year, George spends many weeks visiting the RCTC campus and many hours calling and emailing RCTC administrators and staff to design and coordinate the project. Several years ago,
he hired staff members to coordinate student activities and to oversee the construction site year-round.

The partnership also led to important personal relationships between George and his partners within TCBI. Although the foci of the partnership - to build homes and infrastructure for the Tribal community and provide educational opportunities for students - were formally negotiated at the start of the initiative with representatives from each of the institutions signing a letter of agreement, the partnership has expanded to include interpersonal relationships and commitments between members of the partnership. George described many of the tribal members as “friends” and emphasized to his classes the importance of making personal connections with community members. After five years of working together, George told me that TCBI communication has become “much less formal and a little more intuitive.”

The National Context

The TCBI partnership is one of hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of faculty-community partnerships that have been developed over the past two decades. Partnerships that are designed to meet, simultaneously, the needs of students and communities are part of a broader effort to increase the engagement of colleges and universities in the public realm (Rubin, 2000). In 2006, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching selected 76 U.S. colleges and universities for its new Community Engagement Classification, “a significant affirmation” according to Alexander McCormick, who directs Carnegie’s classification work, “of the importance of community engagement in the agenda of higher education” (Carnegie Foundation, 2006, ¶1).

Community engagement has long served society through teaching, research, and service contributions (Harkavy & Benson, 1998); however, recent cuts in state and federal funding to
institutions of higher education and a growing public perception that higher education serves private gains more than public good seems to have “shaken the higher education community out of its complacency” (Sandmann & Weerts, 2006). Some colleges and universities are therefore increasing their commitment to community engagement and faculty-community partnerships may become more important and numerous than ever before.

Colleges’ and universities’ growing commitment to community and civic engagement is demonstrated by the increasing number of institutional memberships over the last two decades in Campus Compact (see Figure 1), a consortium that currently numbers about 1,100 college and university presidents who support publicly engaged work by faculty, students, and staff. Since 2000, Campus Compact member schools have reported a 60 percent increase in students’ service participation (Campus Compact, 2005). Students working in areas such as literacy, health care, hunger, homelessness, voting, and the environment now contribute more than $5 billion worth of service provided to their communities each year. Ninety-eight percent of Campus Compact’s members have established one or more partnerships with community agencies, 98 percent offer service-learning courses, and 86 percent have a community service/service-learning office.
The Need for More Research on Partnerships

Developing and maintaining partnerships are key elements of effective college or university engagement with the community because such partnerships provide opportunities for students, faculty, and community members to solve real-world problems (Harkavy, 2003). Yet, according to the study done by Abes, Jackson, and Jones (2002) of factors that motivate or deter faculty use of service-learning, many faculty members decide not to collaborate with community partners because they are anxious about coordinating the projects with partners. In addition, service-learning partnerships are time and effort intensive, may not be recognized as part of faculty’s scholarly work by colleagues or promotion and tenure committees (O’Meara, 2002), and have the potential to damage wider community-university relations if mismanaged.
Those faculty who do begin partnerships often find they are difficult to maintain (Carriere, 2006). Changes in leadership at colleges and universities, funding, and enrollment, as well as academic schedules that follow semester terms and include breaks, are inherent factors of campus life that present challenges to managing campus-community partnerships (Carriere, 2006). Failure rates are high even in for-profit partnerships such as mergers, joint ventures, and strategic alliances (Park & Ungson, 1997).

But the TCBI partnership I had observed was thriving. I wanted to investigate the relationship further and to compare the TCBI partnership with others to improve understanding of what makes partnerships work. I wanted to discover the elements that allow for partners who come from different organizational environments to navigate a faculty-community partnership successfully.

**Tribal College Building Initiative: Building Grounded Theory**

I was first introduced to the TCBI partnership while attending a small national conference on community engagement. I became intrigued by the partnership itself. Who was involved? How was the partnership managed? What factors have contributed to its longevity and reported successes? In short, I wondered, what made the partnership work? So I began to investigate the partnership and explore the literature on faculty-community partnerships.

Theory on the nature of faculty-community partnerships, and the perceptions and processes involved in facilitating successful long-term partnerships is sparse; most articles focus on students’ outcomes, anecdotes, and lists of best practices. Therefore, I chose to develop grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1989); theory that is derived from reiteratively gathered and analyzed data (Strauss & Corbin, 1989). By the end of my first year of observing and studying the TCBI partnership, I had developed constructs and conceptual frameworks, which I revisited
and modified throughout the study as a result of ongoing data collection and analysis of multiple partnership case studies. Methods used throughout this study are fully described in Chapter 3; however, to illustrate how I uncovered key findings as a result of the initial study of TCBI, I briefly review some of the techniques I used.

To answer my initial questions regarding the TCBI partnership, I visited the reservation at which the construction site was located. I lived and worked with the faculty, students, and volunteered as a participant observer for two weeks. Although my interest was primarily on the partnership, I allowed a wide focus and kept a journal. Topics in my journal included students’ activities, interactions, and conversations while they were participating in the construction project on the reservation¹, as well as my thoughts regarding observations and interviews with faculty, staff, and community members who were involved in the management of the partnership. I quickly found through my observations and conversations that students’ activities and interactions with tribal members had little to no influence on the perceptions and interactions between faculty and community members of the TCBI partnership. I concluded that the partnership was an entity that facilitated the students’ involvement in the construction project, but the students themselves did not influence the partnership. I had, however, found several key themes which later helped to guide my further studies of TCBI and four additional faculty-community partnerships. The themes included the perception of partners as personal friends; a sense of “we;” the nurturing of the partnership; the importance of reciprocity, equality, and respect between partners; and the effort, particularly for faculty, of managing a partnership outside of their employing institution.

¹ Full methods of the initial data collection are described in Chapter Three.
Emergent themes.

When I visited the TCBI construction project in the summer of 2005, I was struck by the friendship and care for each other that was apparent in both words and actions. During my first night on the reservation, I attended a meeting at which the ESU faculty welcomed students and volunteers to the project site. George talked about the importance of his relationship with members of the reservation, “We have friends here now. We keep coming back year after year and that means volumes to this community.” He asked students to read the stories that community members had written of their experiences with TCBI, such as what the project has meant to them, “so you know something about the people you talk to. It means a lot to them.”

George’s partners at RCTC also shared the feelings of friendship. During my second night, I listened to a welcome address given by the president of the college, Carl. He spoke about how much George had meant, personally, to tribal members and the local community: “Since [George has] been out here, he’s almost become an honorary [tribal member]!” A few nights later, members from two families of the tribe joined our group for dinner. I observed several alumni and faculty of the program greet them with open smiles and warm hugs. I wrote in my field notes that night, “There is certainly a friendship relationship between these members of the Tribe and the TCBI group.” When I asked the vice president of RCTC in an interview later that week to describe the relationship, he spoke about the friendships he had made over the past several years; “I have felt like they are all friends that I’ve had for a while.”

In the course of two weeks spent on the reservation and project site, I also noticed members from ESU and RCTC referring to each other in terms of “we” and doing favors for each other that went beyond the parameters of the construction project. For example, Carl, the president of RCTC, spoke about his and George’s shared effort in trying to convince the board of
trustees of an alternative site to the one the board had selected. Carl said “the partnership is one of cooperation, collaboration, and unity.” I heard about students building an announcer’s booth and horseshoe pits for the annual Powwow, and watched faculty members leave with tribal members to go on a buffalo hunt (which is a very special, rare, and sacred event). George wore a vest on which he had personally hand-beaded the initials of the partnership on the vest in the tradition of the tribe. I observed partners from both ESU and RCTC wearing shirts or hats that carried the name of their partners’ institutions, and a t-shirt made for project participants during a previous year, which read, “Sustainable Buildings, Sustainable Partnerships” and listed the names of the partnering institutions. It seemed that TCBI provided opportunities for more than simply meeting professional objectives (learning experience for students and buildings for the tribal college), it also provided a means for personal bonds and friendships between persons from different institutions and cultures. For some members in particular, it seemed to provide a sense of individual identity – an expression of who they were personally and professionally.

Although the faculty and community members spoke of each other as partners and used inclusive language, such as “we” when speaking about the partnership, it was apparent that each person remained cognizant of their roles as representatives from different institutions. The organizations themselves had different characters. Eastern State was more powerful than RCTC; it was much larger, more prestigious, and wealthier. Red Clay’s mission was tightly focused on helping tribal members to become self-reliant through higher education and on preserving their traditional culture and language. Eastern State’s mission relatively more diffuse as a multi-campus, land-grant institution with commitments to excellent teaching and researching and outreach to the statewide community. Even norms about timelines, planning, and punctuality were different. Although TCBI partners had developed friendly relationships and expectations
about how the project would be managed, I realized that the partners were, nevertheless, spanning the boundaries of their two very different organizations. They were both partners of the partnership and representatives of their respective institutions.

The importance of reciprocal and equitable treatment and respect was a fourth finding that emerged from my summer studying the project, which later led me to incorporate the idea of collaborative negotiation practices into my guiding conceptual framework for what makes partnerships work. Repeatedly I heard members of RCTC and ESU faculty describe their interactions and negotiations as fair, equitable, and inclusive. As one RCTC administrator put it,

A lot of times, universities like to come in and use the tribal college to get grants… This partnership has been at the other end of the spectrum. They’ve asked us what we want. They’ve involved us in setting our objectives for what we want done here. They’ve involved the community. This partnership is the best partnership I’ve ever been involved in.

Each partner spoke of the importance of respecting the needs and desires of each other as a key ingredient for preserving the partnership. Furthermore, participants’ stories about previous failed partnerships provided insight as to the key issues that should be negotiated, such as the issue of equally sharing credit for the work done by partners. It appeared that sharing credit and other issues affected members’ feelings about the partnership. However, it was not clear from the pilot study whether content was as important as process when negotiating issues pertaining to the partnership.

My observations and interviews of TCBI partners revealed that the partnership had succeeded in accomplishing its partners’ goals and in developing an enduring relationship. Interpersonal relationships had been developed, and respectful and equitable negotiations had
been practiced. The friendships were deeply meaningful for many of the partners. Membership to the partnership, particularly for faculty, had become incorporated in how they viewed themselves, their identity. Two observations that piqued my interest in identity were partners’ expressions of “we” and the frequency with which partners’ wore t-shirts with the logo of the TCBI partnership or their partners’ institutions.

Individual identities and organizational roles appeared to have played a role in shaping how faculty and community members approached and facilitated the partnership. In large part, the partnership seemed to reinforce individuals’ identities as compassionate citizens and passionate professionals. I began to question whether partnerships, as separate organizational entities, have identities and what a Partnership Identity would look like. Organizational identity may have powerful effects on members (Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Elsbach & Kramer, 1996). Similarly, the existence of a Partnership Identity might influence perceptions and behaviors of persons involved.

Observations such as those described above led me to explore the concepts of individual, organizational, and Partnership Identity, as well as collaborative negotiation. A review of these literatures in the fields of higher education and management and organization helped to inform the development of a conceptual framework and four research questions. The framework and questions provided systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct grounded theory on Partnership Identity.

**Purpose of the Main Study & Research Questions**

The goal of the subsequent main study was to understand the role of identities in managing faculty-community partnerships. This study addressed the following questions:

1. How do the social identities of boundary-spanners affect their perceptions of their employing
organizations’ identities?

2. How do boundary-spanners’ social identities and their perceptions of their organizational identities affect the way that they approach and negotiate the partnership?

3. To what extent does the partnership itself have an identity?

4. If the partnership has an identity, what are its core characteristics?

Much of what has been written about community-university partnerships describes examples of partnerships which essentially exist only as names on grants, reports, or in promotional brochures (Jacoby, 2003). This project examined partnerships that were active for at least two semesters, examined the role of various forms of identity in partnerships, and begins to develop theory on Partnership Identity. This study responds to calls for systematic and theory-based examination of the individual and organizational level factors that foster interorganizational cooperation (Smith, Carol, & Ashford, 1995; Marchington & Vincent, 2004; Hennart & Zeng, 2005), and goes beyond prescription (see for example, Palermo, McGranaghan, & Travers, 2006; Calleson, Kauper-Brown, & Seifer, 2005; Oates & Leavitt, 2003; Freeman, 2003) to explore organizational and individual influences on partnerships.

In subsequent chapters I review the literature on faculty-community partnerships, identity, and collaborative negotiation (Chapter 2); outline the conceptual framework developed in the initial study of TCBI and methods used throughout this study (Chapter 3); and describe the case studies of four different partnerships (Chapters 4-8). To answer the research questions, I provide a cross-case analysis of the case studies outlining their similarities and differences (Chapter 9). To conclude (Chapter 10), I summarize the study, discuss how my study contributes a new theoretical understanding of faculty-community partnerships, and review the implications of my study for practice, as well as for theory.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The potential of faculty-community partnerships to enhance students’ learning and to serve community needs depends on the effective management of partnerships (Sandy & Holland, 2006; Carriere, 2006). Social identity and organizational identity theories suggest that persons’ behaviors and relationships are influenced by their own identities, as well as the identities of the organizations for which they work. Negotiation literature suggests that collaborative partnerships require integrative solutions and open discussions about issues of substance. In this section, I review the empirical and theoretical literatures on interorganizational partnerships, identity, and collaborative negotiation. Each of these literatures informed the development of the research questions and helped to frame my perspective as I asked questions, collected archival documents, observed partners’ interactions, and developed theory on the role of identity in faculty-community partnerships.

Interorganizational Partnerships

The majority of empirical and theoretical research on interorganizational relationships focuses on mergers, joint ventures, or strategic alliances (Marchington & Vincent, 2004), each of which is different in the degree to which organizations share resources and legal responsibility (Scott, 2003). The term partnership, by legal definition, applies to a business that is owned by two or more people who share management decisions, profits, and debts (Online Law Dictionary, 2007); however, in the service-learning literature it may apply to non-contract based collaboratives between faculty and community members. Common to the success of all types of interorganizational relationships is the necessity for organizational representatives to work together effectively. Research on collaborative relationships suggests the importance of both individual and organizational factors; as “personal relationships may supplement or even
supplant formal role relationships and psychological contracts may increasingly substitute for formal legal contracts (Ring & van de Ven, 1994).

Explorations of failed and struggling partnerships suggest that organizational structures may influence interpersonal relationships between boundary-spanners. Sebring’s (1977) study of a “five million dollar misunderstanding” found that a joint venture between a university and a state Department of Public Welfare (DPW) failed due to organizational differences. Sebring argued that structural characteristics that allowed the organizations to deal most effectively with their particular environments also became sources for conflict in a partnership that involved organizations with different characteristics and environmental pressures. Organizational structures that hindered the ability of university faculty and DPW professionals to collaborate effectively included differences in priorities assigned to commonly shared goals (research, education, service), what counted as “work” (such as a practical product versus a theoretical tool), expectations for the timely completion of work, differences between the university’s and DPW’s formalized rules, control procedures, and formal reporting relationships. Ultimately, Sebring argued, differences in organizational structures constrained members’ perceptions and actions, which led to disappointment and disillusionment. The frustration created by the failed venture was so great that one DPW official suggested that it had “set social research back 10 years in the state” (p. 508).

Contributing a lens of identity to issues surrounding collaborative relationships, Güney (2004) studied two previously distinct sub-organizations within a large technology corporation. At the conclusion of her ethnographic case study, Güney suggested that collaboration depends upon the construction of a shared sense of organizational identity (“who we are and what we are doing together” (p. 194)) among members of the collaboration. Güney found that participants
from different sub-organizations had difficulty in working together to achieve common objectives, such as writing a product development plan. Because participants originated from different sub-organizational contexts with different structures and norms, participants were more concerned with establishing the identity of the collaborative group and what type of relationship they wanted to have with each other in the pursuit of their goals, than with the goals themselves. It was not until participants developed a shared organizational identity that they were able to work together effectively.

Both Sebring’s (1977) and Güney’s (2004) studies argue against a model of interorganizational relationships in which partnership success is dependent on complementarity of skills, resources, and abilities between the two organizations (Oliver, 1990). In both studies, the partners had the means necessary to initiate the partnerships, but struggled anyway. Sebring’s (1977) study highlights the ways differing organizational structures and cultures may prevent faculty and public agency professionals from working together on an initial project, thereby hindering future collaborations. Güney found that collaborations may break down due to partners’ failures to develop a unified vision of who they were as a group. By extension, the success of partnerships may depend on boundary-spanners’ ability to relinquish existing ways of thinking of themselves as members of distinct organizational entities and to forge new consensually shared ways of making sense of the partnership (Clark et al., 2008).

**Faculty-Community Partnerships for Student Learning**

As reviewed in Chapter One, the number of faculty-community partnerships has grown rapidly in the past twenty years as educators strive to improve student learning through the practical application of curriculum-based knowledge and skills. The majority of these partnerships are reported in the service-learning literature, which describes many types of faculty
and community relationships (Jacoby, 2003). Service-learning partnerships may be comprised of a variety of partners including faculty members from multiple institutions, directors and members of not-for-profit agencies, undergraduate and graduate students, teachers and administrators of elementary and secondary schools, and government agents (Jacoby, 2003). Partnerships may be as simple as a single faculty member collaborating with a single community partner or as complex as multiple faculty and community members from diverse departments, colleges, universities, and agencies working together on one or more initiatives (Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoeker, & Donohue, 2003). Whether simple or complex, community-engaged learning opportunities for students depend on effective collaboration and cooperation between faculty members and representatives from community-based organizations. The TCBI relationship and others used in this study are examples of such partnerships because they involve faculty and community members who are in collaboration for the purposes of providing learning opportunities for students and supporting communities through service.

**Descriptive Studies of Faculty-Community Partnerships**

Few studies on service-learning use partnerships as the unit of analysis (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Cruz & Giles, 2000; Giles & Eyler, 1998); therefore, faculty-community partnerships are only beginning to be understood (Dorado & Giles, 2004; Jacoby, 2003). In their review of literature on partnerships, Dorado and Giles (2004) point out that most of the studies on partnerships tend to analyze the differences between faculty and community members (Bacon, 2002; Jorge, 2003), the benefits of service-learning to community members (Schmidt & Robby, 2002), or the fit between partnerships and the missions of different types of colleges and universities (Maurrasse, 2001), but do not look at the relationship dynamics or the processes within the partnerships.
Although few analytical or theoretical studies on the development and maintenance of faculty-community partnerships exist, many toolkits or guidelines have been published to provide a list of lessons learned through personal experience (Thompson, Story, & Butler, 2003) or best practices for service-learning practitioners (Palermo, McGrangham, & Travers, 2006; Freeman, 2003). The most frequently cited guidelines have been published by academic not-for-profit organizations, such as Campus Compact and Community-Campus Partnerships for Health, and governmental agencies, such as the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Characteristics that are common to what authors call “ideal” partnerships include the development of mutual agendas, common understandings of resources and capacities of partners, equitable oversight and control of projects, ongoing assessments of processes and outcomes, and attention to the relationship (Holland, 2005). Table 1 provides a representative sample of principles and guidelines that are provided to service-learning practitioners. On the whole, the authors suggest items to be discussed between partners, such as missions, values, resources, and roles, as well as ideal states of partnership, such as shared trust, respect, commitment, credit for success, accountability, passion, and vision.

My review of the literature on faculty-community partnerships confirms Rubin’s (2000) assertion that nearly all researchers identify trust as a key element in effective partnerships. Trust is not operationally defined by authors in the service-learning literature, but others have defined trust as a sense that partners will not act opportunistically at the expense of the other (Bradach & Eccles, 1989; Gulati, 2004). Inkpen and Currall (2004) argue that trust evolves within a partnership from learning with and about the partnering organization. While many researchers describe the presence of trust in relationships, few discussed how or the process through which trust was developed (Huxham & Vangen, 2005). Bringle and Hatcher (2002) drew on theories of
friendly and romantic relationships to suggest that interdependency may be defined by frequency and diversity of interactions, as well as the strength of the influence on each party’s behavior, decisions, plans, and goals, but they do not advance a theory to understand why such actions foster closeness and trust. My study, which draws on identity and negotiation theories, may provide insight as to why trust may be developed in faculty-community partnerships.

For the most part, articles written on faculty-community partnerships, and collaborative relationships, in general, are authors’ reflections of their own experiences and conclude with lists of lessons learned for future partnerships (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002; Huxham & Vangen, 2005). With a few exceptions, these reflections are single case studies, present practical insights, tell of successful partnerships, and do not build theory (Dorado & Giles, 2004; Jacoby, 2003). My study includes a cross-case analysis of multiple partnerships from two institutions and provides a theoretical framework through which to understand the factors and processes involved in the development of successful partnerships.
Table 1. Principles for Effective Campus-Community Partnerships

| Effective Partnerships (Department of Housing and Urban Development) |
|---|---|
| Joint exploration of goals and interests and limitations |
| Creation of a mutually rewarding agenda |
| Operational design that supports shared leadership, decision-making, conflict resolution, resources |
| Clear benefits and roles for each partner |
| Identification of opportunities for early successes for all; shared celebration of progress |
| Focus on knowledge exchange, shared learning and capacity-building |
| Attention to communications patterns, cultivation of trust |
| Commitment to continuous assessment of the partnership itself, as well as outcomes. |

| Partnership Principles (Community-Campus Partnerships for Health) |
|---|---|
| Mission, values, goals, outcomes |
| Trust, respect, commitment |
| Focus: strengths, assets, areas for improvement |
| Balanced power, shared resources |
| Clear, open communication |
| Roles, norms, processes (mutually designed) |
| Feedback for continuous improvement |
| Shared credit for accomplishments |
| Investment of time needed to develop and evolve |

| Core Elements of Partnerships (Committee on Institutional Cooperation) |
|---|---|
| Mutually-determined goals and processes |
| Shared resources, rewards, risks |
| Roles reflect partner capacities and resources |
| Respect for expertise of each partner |
| Sufficient benefits to justify cost/effort/risk |
| Shared vision/excitement/passion |
| Accountability for carrying out plans |
| Commitment to benefits for all partners |

Adapted from Holland, 2004
Empirical Studies and Theories of Faculty-Community Partnerships

Several studies provide the basis for what is empirically known about service-learning partnerships because they use partnerships as the unit of analysis. Dorado and Giles’ (2003) empirical study builds on Bringle and Hatcher’s (2002) theory about phases of interpersonal exchanges between campus and community members, and Enos and Morton (2003) theorize partnership development as a shift from transactional to transformative. Bringle and Hatcher’s (2002) theory about the phases and dynamics of relationships suggests that a partnership’s age may indicate its stage of development, with older partnerships having deeper interpersonal connections. The authors suggest that important signs of growth and maturity include the “transformation from each party assessing individual outcomes to interdependency that results in the appraisal of joint outcomes” (Kelley, 1979, p. 513).

Enos and Morton (2003) suggest a typology of campus-community partnerships according to their depth and complexity. Transactional partnerships are typically one-time collaborations in which boundary-spanners have minimal contact with each other. Transactions may include coordinating students’ projects or completing project reports. The deepest and most complex relationships are transformative experiences for the boundary-spanners and the partnership itself. Boundary-spanners who are members of transformative partnerships engage in the joint creation of knowledge, act in ways that facilitate the accomplishment of each party’s goals, and acknowledge their mutual interdependence.

Giles and Dorado analyzed 27 interviews with participants in 13 service-learning partnerships and categorized partnerships as tentative, aligned or committed. Categories were decided on the dominant behaviors partnerships showed, such as learning about each other (tentative), working together to solve problems, clarify expectations, and align partners’ goals
(aligned), or nurturing the partnership beyond that which is required to facilitate the completion of a project (committed). The authors found that some partnerships remained tentative because parties were not interested in developing a long-term partnership. Aligned partnerships were typically new, and partners were engaged in establishing the goals and modifying nascent structures, such as roles and responsibilities. Partnerships in the committed stage had lasted two semesters or more and partners’ behaviors and words suggested that partners cared about each other as well as the specific project. Community organizations that viewed service-learning as a way to further their missions were more likely to describe the partnership using terms that indicated nurturing qualities. In each of these three studies, the authors conclude that the partnership: (1) takes on meaning beyond the transactions of the projects, (2) may be conceptualized as relationships between individuals, and (3) passes through a series of non-linear “paths of engagement” (Dorado & Giles, 2004, p. 25).

Todd, Ebata, and Hughes (1998) argue that university-community partnerships represent the interplay between groups of people who are influenced by their organizational and social environments. The authors argue that contextual and process factors may have been critical to the success of the three community-university initiatives studied. Contextual factors include (1) the extent to which participants receive encouragement and support from college, university, or community administrators, and (2) institutional cultures (rules, procedures, and practices) and infrastructure, such as policies and resources, which may either facilitate or inhibit collaboration. Process factors include (1) the role of the faculty as either a consultants, equal partners, or as learners, (2) the ability of stakeholders to develop and frequently revise shared goals or objectives for the initiative, and (3) the sustainability of funding.

My study builds on previous research that illustrate the types of phases partnerships
experience (Dorado & Giles, 2004; Enos & Morton, 2003; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002) by exploring why and how some partnerships reach a committed stage in which faculty and community members ascribe meaning to the partnership that is above and beyond the specific project (Dorado & Giles, 2004). This study also builds upon Sebring’s (1977) argument that organizational structures may influence interpersonal relationships between faculty and community members, as well as extends Güney’s (2004) exploratory work on the cognitive effects that identification with distinct organizations may have on collaborative partnerships. Additionally, this study explores the various levels of commitment experienced by faculty and community members in long-term partnerships.

**Boundary-Spanning Work**

The ability to forge a partnership that effectively provides for student learning is a necessary, but often difficult, aspect of service-learning experiences (Sandy & Holland, 2006; Abes, Jackson, & Jones, 2002). The process requires faculty and community partners to engage in “boundary crossing” or “boundary work” (Hayes & Cuban, 1997) in which they cross back and forth between academic and non-academic worlds which may have different norms, cultures, and expectations (Carriere, 2006). Boundary-spanners are organizational representatives who are “intimately involved in the day-to-day relationship-building activities and operations within the developing partnership” (Noble & Jones, 2006, p. 897). Organizations have norms about whether boundary-spanners should act competitively or collaboratively, for how long, as well as the degree of flexibility they have in negotiating the relationship and relevant issues (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Rosenthal, & Snoek, 1964).

Interorganizational boundary-spanning may also affect the individuals involved. For example, Child and Faulkner’s (1998) study of boundary-spanners suggests that organizational
representatives may experience role tension as they work between two or more different organizations. Boundary-spanners may experience a “sense of separateness” (Child & Faulkner, 1998, p. 240) as a result of not knowing or understanding the organizational norms of their partners. Different types of organizations, such as public and private, may have “distinctive cultures that lead them to exhibit different values, concerns, and accountabilities, pursue different objectives, and place emphasis on different aspects of risks and benefits (Noble & Jones, 2006) than their partners. These differences can lead to difficulties in collaboration. In some instances, however, boundary-spanners’ loyalties may expand to include the partnership as an entity in its own right to the “point where their loyalty ‘rolls over’ to the (partnership) … and they find themselves representing the (partnership) as an entity within their own organization” (p. 913). In such instances, the boundary-spanner is member to both their host organization, as well as to the partnership.

Theoretical Foundations

Theories of identity and negotiation underlie this study. In this section, I review social and organizational identities theories and then suggest how these theories may inform faculty-community partnerships. I also review literature on collaborative negotiation, a particular process in which members from distinct organizations work together for their mutual benefit, and highlight its relevance and role in the development of Partnership Identity.

Identity Theories

Identity is who somebody knows her or himself to be. Current theories of identity development suggest that identity formation evolves from social interactions, perceptions of self in relation to others, and memberships in groups (Stryker & Burke, 2000). This study draws on two identity theories, which are reviewed below: social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979)
and organizational identity (Albert & Whetten, 1985) to explore the boundaries and relationships between personal and organizational identity.

**Social identity.**

Social identity theory was first conceptualized as a product of studies by Tajfel and Turners (1979) on individual and group behavior. They found that persons randomly assigned to groups tend to see their own group members in a more favorable light than those in another randomly assigned group. The mere act of naming or assigning a person to a group had the effect of creating and ingroup identity and fostering ingroup favoritism (Tajfel, 1972). Hence, a sense of membership is a sufficient condition for individuals to display favoritism to members of their group (*ingroup*) over others outside of the group (*outgroup*). However, ingroup identification does not depend on the existence of an outgroup (such as another team or competitor); it may exist independent of intergroup competition.

Social identity is an individual’s sense of belonging to certain groups. For example, a professor is likely to identify as a member of her discipline and her university. Social identity theory posits that individuals define themselves in terms of formal or informal group memberships (Cleveland Browns fan, Penn State student, graduate student), as well as in terms of their individual characteristics (tall, young, extroverted, smart) and preferences (for reading, traveling, cooking). Therefore, individuals’ identities are multifaceted; they are formed as a result of an individual’s membership to many groups. Colbeck and Weaver’s (2008) of 12 faculty members who were engaged in public scholarship support this view multiple simultaneous social identities; faculty recognized multiple professional identities with regards to discipline, roles, and professions. In short, social identity is based on in- and outgroup classifications which allow individuals to define others in relation to themselves and themselves

Empirical research suggests that ingroup membership has an emotional component (Tajfel, 1972) that may help persons to work well together (Ouwekerk, Ellemers, & Gilder, 1999). The review of empirical studies about social identity by Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell (1987) suggests shared ingroup identities may help groups increase their productivity (Schacter et al., 1951) and performance (Goodacre, 1951), increase conformity to group norms (Festinger, et al., 1950), improve morale and job satisfaction (Exline, 1957; Gross, 1954), facilitate intragroup communication (Festinger et al., 1954), solidify intergroup barriers (Knowles & Brickner, 1981), reduce intragroup hostility and direct it towards those who do not belong to the ingroup (Pepitone & Reichling, 1955), increase feelings of security and self-worth (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987), and see ingroup members as more flexible, kind, and fair than persons outside of the group (Doise et al, 1972). Haslam’s (2004) research shows that intergroup communication is more effective among ingroup members because of reduced uncertainty, increased feedback and coordination than communication with those who do not share a social category.

Organizational identity.

Social identity theory and research has sparked important research and debate on the factors that shape the identities of organizations (Hatch & Schultz, 2004). Organizational identity is members’ collective sense of the organization’s essence and mission. The essence of an organization is a collective conceptualization of “who we are as an organization” (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Mission is the reason for which the organizational entity exists – the intended outcome which the organizations make efforts to achieve. Organizational identity was first formally defined by Albert and Whetten (1985) as those features that are central (that which
members perceive as core or fundamental to the organization), *distinctive* (that which members perceive as different from other organizations), and *enduring* (that which is perceived by members as the lasting features of the organizations). The tripartite features of organizational identity are briefly reviewed below.

**Central.** Albert and Whetten (1985) did not specify what is central to an organization (“that which distinguishes the organization on the basis of something important and essential” (p. 166)), and a lack of consensus exists as to the meaning and definition of organizational identity (Albert, Ashforth, & Dutton, 1999). Other scholars, however, have discussed the central importance of shared organizational values and norms.

Organizational values have been characterized as “the essence” (Aust, 2004) of an organization, as well as the “most distinctive property or defining characteristic of a social institution” (Rokeach, 1979 as cited by Meglino & Ravlin, 1998, p. 51). Organizational values are the principles that members within an organization use as criteria for behavior (Scott, 2003) and have been conceptualized as those values that are shared among members of the organization (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998). Values specify acceptable organizational practices (such as the extent to which faculty’s work should address concerns of the community) and facilitate interactions between members (such as collaborative versus competitive negotiation styles) (Schein, 1985).

Values reside within the subconscious and structure everyday experiences and behaviors (Epstein, 1979, 1983). Values are linked to how individuals make sense of their experiences and create meaning. Leaders, in particular, are likely to be in a position in which they are making value-based decisions about the organization, such as vision or goal setting, and therefore, may identify the organization according to those guiding values. Mandler (1984) suggests that “something is meaningful to us if we connect it to ourselves” (cited in Gray, Bougon, &
Donnellon, 1985, p. 87). Organizational values give meaning to shared experiences; “the greater the coincidence among these tacit value systems, the deeper and more socially binding are the meanings that arise. Moreover, since values embody concerns about personal welfare, the meanings attached to them are not easily relinquished” (Gray, Bougon, & Donnellon, 1985, p. 88). Values are an important aspect of organizational identity because they underlie decisions made by organizational members.

The majority of studies on organizational values focus on value congruence between individuals and organizational units (see for example, Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Kraimer, 1992; Hall, Schneider, & Nygren, 1970) and few study organizational values apart from members’ personal values (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998). A review (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998) of the research indicates that perceived congruence between member’s and organizations’ values relates positively to affective outcomes, including satisfaction, commitment and involvement (Cable & Judge, 1996; Harris & Mossholder, 1996). Furthermore, a positive relationship is indicated with prospective employees’ intentions to join an organization, the extent to which employees’ meet expectations (Lee & Mowday, 1987), members’ optimism about the organization’s future (Harris & Mossholder, 1996), and adaptability (Chao, O’Leary-Kelly, Wolf, Klein, & Gardner, 1994). Overall, working in an environment that is consistent with one’s values leads to a more positive work experience on many levels (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998).

Organizational norms are also central to an organization’s identity as they are generalized rules or expectations that govern the behavior of organizational members (Scott, 2003). Norms are derived from values that specify socially desirable modes of conduct such as members’ attire, attendance, and communication. Norms encourage individuals to comply with informal organizational rules that govern behavior and justify enforcing the conformity of others to group
expectations (Scott, 2003). Values and norms may be key components of that which is central to an organization, and they may be organizational features that are distinct and enduring.

**Distinctive.** Similar to persons, organizations distinguish themselves from each other through the articulation and enactment of their core characteristics. Distinctiveness recognizes that persons’ and organizations’ tendencies to fixate on ingroup and outgroup comparisons (Gioia, 1998). Members of organizations commonly believe, “in order to have something worth welcoming others to, we have to know who we are and what we stand for . . . if we are all-inclusive … all the time, we run the risk of blurring important boundaries . . . and losing touch with our core identity” (Westerhoff, 1999). Distinction from the ‘other’ category provides “an identity for their own group, and thus some kind of meaning to an otherwise empty situation” (Tajfel, 1972, p. 39-40, as cited by Haslam, 2001, p. 31). In colleges and universities, institutional distinctiveness is achieved through a unifying vision of the mission and role of education and serves as an *esprit de corps* among faculty, students, and alumni (Townsend, Newell, & Wiese, 1992).

**Enduring.** Organizational identity is considered to be relatively enduring because it is rooted in the minds of many organizational members. Members’ perceptions of the organization’s mission and essence must be altered, first, if the identity of the organization is to be changed. For example, the identity of a college or university is made stable by its preservation in a collective conscience of students, faculty, and alumni. Organizational sagas, “a collective understanding of a unique accomplishment based on historical exploits of a formal organization, create strong normative bonds within and outside of the university” (Clark, 1972, p. 178). The same may be true for all organizations: sagas carried from member to member over time may be important factors in how members perceive and articulate the identity of the organization.
Although identity is relatively stable, identity is not static. Albert and Whetten’s (1985) criterion of enduring has been challenged and reconceptualized (Gioia, Schultz, & Corely, 2000). Organizational identity has been shown to change in response to external pressures, such as media and markets (Elsbach & Kramer, 1996), strategic changes in academic institutions (Gioia & Thomas, 1996), as well as through interorganizational mergers (Clark et al., 2008). Gioia, Schultz, and Corely (2000) point out that organizational identities may be adaptively unstable, allowing both for the stability needed to provide direction to members, and the flexibility that allows the organization to respond to changing needs and environments. For example, The March of Dimes Foundation shifted its organizational mission to raise funds for cystic fibrosis once it had achieved its goal to eradicate polio (Scott, 2003).

Situations in which identity becomes most salient are also times in which identity is most likely to be challenged, and, subsequently, changed (Albert & Whetten, 1985). The question of organizational identity may be particularly salient or important during important events including the formation of the organization, the loss of an identity sustaining element, the accomplishment of an organization’s mission or vision, extremely rapid growth, a change in collective reputation or status (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Hence, identity may have a sense of continuity in which the interpretation and meaning of core beliefs and values shift while the labels endure over time and context (Gioia, Schultz, & Corely, 2000).

Less well understood but of increasing interest is the idea that organizations working in collaborative partnership with each other may develop a mutual identity (Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Gricar & Brown, 1981). Identity between partners may be developed discursively as members interact and develop relationships with each other (Maguire et al., 2001; Gray, Bougon, & Donnellon, 1985) and develop temporary and evolving structures with implicit and shared
rules and norms (Wood & Gray, 1991). A mutual identity within a partnership may provide a collaborative advantage (Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Beech & Huxham, 2003) because it may address issues of power and build trust by eroding previous ingroup boundaries, which may have separated partners previously.

*How identity influences behavior.*

The identity of an organization focuses members’ attention and resources in a particular direction. Organizations attend to that which is most congruent with who, or what, they are (Gioia & Thomas, 1996). Members of organizations use their organizations’ identities as guides for directing their own behavior and resources (Pratt, 2000). An organization’s identity, therefore, may influence individuals’ perceptions of what is most essential to the organization, and, by extension, what is most essential for their own work roles as well.

Additionally, sub-units within organizations may have identities as well. A study of 80 employees within a 150-employee manufacturing company concluded that workers identified with their team or sub-unit more than the organization as a whole and that workers behaviors is more powerfully controlled by peers within the team than by bureaucratic systems (Barker & Tompkins, 1994). Likewise, academic colleges and departments may have their own identities, which may influence professors’ choices and behaviors far more than the institutions’ identity (Kuh & Whitt, 1988).

Research on organizational identity is broad in scope. Organizational identity can be manipulated to influence members’ behaviors and resource allocation (Gioia & Thomas, 1996). For example, leaders may create policies (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991), handbooks, slogans, or training materials (Pratt, 2000) to construct varying images of an organization’s identity in an effort to influence members’ behaviors. University leaders may reference and thereby seek to
emulate other top tier universities in an effort to affirm their organizations’ identity, or who they strive for their university to be (Labianca, Fairbank, Thomas, Gioia, & Umphress, 2001; Gioia & Thomas, 1996). Other research suggests that organizational learning (the way an organization adapts to its environment) (Argyris & Schön, 1978) may be impeded by an organization’s efforts to preserve its current identity (Brown & Starkey, 2000). Diversity management practices may be enhanced by creating organizational identities to which members’ personally identify (Brickson, 2000).

This project builds on studies that suggest that organizational identities are created, sustained, and evolved through communicative interactions (Ashforth & Mael, 1996; Güney, 2004), such as negotiations. In particular, I will explore how boundary-spanners who represent organizations with distinct identities negotiate with each other, and the influence of their organizational and social identities on the process and content of their negotiations.

**Negotiations within Partnerships**

Negotiation is a basic process of communication (Fisher et al., 1991) through which two parties come to a decision regarding a mutual interest or a means for getting things accomplished. Negotiation is more than simply reaching an agreement, however. Agreements may require little negotiation at all (for example, two people can agree that it is cold outside), but negotiations always imply a degree of tension between parties – otherwise there is no need to continue to negotiate (Strauss, 1976). Negotiations are ubiquitous as individuals and organizational representatives negotiate to solve problems, resolve conflicts, and to create relationships (McRae, 1997).

Frequently, persons incorrectly associate competition or win-lose situations with the term negotiation. Although negotiations may follow a win-lose structure (distributive negotiation) in
which each party attempts to claim assets or ideas at the cost of the opposing party, negotiations that are successful in creating service-learning opportunities are more likely to follow a win-win structure (integrative negotiation). However, this may not always occur. For example, early interactions between boundary-spanners may determine the extent to which organizational representatives are willing to negotiate in ways that maximize the benefits of all parties involved (win-win), rather than in ways that lead to one party winning at the cost of the other (win-lose) (Noble & Jones, 2006).

Negotiations may serve as transformative opportunities for establishing collaborative partnerships because they may construct participants’ mental models, or expectations about how one’s partners, and the partnership itself, are to be managed (Gentner & Stevens, 1983; Bazerman, Curhan, Moore, & Valley, 2000). The degree to which partners develop a shared understanding of the negotiated relationship may influence how partners behave. Specifically, partners who do not share a common mental model of the partnership are much more likely to arrive at an impasse or to yield widely disparate payoffs than when a single model is shared (Thompson & Hastie, 1990).

The topics of negotiation and collaboration have been widely researched and tend to provide descriptions of themes inherent in the process (such as communication, commitment, compromise, trust, and power, to name a few) (Huxham & Vangen, 2001), conditions that facilitate interorganizational collaboration (Gray, 1985), and outcomes (Wood & Gray, 1991). My review of negotiations focuses on integrative negotiation practices because of emergent themes that arose from my year of observing the TCBI partnership (for example, respecting each other’s needs and interests, and creating mutual gains) and my interest in understanding the interactive processes through which a Partnership Identity was constructed.
**Integrative (Win-Win) Negotiations**

In their classic book on negotiation, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*, Fisher and Ury (1983; Fisher et al., 1991) argue that a good agreement is one which is wise and efficient, and which improves the parties' relationship. A wise agreement “meets legitimate interests of each side to the extent possible, resolves conflicting interests fairly, is durable, and takes community interests into account” (Fisher et al., 1991, p. 4). Wise agreements seek to maximize the potential for win-win solutions and to develop relationship between the parties. Fisher, Ury, and Patton argue that parties should follow four key principles at each stage of negotiation, including the analysis, planning, and discussions. The four principles are: (1) separate the people from the issue; (2) address needs and interests, not problems; (3) invent options for mutual gain; (4) use objective criteria for standards of performance (Fisher et al., 1991).

*Separate the people from the issue.*

Successful negotiations are more likely to occur when partners are able to separate the personalities of the people from the issue being negotiated. *Separating the people from the problem,* however, does not mean that the personal aspect is ignored. On the contrary, attention to one’s role in the relationship is important to engender trust for future transactions, especially when reciprocity is expected (Harvard Business, 2003). Negotiators have two interests: the substance and the relationship (Fisher et al., 1991). Principled negotiations address the people issues of perception, emotion, and communication.

Effective negotiators discuss perceptions openly and work to change incorrect ones (Fisher et al., 1991). In separating the people from the problem, or evaluating the issue apart from the person, negotiators acknowledge both kinds of interests, the substance and the
relationship. In emotional confrontations, parties often hold each other in a negative and suspicious light, closing lines of communication and trust. Effective communication about perceptions requires empathy, the ability to ground judgments on facts not fears, the integrity of each side to uphold personal or business values, speaking to be understood, listening actively, and acknowledging what is being said to ensure proper interpretations (Fisher et al., 1991).

*Focus on interests, not positions.*

Partners frequently begin their interactions with different needs, expectations, and positions. Too often, interests become entangled with a person’s positions, and the “objective merits of the problem” - the purpose of the negotiation - is forgotten (Fisher et al., 1991, p. 11). Therefore, integrative negotiations should focus on interests, not positions. Interests are underlying wishes or desires that may underlie a particular position. For example, the interest of the President of RCTC in establishing TCBI was to improve the campus’ infrastructure to meet community needs. George’s interest, however, was in his research and students’ education. Positions are particular stances taken on a given issue. The position of the RCTC President was the use of students’ labor to build infrastructure. George’s position was to create a service-learning program and research opportunities.

Negotiating positions may not only obscure what each party really wants (i.e., their interests), but are also unlikely to produce agreements that are truly satisfactory to each party (Fisher et al., 1991). Oppositional relationships hinder each party’s ability to discover mutual or alternative interests that may lie behind a singular position (Fisher et al., 1991). If following a principled approach, partners may openly share information about their respective interests (Harvard Business, 2003). Negotiators who “create the condition for a free and open discussion of all related issues and concerns” (Lewicki, Sauners, Barry & Minton., 2004, p. 97) may
preserve the relationship and allow partners to think more collaboratively and creatively, together.

*Invent options for mutual gain.*

The trust built through addressing the relationship separately from the issue, and the effort to focus on mutual interests, rather than positions, may provide a basis for parties to move beyond working for personal gains to working together to invent options for mutual gain (Lewicki, et al., 2004; Fisher et al., 1991). Fisher and Ury suggest that through creating new options that had not be previously known, negotiators are likely to increase the number or quality of beneficial options or opportunities, as well as develop the relationship. For example, collaborative brainstorming sessions tend to expand the scope of the discussion moving beyond fixed-pie assumptions (Harvard Business, 2003). Parties invent or discover possible new ideas or options that benefit each organization individually or both organizations, collectively. Hence, commonalities rather than differences are emphasized (Lewicki et al., 2004).

*Use objective criteria for standards of performance.*

The fourth principle of integrative negotiation suggests that parties should insist on using objective criteria. Objective criteria are agreed upon and fair standards that are used to determine outcomes. The use of objective criteria helps to prevent contests of will in which parties apply pressure or abuse power to achieve their own ends at the expense of the other parties.

Integrative partnerships are likely to fail when one or both parties use pressure or status to force an agreement – the focus shifts from mutual interest to individual gain. “At a minimum, objective criteria need to be independent of each side’s will. Ideally, to assure a wise agreement, objective criteria should be not only independent of will but also both legitimate and practical” (Fisher et al., 1991, p. 85). Power imbalances are likely to lead to defensive and positional
negotiation practices, which emphasize differences between parties, including differences in status and power.

**Negotiating Service-Learning Collaborations**

Foss, Bonaiuto, Johnson, and Moreland (2003) suggest that openly negotiating the purposes, resources, roles and responsibilities, and credit prior to or at the start of a service-learning project, may decrease ambiguities and time expenditures during early phases of relationships. Through negotiations that occur early on in the partnership, individuals figure out the substantive issues of their partners, discovering commonalities as well as points of difference. Failure to address and negotiate the purpose, resources, roles and responsibilities, and distribution of credit may, ultimately, draw attention to power inequities between organizations (Foss et al., 2003) or highlight their respective differences. For example, each partner may see the other as shirking their responsibilities to the partnership and begin to question the other party’s commitment to the project if respective expectations of the project (roles and responsibilities) are not clearly delineated between partners. Communication about roles and responsibilities is frequently lacking between faculty and agency personnel in service-learning partnerships and may serve as a reason for partnership dissolution. In their study of community members’ experiences with service-learning, Vernon and Ward (1999) found that community members were particularly unsure of their responsibilities regarding the students who serve their agency or community.

Likewise, during later phases of the relationship (for example, during the project), aspects left undiscussed may cause one party to feel less valued and less powerful than the other party (Foss et al., 2003). For example, if one partner seeks and takes recognition (credit) for the success of the partnership and does not include the partnering organization in the publicity, the
overlooked partners may feel undervalued, and begin to focus on how their host organization is different from that of their partner. Variances in missions, values, and norms may be brought to the forefront as the overlooked partner tries to make sense of why their organization was not included in the public recognition of efforts. Openly discussing substantive issues, therefore, may help partners focus on their commonalities and come to a consensus regarding each party’s understanding of the purpose, the resources available, the roles of each party, and the degree to which partners expect to share credit. In short, boundary-spanners who negotiate substantive issues (purpose, resources, role and resources, credit) of the partnership, may be more likely to form a shared sense of who they are together within the partnership than in those partnerships that do not negotiate these issues.

**Negotiating Identities**

Further supporting the idea that identities are involved in and may be a product of negotiation, Güney’s (2004) study of collaborative development of technology among distinct internal organizations of a high-technology corporation found that “planning negotiations create a platform for the participants not only to reach an agreement on the definitions of future products but also to determine the future state of the relationship between their collaborating organizations” (p. 213). The development of a collaborative relationship may depend on a shared sense of organizational identity among participants. Furthermore, contrary to common notions that negotiations break down because of difficulty in aligning collaborative goals, Güney’s (2004) research found that “planning negotiations break down at certain points, because some of the problems participants face during their collaborative activity are *rooted in the question of constructing a shared sense of organizational identity*” (p. 214 emphasis added).

The literature reviewed in this chapter together with my observations and analysis of the
TCBI partnership provided the foundation upon which I developed a conceptual framework to guide the study of additional partnerships. In the following chapter, I describe the conceptual framework and the methods used in the development of my theory on Partnership Identity.
CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK & METHODS

This study sought to develop a theory on the nature and processes of successful faculty-community partnerships. A conceptual framework developed from the initial study of the Tribal College Building Initiative (TCBI) and the literature review provided a theoretical handrail to help guide, but not limit, the focus of the main study and explored development of partnership identity between faculty and community partners. Additional themes emerged from the main portion of the study as observations and interviews explored, generally, the ways in which faculty and community members in five partnerships perceived themselves as members of social groups (social identity), and the ways the identities of their employing organizations affected how they viewed their social identities in relation to their involvement with their partnerships. I explored those issues about which faculty and community agents negotiated (content), and the ways in which they negotiated (process) to ascertain how, if at all, faculty and community agents developed a partnership identity.

Figure 2 illustrates this study’s conceptual framework, which guided, but did not limit, my initial analysis. The conceptual framework indicates relationships between the following major concepts: social and organizational identities, negotiation, and partnership identity. Findings from the five case studies (Chapters 4 through 8) helped to further define my theory of partnership identity beyond this original framework.
This section describes the relationship between individuals’ social identities (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and organizations’ identities (Albert & Whetten, 1985) - how individuals and organizations perceive themselves – and suggests that these identities may be likely to affect how faculty and community agents perceive and negotiate their faculty-community partnership.
Social Identity

Social identity is an individual’s sense that she or he belongs to certain groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Theories of identity formation suggest that a person’s sense of who she or he is evolves from social interactions, perceptions to self in relation to others, and memberships in groups (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Alignment of one’s identity to a group may increase one’s feelings of loyalty, flexibility, and favoritism towards other group members (Tajfel, 1972).

Membership.

Faculty and community agents are likely to identify themselves as members of those institutions in which they join, either formally or informally (Tajfel, 1972). Membership is a perception of belonging to a group. Examples of membership include places of employment, volunteer organizations, as well as environmental associations, religious societies, familial groups, or political parties. For example, a faculty member may identify as a tenure-track professor of engineering at Eastern State University, thus revealing social identities of rank, discipline, and organization.

Roles.

Organizational members may have multiple roles, such as professor, mother, coach, president, and boundary-spanner, (Colbeck & Weaver, 2008). Boundary-spanners are those persons who are intimately involved with supervising students’ activities while on the service-learning site, as well as those who are engaged with the relationship-building activities and operations that pertain to developing and maintaining the partnership itself (Noble & Jones, 2006). In this study, boundary-spanners may include faculty members, staff, administrators, and community agents who negotiate and facilitate service-learning programs.

I use the term boundary-spanner because it refers to the role an individual plays as an
organizational member and highlights the effect an organization’s identity may have on how an individual negotiates. However, it is important to note that boundary-spanners have multiple roles and memberships, and cannot be simply categorized as organizational representatives (Colbeck & Weaver, 2008). Boundary-spanners’ conception of themselves, or social identities, may consist of personal memberships to groups, as well membership to an employing or volunteer organization.

Organizational or disciplinary norms may provide rules regarding how members are expected to behave (Scott, 2003) and may influence how boundary-spanners interact with each other (Sebring, 1977). For example, faculty members may have a one-sided view of community members as subjects for research and may fail to include community partners as co-researchers, co-teachers, co-authors, or co-presenters (Giles & Eyler, 1998). Furthermore, tenure and promotion policies and department norms (O’Meara, 2002) and graduate education socialization (Austin, 2002) may devalue, or simply limit, faculty’s understanding of their roles in service and outreach.

**Organizational Identity**

Organizational identity is members’ collective sense of “who” an organization is. More formally defined, organizational identity includes those features which members perceive to be core or fundamental to the organization, distinctive from other organizations, and continual throughout time and circumstance.

*Core character.*

Organizational identity is defined according to that which is core to the organization – that is, its core missions, values, and norms.

*Organizational mission* is the reason for which the organizational entity exists – the
intended outcomes towards which members work to achieve. Mission is a core characteristic in
not-for-profit organizations, in particular, as the bottom line is not profit, but rather effectiveness
in meeting its mission (Ausburger, 1992). The missions of universities are often generally
defined by their tripartite missions of teaching, research, and service. A mission is a “clear and
compelling overall goal that serves as a unifying focal point or effort . . . . which translates the
more abstract philosophy into a tangible, energizing, highly focused goal that pulls the
organization forward” (Collins & Porras, 1991). At the department level, the university’s mission
may be defined more specifically than at the institutional level. For example, faculty members of
a highly ranked department may perceive the primary mission of the department to produce new
knowledge through excellent research, and teaching and service, as second and third-ranked
priorities. The mission of a community agency may be to provide free health care and counseling
services to local, battered women.

Organizational values are the principles that members of an organization use as criteria
for behavior (Scott, 2003). Examples of organizational values include environmental
sustainability, educational excellence, cultural preservation, profitability, labor efficiency, or
social justice. This study explored those organizational values which faculty members and
community understand to be core to their institutions, as well as to their departments and
community agencies, respectively, and the ways in which those values affect members’
negotiations and subsequent perceptions of the partnership. Values within academic departments
may include collegiality, autonomy, academic freedom, specialization/expertise, reason and the
Values held by members of a community agency may be social justice, land preservation, and
public education.
In her study of the effect of tenure on the motivation of faculty members to research, teach, and engage in service, Colbeck (1992) found that the pursuit of tenure socialized faculty to internalize the work priorities of their organization. The organizational norms – or rules for expected behavior – may be powerful indicators of what is most central to the organization. Norms are derived from values that specify modes of conduct that are socially desirable and may address members’ attire, attendance, and communication. Norms encourage individuals to comply with informal organizational rules that govern behavior (Scott, 2003), and, therefore, may justify enforcing members’ expectations.

Distinctiveness.

How members distinguish between and categorize partnerships may provide clues as to “who” each organization is, and “who” it is not. An urban university, such as Portland State University, for example, may distinguish itself as different from other universities on the basis of its commitment to public scholarship. A communications department may distinguish itself as one of the top ranked departments with regards to its emphasis on democratic engagement. A women’s shelter may distinguish itself from other rehabilitation and resource centers by its focus on alternative healing arts.

Continual.

Continual is “temporal continuity or an ability to reflect a sense of permanence while experiencing variability” (Aust, 2004, p. 518). For example, the leadership and volunteers at the TCBI may change every few years, but the core characteristics that form the TCBI’s identity may change very little, if at all. Missions, values, and norms may be maintained as they are transferred from one new member to the next. However, the extent to which an organization’s identity is continual depends on the perceptions of the members themselves, and therefore, may
shift (Bartel, 2001). As stated previously, an organization’s identity may be most salient, and perhaps changed, during critical events (Albert & Whetten, 1985), including the formation of the organization, rapid changes within the organization (such as changed circumstances or the arrival or leaving of key persons); rapid growth of the organization (such as a surge of resources are introduced to the project); a change in collective status (such as heightened media attention or external political pressures/ disincentives); continual but imperceptible changes within the organization (such as new missions, objectives, or goals), and; accomplishment of the organization’s mission (such as the project is completed and a new one must be begun).

**Identities of Sub-Units Within Organizations**

Sub-units within large organizations, including academic departments and community agency offices or programs, also have identities (Güney, 2004; Clark, 1987). Kuh and Whit (1988) suggest that large, multipurpose universities are multicultural contexts, which host many different subgroups with different values, traditions, and priorities (Gregory, 1983). Peterson and Spencer’s (1979) work suggests that the differences between subunits or groups are critical in mitigating conflict, guiding participation, or stimulating competition or cooperation. Operational autonomy of academic departments and professional schools lead professors to infer aspects of the larger university through the lenses of their own unit (Clark, 1987). For example, a professor of agriculture who has a position in Extension may be more likely to emphasize importance of, and hence, prioritize the service and outreach missions of the university over the research and teaching missions. Conversely, a professor in the school of business, in the same university, may be more likely to emphasis and prioritize the research and teaching mission over the service mission. Hence, the organizational identity of sub-units may be more salient to boundary-spanners than the identity of the institution as whole entity.
The identities of not-for-profit organizations may have well-defined and stable identities because success is determined by their effectiveness at addressing their mission statements (Ausburger, 1992). Community agencies are likely to have well-defined identities to the extent that their missions are clearly articulated and consistently enacted. However, not-for-profit organizations, particularly, large, decentralized ones, may also have sub-organizational identities.

**Relationship Between Social and Organizational Identities**

An individual’s social identity may affect how one perceives one’s organization. Memberships in social groups other than the host organization (defined for this study as a university or community agency) may lead members to attend selectively to those aspects of the host organization that support, or at minimum, align with their social identities. Take for example, two professors who work in the same department at the same public university. Professor A identifies as a social activist, an environmentalist, a family member, and a teacher. Professor B identifies as a physicist, a researcher, an athlete, and an outdoorsman. Each professor may describe the identity of the university differently. Professor A may describe the university as a public teaching institution, with a commitment to outreach and serving the needs of the state. Professor B, however, may describe the university differently, a “top ten” research institution. Professor A’s social orientation of social activist, environmentalist, and teacher may orient his view to highlight the land-grant mission of the university, while Professor B’s personal orientation as a research scientist may lead him to emphasize the research mission. Certain social identities (such as social activist or researcher) may be particularly salient in members’ interpretations of the organizations’ identities. Core aspects of the same university, therefore, may be interpreted or emphasized differently by its faculty members.

Conversely, organizational identity may affect social identities. Organizational missions,
values, and norms may affect an individual’s identity. For example, “strong situations” (Dornbusch, 1955), such as military academies and basic training, exert powerful influences on their participants. Strong situations “tend to create similar attitudes and behaviors in widely different, sometimes randomly chosen people” (Davis-Blake & Pfeffer, 1989). Similarly, Colbeck’s (1992) study on the effect of tenure on motivations to teach, research, and to engage in service suggests that the values of the university, as conveyed by tenure (a process through which one gains formal membership to the institution), affect how faculty members value aspects of their work roles.

The extent to which an organization’s identity is narrow or broadly defined may affect how or the extent to which members within an organization collaborate with community partners. In organizations with broadly defined identities, members are likely to hold different views about its core missions and values, and even disagree about its norms, or expected rules for behavior. For example, faculty members from a public land-grant university may disagree about the merit of community-based research. One professor may argue that the service mission of the university is equally important as the research and teaching missions, whereas another professor may argue the opposite. Collaboration between members within the same institution, therefore, may be difficult if the criteria upon which activities are judged do not align. In organizations with narrowly defined identities, the reverse may be true. For example, the sole value of women’s advocacy group may be equal rights for all women. A unified vision provides criteria against which all negotiated decisions and actions may be based.

**Negotiation**

Negotiation is a basic means through which two parties come to an agreement regarding a mutual interest. I use the term negotiation, a particular form of communication, to draw attention
to the tensions that exist between boundary-spanners who are working towards collaborative
ends. Tensions are inherent in negotiations because have parties’ have different purposes,
motivations, and expectations for working together (Straus, 1976). This study explored the roles
that principled negotiation practices have in developing shared understandings and meanings of
the identity of the partnership.

Substance of Negotiations

Barbara Polvika (1995) created a conceptual model for community interagency
collaboration in which she argues the “formation of collaborative community services and
programs requires interagency coordination that facilitates integration of jointly shared goals and
resources” (p. 110). Foss et al. (2003) used Polvika’s model as a guide in creating a conceptual
framework for service-learning partnerships. For this study, I borrowed from the principles
outlined by Foss, et al. as the basis for the substantive areas of negotiation because these areas
are also commonly highlighted as key aspects of effective community-university partnerships
(Carriere, 2006). The five substantive areas are guiding principles2, project and partner purposes,
provision and allocation of resources, partner roles and responsibilities, and shared credit.
Without negotiating the five areas prior to the start of the project, power inequities could occur
that may result in an ineffective relationship (Foss, et al., 2003).

Guiding principles.

Agreeing upon a set of guiding is one of the principles of a partnership negotiation during
the development of a project (Foss, et al., 2003). Guiding principles are the partners’ commonly

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2 To differentiate between values held by an organization (which are relatively stable over time
and collectively held) and the same term used in Polvika’s model (1995), I have substituted her
use of the term “values” with “guiding principles” to suggest that partners speak of those
principles which are pertinent to the partnership, not to the entirety of their respective
institutions.
held beliefs about what is important, the principles that should guide decisions made about the project. While each partner may have individual principles, agreement on common principles provides mutual understanding about why the partnership was established. Misunderstandings may be avoided, therefore, if members share assumptions about the principles that may be used to guide the partnership.

**Purpose.**

Partnerships are motivated by the desire of each organization to achieve a purpose or to accomplish a task they would otherwise not be able to satisfy alone. The reason for collaboration may be different for each partner, and upfront negotiation about the partnership allows the objectives of each partner to be identified and agreed upon so that from the start everyone is clear about the expected outcomes of the project (Vernon & Ward, 1999, p. 35). Ultimately, pre-stated agreed-upon purposes may aid in the success of a partnership (Foss et al., 2003), because they allow partners, when together and not, to move towards a same vision.

**Resources.**

Resources, particularly in service-learning partnerships, may include students, finances, and information (Polvika, 1995; Vernon & Ward, 1999). Students can be a vital resource in faculty-community partnerships because they provide certain knowledge, skills, and labor to a community agency. However, students are often cited by community partners as a major challenge to the success of projects because they may not be a reliable due to lack of training, schedule conflicts, duration of a class, or frequent turnover (Vernon & Ward, 1999). Finances are also an important resource in faculty-community partnerships for student learning. Entering into new or expanded projects may call for increased staff or supplies for the agency involved, resulting in a higher need for financial resources, which most not-for-profit agencies and faculty
members do not have. Costs that often arise include transportation, staff compensation for extra training time, and increased supplies and food. If the partners do not predetermine how to cover the increased costs, incorrect assumptions may result in each party feeling that the other has failed them or is not as committed to the success of the project as previously thought (Polvika, 1995).

*Roles and responsibilities.*

Delineating roles and responsibilities is the third substantive area that should be discussed and agreed upon at the start of the partnership if each partner is to come to understand the partnership as a shared organizational identity. Common questions that community partners are unclear about (Sandy & Holland, 2006) include: what, generally speaking, is required or expected of them? Is it the responsibility of the agency member to report to the professor if a student does not attend the work session or fulfill their commitment to the community? To what extent should the agency or community member follow-up or debrief the success and failures of the program with students and faculty members? Decisions may also be made regarding who is responsible for resource allocation, student training, transportation, and if the faculty member is expected to be at the project site with the students, and the extent to which the agency partner is a facilitator of learning processes, either in-class or at the project site. If partners understand and agree to accept certain roles in the relationship, each party may work either together or independently and may avoid making erroneous assumptions regarding each other’s responsibilities.

*Credit.*

Sharing credit may be a critical component of negotiations (Palmero, McGrangham, & Travers, 2006). For example, in my first year of observing the TCBI partnership, several
members related to me their experiences of a former partnership that had not worked out, in large part, because representatives from the partnering organization failed to include other member organizations in their publicity of the project. Representatives from the not-for-profit agency who coordinated the project arranged for the film crew of a nationally televised program to tour one of the projects while their collaborating partners were off-site and unaware of the filming of the project. The offended party terminated the partnership as a result of their partners’ failure to share credit for the success of the program.

The issue of credit is also important because it may increase the legitimacy of the joint initiative to the host organizations, which support (or at least allow) the faculty-community partnerships. While many faculty and agency members enter into partnerships because of the common good they hope to accomplish, the opportunity to garner notable credit also may be an incentive. Credit is expressed in many ways, such as newspaper articles, television interviews, or published research findings. Sharing credit equally among partners may facilitate positive interpersonal and inter-organizational relations, give legitimacy, and denote respect for each other.

Sharing credit may be particularly important because of its connection to how individuals and organizations perceive themselves through the eyes of their partner. Perceptions of how one is viewed by one’s partner are important “(b)ecause identity is so profound, it necessarily is involved with questions of esteem and status” (Godfrey, 1998, p. 291). Ultimately, failure to discuss credit may result in partners’ divisive concerns about relative importance, power, and respect.
Integrative Negotiation

Integrative negotiations (Fisher et al., 1991) may play a role in helping community members and faculty forge a partnership identity. To review, principled negotiations follow four key principles:

1. separate the people from the issue
2. address needs and interests, not problems
3. invent options for mutual gain
4. use objective criteria for standards of performance

Boundary-spanners who follow principled negotiation techniques may be likely to develop amicable relationships (Fisher et al., 1991) and to yield mutual benefits (Pruitt, 1983).

Separate the people from the issue being negotiated.

Successful faculty-community partnerships recognize the needs and perceptions of others but separate them from the issue being negotiated. Partners who do not entangle emotions into decision making processes will be more likely to preserve positive assessments of each partner, and are, therefore, more likely to perceive the organizational partners as compatible now and in the future.

Focus on the interests, not on the positions.

Boundary-spanners who focus on their motivations for collaboration and do not insist on a specified outcome may be likely to form strong partnership identities. For example, the TCBI partners were able to look beyond their own preferences for where a building was to be located and focused on addressing each other’s interests (cost savings and ease of design and construction versus respecting traditional tribal values of not placing children near cemeteries). Community and faculty members may avoid negotiation quagmires and divisive feelings if each party identifies and discusses interests and avoids entrenchment in positions (Fisher et al., 1991).
Invent options for mutual gain.

If university-community collaborations are to be effective, a common ground must be found (Northcraft & Neale, 1993, p. 210). When boundary-spanners think creatively to invent options that benefit all parties, commonalities between parties rather than differences are emphasized (Lewicki et al., 2004). In the case of TCBI, ESU faculty and RCTC administrators had separate goals: student learning and community infrastructure. However, both institutions also recognized and helped each other to pursue respective needs as well as mutual opportunities. For example, George incorporated into his curriculum a project in which students develop teaching modules on home maintenance and energy conservation which were taught to RCTC students and residents of the reservation. Integrative processes that develop ways in which partners are mutually benefited may literally expand the opportunities available and the value of the negotiated item (such as the partnership) may increase (Schoenfield, 1991; Bazerman, 1983).

Insist on using objective criteria.

Using objective criteria which have been established and agreed upon by each partner may facilitate a sense of cooperation and lay the foundation for common expectations and collaborative behavior. Similar to the principle of creating options for mutual gain, partners who establish objective criteria for how decisions are to be made and upon on what values they are to be based, were expected to create sociocognitive structures, such as identification with the group, which facilitate partnership identity.

In the TCBI partnership, the decision as to where to place one of the building projects (a childhood learning and daycare center) was heavily negotiated. The ESU and RCTR leadership team proposed to the RCTC board of directors a site for the construction of a center in which children would learn and play. The site was large enough, was easily assessable for parents to
drop off and pick up their children, and for large trucks to deliver materials. However, the board rejected this site because of its close proximity to a cemetery. It is taboo for children to be near cemeteries. Several meetings ensued in which the TCBI leadership team tried to work on a compromise, as the other option for the building was on a site that posed great challenges for architects and engineers and increased the cost of the project substantially. However, the negotiation was ultimately decided as members of the TCBI leadership team agreed that respecting cultural values were the most important criterion for deciding next steps.

**Negotiating Identities**

Creative and collaborative thinking between organizations is an important process in building a sense of who faculty and community agents are as a collaborative group. Boundary-spanners may, collectively, generate ways of making sense of the partnership, such as what and how goals should be accomplished. Values of the partnership are established, as well as each boundary-spanners’ commitment to the relationship. Trust may be developed as boundary-spanners witness each other’s loyalty to the partnership and to making it work. Constructing options for mutual gain may be one of the most important processes in the development of partnership identity through negotiation because boundary-spanners are developing missions, establishing values, and instituting cooperative norms that are distinct to the partnership and which may differ from their host organizations’ missions, values, and norms. The structure of the partnership may be established through collaborative creativity, and may have the potential for creating a sense of “we” within the partnership.

Negotiation, particularly at the start of a partnership, may be as much focused on establishing identities (Thompson, 2005) -- one’s own, one’s collaborator, and the partnership itself -- as it is focused on substantive issues, such as resources and responsibilities. However,
after successful negotiation with out-groups, intergroup relations improve and negative evaluations of the out-group party may disappear (Thompson, 1993). Hence, integrative negotiations may have “remarkable potential” for improving intergroup relations (Thompson, 2005).

A shared organizational identity may play an important role in the way in which boundary-spanners discuss substantive issues and develop common understandings of the mission of the partnership. The process and content of negotiations, therefore, may be mediated by how faculty and community members, as individuals and as organizational representatives, perceive the partnership. The instance in which TCBI leaders worked together to present their ideas for the location of the daycare center suggests that a shared identity may exist between the partners. However, separate organizational and individual identities may influence boundary-spanners’ negotiation styles because of the missions, values, and norms associated with those identities.

**Partnership Identity**

Partnership identity is a concept that was developed through my observations of the TCBI partnership and subsequent explorations in the literature on management and organization. Eisenhardt (1989) suggests that initial definitions of constructs help the shape the design of the study, but that a priori definitions may be adapted or discarded as a result of continuous comparison of data to the theory under development. The concept of a partnership identity is tentatively defined as a cognitive state in which boundary-spanners who manage a service-learning partnership come to identify themselves and their partners as members of a partnership, an organizational entity which may have its own distinct and enduring missions, values, and norms.
As outlined previously in the literature review, the identities and actions of boundary-spanners are shaped through shared group experiences within organizations. Sustained interactions between organizational members foster similar views of the organization and create common understandings, or norms for members’ roles and behaviors (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). In American colleges and universities, in particular, Kuh and Whitt (1988) found that the value system of sub-units, such as disciplines, often differs from those of the host organization. Furthermore, the authors found that the differences between sub-units and the host organization provide further bonding for sub-groups. Faculty and community boundary-spanners who are engaged in long-term service-learning partnerships may bond with each other and establish loyalties to the partnership that may go beyond that required to facilitate a project for student learning (Janke & Colbeck, 2008).

By extension, I explored the extent to which negotiations between boundary-spanners result in the development of shared missions, values, and norms that are unique to the partnership, and which are not simply an amalgam of the missions, values, and norms of the host organizations. Partnership identity extends Bringle and Hatcher’s (2002) theory which suggests that boundary-spanners may create “mature, committed, close relationships” (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002, p. 509) which are characterized by a transition from a tit-for-tat pattern of accounting for the relative gains of each partner to mutual consideration of joint outcomes, a communal attitude, and accommodation.

Partnership identity draws on conceptualizations and research on organizational identity to explore the role of shared values and norms in establishing collaborative processes between partners. The study explores the extent to which partnerships may evolve their own identities apart from those brought from representatives’ host organizations. The primary purpose of this
study, therefore, is to understand if partnership identity exists within faculty-community partnerships, and, if so, to describe its core characteristics.

**Methods**

The goal of this study is to build grounded theory that will help to explain the factors that influence development and maintenance of successful and long-term service-learning partnerships between faculty and community partners. Very few studies examine the processes through which service-learning projects develop to enduring or committed stages of relationship (Dorado & Giles, 2004). This dissertation will begin to build theory on the formation of partnership identity by using the multiple case study approach (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2003). Case studies are appropriate to answer ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions in naturalistic settings and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context (Yin, 2003). Multiple-case sampling strengthens the precision, validity, and confidence in findings because it allows for comparisons across similar and dissimilar cases (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Building theory from case study research relies on continuous comparison of data to the theory under development (Eisenhardt, 1989). As stated previously, initial definitions of constructs help to shape the design of the study, although a priori specifications are not essential in developing theory from case study research (Eisenhardt, 1989). The emergent theory, however, is more firmly empirically grounded if ongoing data collection and analysis support the theoretical constructs.

**Pilot Study: Developing the Research Guide**

In the initial exploration of TCBI, I interviewed two faculty, three staff, and two graduate teaching assistants from ESU because they were directly involved with maintaining and facilitating the partnership. Post-interview memos were written immediately following
interviews to capture the essence of the conversation and to facilitate concurrent analysis that could help to inform the next interviews, the collection of documents, and the activities on which my observations should focus. Two tenure-line professors in Architectural Engineering and Architecture from ESU were interviewed, although only one was the primary organizer in establishing the partnership and coordinating activities on the project site with community partners. From ESU, two graduate student coordinators and one staff member were interviewed because their roles were to communicate with community members, on behalf of ESU, to arrange aspects of the construction projects and cultural activities. No faculty or staff from GU were interviewed because of my initial focus on ESU exclusively.

Four administrators from RCTC were interviewed due to their involvement in planning and coordinating aspects of the construction project with faculty partners. These persons included the President, Vice President, Dean of Students, and the Director of the college’s daycare center. Prior to the interviews, all participants were asked to sign a consent form approved by Penn State’s Office of Research Protections (see Appendix A).

Observations.

Observations of the partnership were made over two weeks in Summer 2005. I kept notes of public statements leaders made to the group regarding the partnership, specifically, and recorded my impressions of the nature of the partnership in field notes and journaling.

Documents.

The website established by ESU on behalf of the TCBI partnership and the Letter of Agreement signed by all partners provided additional information about the purpose of the partnership, the expectations established at the start of the partnership of each partner, as well as
the way in which the partnership is presented to the public. Both documents provide an additional data point for understanding how partners view the partnership.

**Guiding questions.**

The overarching intent for including these questions was to understand the *meaning* (Maxwell, 1996) members’ attributed to the partnership in their roles as inter-organizational boundary-spanners. These questions guided selection of relevant information from each data source.

**Interview questions.**

The interview questions addressed the nature of the partnership, as well as the process and content of the negotiations relevant to the functioning of the partnership. The interview protocols can be found in Appendixes B-D. The questions provided a guide, but were not necessarily articulated verbatim or in the order shown to allow for a conversational tone. The semi-structured format provided the flexibility required to follow a particular vein of conversation, naturally, and thereby improve the richness of the participant’s response (Kvale, 1996).

**Observation.**

Observations of the partnership were made in the summer weeks when the students, faculty, and staff from ESU and UW were on RCTC’s campus for the construction of buildings. The construction period was an event of interest (Marshall & Rossman, 1999) because it provided an extended and active period of time during which the partnerships’ goals were accomplished and permitted observations of the nature and extent of contact among partners. Observations of the partnership during the two-week session in Summer 2005 were purposively broad in scope to allow me to gain as broad a perspective of the partnership as possible. To this
end, I observed six classes at ESU prior to the field experience, as well as a conference call that occurred between both ESU faculty members, the three, ESU staff members, and the four collaborators from RCTC. While on the reservation that first summer, I observed, took field notes, and recorded my thoughts on student activities, interactions between students and faculty, students and staff members, students and community members, as well as interactions between ESU and RCTC members. I included students in my initial observations because I felt that they might have been an influencing factor on the partnership. I also took notes of partners’ verbal statements to the students introducing or describing the partnership, such as at the beginning of the field experience, as well as throughout.

Data Analysis

Much of the data analysis occurred while on site of the reservation to capture my interpretation of the data and to note those aspects that stood out as important and relevant to my guiding questions. The iterative process of collecting and analyzing data to inform additional data collection is useful in developing a greater understanding about the phenomenon of interest (Yin, 2003; Eisenhardt, 1989). I used information gained through interviews and observations to develop a broad understanding about nature of the partnership paying special attention to those instances that seemed significant to the partners and the functioning of the partnership. I was also interested in whether the partners’ perceptions of the partnership were similar or different.

In my data analysis, I coded participants’ transcribed interviews according to their responses to the semi-structured question of the interview protocol. Responses to each question were then placed in a single document so I could see how each participant responded to the same questions. Next, I looked for additional themes and developed additional codes for the responses, which were then placed into a matrix. Observation notes and documents were then scanned for
additional codes and were placed within the matrix as well. I then wrote a narrative of the key themes of interest using codes and quotes to develop a rich description of aspects of the partnership that addressed the guiding research questions.

*Informing the main research questions.*

The pilot study suggested that relationships between faculty and community partners may extend beyond the project to become an interpersonal relationship in which members care about each other and the partnership, not only the outcomes of the project. Therefore, the main study continued to explore the role of partners’ views of each other, the partnership, and their interactions. As previously stated, a review of the literature informed initial findings from the pilot study, both in terms of potential constructs and appropriate methods to consider. To explore the influence of identity in maintaining faculty-community partnerships, I included five broad areas in the pilot study: (1) the *nature* of the partnership; (2) the *process and content* of negotiations relevant to the functioning of partnership activities; (3 & 4) the roles of *organizational and individual identities* in contextualizing and influencing boundary-spanners’ collaborative actions; (5) and the *existence and characteristics of the partnership’s identity*.

*Informing the methods.*

The pilot study helped me to develop my interviewing skills, and therefore, to improve the quality of participants’ responses. I noticed that in several cases I did not follow up a statement with questions that asked the participant to be more specific or to explain what they meant. The consequence to remaining committed to the interview protocol, nearly verbatim, was that I failed to dig deeper into the topic to allow for a better understanding of the meaning of their words. Questions in the main study were re-organized to allow for a natural flow of conversation in which participants were encouraged to tell their stories. The conversation may be
directed through general guiding questions as well as by more pointed questions which require
the participant to speak more specifically on an idea or feeling, or to provide more details about
an event.

**The Main Study: Building Theory through Multiple Case Studies**

Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest small purposive samples for multiple case studies
(1994). Findings from small samples may be transferable to other partnerships (Lincoln & Guba,
1985), illuminating key aspects of Partnership Identity. Purposive samples permit the researcher
to select participants based on the qualities that may be relevant to answering the research
question. Similar to constructs, samples need not be wholly specified prior to the start of data
collection, as additional participants may be included to refine construct measurements or the
theory under development (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Maxwell, 1996). The following sub-
sections outline the guidelines I used in selecting case studies.

**Selection of Institutions**

I purposively selected higher education institutions based on 1) institutional support for
community outreach and engagement and 2) organizational type.

*Support for community outreach and engagement.*

Bringle and Hatcher’s (2000) and Holland’s (1997) studies of institutionalization of
service-learning in colleges and universities suggest that across types of institutions,
organizational factors, including as mission, faculty promotion, tenure, and hiring, organizational
structure to support community engagement, and integration of service into the curriculum are
likely to affect faculty’s scholarly engagement with communities. Purposive sampling for
homogeneity (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007) may help to limit the variation between
universities with regards to their commitments to community outreach and engagement, as well as to help ensure the availability of cases to study.

*Organizational type.*

Morphew and Hartley’s (2007) study of missions across different types of institutions suggests similarities and differences between public and private institutions. Most institutions of higher education, whether public or private have missions that include teaching, research, and service. However, institutional missions may vary with regards to how service is articulated. In particular, public institutions tend to view “service” and “civic duty” as those activities that help the economy and members of the state through applied research and expertise, whereas private institutions tend to view service as those activities that prepare students to become leaders in society. I selected partnerships from one liberal arts college and one public land-grant university.

*Selection of Partnerships*

The unit of analysis for this study is service-learning partnerships between faculty and community boundary-spanners. I sampled partnerships that 1) are currently on-going, 2) have lasted one or more years, and 3) consist of faculty members and community agents.

I sampled on-going partnerships to gain a sense of how faculty and community members experience the partnership while they are actively involved in partnership-related activities, such as providing service-learning experiences. I also sampled partnerships that have lasted one or more years to explore partnerships that are relatively long lasting. Although short-term partnerships for single projects are prevalent, they may not have yet had the chance to evolve into close, multi-faceted, ongoing relationships (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). Selection of partnerships based on what may be a dependent variable, longevity of the partnership, follows in the tradition of Lawrence and Lorsch's (1967) study of organizational “effectiveness.” The
authors chose six organizations that were operating within the same industrial environment based on initial definitions of “effectiveness” (p. 1) to minimize the variation between organizations and to allow for cross-case analyses. This practice is also used in the scholarship of community-university partnerships (for examples, see Dorado & Giles, 2004; Weerts & Sandmann, 2006). While recognizing that financial limitations may limit the longevity of partnerships (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002), a partnership that has lasted for more than one year may be likely to have sufficiently met certain conditions and expectations of each of the parties involved.

**Selection of Participants**

I purposively selected 1) faculty and community boundary-spanners who were directly involved with the management of the partnership, as well as 2) central administrators of boundary-spanners’ host organizations.

*Boundary-spanners.*

Each of the partnerships I studied included at least one tenure-line faculty member, but may also have included staff and graduate students who served boundary-spanning roles on behalf of the partnership. Community teams may have included one or more employees or volunteers from a not-for-profit organization. Sampling these participants helped me to explore how boundary-spanners perceive the identities of their respective organizations, the identity of the partnership, as well as their own identities. These interviews also helped me to understand the process and content of boundary-spanners’ negotiations with each other.

*Central administrators.*

In addition to those persons who were directly involved in facilitating the partnership. I also interviewed central administrators in the boundary-spanners’ host organizations gain more information about the role of community engagement in the institution. Administrators
interviewed at ESU and WC included deans, provosts, and directors of centers or programs that relate to or oversee community engagement curricula and activities. I also interviewed administrators in several of the community agencies in which community partners’ worked. However, in some cases, such as Red Clay Tribal College, United Way and Shafer Township the community partner was also an administrator. In the cases of Cooperative Extension Services, Department of Social Services and Community Action Partnership, administrators were unavailable for interviewing (see Table 7 for a complete list of partnerships).

Data Collection

The data collection strategies used in this study included interviews with boundary-spanners, observations of boundary-spanners’ utterances and interactions, and analyses of documents.

Interviews.

I used semi-structured interviews to guide the interviews and kinds of information collected. A semi-structured approach helps to ensure the comparability of data while allowing the researcher to follow intuitions and research directions that may enhance their understanding of a particular phenomenon (Maxwell, 1996). The semi-structured interview protocol developed for faculty (see Appendices B & C) and community see Appendix B) boundary-spanners included: 1) questions to elicit descriptions of boundary-spanners’ social identities; 2) questions to elicit descriptions of organization’s identities; 3) questions about how boundary-spanners negotiate and the content of negotiations; and 4) questions about how boundary-spanners experience and perceive the partnership. Interview protocols for leaders and administrators of sub-units and organizations (see Appendix D) elicited descriptions of 1) the organization’s identity; 2) the identity of the sub-unit (where applicable); 3) institutional-level support for
public scholarship activities; 4) department level support for public scholarship activities (where applicable). All interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Observations.

To discover the presence and character of the partnerships’ identities beyond the interviews with its members, I observed partnerships at the times when the partnership was active. This included times during which the community representatives may have been on campus talking to and working with students, as well as during meetings in which faculty and community partners planned their activities. During these occasions, I took field notes, paying particular attention to how and what boundary-spanners negotiate, as well as the words boundary-spanners use to describe themselves, each other, their interpersonal relationships with other boundary-spanners, and their partnership.

Documents.

I collected documents to explore 1) social identities, 2) organizational identities, and 3) partnerships’ identities. I relied almost exclusively on partners’ interviews to understand their social identities as members of the partnership, however, also examined partners’ professional websites for any statements about their partnership work. Only several faculty partners had professional websites, and none spoke to their social identities as partners of the partnerships I studied. To explore organization’s identities, both as a whole and as sub-units, I collected institutional documents, which included organizations’ websites, mission statements, public relations documents, and annual reports or statements written by the board of trustees. To explore partnerships’ identities, I collected documents that were written by boundary-spanners on behalf of the partnership. Documents included letters of agreement (TCBI), organizations’ and boundary-spanners’ professional Websites (VITA, EITC, TCBI), scholarly and non-
academic articles written by either of the boundary-spanners (TCBI), as well as partnerships’
grant proposals, reports to funding agencies or departments, and printed brochures (EITC,
TCBI).

**Data Analysis**

Data from the interviews, observations, and documents were analyzed to develop theory
about faculty-community partnerships from the five case studies. I grounded this research in
initial findings from the pilot study, as well as in literatures from Higher Education and
Organizational Studies. Data analysis included both within- and cross-case analysis (Eisenhardt,
1989) of partnerships. Within-case analysis was used to explore (1) the role of boundary-
spanners’ social identities in how the approach and negotiate the partnership; 2) the role of
boundary-spanners’ organizations’ identities in how they approach and negotiate the partnership;
3) how boundary-spanners negotiate and the content of negotiations; and 4) how boundary-
spanners experience and perceive the partnership. Cross-case analyses explored similarities and
differences between the partnerships with regards to the four within-case analysis questions.

All interviews were transcribed verbatim and entered into NVivo, qualitative data
software program to identify themes according to the interview guide questions and topics. I
developed a first round of coding categories for each question/topic to explore the emerging
concepts that related to my initial conceptual framework, as well as other themes that may have
been unanticipated. In particular, I focused on coding categories that related to how partners
viewed themselves, their employing organizations, their communications/negotiations, and
partnerships.
**Within-case analysis.**

The within-case analysis involved examining the partnerships separately and writing a detailed case study for each (Eisenhardt, 1989). I used my initial conceptual framework to guide my within-case analysis.

**Social identity.** I examined the transcribed interviews and observations of each participant in each partnership to understand how boundary-spanners identified themselves as members of their employing or volunteer organization, sub-units (such as a department), disciplines, partnerships, or other groups not yet anticipated. I looked for participants’ articulations of memberships and roles as indicators of their social identities within the context of their professional and personal work. For example, a boundary-spanner may refer to herself as an activist or a communitarian, or in other terms that would imply an informal membership to an ideological group. These articulations provided insight as to the links between boundary-spanners’ social identities and what they perceived to be the core characteristics of their respective organizations’ identities.

**Organizational identity.** I interviewed faculty and community agents within the partnership to help me understand the organizational identities of boundary-spanners’ host organizations – as perceived by the boundary-spanners themselves. When possible, I interviewed one to two central administrators within each host organization to understand how they understand community engagement as a central part of the organizations’ mission (or not). Interviews with central administrators served to contextualize boundary-spanners’ definitions of the organizations’ identities and provided me with a deeper understanding of the organizations’ support (or lack thereof) of community engagement.
Negotiation substance and process.

I analyzed interviews and field notes of faculty and community boundary-spanners’ interactions with each other to explore the extent to which faculty and community boundary-spanners used a collaborative approach to negotiating their relationship, as well as the extent to which they discussed areas of substance. Except for partners in the TCBI partnership, faculty and community partners could either not remember any issues that needed to be negotiated between one another, or they claimed that there were no negotiations, only agreements. The lack of a concrete issue that needed to be decided made it difficult, therefore, to evaluate whether partners followed integrative negotiation styles, as initially conceived in my conceptual framework. Hence, I found that my initial assumption regarding negotiation was not helpful in understanding how partners’ communications with each other may relate to the development of and characteristics of partnership identity. Ultimately, I reconceptualized my original notion of partners’ interactions from negotiation to communication. Whereas negotiation required partners to remember how they approached a particular issue, the concept of communication required partners to discuss the channels they used “to send and receive information, keep one another informed, and convey opinions to influence the group’s actions” (Mattessich, Murray-Close & Monsey, 2001).

To explore how partners communicated with each other, I relied on my field observations and interview transcripts. I read through each memo and transcript and developed primary codes based on participants responses to questions about communication or negotiation, as well as any time they referred to communicating (such as calling, writing, or meeting their partner(s)). From the primary round of coding, I developed secondary codes to identify patterns within cases with regards to partners’ descriptions of communicating with one another. For example, in the STEP
partnership, faculty partners discussed the partnership as a “consultant-like” relationship and described their meetings as times when they “pitched” ideas and got information to help advance the students’ projects. In the meeting I observed, I noted that partners solicited feedback or information from one another, but rarely developed plans collaboratively. A review of the literature on collaboration suggested key differences between collaboration and cooperation, which I then used to define and describe the communication style of the five partnerships.

Partnership identity.

I analyzed each case to explore the key characteristics participants referred to when describing the partnership as a shared organization-like entity. Although I used conceptions of organizational identity to guide my exploration of partnership identity, I sought to understand how partners’ descriptions of the partnership may have informed the key components of partnership identity. I relied on partners’ verbal expressions of the partnership as “we” or “our,” as well as through expressions of shared norms and loyalties to indicate the presence of a shared identity.

Cross-case analysis.

I analyzed the partnerships across cases to identify patterns, as well as the similarities and/or differences between partnerships. Eisenhardt (1998) suggests that researchers select categories or dimensions to explore the across group similarities and differences. The research questions that guided my study also helped to inform my cross-case analysis.

Organizational identities. I looked across cases for patterns of similarities and difference with regards to the identities of partners’ employing institution and how faculty and community partners viewed their social identities in the contexts of the partnership or negotiated the partnership.
Social identities. I looked across cases for patterns of similarities and difference with regards to partners’ social identities and how they negotiated with one another.

Negotiation content and processes. I looked across cases for patterns of similarities and difference with regards to the processes and content of negotiation partners’ followed and the presence of Partnership Identity.

Partnership identities. I looked across cases for patterns of similarities and difference with regards to components of the partnership that indicated partners’ shared sense of group identity.

Continuous analysis.

Interviews were transcribed soon after they were recorded and were be coded in accordance to the conceptual framework. I continuously analyzed the data to identify emerging patterns and compared it to my initial measurements of constructs, in particular my proposed construct, Partnership Identity. As I continued to collect and analyze data, I revised my original constructs and relationships between constructs and formulated a revised proposition (Eisenhardt, 1998) about the roles that identities and communication played in developing Partnership Identity.

Limitations

Findings regarding the relationship between the development of Partnership Identity and organizations identity, social identity, and communication substance and processes may be transferable to other faculty-community partnerships and theory about what makes partnerships work (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This study presents a preliminary definition of Partnership Identity, which may be explored through future research on additional populations of partnerships. The partnerships in and findings from this sample are not representative of all faculty-community partnerships. This study sample presents a self-selection bias as all boundary-
spanners and administrators were invited to participate in the study. Partnerships were also chosen for their longevity (one year or longer) and their perceived success (sense that the project and relationship were going well). Therefore, participants were not randomly selected and were not purposefully selected for heterogeneity across types of partnerships.

Another limitation of this study is that partnerships were gathered from only two types of higher education institutions. In my findings I describe differences between the ESU and WC. These findings suggest possible areas for further study.

The partnerships included in this study represent diverse types of community agencies, from government agencies (IRS, ST, DSS) to a tribal college, from a university-affiliated cooperative extension agency (CE) and religiously-affiliated private agency (RIC) to state and local community-based agencies (CAP, OFU). As a result of the small sample, data from this study may not accurately represent agencies not included in this study. However, the findings are transferable to theory about faculty-community partnerships (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

This study intended to explore partnerships from the perspective of the participants. Therefore, this study relied on participants’ interpretations of how they negotiated and communicated with each other, rather than on observations and recording of participants’ actual conversations with each other. As a result, findings rely on participants’ retrospective sensemaking (Weick, 2001) – how they made sense of their experiences after events had occurred, not on content analysis of communications as they really occurred.

CHAPTER 4: TRIBAL COLLEGE BUILDING INITIATIVE PARTNERSHIP

An initial description of the Tribal College Building Initiative (TCBI) partnerships was provided in Chapter 1 as an illustration of how a faculty-community initiative may evolve from a one-time experience to a long-term partnership. To review, George, an Eastern State University
(ESU) professor, established a partnership in 2001 with Carl and Timothy, administrative leaders at Red Clay Tribal College (RCTC). The partnership facilitated students’ learning, George’s scholarship, and the development of much needed infrastructure on the American Indian reservation and tribal college. The partnership grew so that by the time I began studying it, professors from different universities had joined (and some had joined and subsequently left) the partnership. In this chapter, I describe and analyze the partners and their employing organizations, the content of their discussions and styles of communication, as well as the characteristics of TCBI’s partnership identity.

**Partnership Overview**

When I returned to the reservation in summer 2006, partners were already deeply involved in the construction of a day care center and an adjoining playground. George, an engineering professor from Eastern State University (ESU) and his graduate students had been coordinating with Timothy administrators at Red Clay Tribal College (RCTC) and an on-site project manager throughout the year prior to ensure the successful completion of the project. Approximately 30 students, five graduate students, and one administrative staff member from ESU joined George in the summer construction project, as well as two faculty colleagues: Owen, an ESU architecture professor, and Josh a landscape architecture professor from Grasslands University (GU). Owen was the principal architect of the daycare center and co-taught the three-course series at ESU with George. Josh was the principal landscape architect of the playground that adjoined the center. He brought approximately six GU students to work with ESU students to design and build the playground as part of their independent studies.

Faculty partners and most student participants stayed and worked on the reservation for two to three weeks. They worked on various project components (e.g., applying exterior stucco,
installing solar panels, assembling playground equipment) to finish construction on the center and to design and build the playground. Unlike previous years in which students designed a single structure in the spring semester to be built in the summer, students in the 2005-2006 course series at ESU learned about sustainable engineering design and technologies. They also developed a series of two-hour workshops to educate tribal members about strategies to decrease energy costs and the amount of toxins used in home maintenance. Students worked in teams to develop several different workshops (such as energy efficiency and low-toxin materials), which they presented to each other in the summer session as a trial run; students in future classes would improve the workshops and present them to tribal members in summers to come.

In addition to their on-site work construction and workshop development activities, participants also attended cultural programs to learn about Tribal culture, traditions, and current social issues. An ESU administrative staff person, whom George had recruited to help manage the cultural education portion of the summer program, arranged these programs with a member of the tribe who served as a liaison between community members and the ESU and GU partners. Activities included inviting tribal members to the community center to share meals, stories, music, and games with students; taking students on van tours of the reservation to learn about housing issues and problems; and attending the annual powwow.
Table 2. TCBI Partners' Pseudonyms, Employers, Job Titles, and Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Employer, Job Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TCBI</td>
<td>George</td>
<td>ESU, Engineering Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Owen</td>
<td>ESU, Architecture Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td>GU, Landscape Architecture Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carl</td>
<td>RCTC, President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Timothy</td>
<td>RCTC, Director of Facilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESU</td>
<td>Eastern State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GU</td>
<td>Grasslands University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCTC</td>
<td>Red Clay Tribal College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCBI</td>
<td>Tribal College Building Initiative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Partners’ Social Identities**

As discussed in Chapter 2, faculty and community partners are likely to identify themselves as members of the organization to which they belong, either formally or informally (Tajfel, 1972). Organizational membership may influence how members view their boundary-spanning activities, as well as how they interact with others as boundary-spanners (Sebring, 1977). In this section, I describe the work TCBI partners provided to the partnership, as well as the roles (social identity) they believed they served through their partnership work. Although partners’ may hold many roles simultaneously (e.g., professor, mother, partner), I was interested in those roles partners’ felt were salient to their boundary-spanning work (Haslam, 2001; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher & Wetherell, 1987).

**George**

As described in Chapter 1, George, a professor in the department of architectural engineering, initiated the TCBI partnership in 2001 soon after he took a faculty position at ESU. George presided as the lead faculty partner in the TCBI partnership. Throughout the years, he asked various faculty colleagues to join him in supervising and co-teaching his design-build
classes for the TCBI projects. George wrote the proposals for funding; he cultivated and maintained relationships with RCTC administrators in the TCBI partnership; he funded and supervised graduate assistants and staff on his grants; he developed the students’ curriculum for the three-semester course series he co-taught. Ultimately, George was responsible for ensuring the projects were completed.

Motivation to develop his own partnership with RCTC evolved from his academic research on sustainable building methods and construction strategies to increase the use of unskilled laborers. George was also dedicated to teaching students through hands-on experiences on the reservation. It allowed students to practice team skills, construction management skills, and learn how to work with persons from different cultures. Additionally, George spoke of his commitment to the tribal community, which he served through his partnership with RCTC. After several years of partnership, George had developed meaningful friendships with many members of RCTC and the Tribe. He spoke of having “some identity” when he visited, and Carl called him an “almost adopted member of the tribe” – almost, Carl explained, because the tribe does not officially adopt non-tribal members. Ultimately, George believed that partnering with RCTC simultaneously served his research agenda, provided learning opportunities for students, and assisted his friends and members of the tribal community by helping to build the physical infrastructure of the community.

Owen

Owen, an ESU professor in architecture, joined the TCBI partnership in 2001. George invited him to co-teach the design-build course and to serve as the primary architect in building a reading center for RCTC’s campus. His involvement in the partnership, for the most part, was limited to discussing his designs with George and RCTC administrators, most of which he did
during the academic year and via e-mail or the phone. Owen had worked on many community-based projects with students prior to coming to ESU and quickly embraced several more community-based projects, in addition to TCBI.

Owen told me that he became involved in TCBI because he believed in “haptic” education (learning through hands-on experiences), as the best method of educating students about architecture. In addition to serving his role as an educator of pre-professional architects, the partnership allowed Owen to learn more about sustainable design and Native American culture. He felt he provided an important service to the Tribe by applying his architectural skills and knowledge.

Josh

Josh joined TCBI in 2003; he played a supporting role to a landscaping architect colleague from ESU who was, at the time, coordinating the landscaping aspects for TCBI. In 2005, George asked Josh to take over as the lead landscape architect for TCBI and to design and oversee the construction of a playground, as the previous landscape architect could no longer be involved. Josh was already very experienced in working with undergraduate students and not-for-profit agencies to design landscape features for the public. Since beginning his college teaching career in 1999, Josh actively sought out partners in underserved, typically urban, communities. He offered his expertise on open space planning, streetscape designs, and digital mapping, as well as his students’ time and efforts through service-learning courses he taught and independent studies he supervised.

Like Owen, Josh joined TCBI because he wanted to “take students out of their contexts” to immerse them in construction management on-site, as well as to improve students’ cultural competency through exposure to and experience with persons of different ethnicities and
cultures. Providing students with actual, hands-on experience with design and construction management, Josh believed, improved their knowledge and understanding of the discipline, while at the same time increased their awareness of cultures different from their own. Josh was also dedicated to providing his knowledge, skills, and time to serving the Tribal community. Over the years, he had made close friends with several members of the Tribe and felt a close connection to them. Although he was not provided funding from his university for his teaching or scholarship work through TCBI, he was committed to returning each year to maintain the connection with his friends and to serve the community.

**Carl**

Carl, the president of RCTC, was a leader in the community as well as at the college. He grew up in the community, spoke the tribal language, and had become an educator because of his desire to preserve the traditional culture and language of his ancestors and to improve the quality of life for the living members of his community. When I asked him how he introduced himself to those he does not know, he told me, “I’ve always said I’m really proud to be a teacher and an educator.”

As college president, Carl had facilitated grant-based partnerships between RCTC and several other universities and not-for-profit agencies prior to and concurrent with the TCBI partnership. The opportunity to “get quality buildings that would over the long run pay for themselves through the savings in heat and air conditioning” attracted Carl to joining the partnership. As president, Carl was responsible for obtaining the board of director’s approval for the projects, approving design decisions on behalf of the college, securing funds and managing policies related to the construction projects.
**Timothy**

Timothy, the vice president and director of facilities at RCTC, was directly responsible for making many of the day-to-day, as well as long-term, decisions about each of the TCBI projects. He and Carl had served as the primary representatives of RCTC since the TCBI partnership began in 2001. He, similar to Carl, was attracted to developing the TCBI partnership because it provided the tribal college access to expert faculty and student laborers who could help to improve the college’s physical infrastructure. He felt personally committed to serving the Tribe, and had remained with the college for many years.

**Summary**

Each of the partners served the TCBI partnership in their respective roles as faculty members and tribal college administrators. George, Owen, and Josh served from their positions as faculty of their universities, and their involvement helped them to meet their academic roles: teaching, research, and service. Carl and Timothy served from their positions as RCTC administrators who were responsible for the campus’ physical infrastructure and the college’s curricular programming and services. Although their work in the partnership helped them to meet their work responsibilities in their respective employing organizations, each partner also felt that the partnership fulfilled their desire to assist and improve the welfare of communities. George, Josh, Carl, and Timothy, in particular, had deep and personal ties to the Tribal community. The TCBI partnership, therefore, was an expression of the partners’ professional pursuits, as well as their personal commitments.

**Organizational Identities of Partners’ Employing Institutions**

The identity of an organization, members’ collective sense of “who” an organization is (Albert & Whetten, 1985), may influence how members act and the extent to which they feel
they fit in or belong to the organization (Kalliath, Bluedorn, & Strube, 1999). Sub-units within large organizations, including academic departments and community offices, also have identities (Clark, 1987; Güney, 2004). Members may take cues regarding the value of certain work activities, looking to the organizations missions, structures, and policies. In this section, I review the identity of the partners’ employing institutions and faculty members’ academic departments; I describe their missions and the formal and informal structures that supported faculty-community partnerships for faculty scholarship and student learning.

**Eastern State University**

In Chapter 3, I described ESU’s mission and types of support for faculty-community partnerships, relying on my interviews with several university administrators. To review, the vice provost for undergraduate studies directed an office dedicated to promoting and supporting engaged scholarship activities. The office provided funding to George for curriculum development and showcased his work on the Center’s website. Other senior officials provided verbal support and encouragements for engaged scholarship activities but were still in the early stages of developing funds and policies that supported this type of faculty work.

To gain a sense of how service was defined and how it was incorporated as a part of the university’s mission, I asked faculty partners about the support they received, or did not receive, from the university, its administrators, as well as their department colleagues. George and Owen acknowledged the financial support and a sense of encouragement senior administrators at the university and in their departments provided, but felt that their work was not recognized as essential to the mission of the university or department. George spoke of his work in the relation to other colleagues in the department; “I’ve been able to spot other faculty who value project-based learning opportunities and the extra skills and efforts it takes to conduct those kinds of
projects. I’ve also seen that it’s pretty unique.” Colleagues accepted his method of teaching students through community-based research projects, he surmised, because he was able to “bring in” external funding to the department. George further explained, “It’s an under-funded department so there is a low budget for the amount of undergraduate courses we have to the number of faculty we have, so the pursuit of external funds is highly valued.” George felt recognized for his work from administrators, but did not feel that his colleagues valued it as core to their institutional mission.

Owen believed there was increasing awareness and acceptance of community-engaged architecture projects by colleagues in the academic architecture community in the past five to 10 years, “there isn’t uniform support for these kinds of projects … [but] you’d find across campus, across design school[s], across the country there’s been a big push toward design-build in the context of social relevance.” The emphasis on hands-on, or haptic, learning also supported his efforts to develop partnerships with community members for student learning opportunities. He too felt as though his service work was in addition to his regular academic work. If he wanted to stop, none of his department colleagues or administrators would feel that he was not fulfilling his commitments to the university.

On the whole, ESU faculty participants felt that, while they appreciated the limited support they perceived from university administrators regarding their community-engaged work, they felt as though service to the community was extra. Not many of their colleagues participated in collaborative partnerships with individuals outside of the academy, and those that did, typically worked with for-profit industries. George and Owen described their service as helping to increase and enhance the physical infrastructure of the Tribal community. They felt that by applying their own expertise they could help to serve a particular community.
Grasslands University

Grasslands University is categorized by the Carnegie classification system as large, four-year, doctorate-granting, multi-campus university with very high research activities. As a land grant institution, the university has well-established and comprehensive outreach and extension services to support and improve its state’s agriculture and economy more generally. The university also hosted a center for civic engagement, which was intended to support faculty in developing partnerships with community agencies for student learning.

Although university-level support was provided to faculty for community-engaged teaching through the Center, Josh lamented the lack of support for this type of work in his department. His colleagues considered his work with TCBI as a type of community service that should only be done “on the side” of teaching and research, as it was not appropriate or adequate work for his promotion and tenure portfolio. A faculty mentor explained to him that such work belonged in the realm of outreach and extension services, not the academic departments. While Josh perceived general “emotional” or “rhetorical” support from the university (“a slap on the back”), he received no funding or access to university resources (such as transportation for students) for his work with TCBI. Overall, Josh believed that the type of service he provided the Tribal community was not the type of service his university felt he was supposed to be doing. The service he was expected to provide was to his academic community, and service to the public through direct application of one’s skills was tangential to his academic work.

Red Clay Tribal College

Red Clay Tribal College, a two-year, non-residential tribal college, is located on an American Indian reservation in the Great Plains. Carl, the college’s president, said the college’s mission statement served as a “guiding document;” the values and goals stated in it were used to
make decisions about which programs and activities the college should support. The college’s “primary mission is to provide educational and cultural leadership to its constituents” (RCTC mission statement). Timothy also spoke about using the mission statement when I asked him about the values and principles that guided administrators’ decisions regarding the activities of the college. He echoed Carl’s statements about the importance of post-secondary education for personal and professional advancement, as well as the preservation of culture. Additionally, I saw three framed copies of the mission statement displayed on the walls throughout the college’s main building. Overall, it appeared that its mission as a tribal college, to prepare tribal members for educational and professional opportunities and to preserve aspects of the tribe’s traditional culture characterized the identity of RCTC.

**Summary**

The organizational identities of ESU and GU were broadly defined by its administrators and faculty members as land-grant institutions; their purpose was to serve the people of the state by providing education, research, and service. The administrators I interviewed at ESU (GU administrators were not interviewed) supported faculty members’ faculty-community partnerships to enhance their scholarship or teaching, and both ESU and GU funded centers for community-engaged scholarship and teaching. George received some financial support from the campus center, and both George and Owen received verbal support from administrators in their departments and colleges. Josh, however, felt pressure from colleagues in his department to discontinue his involvement in faculty-community partnerships, was not permitted to offer a course related to TCBI, and received no funding from the institution to support his students’ travel to or accommodation on the reservation. It seemed that the professors felt that although the TCBI partnership furthered their institutions’ land-grant missions, each was acting as if on their
own behalf. They viewed the partnership from the perspective of individuals who were personally committed to serving the tribal community through their expertise and position within their universities.

Red Clay Tribal College had a more narrowly defined mission (educational and cultural leadership) and set of constituents (members of the tribal community) in comparison to ESU and GU. Its mission was to provide educational and cultural leadership to members of the tribal community. Carl and Timothy seemed to experience the partnership as a component of their professional work roles. Their work with George, Owen, and Josh helped them to fulfill RCTC’s mission, to which they were professionally and personally committed. Their professional, yet deeply caring, approach to managing the administrative affairs and physical infrastructure of the tribal college likely affected how Carl and Timothy communicated and interacted with their partners at ESU and GU.

**Content of Partners’ Communications**

Effective faculty-community project management requires that partners openly discuss substantive areas of the project, including which roles each partner or partnering entity will play and which responsibilities each will assume -- particularly how resources will be cultivated and allocated (Foss et al., 2003). In the TCBI partnership, George, Carl, and Timothy explicitly discussed project management logistics, funding, architectural designs, and plans for continuing the partnership, expanding its goals and opportunities.

**Project Management Logistics**

The extent of George, Carl, and Timothy’s activity in coordinating and negotiating aspects of the partnership changed considerably from when it first began in 2001 to when I interviewed them in 2005 and 2006. During the initial years, they told me in separate interviews,
each of them spent a greater amount of time communicating together on the phone and e-mailing each other about details related to the project. At different points in the planning process, George was in communication almost daily with Timothy, the director of facilities. They discussed various aspects of the projects, from design concepts to funding opportunities, building regulations to resource allocation, and housing logistics for visiting students and faculty to construction management.

When I studied the partnership in 2005 and 2006, however, George and Timothy were no longer responsible for the day-to-day responsibilities of project management, and consequently, they no longer spoke together as frequently as they once had. George recruited and funded three graduate assistants to help him teach and supervise students in the spring, summer, and fall courses; he hired a staff assistant to coordinate the residential and cultural aspects of the summer construction course; and he hired a project manager to supervise certified professionals to complete aspects of the project that were beyond the ability and time constraints of the students, such as installing electricity and plumbing. Areas of project management that were once handled by George were delegated to graduate assistants and a private construction manager who spoke directly with Timothy when necessary. George trusted the graduate students and independent contractor to organize and supervise much of the project. Graduate assistants were in direct contact with the independent construction manager whose office was located on RCTC’s campus for the duration of the project (2005 to 2007). The independent contractor, in turn, worked directly with Timothy to discuss logistics regarding the construction of the project. In effect, the independent contractor became a key liaison between RCTC and ESU. George and Timothy remained as the lead partners who were ultimately responsible for the oversight of project logistics and design from each of their institutions.
Funding.

Throughout the year, George, Carl and Timothy discussed funding. They discussed applying for grants, seeking approval from the RCTC board of directors for construction funds, securing loans, and paying vendors and servicemen. Although George and the project’s construction manager handled the majority of service contracts and purchases, they depended on George to access funds that were available only to tribal colleges or loans received by the college.

Architectural designs.

Discussions about design, however, remained the domain of faculty members who served as the key architects of the project. In 2005, Owen spoke on the phone several times with Timothy and several other staff members at RCTC to solicit suggestions about the design and style of the daycare center they were proposing to build. In 2006, Josh visited the RCTC campus twice and spoke with Timothy and several other staff members at RCTC to discuss the parameters and design of the playground area that was to adjoin the daycare center. Plans were also shared and discussed with George as the lead coordinator and construction supervisor of the entire project. Once the designs were approved, both Owen and Josh spoke with Timothy several times during construction to communicate their progress and to ask for further feedback on their design choices.

Mission and goals.

Partners may address objectives or clarify the aims of the partnership, particularly in the beginning of a collaboration, or as circumstances (such as funding or personnel) change (Huxham & Vangen, 2005). In the second year of the TCBI partnership, George and an ESU colleague (who was no longer involved in TCBI in 2005) wrote a cooperative agreement. They
wrote it to clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations between the partners. The mission of
the partnership, they wrote, was to “engage in cooperative educational, research, and outreach
activities for the mutual benefit of the institutions.” The agreement established TCBI as a
“cooperative program” that involved ESU and RCTC, but which could be extended to include
additional universities. It defined the activities that would be supported by the partnership
(faculty and student exchanges, seminars, workshops, courses, conferences, community outreach
projects), developed protocols for initiating projects (“parties involved will prepare a detailed
statement of work”), established an anti-discrimination policy, and outlined leadership roles
(TCBI director and co-directors) and responsibilities (seek financial assistance and additional
collaborators, develop a five-year strategic plan). The cooperative agreement was shared with
and signed by RCTC administrators and faculty from ESU and was to be renewed every five
years. However, when I asked each of the partners whether they had ever discussed each
partners’ roles and responsibilities, only Carl mentioned the agreement. George admitted that he
had not seen or referred to the document in years. In fact, he offered, he could no longer locate a
copy of the agreement.

The extent to which faculty and community partners discussed the purpose of the
partnership may have lessened because they had come to a shared understanding of their
purpose. Timothy spoke of how his communication with George had changed over the years.

I understand a lot more about what [the faculty partners] expectations are for us. They
understand more about what my expectations are and that’s a process. It’s just something
that evolves from discussion over the years. I think a mutual understanding of where
we’re going is stronger now. We don’t have as many contacts as we had initially, but then
again, there was a lot more to discuss initially than there is now. Now, we’ve all kind of
settled into our roles with the partnership and we all know who is responsible for what and what the deadlines are. Partners seemed to assume they shared an understanding of why they were invested in the partnership, so they felt they no longer needed to talk about it explicitly.

**Identifying future opportunities.**

By 2006, it appeared that the focus of George’s conversations with his RCTC partners had shifted from project logistics to identifying opportunities for future projects. According to both Carl and Timothy, George had become a trusted colleague and friend of the college, and the board of directors consulted him to help develop their five and ten year strategic plans for the college’s infrastructure. They spoke together about how the TCBI partnership could assist the college in its vision for future development. Carl and Timothy looked to George for continued guidance and support, both in generating ideas and in physically constructing the projects and George counted on their willingness to identify projects that could facilitate his teaching and research. George described his conversations with Carl and Timothy in recent years: “There’s a really serious, high-level, 10,000 foot view – where we are going, what we are doing.” The purpose their conversations were, he said were, simply, “to touch base or to reframe or adjust to new conditions” and this was needed only every other month or so throughout the year.

**Summary**

Overall, the majority of George’s conversations with Timothy and Carl focused on providing input and feedback about major aspects of the current project and developing new opportunities for the partnership, while the day-to-day logistics of construction management were left to the independent contractor who had been hired on the grant. Additionally, George, Timothy and Carl regularly discussed and identified additional opportunities beyond the current
project to facilitate their continued work together. Owen and Josh were not involved in these types of conversations, in large part, because they felt George was the lead partner; he founded the partnership and was, ultimately, responsible for ensuring the successful completion of projects. On the whole, it seemed that partners no longer discussed explicitly their purposes for developing each project. Carl, Timothy, and George discussed the mission of the partnership at the onset of the partnership but did not formally revisit it again in later years.

**Partners’ Communication Styles**

Communication is comprised of style as well as content. The style of discourse one uses with a partner can indicate power structures (hierarchical or flat) between individuals and organizations and assumptions about decision-making processes (collaborative or independent). For example, cooperative talk emphasizes a willingness to share and integrate ideas, whereas assertive talk emphasizes insistence that decisions be made independently and autonomously (Hardy et al., 2005). Partners who follow integrative communication strategies seek input from each other and build consensus, particularly with regards to plans or decisions that affect the other partner (Hardy et al., 2005). Faculty partners of TCBI, in particular, sought input from their partners at RCTC and worked hard to develop consensus among the group in developing plans and making decisions.

*Seek input.*

Each of the partners told me that ESU and GU faculty asked and listened to the needs and wishes of RCTC partners before making important design or construction decisions. Important decisions included the size, cost, design, and location of the building, and the parameters and design of the playground area. Several times each year, ESU faculty, staff, and students held a conference call with RCTC administrators and staff to solicit preferences and seek approval of
designs they proposed. Josh held conference calls from his office at GU to discuss landscape designs with Timothy, the director of student services, and staff from the daycare center. George and Josh separately visited RCTC several times in 2006 to discuss their design ideas and any other issues related to the design and construction of the summers’ upcoming projects. When asked about why the partnership worked, Timothy attributed much of their success to the “collaborative equality” their faculty partners had shown them with regards to planning and making decisions. He spoke about the “openness” of their communication and their “commitment” to ensuring the success and preservation of the partnership. Carl also described the importance of partners’ “cooperation,” “collaboration,” and “unity.”

*Recognize partners’ work.*

George, Owen, Carl and Timothy each condemned the actions of a previous entity that had not sought consensus with the members of the tribal community. The unnamed entity had built several structures for the community, but the entity did not collaborate with the community; decisions about the structure were made without input from the community. I heard stories about how that relationship was strained because tribal community members did not feel part of the decision-making process.

*Build consensus.*

The commitment of TCBI partners to build consensus regarding their shared projects was illustrated to me by George, Owen, Carl, and Timothy’s comments about one issue in particular: the decision of which site to build the daycare center. Carl explained to me that the initial site that he, George and Owen had selected was “problematic” because of concerns that some board members and elders of the tribe had about the close proximity of the proposed daycare to a cemetery that bordered RCTC’s campus. Traditional beliefs prohibited children from being near
cemeteries. The issue for the TCBI partners, Carl and Timothy included, was that the only other site available was logistically difficult and would require an additional $100,000 or more be added to their construction budget. To accommodate the building on the other site, electric and telephone wires had to be buried and a small abandoned building had to be removed. Carl continued, “Well, that created a whole lot of problems for George and all of the planning we had done up to that point.” Carl, Timothy and George spent a great deal of time deliberating on how to meet the interests of all involved, including the desire to be culturally sensitive and to achieve financial and design feasibility. In the end, George felt that he and his partners had fairly comprised,

I think we took it on the chin because it’s a lot harder place to put a building, but I think they took it on the chin because a lot of money for the building went into moving telephone poles when it could have been going into a nicer facility for the kids.

Each of the partners told me that they felt that the final outcome was fair and reasonable, and that the situation was handled as well as possible. Ultimately, how partners’ negotiated the issue of where to locate the daycare center seemed to demonstrate the extent to which partners, when confronted with a difficult and potentially divisive situation worked collaboratively and sought consensus.

Josh spoke at length about their deliberate intentions to establish collaborative partnership in which partners worked with each other rather for each other. He spoke about the importance of moving away from the “fee-for-service” approach used by most professional architects.

The idea in the professional world is a fee for service. You provide me a fee and I will spell out exactly what I’ll do for you and when I’m done, I walk away. You sign off and
that’s the end of our relationship. The professional architect is held accountable through the legal system; if a building fails or something is wrong, they can be taken to court. But for what we do, there is not a contract… we’ve moved beyond that [professional model]… if it is a true partnership, then we are all negotiating with each other what we each get out of it together and what we learn together… [t]hey trust that when we come back, we’ll fix things that need to be fixed… And then we have the expectation that if we didn’t get the information that we needed, we’ll get that next time… It is mutual trust, like friends. We negotiate with each other.

Josh believed he could establish trust between partners by developing an on-going and trusting relationship. Part of that trust building process, it seemed, was engaging in collaborative styles of working together.

Summary

Partners followed a cooperative style of communication in which they demonstrated their willingness to honestly listen to and work with each other. They used cooperative styles of communication by seeking each other’s input and achieving consensus on major issues. These types of interactions tend to “reinforce a group’s collective identity – in signaling a willingness to cooperate, participants will draw on the collective identity” (Hardy et al., 2005, p. 69), and this seemed true of the TCBI partnership.

Speaking of their shared commitment to sustaining the partnership, Josh said, “You couldn’t do it without shared values; the shared values is [sic] where you retreat to when there is strife between the organizations.” Although he spoke of the mutual benefits that faculty and community partners received, he emphasized the partnership as the overlying or superordinate value that shaped their actions and interactions.
The shared value was more how do we sustain this? This partnership is good. It’s good for all of us….There’s a commitment to that partnership; the partnership is valued, rather than the partnership coming together around a different kind of value, [such as] education…. Really, the underlying value is partnerships. We value relationship.

Partners developed close relationships and followed a collaborative style of communicating with each other. They were dedicated to nurturing and preserving the relationship so that they could continue to build on their previous successes. Furthermore, it seemed that the style of communication partners followed in seeking each other’s input and building consensus around project decisions and logistics played a role in the partnership developing an identity that was separate from the partner’s employing organizations. Carl, Timothy, and George stood together as a partnership entity in advocating and ultimately deciding where the daycare center was to be built. Carl’s description of the event suggested that at least on one occasion, the TCBI partners became established as a “we” when negotiating with the RCTC board of directors.

**Partnership Identity**

The identity of a partnership captures “who” the entity is, as viewed by its members. An identity speaks to that which is core, distinct, and enduring (Albert & Whetten, 1985) and is likely to guide members’ actions and interactions as they are related to the partnership. The development of a collective sense of purpose beyond partners’ immediate interests may be critical if faculty and community partners are to overcome challenges of all kinds (Maguire Meservey & Richards, 1996). A shared vision may foster long-term thinking and help partners to see that they are in their circumstance together, as a team. Partnerships may also develop norms, or informal rules for behaviors, that influence how partners perceive each other and work together. Faculty and community members who assume that trust is an essential quality of the
partnership, for example, may strive to develop norms about communicating openly and honestly. Furthermore, expectations about the durations of the partnership may foster behaviors that commit partners to continuing the relationship.

**Mission**

In all cases, when asked to describe the purpose of TCBI, partners spoke about the importance of the partnership in facilitating mutually beneficial opportunities. When pressed, partners explained that the design-build projects provided students the opportunity to apply their classroom learning to a real construction project and the tribal college with buildings to expand their capacity to serve the community. Faculty partners tended to begin their statements telling me about their initial purpose (educating students) and end with their community partners’ initial purpose (building structures). The opposite was true for community partners’ responses.

Partners tended to use the terms purpose, goal, and vision interchangeably. For example, Carl described their relationship as “symbiotic,” and explained that partners’ goals were mutually benefited. Carl continued saying, “We have a commonality of purpose.” George also believed that their “bottom line goals [were] shared.” Likewise, Timothy spoke about having “a shared vision” of education and cultural exchange through building projects. Each partner, RCTC, ESU, and GU members alike, emphasized the importance of providing community buildings and homes to the tribal community and educational experiences for students. It seemed that their vision for the purpose of the partnership itself had evolved to include both purposes as core to its existence.
**Norms**

Norms are informal rules for behavior that are often understood implicitly. They are developed and reified through social interactions. In organizations, norms direct how one is expected to act or the goals they are expected to pursue (Scott, 2003).

I identified three norms that partners of TCBI partnership seemed to follow. First, faculty partners, in particular, *maintained awareness and respect for the community’s traditional culture*. Second, all partners *communicated openly and honestly* about project and partnership issues. Third, all partners worked to *create opportunities for continuing the partnership*. These three norms, however, seemed to be developed due to an overarching desire, on behalf of all of the partners, to establish a deep and enduring sense of *trust* with each other. Developing a sense of trust, according to RCTC and faculty partners, was essential to establish for the success of the partnership. Therefore I identified trust not as a norm, but as an ideal around which partners’ shaped norms for the partnership.

**Trust.**

Previous experiences in which other entities had partnered with RCTC only to help them access funding for their own research or instructional work had left RCTC administrators feeling exploited and cheated. As a result, Carl admitted that his intentions for partnering with George were “mercenary.” He simply wanted to have structures built on RCTC’s campus. It was not until several years later, when he had developed a trusting relationship with George and his faculty colleagues, that Carl recognized the benefits of sharing his tribe’s culture with students as part of their learning experience. He began to see, and care about, the benefits each received from the partnership. TCBI partners’ actions and interactions, therefore, were guided by their desire to develop trust with each other.
Trust was equally important to the faculty partners, George, Owen, and Josh. Josh spoke at length about the importance of trust in faculty-community projects, particularly because of the absence of legally binding contracts. He described the typical client-architect relationship; “The professional architect is help accountable through the legal system; if a building fails or something is wrong, they can be taken to court. But for what we do, there is not contract. There is not a fee for service…” Josh felt that the partnership had evolved from the typical relationship between a client-architect because of the trust that had been built. He described an interaction he had with Timothy in which Timothy said, “Oh, it’s your project? Then I know you’ll come back, you listened, you changed the design to respond to us. You treat us with respect.”

Josh believed that accountability was rooted in the trust that partners would remain available and committed to assisting each other. He explained,

They trust that we’ll come back [and] when we come back, we’ll fix the things that need to be fixed; We’ll extend the things that need to be extended…And then we have the expectation that if we didn’t get the information quite that we needed, we’ll get it next time. Or if we need a little more help with community organizing that we’ll get that. And if we need a better meeting space, they’ll help us find a better place. There’s nothing written down; there is no bookwork. It is mutual trust, like friends.

Josh felt comforted that he and his faculty partners in TCBI had established a sense of trust with their partners at RCTC.

To review, I identified three norms that seemed to guide faculty and community partners’ expectations for how each would behave: (1) maintain awareness and respect, (2) communicate openly about issues related to the project and partnership, and (3) facilitate and explore opportunities.
Maintain awareness of and respect for cultural contexts.

Two examples illustrated the extent to which partners had developed implicit norms about the importance of maintaining awareness of and respecting the culture in which they were working. First, I noted from interviews and reviews of the projects on the partnership’ website that the design of the architecture projects had, from the start, attempted to integrate aspects of the tribe’s traditions and culture. For example, students designed mosaics that depicted images of sacred animals and painted the names of the animals in the tribe’s native language. They honored the importance of eastern light in the orientation of the entryway structure and built a story circle in the playground so that adults could tell stories to children. Owen, George, and Josh each spoke at length with me about their continual efforts to learn about the symbols and traditions of the tribal community so they could incorporate those aspects into their architecture and landscape architecture designs in meaningful and appropriate ways. Although he was not explicitly told to do so, Josh understood the importance of integrating the tribe’s culture in to his research designs; he saw that it had been integrated in all other projects.

The second illustration of the norms developed about respect for the tribe’s culture, was the decision-making process George followed when he was, ultimately, given the choice of where to locate the daycare center. Rather than prioritize his interests in saving money and time, he prioritized the feelings of the tribal elders who felt that locating a daycare center next to a cemetery would violate traditional beliefs. I heard Carl, Timothy, Owen, and George discuss the significance of this situation and the importance of respecting the preferences and wishes of tribal members, particularly as they related to cultural practices and prohibitions. George and Owen felt that it was more important, for their long-term relationship with his partners, that they demonstrate respect. On the whole, George and Owen obeyed informal norms regarding the
importance of respecting tribal culture and traditions when they prioritized respecting the desire of tribal elders to locate the daycare center away from the cemetery over their own desires to use already developed plans for a site that would require less work on their part.

Communicate openly about project and partnership issues.

Faculty and community partners also discussed how trust was developed through open communication about all aspects of the project. From Timothy’s perspective, trust was developed because he felt included as an equal partner. “We got phone calls, conference calls, lots of e-mails about design changes. We felt like we’ve been given every opportunity to provide input on the on-going design concepts.” Responding to my question of what activities nurtured the relationship, Timothy told me,

Open communication. Talking all of the time. I think more than anything at times I would get really almost frustrated because they would ask me about all kinds of things that I thought, gee, you can decide this. But they would ask me anyway. There was a reason for that. Yeah, the opportunity for input and to know that what you're saying is being heard and not just listened to.

Distinct

Organizations may manage their image in an effort to gain a positive reputation from current and potential constituents (Corely & Gioia, 2000) as well as to induce certain behaviors from its members (Gioia & Thomas, 1996). The public face of TCBI seemed well developed. The mission statement was posted on the TCBI website, printed on pamphlets and newsletters, published in articles written by faculty partners, and embedded in the minds of each partner. George hired a graphics designer to develop a TCBI logo (2002) and placed it on all materials published or distributed by the partnership. George had t-shirts made each year with the TCBI
logo, which were given to all participants, partners, and community members who visited with ESU and GU students. One t-shirt advertised, “Sustainable Buildings, Sustainable Partnerships.” George and his graduate assistants had published an annual TCBI newsletter since 2001 celebrating its accomplishments and outlining its plans for the future. The newsletter was mailed to sponsors and alumni of the program, and posted on the TCBI website. On the reservation, George had “Dear Neighbor” letters posted throughout public and commercial buildings to educate community members about the construction project and to tell them when and why students and faculty were visiting the reservation. Furthermore, the TCBI partnership had served as the focus of several conference presentations given by George, as well as the cornerstone of a Master’s thesis on sustainability education in engineering. Following each construction project, ESU students developed and delivered a PowerPoint presentation outlining their experience to the public as an effort to recruit participants and money for the following year.

Organizational Structures

Although informal norms have power influence on partners’ behaviors with regards to their partnership, formal organizational structures may also serve as powerful indicators of who the partnership is and what partners are doing together. For example, in an effort to achieve autonomy and sustainability of the partnership, partners may formalize roles and systems for facilitating the partnership’s work (Maguire & Richards, 1996). I found that TCBI partners developed structures to both coordinate their shared work and formalize their partnership as a distinct entity to which persons could join and funders could donate. Leadership structure, staff positions, accounting systems, and other managerial systems for accomplishing work may have played a role in how partners viewed the partnership as collective and organizational-like entity.
Leadership structure.

The leadership structure of the partnership was defined, in large part, by the grants that funded the partnerships’ projects. In each of the TCBI projects, George was clearly identified as the lead researcher, instructor, and grantee responsible to the funding agency for ensuring the success of the project. In the 2005-2006 funding cycle, Josh was written into the grant as the landscape architect responsible for the design and construction of the playground. Administrators at RCTC were identified as partners by the grant, but their roles were largely limited to facilitating the project through guaranteeing access and administrative support for the project. Leadership positions, though initially formalized through the 2001 collaborative agreement, were defined and reiterated by the grants that funded the projects.

Staff positions.

When I observed the TCBI partnership in 2005 and 2006, the partnership had several paid staff and research assistants who helped to coordinate the activities of the partnership. George had funded at least three graduate (some graduate students helped facilitate the curriculum and project whose funding was not directly attached to TCBI partnership grants) students to help him guide students through the design and build portion of the program. In the spring semester, graduate students helped to teach the weekly design-build courses on sustainable construction practices and management.

In 2006, George invited a staff member (whom he supervised in his capacity as a director of a center) to help him set up and manage logistical aspects of the summer project, including procuring food and liaising with a local member of the tribe to coordinate cultural learning opportunities for student and faculty participants while on the reservation. In the spring semester, she worked from her office at ESU to set up the logistics. In the summer, she visited the
reservation to establish personal connections and firm up plans with those whom she coordinated with earlier. George also paid the tribal member for her coordinating efforts. Approximately three faculty members, five graduate students, and one staff member helped to coordinate the program, traveling to the reservation to help guide students in their construction projects.

*Accounting systems.*

George was the principal researcher named on the federally funded grants that financed the TCBI design-build construction projects, and as such, he was the key person responsible for maintaining the accounts associated with the construction project (private contractors, construction materials). George also received funding to pay the room, board, and travel expenses of approximately five graduate students to assist him with construction management on-site. As mentioned earlier, George also hired a private construction manager to supervise the project throughout the year. The construction manager was paid through the grant and lived near the reservation year round. Carl, as RCTC president, handled securing loans or additional funds for building costs that were not covered by grants that George secured.

The presence of funding and established organizational structures were key factors in enticing Josh initially to work with TCBI. He felt they enabled him to join the initiative without having to exert a lot of energy to establish the partnership, as he had in past experiences.

Having done this work, I’ve worked in situations where there’s leadership change and all of a sudden your community partner is gone or evaporated. What has happened mostly is we’ve worked with non-organized, I wouldn’t say unorganized or disorganized, but non-organized community groups. There’s no structure, no funding. There’s no physical meeting place and in those kinds of partnerships, you spend all of your time building capacity. And, that’s not what I do well. Here, you know the community and you know
the (tribal) college is not going away. There is a certain stability here.

The organized and stable partnership helped to attract, as well as orient, newcomers to the partnership.

**Enduring**

Faculty and community partners had also developed expectations about working together on future projects. It appeared that each partner trusted that the other would work together to identify additional project opportunities for the partnership and to acquire resources necessary to continue working together. Carl and Timothy told me about their visions for the future of the college’s campus and the collaborative role that TCBI would play, and Timothy spoke about his hopes for additional projects as well. The partners had already discussed plans for building a house for visiting faculty on the RCTC campus and were in conversation about additional projects, such as workshops led by students, which could benefit the college. Overall, faculty and community partners assumed they would continue the partnership and acted on that assumption to identify and develop future opportunities.

TCBI partners worked cared deeply about maintain the partnership because of the positive opportunities it provided and the deep level of trust they had developed. George suggested that after they successfully completed the first project, the actual construction project became “secondary… Pretty quickly it didn’t matter what we were building, but we were going to do something together.” It appeared that each of the partners valued the relationship above all else, because it was, after all, what enabled them to develop construction opportunities for the students and the college.
Summary

The TCBI partnership appeared to have developed a partnership identity as evidenced by statements about what is core to the partnership. Partners felt the partnership achieved both its purpose of providing hands-on learning opportunities for students and improving the campus’s physical infrastructure. Unless a project facilitated student learning or improved the infrastructure of the tribal community, it would not be done. Norms existed within the partnership that guided partners’ behaviors and actions on behalf of the partnership. Partners were expected to treat each other as co-collaborators, to be respectful of each other’s professional and cultural values, and to maintain the partnership past the individual project. Partners established norms about how to interact, faculty and community partners established friendly relationships in which partners shared information about themselves (such as about their families, hobbies, or non-work related activities) and interacted in activities that were not related directly to facilitating the activities of the project (they joined powwow festivities and shared meals).

Summary - TCBI

Dorado and Giles (2004) suggest that the content of conversation between faculty and community partners may change throughout the duration of a partnership; typically, in the early stages, partners spend a great deal of time and energy learning about each other, deciding roles and responsibilities, identifying resources, and generally navigating the logistics of the project. Faculty and community partners told me that they did not need to talk with each other as frequently as they did when they were in the first years, in large part, because many of the project logistics were handled by support staff, including graduate students. In recent years, partners tended to meet or talk with one another about how the partnership was working for each
them in an effort to modify and improve the partnerships’ functioning, efficiency, and effectiveness. George, Carl, and Timothy explicitly discussed the logistics of the project, as well as ways to ensure effective functioning and continuation of the partnership.

The TCBI partnership appeared to be well established as an entity which had a defined mission statement, clearly assigned roles and responsibilities between partners, secure funding from multiple agencies and private sponsors, and well-developed norms regarding how and when partners’ communicated with each other, as well as their expectations for involvement. I sensed that the relationship faculty and community partners had become something bigger and more meaningful to the partners than the individual projects. The partnership had a name, the Tribal College Building Initiative, and a logo, which was designed by a graphic designer and displayed on t-shirts, as well as on fliers that were posted throughout the tribal college and town. The partners seemed at ease with each other; they made jokes with each other, spoke fondly of past projects, and introduced each other to their students and colleagues as “friends.” They showed respect towards each other and spoke of their appreciation for each other. Partners seemed to understand their roles and responsibilities, and each trusted the others to fulfill them. Most telling of all, I heard partners say “we” when describing the activities of the partnership.

Carl felt that his relationship with TCBI partners was “firmer” than most others. They had a long and trusting relationship, and to his mind, the partnership was not dependent on grants anymore. Timothy viewed the partnership as a “very functional and a very useful collaboration” in which partners were on a “very level playing field.” Each of the partners were respectful of each other, included each other in making important decisions, and “worked hand-in-hand with the opportunities” they had.
Ultimately, it seemed that the TCBI partnership appeared to have reached a stage of relationship, which Dorado and Giles (2004) called “committed engagement” (p. 25). Committed engagement is characterized by partners who value the partnership beyond the current project and who “believe that the partnership should be protected, extended to other areas, and even defended when in danger of disappearing” (p. 31) due to unforeseen or unavoidable circumstances, such as loss of funding or institutional support. As Timothy suggested, the partnership did not seemed based on any one individual, and therefore, could be maintained long-term and through different iterations of partners. The goals of the partnership may evolve from its focus on construction to a focus on sharing curricula on sustainable construction for the tribal college, but its mission (to provide for community needs through educational opportunities and experiences) and its norms (co-collaboration, respect, longevity, and friendly relationships) will remain essentially the same.
CHAPTER 5: SHAFER TOWNSHIP ENERGY PARTNERSHIP

In this chapter I describe the Shafer Township Energy Project (STEP), a faculty-community partnership that was in its third semester of a four-semester service-learning project, at the time of my study. First, I provide an overview of the partnership and the project in which undergraduate students learned how to develop greenhouse gas inventories and write mitigation reports for local government. Second and third, I describe the partners’ roles and reasons for their involvement in the partnership and how the partnership relates to the missions of their respective organizations. Partners included a tenured professor and a non-tenure track senior research associate from Eastern State University (ESU) and a manager of public works and a councilperson from Shafer Township (ST). Third, I present my analysis of the key aspects (content) discussed and style of communication partners used when planning and organizing their shared initiatives. Fourth, I describe the core characteristics of the partnership and explore how partners’ roles and interactions may have influenced the development of a partnership identity. Finally, I provide a summary of my analysis of the partnership.

Partnership Overview

Garrett, a senior research associate at ESU, and Adam, an ESU geography professor, were eager to build upon their past successes in creating inventories of greenhouse gas emissions for university campuses and regional areas, so they accepted a local citizens group’s invitation to attend a meeting on how to reduce the township’s energy use and emissions. The citizens group was concerned about global warming and wanted to identify and support initiatives that could effectively address the problem. A member of the group had heard about Garrett’s and Adam’s work at the local university and believed their expertise could benefit town officials and staff interested in addressing global warming.
A confluence of ideas, groups, and plans seemed to bring the greenhouse gas emissions project to fruition. On one hand, Garrett and Adam had worked together for several years on similar projects and were looking to develop a service-learning class for undergraduate students. Susan, as an elected councilwoman had adopted environmental issues as her primary concern and platform, and Matt had recently returned from a professional development trip abroad and was ready to start making some changes to reduce the township’s energy consumption and waste. When some members of a church group, which had formed to raise awareness of and to address local environmental concerns, approached Matt and Adam, they seized the opportunity to develop a relationship with those they felt would provide adequate access to the information needed for the assessment, as well as the political power to ensure their action strategies were implemented.

As a result of that meeting, Garrett and Adam decided to co-teach four semesters of an undergraduate course that would teach students about greenhouse gas emissions and culminate in a greenhouse gas report and mitigation plan for Shafer Township. They had prior experience supervising and mentoring graduate students on this topic and felt they had an appropriate model for how they could use an inventory project to teach undergraduate students about greenhouse gas emission and remediation. In the first course, Adam and Garrett co-taught their students about greenhouse gas emissions and assigned student groups to investigate and report various sources of greenhouse gas emissions. Students developed and presented their preliminary findings to the church group, Susan, and Matt. In the second course, students built on the initial findings and developed a mitigation report listing strategies Township employees could follow to reduce energy use. Adam and Garrett edited the preliminary report and delivered it to Susan and Matt, whereby Matt edited the report further and crafted it into a resolution to be presented to the
town council. The town council accepted the resolution to address greenhouse gas emissions, as recommended by Matt and Susan. When I interviewed Adam and Garrett in fall 2007, they were teaching the third course of the four-course series. Students were busy developing action plans (based on the preliminary report developed by the previous class) that suggested how Shafer Township could decrease its energy consumption and decrease its emissions.

Table 3. STEP Partners' Pseudonyms, Employers, Job Titles, and Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization, Job Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STEP</td>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>ESU, Geography Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Garrett</td>
<td>ESU, Senior Research Associate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matt</td>
<td>ST, Manager of Public Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>ST, Elected Councilperson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>STEP</td>
<td>Shafer Township Energy Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Shafer Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ESU</td>
<td>Eastern State University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Partners’ Social Identities**

Members of STEP included two partners from ESU, Adam, a faculty member, and Garrett, a senior research associate, and two partners from ST, Matt, the manager of public works, and Susan, an elected councilwoman. I describe the positions and roles of each partner to explore how partners’ viewed their professional and boundary-spanning roles and their reasons for joining the service-learning partnership.

**Adam**

Adam described his and Garrett’s partnership with Shafer Township as serving three primary roles: scholarship, education, and professional service. Adam began his scholarship on climate change, and greenhouse gas emissions specifically, over two decades ago while enrolled in graduate school. Not long after he earned his doctorate, he became a geography professor at Eastern State University and continued to pursue his line of research on climate change. Certain
types of projects, Adam explained, required participatory research methods that involved community members, employees in the private sector, as well as government officials. He described his experiences when he worked “directly with stakeholders to share scientific information” and emphasized an “iterative process” through which he learned about their needs and circumstances in developing long-range plans. Adam also discussed his decision to develop the four-course series as a way to further his current research:

From a scientific point of view, it’s very interesting to me to try to think of ways of taking the different processes and different emissions patterns from the two entities, the university and the public entity, the township, and to bring them together because the emissions patterns are very different and the command and control patterns are very different.

The course helped him to further develop his research and understanding of factors that affect local emissions and Shafer Township provided a nearby case study.

As an educator, Adam believed students were the “hope of our future” and spoke of the “buzz” he felt when “one of [his] students does good, as well as [is] doing well.” The course enhanced students’ understanding of how local decisions and policies affect levels of greenhouse gas emissions and provided real-world context to abstract ideas. He explained the project allowed student “to think independently, to actually apply university-based knowledge to practical world situations … [Students] have to think through [many] things simultaneously because that’s how the real world works. It’s complex and that’s how this particular problem needs to be solved.”

Adam felt that the partnership also allowed him to provide services in his role as an academic. He believed faculty, and senior faculty, especially, were obligated by the department
and university to apply their expertise to public problems as a component of their professional service.

That’s one of the things we look for somebody who is going up for full professor. We want to have somebody who is having an impact on the community, both the academic community, so it’s more nationwide, and on the general community... [a professor] might not have as much influence on [their] local communities... but [they] might have influence on state policy, or be an advisor to somebody in Washington [DC].

Adam felt compelled to apply his scholarship to public problems and chose Shafer Township because of its close proximity and accessibility to ESU students.

Ultimately, Adam believed that the course allowed him to “bag [three] birds with one stone.” He told me, “You can do great education and do great service and solve a scientific problem.” Adam believed he simultaneously addressed teaching, research, and service responsibilities through his work with the partnership. “I’m trying to do the right thing by climate change and I’m trying to do it at the local level. Also as a geographer and a scholar, I am looking at this clinically.... It’s where I live and I want to see where I live do the right thing.”

Garrett

When Garrett retired from his previous career a decade ago, he decided to take a job as a senior researcher to help inform policy on statewide environmental issues. For the first several years, he held a paid senior research associate position at a research center within the College of Earth Sciences. The department in which he was a research associate dissolved several years previous to the start of this study, so when I interviewed him, he was working as an affiliate researcher in the Center for Regional Environmental Assessments. Garrett had office space in the Center and access to university resources, but was unpaid. In his position, he worked with ESU
faculties and administrative personnel to research and to reduce energy consumption on ESU’s campus.

Although Garrett did not hold an instructor position at ESU, he was nonetheless a dedicated educator. He volunteered his time to assist Adam in developing the course, as well as managing the students’ work on the project. He handled the “practical matters or issues” that arose throughout the project, such as teaching the students about who to contact and how to collect data. He explained, “I’ll hold their hands and educate them. Help them to untie the knots.” As a co-educator, Garrett was teaching students how to conduct research.

Garrett felt that his work was a form of professional service. As he put it, he was an “uncompensated employee” who was committed to contributing his “knowledge, expertise, and networks” to help address the twin issues of global warming and energy consumption. Garrett told me he felt committed to working with Adam and Shafer Township to develop the emissions inventory and remediation plan because of his desire to link the resources of the university to the community.

My interest in it is to do something for the people and the community and the institution of [Eastern State], which I think is important and useful…. It’s worthy work…. I hope that we achieve enough results to get serious attention from the people who direct the affairs of the university so that they can recognize how much more they can do for the [township and surrounding region]. And vice versa.

Garrett believed that he could help to address the problem of greenhouse gas emission by donating his time to help Adam teach the class, guide the students in collecting and analyzing data, and serve as a liaison in facilitating the university-township partnership
Because Garrett was an unpaid affiliate of the university and a key co-collaborator in the partnership, I wondered whether he viewed his participation in the partnership as a representative of the university who sought to reach out to the community, or as a representative of the community who sought to reach into the university. I asked Garrett which organization he identified with, in relation to his work in facilitating the partnership. He responded by describing himself as both, to a certain degree.

I’m neither fish nor fowl. In other words, I’m not a native of this area so I don’t feel [pause] - I only feel part of the community up to a certain point, my ankles, maybe. I didn’t graduate from [Eastern State] and I am not a career [Eastern State] academic, so I feel like I’m into [Eastern State] also up to my ankles… That’s a way of gauging… those [feelings]. I feel them every day and particularly I feel them when I come into this course.

Garrett took his volunteer and teaching work seriously and committed himself to seeking out and supporting university-community connections. Throughout his time working at Eastern State, he maintained focus on projects to reduced energy consumption. He mentored and co-taught undergraduate and graduate students, worked on research projects along side of faculty members, research associates, and directors of campus facilities, and consulted with local, regional, and state policy makers. Garrett explained that he enjoyed his work as a liaison who was not tied to any one institution. “I spent my life operating in areas where most people are either fish or fowl, and I am sort of a different species.” Instead, he viewed himself as a resident of the state (“that’s something I feel up to my knees or maybe waist”), an American citizen (“I’m an American up to my neck), and a human being (“I am a human being all of the way”).
As the director of public works, Matt was responsible for overseeing nearly all of the Township’s infrastructure, from keeping streets clear to cleaning sewers, from planning the construction of parking garages to developing emergency response plans. He had been with the township for over two decades when he became interested in developing a plan to reduce the township’s energy consumption, in part to protect the environment, and in part, to save money. “People look at us as engineers who want to build roads and that sort of thing, but our primary goal is to be protectors of the environment.” Matt found that, ultimately, saving energy “dovetailed” into saving dollars as well.

Matt’s personal and professional interest in making the township more energy efficient was piqued by a professional development trip he took abroad to learn about how some European nations were removing organics from their waste stream by composting. Matt returned to the township with a new perspective and increased convictions.

We need to start thinking about what is the right thing to do. From that you will find economic benefits and cost savings, but you’ve got to change your priority of not looking at it as the most cost-effective means, but looking at it as the right [Matt’s emphasis] thing to do.

Matt felt his convictions were reinforced by concerns that were increasingly raised by council leaders and citizens. He thought his office could make the most difference in reducing energy consumption because they were the “energy pigs,” but also because it was their mission to protect the environment.

In his role as director of public works, Matt partnered with faculty and staff at ESU for research projects, such as land-use planning and management. Matt also frequently worked with
ESU’s director of facilities and services to coordinate initiatives and share costs. For example, they worked together to on downtown development projects, lighting public areas, and increasing pedestrian safety. Therefore, Matt’s partnership with Adam and Garrett was only one of several in which he was then or had previously been involved.

**Susan**

Susan had been serving as an elected member of Shafer Township council for several years when the citizens group asked her to become involved in a faculty-community partnership to address climate change. She held deep personal convictions about working to conserve environmental resources and used her political power on the council to actively campaign for increased environmental awareness and caretaking (“It’s been a personal thing to me for many years, but now, it’s urgent”). Her highest priority as a council member was to decrease the townships’ emissions. She told me, “If I had to choose one thing I’d like to do in my remaining time on council, it would be to really get this (greenhouse gas mitigation plan) going and to keep that focus in front of [the council] is really important…. That is my heart of hearts: environmental activism.” She believed that her reputation as an environmental advocate was instrumental in the community group’s decision to approach her and became involved in STEP in her role as councilperson.

**Summary**

Each of the four partners joined the partnership as ways to help them fulfill their work roles, as well as their commitments to addressing the problem of global warming. Although neither Garrett nor Susan held paid positions, they nevertheless identified their work with the university and township, respectively, as their primary occupations. For example, Garrett did not consider himself a volunteer; he identified as an “uncompensated [ESU] employee.”
Additionally, each of the partners was committed to addressing environmental issues. Adam felt that, ultimately, each partner joined the partnership because he or she shared a common desire to “do environmental good.” Although facilitating the partnership and students’ work was an “add on” (Adam) for each of the partners, none of the partners viewed their work with the partnership as community service; they incorporated it into regular work activities in their official work roles.

Organizational Identities of Partners’ Employing Institutions

In this section, I present partners beliefs about the identities of the organizations they represented in the partnership and discuss how they viewed their roles in the partnership as part of or separate from their organizational missions. Although Garrett and Susan were unpaid for their work in their respective organizations, each held officially recognized positions and was, subsequently, obligated to fulfill certain duties and tasks. Therefore, I include Garrett and Susan as organizational members of ESU and Shafer Township, respectively.

Eastern State University

In a joint interview with Adam and Garrett, I asked them to describe the mission of ESU, that which was core to its “essence.” Garrett responded to my question by talking about ESU’s role as a land-grant institution; “[Eastern State] is a land-grant university and its mission statement says that its mission [has] three components: education, research, and service.” Garrett also pointed to ESU’s role as a public university, “the general purpose for which the institution is here, as a land-grant, public university, is to educate the mass of people at the tertiary level who come to it [sic].” Adam agreed and added, “We are very big on education, very big on research, and very big on service.”

Adam also told me that within the college of earth sciences and the geography
department, the three “core values from the land-grant mission” were important for promotion and tenure, though “not equally.” He continued, “Our college has what’s known as the 40/40/20 split. So 40 percent of your time should be spent on education, 40 percent on research, and 20 percent on service.” He went on to tell me that after one had received tenure, professors were expected to devote a greater proportion of their efforts to applying their knowledge to public issues or problems:

So when a person is more advanced, we expect to see that not only are they doing service, but that that service is balanced across the different unit levels at [Eastern State] and also that they are doing service for the greater academic community and the world at large… That’s one of the things we look for when somebody is going up for full professor. We want somebody who is having an impact on the…local communities… on state policy… or [they] might be an advisor to somebody in Washington [D.C.].

In addition to applied scholarship, the integration of service-learning into the teaching curriculum was a new but growing initiative for faculty members. Adam was optimistic that it would become increasingly practiced and supported as an important academic activity.

*Shafer Township*

As noted previously, Shafer Township and ESU had a long history of working together due to their close proximity and overlapping responsibilities (e.g., safety) and concerns (e.g., the economic vitality of local commercial areas). Susan and Matt shared similar perspectives about the core values embodied by the township and that, subsequently, guided their decisions on behalf of the Township. Susan felt it was the mission of the Township to enhance the “quality of life” of local citizens by making the town a “sort of welcoming college town with a downtown that offers variety and is … economically healthy.” Matt also felt serving citizens and protecting
the environment were key aspects of the Township’s mission, and hence, his work as its employee.

Summary

Each of the partners believed their work helped to fulfill the mission of the organizations they represented. Susan and Matt felt they served the Township’s mission to serve and protect the citizens and environment. Adam and Garrett felt that their work fulfilled key aspects of ESU’s land-grant mission: to serve the state as a public land-grant university through education and applied research. Adam also felt his colleagues in the college and department respected his work with the partnership because through it, he provided students with hands-on opportunities to learn about global warming at a local level.

Substance of Partners’ Communications

Effective communication is essential for successful collaboration. Individuals communicate through overt discussions (including in-person, over the phone, or via the Internet), as well as implicitly by their tone and their style of talk (such as collaborative or assertive, interdependent or autonomous). Faculty and community partners who speak openly and explicitly about key aspects of their shared project may be more likely to foster an effective and lasting partnership (Foss, Boniauto, Johnson, & Moreland, 2003). Eastern State instructors and ST representatives met with each other at the start of their partnership to discuss explicitly their separate yet overlapping interests, their roles and responsibilities in facilitating students’ work, as well as limitations and restrictions regarding data accessibility and publicity (what information would be reported to the public). While each semester was in progress, partners’ conversations were limited primarily to e-mails in which they discussed students’ access to data or made preparations for presenting the students’ report to the council or public. In this section, I describe
key themes that emerged as I analyzed each partners’ interviews for content to understand the topics they discussed explicitly and those they did not.

Separate, yet overlapping interests

In their very first meeting together, Garrett addressed his and Adam’s interests in using the Township as a case study and the benefits the township would receive as a result of their work. Garrett recollected that at the first meeting, he spoke about “the spiking of energy costs” due to deregulation and described what other municipalities were doing to reduce their energy consumption. He also discussed Adam and his experiences creating inventories and mitigation plans that had already helped townships and institutions to reduce their energy use and costs. Garrett told the ST representatives that he hoped the Township would allow Adam and him to develop a series of student-researched and written reports to assist the Township in their own energy management.

Susan also remembered discussing the “greater vision” of the Township and thinking that the Township “could really do a lot more than [they] were doing” to address the issues of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. She felt their overlapping interests were important factors in why she and Matt decided to accept the offer to partner with Adam and Garrett. “We talked together about the [Township’s] interest and their interest in us and how we could work together [and] their approach using students to study the [Town].” By the end of the first meeting, it seemed that both parties (ESU instructors and ST representatives) felt their interests were understood and would be addressed through the shared initiative.

Roles and responsibilities.

Garrett and Adam clearly defined their expectations for how Matt and Susan would be involved in facilitating the project, assuring Matt and Susan that they would supervise the
students’ work. Specifically, Garrett and Adam would help students to collect, analyze, and report data; teach them how to conduct focus groups; and oversee students’ preparation of the report and presentations of their findings and suggestions to the town council. Matt was to help students to access Township records and to serve as a liaison to other Township personnel who could inform the students’ work. Susan was to help identify town members for the focus group.

Limitations and restrictions.

Adam and Garrett emphasized the project as an opportunity for students to learn about greenhouse-gas emissions by developing an emissions inventory and mitigation strategies for the Township. Garrett remembered telling the ST attendees of the initial meeting that, “[f]rom our point of view, this was a service-learning project for our students.” Adam and he were not interested in getting involved in shaping policy or implementing the proposals developed by the students’ work; their work was limited to teaching students about greenhouse-gas emissions and mitigation.

Before agreeing to the project, members of the Township asked Garrett about the types of data that would be made available to students and whether certain statistics should remain unpublished. Susan told me, “I think that the most issue… [was] how wasteful we (the Township) are.” The partners discussed which data would be used and how it would be reported. They agreed that the Township partners would review the reports prior to the release to the public.

Data collection and reporting.

Throughout the semester, the four partners discussed strategies for collecting certain types of data, as well as appropriate venues for disseminating their report to the Township’s council and public. They met once or twice throughout the semester. On several occasions, Matt
visited the class to answer students’ questions, provide information or access to resources, and to talk about his responsibilities for protecting the environment. Susan was not involved in the class meetings, but helped students to identify and connect with members of the Township for data collection purposes. The four partners met as a group face-to-face in the municipal building one or two times throughout the course of each semester to discuss the students’ progress and plans for reporting their work.

**Style of Partners’ Communications**

How partners communicate may be just as important to the effectiveness and quality of the partnership as what they talk about; partners who work inclusively tend to emphasize commonalities between them and, hence, reinforce the group’s collective identity (Huxham & Vangen, 2005). Adam and Garrett worked primarily with Matt, particularly in the second half of the four-semester project. I believe that although the partners met as a group several times throughout the year, their relationship was dominated by a style of consulting with each other, rather than a style of true collaboration. The idea of a consultant-client style of communication emerged following the very first meeting I had with Adam and Garrett. I wrote in my journal after my interview with the two instructors:

> It seems that they are approaching this relationship as a consultant would approach a client – they want their business. In this case, their business is teaching and doing research to reduce local emissions. They don’t need to collaborate with the [Township] to do their work (teaching and research), but they need them to accomplish their deeper goal related to actually effecting change in local policy and practice.

In each of my subsequent interviews, I took careful note of their style of interactions to understand the extent to which the ESU and ST partners developed their ideas and plans together
or separately. They seemed to interact much in the same way as a contracted expert would consult with a client: ESU partners pitched and negotiated a proposal for their project and worked relatively autonomously, contacting their ST partners only when they required additional information. Garrett and Adam delivered finished products (reports and public presentations) according to established deadlines.

Each of the partners described their first meeting as the time when Garrett pitched his and Adam’s proposal to develop a service-learning project with Shafer Township (Adam was out of town, so Garrett was the sole ESU representative). Garrett described how he “prepared a number of talking points to explain what [he and Adam] were going to do and [to] explain whether it would be possible to work with the [Township].” As stated earlier, he spoke about how his and Adam’s interests overlapped with those of the Township -- reducing energy consumption – and the way the project could serve the interests of both sets of partners (teaching and energy reduction). In keeping with how one would deliver a sales pitch about a service or product, Garrett outlined his and Adam’s ideas for the project and shared their past experiences and successes with other institutions. He pointed out that the project would require very little of ST staff, that it would foster greater awareness of the problem, and would provide data and recommendations to help guide future Township planning and policy. Garrett remembers telling the ST representatives, “It wouldn’t cost anything. We’d do it all for free!”

Although the four partners met at the very start of the partnership and at the beginning of each semester to discuss the logistical aspects of collecting data for the students’ research project, it was understood that the bulk of the responsibilities and efforts fell on Adam and Garrett’s shoulders; it was their project to complete and deliver to the Township. This point was emphasized in Garrett’s pitch to the ST representatives and was an important point, particularly
to Matt. Matt explained to me that his time was limited, and that this was one of several projects he had collaborated on with faculty members as part of various service-learning projects. He was careful to make sure his involvement in STEP wouldn’t be too time consuming (“we’ve spent an incredible amount of time dealing with the students [previously], and, really, didn’t get much back in terms of product”). Garrett recognized the limited attention his ST partners could give to the students’ project: “To the [Township], it’s not a main project. It’s just one of many things that are a part of their responsibilities.” The Township partners recognized the mutual benefits of the student projects, but had limited time to help facilitate their work.

**Summary**

The substance and style of discourse may produce collective or shared organizational identities that lead to common perceptions about what is core to the partnership as well as to collective actions (Hardy et al., 2005.) The STEP partners tended to speak about project logistics and to do so in ways that resembled a client-contractor relationship. Adam and Garrett, to a large extent, acted as experts who wanted to get involved in a project but needed a client, or organization, to allow them to do the work. They identified and pitched their idea to community partners who they worked with to facilitate and deliver a project. The style of talk, therefore, seems to suggest a professional relationship that was not based on a developing a shared sense of partnership, or we, but rather a short-term project. At points in their conversations faculty partners spoke assertively to their community partners (Hardy et al., 2005), using words and tones to draw lines between their interests and their partners’ interests, which may have reinforced a sense of separateness and short-term membership between partners.
**Partnership Identity**

I explored those aspects which partners believed were core to their partnership, who they were as a partnership, how they viewed one another, and whether they expected their partnership to continue. Overall, Eastern State and Shafer Township partners did not share the same core purposes for the partnership and established few, if any norms, for how one was to act within the partnership. The partners did not set in place organizational structures that might have helped the partnership to last as an organizational entity in its own right. Overall, the partnership was temporary; partners focused on short-term projects and did not prepare for a long-term, or enduring, partnership.

**Mission**

The mission of the partnership was bifurcated along the lines of the faculty and community partners’ primary interests for partnering. Although both sets of partners understood the importance of each others’ purposes for partnering and seemed glad to accommodate each other to the extent possible, partners appeared to prioritize their own institutional-based interests – the faculty partners to education, and the community partners to reducing energy emissions. This was evident in the way the partners set clear boundaries between developing the report with students and implementing the report within the administrative and political structure of the Township. I asked Garrett, “what is the purpose of the partnership?” to which he relied, “[w]e never really talked about that sort of thing;” instead, the partners spoke about how their separate interests could be served.

The contrast between the two missions was greatest in how Susan and Matt articulated the priorities of the partnership. Susan, for example, discussed the importance of conserving energy because it reduced greenhouse gas emissions and saved the Township money, but rarely
addressed the issue of student learning. When she did address student learning, it was from the perspective that it was Adam and Garrett’s interest, not hers. For example, when I asked whether the partnership had developed a shared vision or mission, she told me “[Matt] and I, we feel the constraints and needs of our bureaucracy, whereas [Adam and Garrett], I think, feel the push of wanting to get this going for their students…”

Likewise, Matt discussed his interests in developing an energy management plan, but did not talk about student learning as key to the mission of the partnership. In response to my question about whether the nature of the partnership had changed since it began a year ago, Matt told me, “…all of us have kind of the same things in mind, and it’s not that anyone’s goal or objectives are different from each other... They were a little bit off as far as what I was looking for and what they were looking for…” He went on to describe how Adam and Garrett’s goals for the project had to come “more in line” with the realities and needs of the Township to maximize the usefulness of the students’ service-learning projects. Ultimately, he prioritized the goal of the project, and did not embrace student learning as one of they key reasons for the partnership.

ESU partners spoke about the partnership primarily from the perspective of educators. Garrett told me that in their first meeting with the community partners, he told them, “from our point of view, this was a service-learning project for our students. If it had no value (to the Township), then it was their decision. We (Adam and Garrett) were not getting into the planning process.” Likewise Adam told me that although he “want[ed] to do environmental good” he was “coming at it from an educator’s point of view. I want to see what I can do for my students.” In essence, the ESU partners believed the Township served as a local case study for the students to learn about various practices and policies that affected greenhouse gas emissions.
In my second interview with Adam, I asked him to confirm my understanding that “the partnership did not have a shared sense of purpose for the partnership itself, but rather it was more like two organizational entities trying to work together.” He told me, “I think you’ve hit the nail on the head. [Matt]… as the public works [director] has on his agenda the things that he needs to get done for his job…. [Susan] has… a policy point of view” He suggested that Garrett wanted to educate students and help the Township, and that he was “coming at it from an educator’s point of view.” On the whole, although they hoped to influence the Township’s energy practices and policies, Adam and Garrett recognized partners’ different motivations, and they drew clear lines between their purpose and the Township partners’ purpose for the partnership.

Whereas Adam and Garrett felt the partnership was ultimately about educating students, Susan and Matt focused primarily on improving the ability of their Township to address energy consumption. Therefore, while each of the partners recognized the partnerships’ dual goals, the partners did not seem to embrace each other’s interests; they were not committed to the same purposes.

Norms.

Partners may develop a set of norms as a result of continued interactions with each other. Norms are informal rules for behavior that may be conveyed explicitly or implicitly among members of a group. Faculty and community partners seemed to approach their partnership as a means by which to achieve predefined, tangible, and completed products: the greenhouse-gas inventory and the energy reduction report. Although student learning was a key objective to the ESU instructors (“From our point of view, this was a service-learning project for our students;
[we] were not getting [involved] in the [Township’s] planning or implementation process”-Garrett), the reports provided the common goal that motivated partners to work together.

I asked partners to describe their typical interactions with each other. In particular, I wanted to understand whether they worked collaboratively developing mutually beneficial projects or whether they worked separately, as such the consultative relationships in which faculty were experts and project supervisors (described the architecture professors described in the TCBI partnership). I asked Matt and Adam about how partners were expected to work with one another. Matt responded:

I would term it more as a consultant role in which – they’re providing us information and also providing their students with an educational opportunity in order to get that information…. They take the information, massage it, and work on it so that it’s all in a presentable format [for the public]. So I would term it more as a consultant role.

Adam also viewed his relationship as consultative; he and Garrett were consultants and Matt and Susan were the clients. Adam told me, “We do kind of take on that role [of consultant], not a money role, but we…. are providing a service for them…. They know they are getting something for free and that we’re providing a lot of expertise and knowledge…” In short, partners treated each other in similar ways that clients and consultants might typically treat one other. The community partners (clients) were in need of expert advice, provided access to necessary data and people, and provided feedback when asked. The ESU partners (consultants) pitched the project, supervised the development of the product, and requested feedback regarding their final product. Although partner understood the project was a learning opportunity for ESU students, the focus of partners’ conversations with each other was not about student learning, but rather how to facilitate the completion of the project.
I asked each of the partners to describe the term they used when talking to others about
the relationship they had with each other. In my interviews, I typically waited to hear the term
each partner used to describe their relationship and then asked them what the term meant to
them. Adam and Garrett referred to it a service-learning partnership in their joint interview.
Adam explained, “It’s not a deep relationship by any means. We have been able to gain their
trust [and] we trust them… So it’s a nice relationship, but it’s not deep by any means.”

In my separate interviews with Susan and Matt, I noted that neither used a particular
word to describe the partnership; I prompted both of them by asking, “do you call it a
partnership, a project, a shared initiative?” Matt told me he thought that “collaboration or project
would be a better term” to describe the relationship than partnership. He went on to discuss how
the project helped him reduce the Township’s energy use and costs.

Susan on the other hand, responded, “It is a partnership” and went on to speak about how
“some of us on council are … wanting the [Township] to assume a greater leadership role in the
climate change issue” and the increasing costs of energy. She then spoke about the
interconnectedness of the University and the Township (“whether we like it or not”). It seemed
she viewed her relationship with Adam and Garrett as a strategic partnership that was
contextualized in the larger issue of university-township interdependence.

Organizational Structures

Organizations develop formal or informal structures that facilitate the work of its
members (Scott, 2003). In faculty-community partnerships, partners may explicitly discuss or
implicitly assume responsibilities for various tasks and functions, including decision-making
responsibilities, as a means by which to increase the efficiency or effectiveness of their shared
initiative. The STEP partnership did not establish a formal structure in which each partner assumed a formal role in the partnership, such as chair or treasurer. In part because there was little reason or impetus to establish formal organizational structures: their shared initiative was well-defined, but limited, with regard to what partners intended to accomplish.

Enduring.

The four-semester project was developed as a complete and comprehensive stand-alone project; a final product would be delivered to the Township, which could then use it to reduce emissions through procedural changes made by Matt, as the director of public works, and policy changes, introduced by Susan or Matt, to the Township council. Matt expected that “at the end of next (spring) semester, we should be able to turn things over to the [Township] so that they really have a great solid foundation to get their mitigation process going.” As stated earlier, Garrett and Adam had made it clear that their involvement ended with the completion and delivery of the series of reports.

Summary

Faculty and community partners maintained separate interests in the outcomes of the partnership, and therefore, held separate reasons for their commitment for partnering. The ESU partners, though interested in providing a useful report to the Township, ultimately, remained committed to facilitating their students’ work, and remained separate from the community partners’ commitment to implementing energy reduction policies and procedures. Likewise, the ST partners were happy that their partnership facilitated student learning, but they themselves were not committed to the partnership as an educational opportunity, but rather as an opportunity to serve the Township. It appeared that though partners were very successful in meeting both interests, partners developed the expectation that they would work autonomously on their
respective projects, consulting with one another as their work required. Although Garrett and Adam were willing to continue to “look over their shoulders” and contribute their expertise to the Township, they did not establish the partnership as a lasting and organizational-like entity. The partnership was focused on meeting certain objectives, not developing a long-term relationship.

**Summary - STEP**

The Shafer Township Energy Project was an initiative developed by individuals who felt their work in the partnership fostered their organizations’ missions, and was, hence, a part of their professional work. Partners approached the partnership primarily from their work roles, as educators, directors, or councilpersons, and out of a sense of professional obligation, to educate (Adam and Garrett), to serve the interests of the Township (Susan and Matt), including its citizens and the environment (Matt), to represent the interests of environmentally conscious citizens (Susan). Although they wanted to help the place in which they lived to “do good,” Adam and Garrett did not approach the partnership as vested community members and advocates. Instead, they viewed their service roles as helping to improve the state, nation and world as a whole, one community at a time.

Both the faculty and community partners seemed to approach their work together as a “one and done” partnership; after they had finished their one set of projects, they would be done with the partnership. This view of the partnership seemed to limit partners’ conversations to topics related only to project logistics, such as the immediate needs of the project (e.g., data collection, report dissemination). Partners did not develop plans for extending the life of the partnership to accommodate additional needs or interests. Furthermore, partners followed a predominantly client-consultant style of communication; Adam and Garrett presented proposals
and ideas to Matt and Susan, and Matt and Susan provided their input and preferences. Adam and Garrett served as experts who facilitated the development of a final product, and Matt and Susan provided necessary input or access to data.

Overall, the partnership Adam, Garrett, Matt, and Susan initiated did not develop a sense of shared identity or evolve to include plans for future projects together, despite their success in accomplishing their respective goals. Though past success may yield new plans for building future successes, partners did not seem interested in prolonging their partnership beyond the four semesters. Adam and Garrett’s plans went beyond the Shafer Township; they hoped to develop similar inventories and energy reports for other townships throughout the region and state. They believed they could apply the same service-learning model elsewhere to help other municipalities to reduce their energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. Adam told me that he was “trying to do the right thing by climate change” and that he felt he could apply his efforts locally because he “want[ed] to see where [he lives] do the right thing;” he also added, however, that he was “just as committed” to other helping other towns and regions. Adam and Garrett felt they would help out as they could, but that their time was best spent elsewhere. Adam explained, “Of course, we’ll be looking over their shoulder and keep in contact, but we’re not going to work on it anymore. The idea is to move to other entities, like maybe the townships around the [Township].”

The STEP partnership was only one of several partnerships Matt had developed with other faculty members and administrators at ESU. In each of my interviews with faculty and community partners, participants described additional joint projects developed between ESU and ST. For example, Susan described another project Matt developed with an ESU faculty member regarding transportation issues immediately after I explained to her the topic of my study. Partners also told me about another cost and personnel sharing project between ESU and ST in
the meeting I observed. In our interview, Matt explained that the Township was “really linked at the hip” with ESU with regard to its population and physical infrastructure; they worked to benefit each other through sharing costs and services. In large part, STEP was a small piece of a much larger partnership. Matt described it,

Well, [ESU facilities] and the township have a good working relationship on a – and we have to -- number of fronts. We share wastewater treatment at the [Eastern State] plant. We obviously have a keen interest in traffic control in and around the township, and how changes they make on campus may affect traffic in our neighborhoods or [township] streets.

Beyond working with the facilities office, Matt had developed relationships with faculty and staff at ESU. He was involved with various faculty members in the College of Agriculture and the Department of Landscape Architecture, to developing strategies to remove organics from wastewater, to design walkways and gardens to channel rainwater runoff, and to research green-roof architecture as a future possibility for municipal buildings. So although he felt that his partnership with Adam and Garrett was important, it was just one of a number of partnerships he maintained with the university to support his own work in his position as director of public works. Matt and Susan hoped they could continue to draw expertise from ESU after the energy project was completed, whether it was from Adam and Garrett, or it was from other faculty and staff at the university.
CHAPTER 6: REFUGEE AND IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

This chapter is a case study analysis of a service-learning partnership between a Wilken College (WC) professor and a community partner who initially worked for the Refugee and Immigration Center (RIC), but continued the partnership when she became the director of adult education at City Schools (CSD). First, I share an overview of the history of the partnership. Next, I describe the identities of the individual partners and their employing organizations. I then present key themes regarding the content and process of partners’ communications with each other. Fifth, I discuss the extent to which a partnership identity was developed and its characteristics. Finally, I provide a summary of the case study.

Partnership Overview

Caroline, a professor at WC and a scholar of refugee and immigration demography, initiated a relationship with the Refugee and Immigration Center (alternately referred to as the Center) nearly a decade before the start of this study. Caroline wanted to initiate service-learning projects for her students believing they would improve students’ understanding of issues related to refugee resettlement. Having no previous contact with the Center, Caroline called the Center’s director of volunteers and inquired about appropriate opportunities for student involvement either as part of a course or as independent study. They met in person, learned about each other’s work, and brainstormed potential service-learning opportunities that involved her classes and the Center’s staff and clients.

In years subsequent to that initial meeting, Caroline met Jessica, the director of adult education, with whom she developed various service-learning opportunities for dozens of WC students at the Center. The majority of students’ service-learning activities involved providing assistance to ESL (English as a second language) instructors with whom Jessica “liaised” on
behalf of Caroline. In addition to serving the ESL program, Jessica facilitated other types of projects. For example, students took individual and family portraits for clients as part of a cultural awareness program, helped tutor clients in their efforts to become naturalized citizens, conducted focus groups with clients to help inform the Center’s development of programs, assisted in writing proposals for grants and other forms of funding, home-tutored parents in ESL instruction, facilitated a collaborative crafts project with clients (e.g., an interpretative quilt), and provided data processing and organization of archival materials for the Center’s administrative staff. Typically, the WC students enrolled in a service-learning course dedicated four hours (two hours of travel and two hours of service) for 10 weeks at the Center as part of course requirements.

In 2005, the City School District (CSD) took over funding of the adult education program and Jessica officially became an employee of the local school system rather than RIC. Despite the administrative changes, Jessica’s office and program remained in the Center. She essentially continued the same services for the same clients and interacted with her same RIC colleagues from her office in the Center. She also maintained her service-learning partnership with Caroline.

Several years after Caroline started developing service-learning opportunities with Jessica, she also became personally engaged in serving the Center as a “public intellectual” (Caroline’s words), someone who applies her intellectual expertise to help address public matters or concerns. She participated as a presenter in the Center’s speaker series, conducted research on refugee and immigration demographics for the executive director, and wrote letters of support to help secure funding for the Center. Several years ago, Caroline’s relationship with the Center deepened when she accepted an invitation to join the RIC board of directors. At the same time, she became the director of the Institute for Community-Engaged Research (ICER) at Wilken
College. As a Center board member, Caroline became intimately involved in facilitating the direction and functioning of the Center, and as director of ICER, she became responsible for coordinating and supervising several students’ research projects and summer internships at RIC.

Although Caroline’s relationship with RIC was multifaceted (service-learning partner, public intellectual, and board member), this study focuses primarily on Caroline’s relationship with Jessica and their efforts to coordinate opportunities for WC students taking Caroline’s service-learning course. Although Jessica was an employee of the school district by the time I began research on the partnership, her interactions with Caroline occurred at the Center and the program for adult education remained consistent with the Center’s missions and values. Therefore, this study portrays Jessica as a member of the Center, even though she was officially employed by the school district. Also, at the time of this study, Caroline was not teaching a course on refugee and immigration policy, so she did not have students currently involved in a service-learning project at the Center. However, both Caroline and Jessica felt they would continue in the future to plan opportunities for WC students that benefited the refugee and immigrant community.

Table 4. RIP Partners’ Pseudonyms, Employers, Job Titles, and Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Organization, Job Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RIP</td>
<td>Caroline</td>
<td>WC, Geography Professor &amp; Director of ICER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>City Schools, Director of Adult Education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RIP</td>
<td>Refugee and Immigration Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSD</td>
<td>City School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIC</td>
<td>Refugee and Immigration Center (also referred to as the Center)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WC</td>
<td>Wilken College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICER</td>
<td>Institute for Community-Engaged Research (at Wilken College)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Partners’ Social Identities**

In this section, I describe Caroline (the WC professor) and Jessica (a RIC staff member), two partners directly involved in facilitating WC students’ service-learning projects. I describe
the positions and roles of each partner to help the reader understand how partners’ viewed their professional and boundary-spanning roles and their reasons for joining the service-learning partnership.

**Caroline**

Caroline discussed her role in the service-learning partnership with Jessica primarily as an educator and member of the regional community in which she lived. In her role as an educator, she integrated service-learning experiences into her courses to enhance her students’ understanding of how a nonprofit organization administers programs to assist refugee and immigrants. Caroline told me she felt compelled to initiate the partnership because “it was so directly related to what [she] was teaching.” She felt service-learning provided students “an opportunity to see their concepts and theories” developed in class “tested” and “played out,” and she “hear[d] from the students how [service] makes their learning more meaningful.” Further, she added, “Well, it’s kind of the only way I can teach is through multiple relationships and spaces for relevance…. I have the sense that student learning is deeper and richer so I think it’s an effective pedagogy.” Although Caroline was committed to serving the Center, she told me that she would discontinue the service-learning partnership, specifically, if she felt it was not contributing to students’ education. She said,

The fact that it enhances their learning is what sustains me to continuing [sic]. I mean, let’s face it, if they were having lousy experiences up there, I’d stop doing it. I’d stay friends with [Jessica], but if it wasn’t working, wasn’t appreciated by the students in my classroom, I wouldn’t do it. So if [the students] report that this really adds to their learning, that sustains it.

Although Caroline did not establish specific learning objectives for students’ involvement at the
Center, Caroline believed that their participation would expose them to how an organization for refugee resettlement “unfolds and is implemented.”

Caroline also described herself as someone who wanted to “give back” by serving her regional community. She served the community through her service-learning partnership with Jessica, as well as through additional relationships she developed with other staff at the Center. As a scholar, Caroline used the region in which the Center was located a case study for her research; she wanted to understand the demographic impact of refugee resettlement. In her role as a scholar and expert, Caroline also acted as a consultant for the Center, meeting with the executive director to inform his work. At times, the executive asked Caroline to provide research, interpret research, and provide letters of recommendations for grant applications. Caroline explained that she felt that her scholarship “would probably be interesting to both officials in [the city], as well as to the [Center], so it was a dimension of public scholarship.”

Several years prior to my study, Caroline took an administrative role as the director of WC’s Institute for Community-Engaged Research (ICER). She explained that her “job now through [the Institute was] to institutionally grow the program.” Caroline viewed her administrative role as an advocate for community-engaged learning and research projects, including service-learning. Reflecting on the legacy she hoped to leave behind, Caroline stated:

Frankly, if when I retire, and we haven’t grown and really taken a huge step into service-learning, regardless of the individual teaching I’ve done, I will feel a total failure because you have to have institutional change and commitment to leave a sustainable program in place.

In her administrative role, Caroline facilitated summer internships and independent studies for students at RIC, and helped several faculty colleagues connect with Center staff to develop short-
term service and service-learning projects. Caroline’s administrative role, therefore, allowed her to establish programs with RIC in addition to her own service-learning courses.

As a result of her applied scholarship and involvement at the Center, Caroline was invited to serve on the Center’s board of directors, and she accepted. She felt her board membership was a “form of civic engagement [that was both] personal and professional.” It drew on the “synergies” of her professional scholarship and her personal desire to “give back.” Caroline summarized, “I have expertise that I think can benefit the organization and it’s a way of being involved in the community in which I live.”

Although Caroline had several points of contact with the Center in her roles as educator, administrator, public intellectual, and board member, she approached her service-learning partnership with Jessica primarily as an educator and vested community member. Caroline spoke about the importance of differentiating between her various roles at the Center because of potential “conflicts of interest” in her roles as teacher, researcher, and Center board member. She told me she could not ask students to conduct certain kinds of research at the Center, such as focus groups with staff members or clients, because of its potential to surface issues that she would have to address as a board member. Caroline reiterated that her partnership with Jessica was “all about teaching.” She kept her relationship with Jessica simple; they facilitated service-learning projects for students that helped Jessica’s adult education program. Ultimately, Caroline developed a multifaceted relationship with the Center in her roles as educator, scholar, administrator, public intellectual and board member, but approached her relationship with Jessica simply as an educator and community member.

Jessica

Jessica, the program manager of adult education, was one of the first RIC staff members
Caroline spoke with to identify and coordinate service-learning opportunities for WC students. Jessica managed the adult education program, sought funding for its ESL courses and other activities, and coordinated volunteers. As noted previously, Jessica continued to work in the Center and interact with colleagues at the Center, although her position was financed by the school district and no longer by the Center.

Jessica viewed her service-learning partnership with Caroline as part of her professional role as the director of adult education programs. As director, she was responsible for identifying ways that volunteers could serve her program and its staff. On behalf of her partnership with Caroline, Jessica worked with ESL-certified instructors to identify those who were interested in having students assist them in their classes for 10 weeks. Although this activity was a natural extension of her work in the adult education program, Jessica felt personally committed to facilitating students’ work because it helped them to understand the experiences of refugees and immigrants in the area, and it helped her to serve her clients. As is common with many human service professionals (McLean & Andrew, 2000), Jessica felt a personal, as well as professional, commitment to improving the lives of others. She “definitely [could not] imagine not being involved” with helping refugees and immigrants and told me, “I am very involved with it at a very personal level.” Ultimately, Jessica partnered with Caroline to facilitate service-learning projects for WC students in her role as the director of adult education programs, but also as one who cared deeply about serving the refugee community.

Summary

Caroline and Jessica approached the partnership in their roles as professionals, Caroline as an educator and Jessica as the director of an adult education program. Both of the partners also believed their partnership was fulfilled their roles as vested members of the community who
cared deeply about helping refugees and immigrants to resettle in their region. Although Caroline served roles as a scholar and public intellectual through other relationships she had developed with employees at the Center and her involvement in the Center’s board of directors, she seemed to approach her service-learning partnership with Jessica more simply as an educator and vested community member.

Organizational Identities of Partners’ Employing Institutions

Faculty and community partners, though individual actors, may view their boundary-spanning roles as a component of their professional work within their employing institutions. Institutional membership and expectations are likely to influence how members interact with each other, as well as those outside of the organizations, in their boundary-spanning roles (Sebring, 1977). Wilken College’s identity and structures for supporting community-based teaching projects, as described by select senior administrators, were described in Chapter 3. However, a professor’s perception may differ from those of administrators. Therefore, I rely on my interviews with Caroline to understand the extent to which she believed service-learning, and community-based scholarship in general, was core to WC’s institutional identity. Next, I describe the mission of RIC from Jessica’s perspective and how her work helped to meet the core purposes of the Center.

Wilken College

Senior administrators at Wilken College felt that community-engaged learning helped serve the core mission of the college “to train leaders and responsible citizens to live and work in society” (paraphrased by WC’s vice president). Several administrators spoke about the development of the ICER to help encourage and support faculty to become engaged in the local community through their teaching and scholarship. The institute offered faculty members
administrative and financial support for their community-engaged research and teaching initiatives.

I asked Caroline how service was defined and supported at WC. She told me that the promotion of “civic engagement and engagement of students [through] ICER” was in WC’s strategic plan…. [though it was] not represented in [WC’s] faculty and tenure guidelines.” To a large extent, the mission of ICER was to expand the number of faculty members involved in community-based scholarship and teaching. A primary mission of ICER, Caroline told me, was “encourage research and scholarship [that was] relevant to [the] region.”

Faculty members, particularly junior colleagues, Caroline felt, were also generally supportive of community-engaged scholarship. Caroline told me about one faculty member who was recently hired in part for her community-engaged research and teaching practices. She felt “these young folks” were more likely to support and practice service-learning and community-based scholarship because of their experiences and changes within academia more broadly. They were more likely to have been exposed to research methodologies that incorporated community members as co-collaborators or community-engaged pedagogies while in their undergraduate and graduate programs.

Caroline was optimistic about increased support and interest in service-learning from her faculty colleagues, but worried that, despite the efforts of the ICER, service-learning would not become fully accepted, and thus truly institutionalized. Senior level administrators, including the president, vice president, dean and associate dean of faculty, and some faculty members encouraged or practiced community-based teaching and scholarship, Caroline felt, however, that because community-based learning was not integrated in promotion and tenure policies at WC, some faculty avoided or were dissuaded from implementing service-learning in their courses.
From Caroline’s perspective, promoting students’ civic engagement was an institutional goal that was specifically named in WC’s strategic plan, and the ICER was developed to encourage and assist faculty to address this aspect of student development. Although some faculty colleagues supported and engaged in service-learning, it was not yet incorporated into promotion and tenure guidelines in ways that rewarded faculty for the time and effort they put into facilitating the projects and partnerships.

**Refugee and Immigration Center**

The Refugee and Immigration Center was established in the 1980s by a religious group to assist a large influx of refugees into the region. The Center helped refugees to identify local, state, and federal resources and provided essential programs, such as English language classes and financial planning services. In the mid 2000s, the Board of Director’s re-envisioned the mission of the Center to respond to changing and expanding government policies, refugee and immigration populations, and the needs of local community members and businesses. At the time of my study, the mission had expanded from assisting refugee and immigration populations through direct service to include improving cultural understanding and diversity training throughout the city. Refugee services were coordinated by Center staff, and included job placement, resettlement assistance, education and professional training courses, citizenship courses, and translation services.

Teaching refugees and immigrants to speak, read, and write in English was an essential service that the Center provided for many years. As described earlier, the Center worked with the local school district to seek earmarked funding for the program from the local and state governments. The Center and school district agreed that despite changes in how the program was funded, Jessica, the Center employee responsible for the ESL program, would continue to run the
program from within the Center, but as an employee of the school district, rather than the Center. The program’s mission statement closely mirrored the Center’s statement. The adult education program’s statement read: “To enable adult learners to be literate, productive and successful in the workplace, home, and community by delivering responsible adult education program services.” The Center’s mission statement was (paraphrased): “To promote the well-being of refugee and immigrant individuals and families by providing individual services and community-centered activities that facilitate opportunity and understanding.” For the purposes of this study, I considered Jessica as an organizational member of the Center, as well as the city school district, because she remained in the same building, running the same program, and coordinating her program activities with the same colleagues within the Center.

Summary

Direct service to immigrants was the essential purpose of the Center and any activity or program that helped refugees and immigrants assisted the Center in meeting this core goal. Jessica felt that her work with Caroline was directly related to the purpose of her program and the Center. Direct service to community members, however, was neither a direct goal, nor the sole purpose of WC. The Institute was created to encourage and help support faculty members to involve students in community-based experiences, such as service-learning, independent studies, or other forms of undergraduate research.

Substance of Partners’ Communications

Effective discourse is an essential, but challenging, element of collaborations (Hardy et al., 2005). The topics addressed (Foss, et al, 2003; Gelmon, Holland, Seifer, Shinnamon, & Connors, 1998) and the style of talk (patterns in tone, format, and process) (Hardy et al., 2005) may affect the likelihood that partners create a lasting and effective collaboration. In this section,
I describe key themes regarding what (explicit talk) and how (style or process of talk) the faculty and community partners’ in the RIP partnership spoke to each other. Best practices in faculty-community partnerships suggest that partners should openly and explicitly discuss key aspects of the shared project, including specific roles, responsibilities, and resources. Open negotiation can help to avoid misunderstandings, wasted time, and hurt feelings.

**Program Needs**

Before the start of a semester in which she taught a course related to immigration and refugee issues, Caroline visited Jessica at the Center to discuss potential projects. Caroline explained that the needs of the Center served as a primary focus in setting up the projects.

… And that’s a very clear role that’s set out for them; they’re to assist the professional staff. And if that in fact puts them in touch with refugees and they get to be friends, that’s great, that’s icing on the cake, but they’re up there to provide labor.

Caroline wanted to ensure that WC students enhanced the services provided by the adult education program; she did not want them to become an additional responsibility or burden on the ESL staff.

**Student Preparation**

Caroline and Jessica discussed the importance of preparing students for their work at the Center. Caroline invited Jessica to visit the WC classroom at the start of each semester to provide students with an overview of the Center’s mission, its programs, and the clients they serve. Caroline said, “The students come in very well prepared. First of all, they know something about refugee policy, so they understand the substance of what’s going on.”

**Student Supervision**

Caroline and Jessica also discussed the extent of the adult education instructors’
responsibilities for supervising WC students in the program and how problems, should they arise, would be handled. Caroline insisted that Jessica and the instructors understand that “[she] will be the one supervising the students and if there’s a problem with the student, [Jessica and the instructors] don’t have to… yell at that student, not that that ever happens, it never really happens, but [that she will.” When concerns or issues arose concerning students’ behaviors in the program (which was rare), Jessica called Caroline who addressed them with her student(s).

**Resources**

Although many lists of best practices for faculty-community partnerships suggest that faculty should talk about resources, this topic was not discussed between Caroline and Jessica. Most times, WC students helped ESL instructors to tutor students, an activity that did not require additional resources. At times when students were involved in projects that did require resources, such as a quilt project, responsibility was left to Center staff members who were overseeing the initiative. In a sense, Jessica and Caroline’s conversations were simple; they spoke mainly of the projects in which the students might be involved. Students themselves were the primary resource discussed.

**Recognition**

Additionally, neither of the partners spoke about having discussed issues of recognition or credit with each other, and they did not think it was a problem. The absence of talk about resources and recognition did not seem to affect the partners’ relationship negatively in any way. Rather, the partners had developed a close relationship in which they co-taught students and shared their personal experiences. Caroline and Jessica trusted each other to raise issues when they needed to be discussed and to help each other in their professional roles and missions as educator and service provider, respectively.
Summary

Caroline’s and Jessica’s conversations, for the most part, addressed how WC students could assist instructors in the adult education program. Caroline made it explicitly clear that she was responsible for addressing any issues related to students; she told Jessica she did not want the staff to feel that the students were a burden. Caroline invited Jessica to visit the WC campus to talk to students about her work and clients at the adult education program in the Center.

Partners’ Communication Styles

Faculty and community partners communicate to each about how they view the relationship and each other through the words they choose, as well as the processes they follow in planning and executing the partnerships’ activities. Through their communication styles, partners may build consensus or establish separateness. For example partners who work cooperatively by listening to and incorporating each other’s ideas emphasize common interests and equality (Hardy et al., 2005). Caroline and Jessica worked together on their service-learning initiatives in a collaborative and friendly manner: they (a) shared decision-making responsibilities related to the service-learning projects, and (b) inquired about each other’s work and personal lives as a regular part of their conversations.

Shared Decision-Making

Caroline and Jessica shared power when making decisions about when to partner, as well as the choosing the service-learning projects. For example, when Caroline was first establishing her service-learning initiatives with Jessica, Caroline initiated the conversations, asking Jessica if there were appropriate opportunities for her students. In recent years, however, Jessica initiated the conversation, asking Caroline “when are your students coming up?” Jessica told me that she was “hoping that next spring [she would] be able to get some students to come over” to the
Center. Some semesters, Caroline felt “she sometimes wanted a semester off.” She felt exhausted from the extra effort of coordinating and supervising students’ service-learning experiences, but she continued to incorporate them in her teaching because of Jessica’s interest and the needs of the Center. Caroline, therefore, allowed Jessica’s interest in having students volunteer at the Center influence her decision of when to partner, and vice versa.

Together they decided how to identify appropriate projects to propose to WC students. Caroline smiled when she said that she and Jessica “actually contest[ed]” over whose interests should take priority. She related to me one of her “many” conversations in which Jessica responded to her question of, “[w]hat do you guys need done?” by saying, “[w]ell, what do your students find interesting?” Projects were identified in an open and integrative way and decided jointly.

Furthermore, Caroline and Jessica shared the responsibility of introducing students to the Center. Jessica visited each class at the start of the year. She told me, “I would go over and speak to the classes a few times talking about refugees in general, the process of becoming a refugee, and the experiences they go through.” Jessica not only served as a guest speaker, but she also involved students in making informed decisions about the projects with which they could help. She told them, “If you have particular interests and talents that you want to develop, we’re happy to have you” incorporate them into your projects. Caroline remarked that she and Jessica formed “a nice balancing act” because Jessica was “interested in having the students provide a real infusion of creativity into some of the teaching programs,” whereas her own “philosophy always [was], ‘you should do what the teachers need done within a classroom or program.’” Jessica not only shared the responsibility of educating the students by visiting the classroom, but she also was given the opportunity by Caroline to help shape their choices about which experiences
interested the WC students.

**Friendly Talk**

Caroline and Jessica’s conversations were never purely about service-learning projects; they interweaved thoughts and questions about their personal and professional lives as well. When I asked both partners to describe their typical conversations with each other when working together on a service-learning project, each explained that it was an informal and friendly relationship. Both Jessica and Caroline described their interactions in terms of friendship. “It’s not so much on the professional level as it is just sharing experiences, talking about what is happening;” “We act more like friends now,” Jessica continued. Caroline also described the nature of their relationship as friends: “these are my friends now. These are not terribly formal relationships; they’re informal.” She, like Jessica, told me about the many conversations they shared about their families and professional work over the years.

**Summary**

The partners openly and willingly cooperated with each other; they shared information about the students’ activities and behaviors, and responded to each other’s input and suggestions. Caroline regularly contacted Jessica throughout the semesters she sent students to work in the Center. She checked-in, by phone or e-mail, to make sure her students were fulfilling their responsibilities. The partners agreed at the start of the semester that Caroline was, ultimately, responsible for students’ behaviors while they were on site and she wanted to be sure they were meeting the Center staffs’ expectation.

Different styles of talk may affect whether a partnership develops a coherent identity that is shared by all of its members (Hardy et al., 2005). In this case, partners seemed to follow collaborative processes whereby they shared power regarding decisions about when and on
which projects to partner. They also shared responsibility for introducing the students and
guiding their work at the Center. Overall, they treated one another as friends. Faculty and
community partners who work collaboratively (e.g., sharing power regarding key decisions in
the partnership) may be more likely to develop a shared perception of the partnership as a
集体 entity (Hardy et al., 2005).

**Partnership Identity**

The identity of a faculty-community partnership may be developed to the extent that
partners share a coherent understanding of its core purposes, norms for behaviors, and
organizational structures that support and perpetuate the activities of the partnership. As initially
conceived in my conceptual framework, a partnership identity extends beyond interpersonal
relationships and exists beyond the individuals as a collectively defined group or organization. A
partnership identity, therefore, is similar to an organizational identity in that it exists if members
of the partnership have developed a shared sense of its core purposes, and norms exist as to how
members and newcomers should behave in their roles as partners. Formal structures, such as
designated roles and responsibilities, may also be established to facilitate the work of the
partners in the partnership.

Although I had originally intended to study only partnerships that involved teams of
faculty and community partners (at least two from each organization), the case presented in this
chapter includes a partnership that involved only one faculty partner, Caroline, and her
community partner, Jessica. Although Caroline was involved with several members of the Center
as part of her own public service, RIC board responsibilities, and as ICER director, she worked
with Jessica, exclusively, to facilitate service-learning projects. I sought, through this case, to
understand whether a partnership identity could exist between a very limited number of partners
(two), and if so, what that identity looked like.

The following sections describe how Caroline and Jessica viewed the core purpose(s) of their work together, norms they developed working with each other over the years, and the extent to which they developed organizational structures to sustain the partnership in coming years and to expand the partnership to include additional WC faculty and students. I also describe Caroline and Jessica’s reactions when I asked them, directly, whether, from their perspectives, the partnership had a partnership identity.

Mission

Caroline and Jessica both believed in the service and educational missions of their service-learning projects. Although Caroline did not have specific learning goals for students’ service at the Center, she believed the “experiential component” of her course was important for students to not only see the “human face” of the issues they studied in readings and class, but also to witness the “administration of refugee resettlement and how it operates.” She also admitted that her deep interest in supporting the Center compelled her to continue to develop service-learning experiences, even when she felt she did not have the time or energy to facilitate them during a certain semester. Her interest in serving the Center’s purpose, therefore, seemed to guide her decision to partner as much as her desire to enhance her students’ learning through experiential education.

Jessica also embraced the dual and complementary purposes of education (enhancing students’ awareness and understanding of refugee and immigration issues) and service (activities that genuinely helped the Center staff to meet their missions). She visited the students in their classroom and wanted the service projects to be interesting and fulfilling to them personally. She was interested in fostering and incorporating their interests and creativity into her and her
colleagues’ work at the Center. When I asked Caroline about whether they shared each others’ purposes when they first partnered, she believed that each understood and embraced the dual purposes from the very start.

**Norms**

Norms are informal, often implicit, rules for behaviors that guide the actions and interactions of persons belonging to a group or organization (Scott, 2003). Different than interpersonal relationships in which individuals develop ways of talking and expectations about communication, group norms as informal rules that may be sanctioned or reinforced by others in the partnership, such as one might find in an organizational setting (Ellemers, Spears & Doosje, 1999). For example, if an individual who is part of a group fails to appropriately recognize the work of one of the partners in a public presentation, other partners may reprimand the errant partner in an attempt to re-establish the informal rules that govern the actions and interactions of members of the partnership. If the partnership exists between two people only then there are no other members to intervene to re-calibrate or re-enforce the informal rules. Any person who intervenes on the offended partners’ behalf does so on the basis of ethics or professional code, but not as a member who has the right or obligation to maintain a certain, if implicit, code of conduct. Caroline and Jessica’s partnership, therefore, seemed incapable of developing partnership norms. Instead, they developed relationship norms, or expectations about how friends and colleagues would treat one another.

Caroline and Jessica developed and relied on their personal relationship, which was both friendly and collegial. As described earlier, the two partners felt they were friends, and therefore, approached each other as such when determining the projects and facilitating student’s experiences. They spoke about their shared professional work and interests (‘At different times,
each of us sort of the expert, depending on what we’re trying to do” – Jessica), but they also spoke about their families. No organizational or partnership norms developed, however; the relationship remained intimate and interpersonal between the two partners. Caroline listed some best practices she would suggest to her WC colleagues if they wanted to partner with the Center for a service-learning project (such as listen the needs of community partners, honor schedules, meet person-to-person when setting up a project, and show respect), but did not believe that others outside of Jessica and herself had established norms for behavior.

**Distinct**

Caroline reflected that her relationship with Center staff had not expanded to involve other WC faculty or staff members who have worked with the Center. Instead, she developed her own “set of relationships” with various members of the Center. She questioned the applicability of the term “partnership” to her work at the Center because she felt it was something that she had developed on her own and which did not extend beyond herself; “It is really so contained in the form of my work up there and nobody else’s.” Caroline reasoned that “because it [was] driven by academic projects” her work with Jessica was not inter-institutional. She questioned how her personal relationship could be considered as an inter-organizational initiative when it was just her relationship that linked the two organizations, the college and the Center. She suggested her motivations were linked to teaching better, but “what makes it work is my friendship with Jessica and my friendships (with other Center staff) and the fact that students have done good work up there.” Upon further reflection, Caroline offered that she considered her work with Jessica a “service-learning partnership.” Jessica reflected Caroline’s thoughts in her belief that the partnership was really a direct and interpersonal relationship, not a collaborative entity that might extend beyond them. She described her relationship as a partnership, but felt that the partnership
was “more with [Caroline]” and not with WC, generally.

Organizational Structures

Organizational structures are systems that coordinate and facilitate the work of a collective. They may include tables of organizational and official roles. Caroline and Jessica did not follow or develop formal procedures for partnering such as assigning titles (e.g., chair or co-chair) or signing contracts that stated the purpose, activities, and outcomes of the proposed initiatives (although this had become standard procedure for other potential service and research projects since Caroline first collaborated with the Center). At one point, Caroline relied on students and staff associated with WC’s volunteer center, but stopped because she felt she wanted more control over the students’ and their projects.

Enduring

The service-learning partnership between Jessica and Caroline was expected to last as long as either one of them was interested and had the time to coordinate the students’ projects. That is, the partnership was dependent on both of their participation and was not expected to continue if Caroline discontinued her involvement. Caroline told me “it’s just me, there isn’t anybody else” in a sustained relationship with Jessica or her other partners at the Center.

Summary

When asked to describe the purpose of the partnership, Caroline and Jessica spoke about both serving the Center’s needs and educating WC students. Caroline and Jessica appeared to embrace each other’s missions, creating a single comprehensive mission between them. They also developed norms between one another relative to treating one another as co-equals, colleagues, and personal friends. Ultimately, Caroline and Jessica felt that their partnership was a relationship, not an organizational-like entity because the partnership was comprised of the two
of them and their shared interests only. The partnership neither needed, nor relied on organizational structures, such as support staff or others means for facilitating the work of the partnership. The partners, it seemed, developed a close relationship that facilitated successful service-learning projects that benefited the Center’s clients, but they did not develop a shared group-like identity.

**Summary - RIP**

The case study presented here differed from the others (presented in Chapters 4, 5, 7 and 8) in that it was a partnership that involved only one faculty member and one community partner. Caroline (the WC professor) developed a multifaceted relationship with different members of the Center. In addition to developing a series of service-learning opportunities for her students with Jessica (director of adult education), she also provided her own expertise and energy in service to the Center (guest speaker, research consultant, member of the RIC board of directors). Caroline’s relationships tended to be personal as well as collegial. With Jessica, she discussed projects available to students and her responsibilities as the students’ primary supervisor, but also allowed Jessica to act as a co-educator, visiting the students in their classroom and figuring out which projects would interest or benefit the students most. Although Caroline’s involvement at the Center and her relationship with Jessica spanned nearly a decade, no steps were taken to develop the partnership as an organizational entity that included others and contained structures to ensure its continuation past either of their involvement. Ultimately, neither Caroline nor Jessica felt their partnership had developed an organizational sense of “we” through their close relationship. Ultimately, the service-learning partnership was fully contained in the partners’ relationship with each other; Caroline seemed to keep separate her service-learning partnership from her other
relationships with the Center, as board member, ICER director and liaison, and public intellectual.
CHAPTER 7: TYLER COUNTY VITA PARTNERSHIP

This chapter provides within case analysis of a partnership that was developed by one set of Wilken University (WU) faculty and local community partners, but then transferred to another set of partners within the same organizations. Partners established and were responsible for running a volunteer income tax assistance (VITA) program. This chapter provides: (1) an overview of the partnership as it was developed and then changed membership, (2) descriptions of partners who identified themselves as members of their employing organizations and the partnership; (3) descriptions of how the partnership fit into the mission and work of partners’ employing organizations; (4) analysis of partners’ conversations, their contents and styles; (5) a description of the partnership’s identity, its core purposes, norms, and organizational structures to support the work of the entity, and (6) a summary of the within case analysis.

Partnership Overview

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program for Tyler County (herein referred to as VITA) was established in the fall of 2002 as a partnership between the Internal Revenue System (IRS), Wilken College (WC), the Tyler County division of the Department of Social Services (DSS), and the Community Action Partnership (CAP) for Tyler County. Samantha (a Wilken economics professor), Marta (the division director of Family and Youth Services at CAP), and Jacob (DSS Commissioner of Tyler County) had just finished a collaborative yearlong study on the impact of welfare reform in Tyler County when Jacob suggested they begin a new project, a VITA program for low-income residents of Tyler County. VITA is an

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3 The IRS developed the VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) program to allow community groups to help the working poor file for earned income tax credits (EITC), an anti-poverty credit that is often unclaimed due to lack of awareness or concerns about being audited. To differentiate between two case studies in which partners were involved in VITA programs, I refer to partnership in Tyler County as VITA (this chapter) and the one in Umpachene County as EITC (Chapter 8).
IRS-supported, anti-poverty initiative that assists low-income, working families in applying for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a tax refund given by the state and federal governments.

The three individuals agreed to establish partnership for the purposes of organizing and supervising a VITA site in Tyler County. Samantha, Marta, and Jacob worked together to complete IRS application forms, establish tax preparation sites and management protocols, and gather necessary resources for tax preparation, including computers, printers, volunteers, and tax preparation supervisors who were certified, or willing to become certified, by the IRS.

Jacob recruited Elaine, director of Administrative Services at DSS, to serve as the primary coordinator for the VITA partnership. Though it was not officially a part of her work at DSS, Jacob allowed Elaine to use her regular office hours for her VITA work. By the end of the first year, Samantha was appointed as director of WC’s newly formed Institute for Community-Engaged Research (ICER) and allocated funds from ICER to pay Elaine a modest hourly wage. Additionally, Leslie, an IRS employee and senior tax specialist, was assigned to the VITA partnership in to support the program, including tax software and advice for how to organize the sites and tax returns.

Samantha asked students in her classes and the economic department to participate. Participation required they take a weekend tax preparers’ course and commit to volunteering several hours each week to prepare taxes at three sites in Tyler County. Although Samantha felt the experience was a form of service-learning because students’ practiced math skills and gained deeper understanding of individual and family economics (her main area of scholarship), she did not require service from her students as part of her course curriculum. She felt that seeking “volunteers [was] better than subscription.” Samantha also recruited several faculty colleagues,

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4 Leslie was not available to participate in this study.
including Tina (an assistant professor in economics at Wilken), to help her supervise students’ tax preparation at the different sites.

By the time I began my study in spring 2007, Samantha, Marta, and Jacob were no longer directly involved in facilitating the work of the partnership. Samantha took a senior administrative position at WC and was no longer director of ICER. Tina stepped into Samantha’s role as the student coordinator and WC representative. Marta remained in her same position at CAP, but asked Karen, the manager of Family and Youth Services, to take over responsibilities tied to VITA. Jacob also remained in his senior administrative position at DSS, but did not remain involved after he helped to establish the partnership and Elaine’s role coordinating it. Furthermore, Samantha, then Tina, invited two student leaders to help facilitate the partnership’s work. They coordinated the student volunteers, including training, scheduling, transportation, and communication between the community agencies and the students, for which they received stipends from the ICER. Overall, the program was considered a success with over 35 students filing over 150 tax returns for working families in Tyler County in 2006. Clients of the VITA program received, on average, $2,005 in federal refunds and $454 in state refunds, or approximately 20 percent of their annual household income.
Table 5. VITA Partners' Pseudonyms, Employers, Job Titles, and Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Employer, Job Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VITA - Tyler County</td>
<td>Tina</td>
<td>WC, Economics Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Samantha</td>
<td>WC, Economics Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jacob</td>
<td>DSS, Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elaine</td>
<td>DSS, Director of Administrative Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lara</td>
<td>CAP, Division Director of Family &amp; Youth Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>CAP, Manager of Family and Youth Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leslie</td>
<td>IRS, Senior Tax Specialist, Stakeholder Partnerships, Education &amp; Communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Acronym

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WC</td>
<td>Wilken College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Department of Social Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAP</td>
<td>Community Action Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRS</td>
<td>Internal Revenue Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Partners in italics were no longer directly involved in the partnership in spring 2007*

**Partners’ Social Identities**

This study provides snapshot views of how partners perceive themselves as members of their employing organization and faculty-community partnerships. Therefore, case study analysis focuses only on those partners who were directly involved with the management of the VITA program in Tyler County during the 2006 tax year and does not include those who were previously involved. Partners included in within case analysis are Tina (WU professor), Karen (CAP manager of Youth and Family Services), and Elaine (DSS director of Administrative Services).

**Tina**

When I asked Tina to describe her reasons for being involved in the VITA partnership, she spoke of her roles as an educator and a community member. As an educator, Tina was already familiar with the synergies of learning about economics and volunteering in a VITA program. While in her doctoral studies, she prepared tax returns as a volunteer in a similar VITA program and she wanted to continue to support this type of initiative through her faculty work. She believed the program would benefit her students, as it had benefited her:
I just thought it was a great program to teach your students how to do taxes but then to have a use for their quantitative skills…. It’s a useful way to [for students to] say, ‘You know, I’m pretty good at math; [I’m] pretty good with numbers; [I’m] pretty good with people. This is a great way to put it all together to help people.’

Though she believed in the benefits of service for students’ understanding of economics, particularly tax laws and its effects on individual and family economics, Tina, like Samantha, did not require students enrolled in her courses to participate in the VITA program. Rather than practicing specifics skills as part of her course curriculum, she wanted to provide students an opportunity to apply their “quantitative skills” and to feel their education in economics was “useful.”

Though family economics was not an area of her research, Tina continued to supervise the administration and analysis of a survey that Samantha developed in the first year of the partnership. Students administered surveys at the end of their sessions with VITA clients. The survey asked clients about their economic behaviors, such as how they would use refunds from their earned income tax credits. One year, Tina and Samantha supervised a student who used the data for his honors thesis; the three co-authored a paper. Although Tina co-authored a published paper and received a research stipend from ICER, she did not anticipate meeting scholarly goals as a result of the partnership. She told me, “I think the scholarship side of it is probably bigger than I anticipated. I didn’t really think I would ever get any research out of it.” Tina rarely mentioned the survey and did not speak of the partnership as contributing to her scholarship during our two hour-long conversations. She mentioned the survey almost as a passing thought at the very end of our first meeting and discussed it largely in terms of providing data for student projects.
Tina’s work with the VITA-Tyler partnership is closely linked to her position as a Wilken faculty member, though her reasons for partnering was, ultimately, a “more personal” commitment:

I mean this is my community. I am not tenured. I don’t have time. I have kids and so I don’t really have time to go volunteer at the hospital or whatever it may be. I feel like this is my community service even though at some level, professionally, I am getting a reward for it. I can note it as part of my service to the university, but I think more importantly, to me personally, it is the really the only community service thing I do in my life. It may change - my kids get older, I don’t have to publish as much, that sort of thing... but I really do enjoy it and I don’t think I would do it if I didn’t really feel like, personally, it offered significant rewards. And, it’s fun for me!

Tina felt she combined her two roles of educator and community member. She felt her involvement in VITA was an effective way of “maximizing the return” on her own investment, time. She explained:

I’ve always felt, and I’ve learned this more as a result of this program, and Samantha has taught me this too, that I individually can do a lot, but using resources that already exist, you can do a whole lot more. So one person can actually make a big difference, but if you can get people to work together, people who have traditionally not worked together, bigger things. The thing takes on its own life and energy.

As a professor, Tina accessed students and laptop computers, both of which were valuable resources not readily available to her partners at DSS or CAP. She also hired two student leaders to help her coordinate students’ schedules and transportation. Tina viewed herself in the
partnership as both faculty and community member and believed that both roles were critical to her involvement in the partnership.

Karen

Karen became a fully involved member in 2006, though she had played a “support role” since 2002 when first joined CAP as an employee. In 2006, her supervisor at CAP and an original VITA partner asked Karen to supervise CAP’s involvement in the VITA partnership as part of her regular work duties as the manager of Youth and Family Services. Her new leadership role included supervising the administrative assistant who scheduled VITA client appointments and continuing the publicity campaign to get clients to sign up for the free tax preparation services.

Karen had just finished her first season as a lead partner in the VITA partnership when I interviewed her in spring 2007. She spoke of her involvement as one of her work responsibilities, as given by her supervisor. When I asked Karen for the reasons she became involved in the VITA partnership, she pointed out that is was “ultimately [her] job… [she] get[s] paid for doing it.” Karen quickly continued to explain to me her feelings about her job; it was not just a job, it was a personal mission to help people as well. Karen told me she was committed to serving community members in need and described to me her long history of community organizing. She said, “it’s part of who I am and what I do. . . So for me, participating in VITA is a part of who I am and my civic responsibility gene. . . It is my job, but I would be doing something else if I didn’t want to participate in these kinds of activities.” Karen, therefore, did not distinguish between her job and her personal role as a community organizer; she took a position at CAP because she was a community organizer.
Elaine

Elaine was the only current partner who had belonged to the VITA partnership since its inception and who was provided a stipend by ICER for her coordination and oversight of WC students’ training and tax preparations. She told me that when Jacob, Samantha, and Lara started organizing the partnership, Jacob asked her to join the partnership as the tax ‘expert,’ and she accepted. Elaine explained that her role in the partnership was as a tax preparation consultant. She coordinated training sessions for student volunteers, answered questions about tax preparation (in person if on the site, or by phone), and reviewed all tax forms before electronically filing them with the IRS.

As noted previously, Jacob allowed her to use DSS time to supervise the sites and training workshops each tax season even though her position as a VITA coordinator was not officially a part of her work at the DSS. The partnership, Elaine explained, was “outside of [her] job title.” Although DSS “donate[d]” no less than 30 hours of Elaine’s time each season to VITA (“as long as my work gets done for DSS, I can come and go for VITA”), Elaine considered her work with VITA her own personal initiative, not a DSS initiative. Elaine reasoned that no one else at DSS was capable of taking over her role in the VITA partnership because they didn’t have the “tax knowledge.” She surmised that her supervisor might allow the VITA partnership to use space in the DSS offices to provide tax assistance to their clients, but only if a DSS employee volunteered to supervise the use of the space.

Although she enjoyed her work with students, friendly relationships with VITA partners, and helping low-income community members, Elaine nevertheless experienced her partnership work as a personal commitment to serving her community. In addition to her work with the VITA sites, she also helped clients file their tax returns during her regular workday, and
visited several clients in their homes because they were homebound. In recent years, Elaine worried that as her responsibilities grew at DSS due to recent promotions, she would no longer have as much time to dedicate to the VITA partnership. She spoke about remaining involved, but finding another person to help with some of the more time-intensive duties, such as supervising the sites. Overall, Elaine served the partnership as a community member with tax preparation expertise.

**Summary**

Although the partnership fulfilled partners’ personal goals to improve the quality of life of community members in need, the extent to which the partnership was incorporated into partners’ professional work roles varied greatly. Coordinating student volunteers and supervising a VITA site was above and beyond Tina’s work responsibilities at WC and was largely a personal initiative. However, Tina was able to develop a line of research through the partnership and received a modest research stipend, funding for two student leaders to help coordinate the initiative, and funding to pay Elaine an hourly wage for supervising WC students and filing of all income tax returns done by student volunteers at the three sites. Karen’s work responsibilities at CAP included coordinating publicity and facilitating appointment scheduling on behalf of the VITA partnership. Although Elaine was permitted the use of her regular work day at DSS to organize and supervise VITA sites, her work with the partnership was an addition to her regular work responsibilities, for which she was paid.

**Organizational Identities of Partners’ Employing Institutions**

Descriptions of partners’ social identities, as related to their employing organizations and the VITA partnership were described in the previous section. In this section, I present partners’
views of their institutional identities. I also present how service was articulated as part of the institutions’ missions.

**Wilken College**

Support for faculty-community partnerships for student learning as described by senior administrators at Wilken College was discussed in Chapter 6. Briefly, administrators felt that student learning opportunities within the community helped the university to meet one of its core missions, to educate students for their future leadership roles in the public. The Institute was established several years earlier to help initiate faculty members’ community involvement through their teaching and scholarship.

Tina told me that her program was often lauded by WC’s president as an example of how professors were enhancing students’ education while also providing a valuable service to the community. She told me that the president “loves this program… she always knows how many tax returns we’re doing and how much money we’re giving back to the community” through tax returns. Tina continued, “So, it’s an easy thing for [the president] to go to alums and say, ‘we have this program… and say our students are learning how to do taxes… and returning $500,000 to 400 households in [Tyler] County.’” Tina also spoke the support she received for her community involvement from ICER, and its director, Caroline. She received a modest research stipend for her survey research with students on the VITA program. Overall, it appeared that Tina felt she was supporting the service and education missions of the college.

The emphasize on service seemed greater at the university level than at the department level. Tina told me that she not experience as much support from the economics department as she did from the college president and other senior-level administrators. She felt neither rewarded nor punished her for her work with VITA. For the most part, she felt free to spend her
time how she wanted, “as long as [she] fulfilled her teaching and research responsibilities.” Tina described her experience in the department:

I don’t think my colleagues in the department really understand what we do in the program. Nobody ever asks me about it. They know I do it and I think they think I’m a little crazy for doing it, because they probably think it’s a bigger time commitment than it is. I’m up for tenure and under (the category of) service, this will be the first thing I put, that I essentially helped develop and grow this program.

In sum, although Tina did not receive much interest or support from her colleagues, her work was frequently publicized in speeches given by the college president to alumni and potential donors, as well as by the university’s public relations department. Overall, Tina was enthusiastic about her involvement in the partnership and felt that her work was legitimate and important work she provided her university and community.

**Community Action Partnership**

Community Action Partnership (CAP) was a private non-profit agency dedicated to providing opportunities for economic self-sufficiency and family support to those who live or work in Tyler County. Administrators and employees at CAP were expected to join “in partnership” with people in need in order to share information, provide assistance and lend support in gaining the knowledge, skills and motivation necessary to reach their full potential. The VITA program became the responsibility of the manager of the Youth and Family Services because of the division’s mission was to help individuals and families to become self-sufficient. The manager hosted a VITA tax preparation site in the CAP building, advertised the tax program to clients, and supervised the administrative staff who scheduled appointments for all three VITA sites in Tyler County.
**Department of Social Services**

The Tyler County Department of Social Services (DSS) administered programs including USDA food stamps, temporary assistance to needy families, child support collection and enforcement, domestic violence services, employment services, child protective services, and foster care. As previously described, DSS was associated with the VITA partnership because it allowed Elaine, their director of administrative services (who was also a certified accountant) to supervise tax returns and tax training workshops for volunteers during regular office hours, as well as host a tax preparation site and advertise the program to its clients.

**Summary**

Both CAP and DSS were local agencies whose missions were to serve low to moderate-income individuals and families. Service to particular communities and populations, therefore, was the key aspect of their institutions’ identities, whereas, WC defined service in terms of both direct service and student education. Karen and Elaine’s work with the partnership, therefore, aligned very closely with the missions of their institutions, to serve communities. Tina also felt that her work with VITA also aligned with the service and educational missions of WC.

**Substance of Partners’ Communications**

Standard best practices for campus-community partnerships suggest that faculty and community partners should engage in collaborative and honest discussions about key aspects of the project. Key aspects may include accountability, funding streams, responsibilities, circumstances that may limit involvement, and expectations for performance (Palmero, McGranaghan, & Travers, 2006). Tina, Karen, and Elaine usually met in-person once or twice at the start of the tax season to plan for the upcoming tax season. Otherwise, the partners relied on phone or e-mail conversations. Typically, they discussed each partners’ “needs” (Karen) with
regards to fulfilling their roles in the partnership. Specifically, they discussed (1) coordination of student volunteers, (2) site management and resources, (3) ways to improve program management for future iterations of the VITA project.

Coordination of Student Volunteers

Tina and Elaine discussed and coordinated training and study sessions for students at the start of the tax season as the first step in preparing students for their volunteer service. Although two student leaders helped Tina coordinate students’ volunteer assignments, Tina maintained a supervisory role and remained in communication with Elaine to ensure adequate numbers of volunteers at each site. Throughout the tax season, Tina worked primarily with student leaders to ensure adequate numbers of student volunteers at each site. By the end of her fifth year with the partnership, she found that she and Elaine needed to talk “if a problem arose” and to coordinate computers and resources every once in a while, but otherwise, they had developed a well-established system for coordinating the partnership’s activities.

Site Management and Resources

Tina, Elaine, and Karen met each fall to discuss the resources needed to manage each site. Resources included space for the program, tax software from the IRS, laptop computers, printers, ink and paper, and tax supervisors to guide students, answer tax-related questions, and review tax forms completed by students. Each partner supervised one of the three sites closest to their office; Elaine handled getting tax software from the IRS; Tina contributed several used laptop computers and printers borrowed from WC’s technology services department to be rotated around to each site. Office supplies such as paper and ink were paid for out of funds for the VITA partnership that were managed by CAP. Tina, Elaine, and Karen sent e-mails to each other throughout the tax season to communicate when certain resources were low or not working (such
as computers or printers) and to coordinate the transfer of computers and printers to the different sites, as needed.

**Program Evaluation**

At the end of each tax season, Tina invited her partners to discuss aspects of the project that worked and did not work. She did this at the annual end-of-the-tax-season partners meeting and celebration dinner, which I attended. Tina, per tradition and on behalf of the Institute, hosted a dinner at a local restaurant to celebrate the accomplishments of WC students and both partnerships involved in volunteer tax assistance: VITA-Tyler County and EITC-Umpachene County (discussed in Chapter 8). Partners from both partnerships met around a large table and discussed their collective successes and recommendations for improving the program for the following year. Successes were reviewed as a summation of the total number of clients served and the total amount of tax dollars refunded. Recommendations were offered by partners from both partnerships and included advertising tax-preparation services earlier to ensure more people who were eligible for the program use their free service rather than pay someone else to do it earlier and making training mandatory for all volunteers. Partners also discussed the collection of surveys, which was part of Tina’s research on the outcomes of the partnership. They discussed the quality and consistency of students’ participation. As an entire group, they brainstormed ways to improve students’ attendance, especially on Saturday mornings. Several joked about providing wakeup call services and breakfasts. Partners also discussed specific items on the survey, particularly items that were not always answered, those that had potential for raising clients’ concern (identifiers for longitudinal purposes), or caused confusion (understanding acronyms). Toward the end of the meeting, Tina asked Karen who would replace her in the VITA partnership when she left CAP. Karen was not sure who would supervise the program;
however, she assured the group that a staff assistant at CAP would continue to receive inquiries, schedule appointments, and generally serve as the point person for incoming questions regarding the program and partnership.

**Purpose**

Manuals for and reports on campus-community partnerships (e.g., The Examining Community-Institutional Partnerships for Prevention Research Group, 2006) suggest that partners should openly negotiate key aspects of the project and partnership if they are to form a successful partnership. Current partners did not explicitly discuss the purpose of their work together, the larger mission or reason why they were collaboratively involved. Karen told me, “I don’t know that I’ve even thought of the purpose of the partnership because it’s been going on for a while and it’s been working” in response to my question about her perception of the partnership’s core purpose. Tina felt they should continue to expand the program through additional advertising to potential clients, but she did not raise the issue to her partners, largely because she lacked the time to commit to enlarging their goal beyond their current achievements.

**Roles**

Partners did not speak about their roles; roles seemed to be clearly defined by the sixth year of partnership. Tina and Elaine had each served student coordinator, and tax consultant and site coordinator, respectively. Karen, the newest member of the triad, seemed to clearly understand her role and responsibilities as a result of her early, support roles when she observed Lara coordinating clients’ appointments through the CAP staff assistant, developing, posting, and mailing advertisements to clients, and writing grants to fund the program. Thus, partners seemed not to talk about assigning roles, but discussed logistics of coordinating the students, sites, resources and program management.
Recognition

The ways in which partners were to be recognized for their work in the partnership were never discussed. Partners’ responses to this question suggested that all partners implicitly understood that partners’ employing organizations, WC, DSS, and CAP, were to be recognized as partners in all types of publicity. Publications included fliers or radio segments developed by Lara or Elaine, on behalf of the partnership, to advertise VITA services. Publicity included interviews for national newspapers and the WC website.

Though not discussed between current partners, equal recognition was a budding concern for one community partner. One partner noted, “I think one thing I hear, if I was ever to hear a sort of negative shift in the whole process… from a media relation standpoint, I think that this was a much more equal partnership. All of us, CAP, DSS, WC were all sort of equally recognized for our roles.” In recent years, the VITA program, as an educational opportunity had gained significant attention from a national media outlet, which had lauded Tina, Samantha and students’ involvement in generating hundreds of thousands of dollars in local tax returns. The partner went on to acknowledge the role of journalists in selecting their topics and interviewees, but she lamented the lack of attention paid to the staff at non-profit agencies. She explained,

I don’t think it’s universal or some huge pitfall that we’re struggling against. I just know that what gets attention is, of course, the student volunteers because that’s great press. What doesn’t get a whole lot of attention are the… entry-level direct service staff, who are actually making all of the appointments and interacting with customers, and what roles each of us play in that, DSS, CAP, and WC.

It seemed that publication and the statements made by journalists and university staff who wished to highlight the good deeds of the project had inadvertently caused some concerns about
whether the non-profit agencies were receiving their fair share of recognition for their work. Although the issue seemed to touch a nerve, the partner never mentioned it to the others in the partnership. She attributed the problem to “the [WC] media machine” and did not blame Tina or Samantha. To her mind, the problem was how others articulated the partnership, not how her partners expressed involvement of their fellow community partners.

**Summary**

Before the start of each tax season, partners typically met to discuss how they would coordinate the upcoming years’ tax return program. They discussed technology, students, sites, funding, and ways to reach potential clients through publicity campaigns. During the tax season (January to April), partners’ communications with each other tended to focus on the day-to-day logistics of the coordinating the students, resources, and tax returns. Mostly, they discussed students’ schedules and the equipment needed to prepare the sites for clients. However, at the end of the tax season, they met together to evaluate the logistics of the program and to make recommendations for the following year. Other than making recommendations for the following year (Tina kept the notes), partners did not discuss the purpose of the partnership, their roles or responsibilities, or the importance of properly recognizing each of the partners. It seemed as though it were unnecessary. The partnership had a well-established system for running the program and partners seemed to contribute as much time as they were able to commit.

**Partners’ Communication Styles**

Faculty and community partners communicate to each other through their styles of communication, as well as the explicit content of their conversations. To understand what partners’ communications with each other were like, I asked them to describe some of their typical conversations with one another. Each told me that their roles were well defined and that
they had fine-tuned their practices to increase their efficiency and coordination. In recent years, they had met together in person less and relied on student leaders more frequently than in past years. In part, Tina told me, they met less frequently because Tina was on an extended leave of absence from her faculty work. Therefore, she relied on the two students to help coordinate student volunteers at the weekly tax preparation sites to a greater extent than usual.

Despite their decreased involvement with one another, the partners told me that they maintained “open communication” (Karen) with each other, and that they were “very cooperative” (Elaine). The partners told me about their shared willingness to listen to and engage with each other to address all types of issues related to the project and partnership. Karen described the style of their interactions as “equal communication” and then went on to describe how their interactions were different than others she had been involved where partners’ did not have equal “control” over the meetings and decisions. They offered to help one another out, taking on each other’s responsibilities, when needed. Elaine described her partners as willing “to sit and listen to one another” and to help one another “solve problems.”

**Partnership Identity**

The identity of a partnership (or any other organization) is, in essence, “who” the partnership is and points to what members of the partnership are doing together. Defining characteristics of organizational identity (those features which are core, distinct, and enduring) (Albert & Whetten, 1985) are borrowed to explore the defining characteristics of partnership identity.

**Mission**

As previously shown, current partners of the VITA partnership did not explicitly discuss the purpose of their work together. They assumed they each understood their reason for working
together: to improve the financial future of low-income individuals, families, and communities. In response to my question as to the purpose of the partnership, Karen said, “I don’t know that I’ve even thought of the purpose of the partnership because it’s been going on for a while and it’s been working.” She went on to surmise the reasons for which each partner was involved, “… there is an understanding that the different partners… meet their own needs. For example, we will use the research generated from this project to secure funding, to talk about demographics in our community.” It appeared the partnerships’ purpose was taken for granted as each met the responsibilities they had agreed to maintain the partnership and projects.

To the mind of each of the three partners, the mission of VITA was narrowly defined and closely tied to the physical action of preparing taxes: to help low-income individuals and families claim money that is due to them, and indirectly, stimulate the local economies through the re-investment of those monies. Tina, Karen, and Elaine each suggested that the partnership would be more successful to the extent that it provided VITA services to a larger proportion of eligible clients in the county. Karen’s response, in particular, demonstrated the direct link between the purpose of the partnership and the goal of its activities: “I think that each of us came in with a clear purpose, a clear mission of what needed to be done… It was a really clear understanding: we’re filing income taxes for low-income families; we’re doing it for free at times that are good for them (clients) and at locations they can get to. Done.” Tina also told me, “everybody has the same goals… tax preparation… and to provide the service to people, to refund these dollars in the community.”

Although partners felt the initiative provided important learning experiences for Wilken undergraduates, the purpose of the program was always focused on the service it provided to the community. Tina spoke of how her perspective of the purpose of the partnership shifted as a
result of her experience with the partnership. She felt that although the learning experience was a valuable outcome of the partnership, the economic returns it provided low-income individuals and families was equally, if not even more significant.

**Norms**

The partnership appeared to have norms, informal guidelines, with regards to how partners should interact with one another. In interviews with each of the three partners, I heard them talk about willingness of partners to accommodate one another’s needs or special circumstances. Elaine described their interactions as “cooperative.” She explained, “if I need them to be here, they are. Very friendly, very easy to work with… It’s all shared… I think there is a lot of cooperation and gratitude for each other…” Elaine told me they accommodated each other because they all felt they “need[ed] to do what works.” She summed up her response telling me, “It’s a very successful partnership. I’ve been in the nonprofit sector a long time and I’ve found many that were not as successful. I think it’s sufficient and it’s effective.”

Karen’s comments also suggested an accommodating style with each other. In response to my question about how they communicated and interacted with one another, she told me a story of when one of the partners told her they needed to move rooms for the VITA program at CAP. The partner told her, “This isn’t going to work. We have to move things.” Karen explained that she and the partner found another office in the CAP office building.

**Distinct**

I found that each of the partners spoke about the partnership as though it were an interorganizational entity. For example, Tina spoke of her work with her community partners almost entirely in terms of “we” throughout each of our conversations. Describing the numbers of clients the partnership returned, for example, she said “we’re not growing as fast as we did
those first years… We’re getting close to our saturation point… We increased a little bit every year now…” She spoke about how each partner contributed (to “us”) through their expertise, resources and time, and that Elaine was “our” accountant. Likewise, Elaine also frequently used the term “we.” For example, she told me “there were only a couple of students who we had to kick out;” “the ones we get (emphasis added).” Karen said she talked “a lot” about VITA as a “partnership,” and often used the term “we” to describe their work together.

**Organizational Structures**

The partnership had clearly defined, though informal, organizational structures that assigned the roles and responsibilities of each partner according to their host organizations. Elaine told me, “I think our roles are pretty well defined.” For example, it was understood that the WC faculty member provided access to students, helped to coordinate training and schedules, and supervised a site, if possible; the CAP partner scheduled appointments for each site, organized publicity of the program to potential clients, supervised one site each week, and wrote proposals to secure funding for office supplies and advertisements; a third person (preferably, but not necessarily a DSS employee with tax law and filing expertise) coordinated and supervised tax filings and answered tax-related questions.

**Enduring**

When asked if the partnership would continue in their absence, each of the partners responded that they felt certain that it would. Tina and Karen believed someone from their organizations would take over, and Elaine believed she could be replaced by another person with enough tax knowledge to oversee returns. To their minds, the partnership had developed well-defined roles that could, and most likely would, be filled by colleagues, if need be. Karen told me,
The partnership is defined as more than just three people who think this is a good idea. It’s not just about the people making it work through their force of will … Wilken is very supportive of VITA. I think if Tina left, they would find some other faculty member to take it over. But if for some reason Wilken were to drop out, CAP would find a replacement at this point. They would go to other colleges in the area to recruit student volunteers or find volunteers from the community.

The partnership, it seemed, could sustain a change in its key players because they had identified and specified roles and responsibilities that could be conveyed to new potential partners.

**Summary**

Overall, the mission of the partnership was unified under one purpose, to serve low-income individuals and families through helping to file their tax returns. Although Tina recognized the educational opportunities the initiative provided WC students, she viewed the purpose of the program along the lines of her partners’ – service to the community. The partners also developed expectations about helping one another, as if they were on the same team. Though they no longer saw each other as frequently as they once did, they knew they could count on one another to help solve a problem. Partners developed an efficient system for working together, each knew her roles and responsibilities. The coordinated system seemed to not only allow partners to work efficiently, but also allowed others to take on their roles should they leave, as in the case of the founding partners.

**Summary - VITA**

Each of the three partners incorporated their work with the VITA partnership into their professional roles at their employing institutions. However, Karen was the only partner whose partnership work was officially integrated into her work responsibilities. Karen contributed
certain resources from the WC (such as space for tax preparation, laptop computers), but could not necessarily count it as a professional requirement. Categorized as extra work that was related to, but not integral to their her work responsibilities, Tina, in particular, felt pressed for time. She felt she could dedicate only a minimum amount of time to the partnership and sought ways to decrease her direct involvement (such as hiring student leaders), while still remaining engaged. Time constraints coupled with her desires to remain engaged in service to her community required partners work be as efficient as possible.

Communication between VITA partners was concentrated at the start of each tax season and was conducted almost entirely via e-mails and phone calls. E-mail and phone interactions tended to be efficient, focusing on the tasks or questions at hand. Partners relied heavily on individuals who were paid for their work in the partnership, namely two student leaders (who received stipends), a CAP staff assistant (whose work for the partnership was included in her regular work responsibilities), and Elaine, a DSS employee (paid by the Institute for her work). Tina, Elaine, and Karen tended to work independently, contacting each other only when approval or input was necessary. The annual end-of-tax-season dinner provided the only venue in which the partners met all together to discuss the successes of and improvements for the subsequent year.

A partnership identity was evident in the VITA-Tyler County partnership. Partners had developed a coherent understanding of the partnership’s purpose; they had established norms for how to interact; and formal organizational structures regarding roles, responsibilities, and resources were put in place to ensure the effective management and future continuation of the partnership. In their interviews, each partner articulated a similar and narrow purpose for the partnership, to provide free tax preparation to help the economy of low-income individuals and
families. Each partner echoed the importance of working autonomously so as to not create redundancies in their work. Efficiency was an especially high priority and influenced the extent to which members reached out to each other for consultation or assistance. Perhaps because of the efficiency norms that limited communication to pertinent issues only, underlying issues, such as concern about equal recognition for community agency staff, was not raised. Finally, partners had very defined roles and responsibilities within the partnership that helped to streamline the work of the partners and provided structures for continuing the partnership in the future.
CHAPTER 8: UMPACHENE COUNTY EITC PARTNERSHIP

This chapter provides within case analysis of the Umpachene County EITC (earned income tax credit) partnership, a second partnership Tina joined to facilitate WC students’ involvement in a nearby volunteer income tax assistantship program. The EITC partnership was developed by a group of individuals from community agencies in the county bordering Tyler County (VITA-Tyler County was presented in Chapter 7) and sought Tina’s assistance to recruit student volunteers. Further overview of the partnership is provided, followed by analysis of partners’ social identities and the identities of their employing organizations. Partners’ communication, their content and style, are analyzed and the development and characteristics of the partnership’s identity is explored.

Partnership Overview

At the start of the millennium, United Way (UW) of America developed a nationwide campaign to help the working poor access tax refunds due them through the earned income tax credit program. As a result of the national initiative, the director of the Umpachene County chapter, Victoria, attended a statewide conference to learn how to set up a volunteer income tax assistantship (VITA) program. She then called together members of local agencies and pitched her idea to develop a local EITC partnership. She presented her argument for why Umpachene County needed community agencies to partner: approximately 1,483 households were eligible for EITC refunds but had not applied for them. If claimed, approximately $3.2 million would be returned to the county in tax refunds for low-income families. Of the persons who attended the meeting, representatives from Cooperative Extension Office (CES) and Opportunities for Umpachene (OFU) agreed to partner and to help apply to the IRS to become an approved VITA
site. In their first year, the small group focused simply on increasing publicity, education and awareness surrounding EITC and tax preparation sites.

Victoria continued to invite representatives from local non-profit organizations to join the partnership. She wanted to leverage support and resources of local community organizations to establish their own tax preparation sites. She needed coordinators, building space, and certified tax preparation volunteers. She was given permission by the UW board of directors to underwrite the resources needed (such as office supplies and advertisements) by the EITC partnership for three years. In the first year, they filed 41 tax returns. Victoria realized that she could not increase the numbers of clients served without student volunteers, so she asked Samantha, a senior administrator at Wilken College (WC), for helping finding student volunteers. Victoria told me,

There was no way we could do more tax prep without more people who were trained to do it, and the students from Wilken were a perfect fit. The other thing is that Wilken does tax law training, the software system [sic,], and the basic overriding rules of how to do tax prep. They offer that class and they were willing to allow some of our volunteers from Umpachene County to attend that as well…. They had already been working at a VITA site in [Tyler] County, and theirs is very successful. So all we were asking is, “will you allow your students to go further out and also [serve Umpachene] County?”

Samantha, who had given responsibility of the VITA program to Tina, asked Tina if she would help support the EITC partnership by providing student volunteers. Tina agreed, and by the end of the tax season, Wilken students had assisted more than 450 families and helped claim $870,000.
By April 2007, when I began my study of the partnership, ETIC partners included UW, OFC, CES, and WC, as well as members of AARP Tax-Aide, Farm Bureau, three local financial institutions, and the IRS local territory office. The partnership expanded its services from publicity to offering tax assistance, and providing financial workshops to educate low to moderate-income families about how to create a budget, build relationships with financial institutions, understand credit, accumulate assets, and capitalize on services available through regional financial institutions.

Table 6. EITC Partners' Pseudonyms, Employers, Job Titles, and Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Employer, Title</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EITC</td>
<td>Tina</td>
<td>WC, Economics Professor</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>UW, Executive Director</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tony</td>
<td>OFU, Director, Regional Financial Fitness Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carrie</td>
<td>OFU, Administrative assistant, EITC coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>CES, Finance &amp; Office manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EITC</td>
<td>Earned Income Tax Credit</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>WC</td>
<td>Wilken College</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>UW</td>
<td>United Way</td>
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<td>OFU</td>
<td>Opportunities for Umpachene</td>
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<tr>
<td>CES</td>
<td>Cooperative Extension Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRS</td>
<td>Internal Revenue Services</td>
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Partners’ Social Identities

The number of partners in the EITC partnership was relatively fluid. Some individuals attended monthly meetings and contributed their experiences or knowledge of community organizing but did not take part in organizing programs or activities, while others were directly involved in setting up and supervising tax preparation sites, seeking funding, and coordinating the annual advertising campaign. Because I was interested in those individuals and organizations that were likely to shape and experience the development of a partnership identity, I asked Victoria and Tina to identify the partnerships’ key partners. I then contacted each of the persons
they suggested. Key partners attended the monthly meetings, served on subcommittees, and were actively involved with coordinating and supporting the partnerships activities, including hosting sites and supervising volunteers’ work with clients. However, it is important to recognize the “wide base” of individuals who represented government, non-profit and for-profit institutions that contributed tax expertise and software, access to clients and potential volunteers, funding to the partnership for advertising, and credit and investment services to clients.

*Tina*

Tina is a professor at Wilken University and faculty partner of the EITC partnership. For further description, see Chapter 7.

*Victoria*

Victoria is the executive director of the Umpachene County chapter of United Way. Her role in the EITC partnership was to initiate, direct, and support the partnership. This role was directly tied to her work responsibilities and UW’s recently expanded mission: to develop partnerships between local nonprofits to meet community needs. Directors of UW chapters were expected to not only raise money for community services, but also to act as catalysts in developing interorganizational partnerships and assisting them with administrative and financial resources. The board of directors supported Victoria’s work to develop the EITC partnership and allowed her to include costs for the partnership’s work as a line item in her administrative budget.

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5 The IRS representative attended meetings regularly and was particularly supportive partners’ work with the tax return software. Due to IRS policy, I was not granted permission to conduct a private interview with the IRS partner. However, I spoke with the IRS partner and her supervisor at the end-of-the-year dinner hosted by WU. Recording was not permitted. I asked questions about their work and mission and was given official publications that described the IRS division of Stakeholder Partnerships.
Although Victoria was passionate about her role in the EITC partnership and found that helping others satisfied her personally, she seemed to approach the partnership almost solely from the perspective of a UW director. When I asked her why she became involved, she described the history of UW and the re-envisioning of its mission statement. In response to my question as to whether she felt the partnership satisfied her personally, professionally, or both, she told me that she found the EITC program satisfying because she came from “a background in human services, direct service” and enjoyed personally working with clients, but spoke to me at length about the important role a UW director can have in community organizing because they are “politically neutral.” Throughout our interview, she described her role in the partnership from the perspective of her work at UW. Though she was committed to the partnership working, she felt her role was to get it to a point where it no longer needed her participation as the director of the local UW.

Cindy

Cindy was a founding member of the EITC partnership. As the finance and office manager at Cooperative Extension Services (CES) (an affiliated office of the state university), she felt the partnership’s goals tied directly to CES’s mission: to “enable people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and knowledge to work” (Cindy’s words). After the introductory meeting, Cindy sought and received approval from her supervisor to represent the office, which included contributing her time at the office and office resources, such as the use of her telephone line for scheduling ETIC appointments. Cindy believed that joining the EITC partnership was “essentially part of (her) job.”

Cindy also viewed her work as a personal commitment; it helped fulfill the obligation she felt to helping her community. Cindy sometimes helped community members complete their
taxes at the local AARP (American Association for Retired Persons) chapter prior to becoming involved in the EITC partnership. She told me that if for some reason she left CES, she would “still volunteer as much time as [she] could” to EITC partnership in her role as a community member; she felt it was important for parents to serve as role models to children and to “live out one’s values,” including contributing one’s time and energy to the community. Though much of her work on behalf of EITC was done during work hours, she also worked many nights and weekends during the tax season (January to April) to help coordinate and supervise student volunteers’ work.

**Tony**

Similar to Cindy, Tony joined the EITC partnership because he saw direct ties between the work of the partnership and his work in his employing institution. As the director of regional finance fitness initiatives, his mission at Opportunities for Umpachene (OFU) was to help families and individuals to recognize their strengths, set realistic goals, make responsible decisions, and get involved in community so they are not only reaching toward their goals and dreams in their own lives, but also giving back to the community so that they can strengthen [Umpachene] County.

Tony felt that the EITC partnership was a “natural fit” because of his role in helping clients to build assets by educating them how to maximize their money and manage their assets.

Tony also felt committed to the EITC partnership as a member of the local community. He explained that he left a career in hospitality services to work in a community agency because he “wanted to be more involved” helping people in his community. His work with EITC clients felt personal and he shared his own experiences with them and how he used the refunds he had gotten to pay for cars and home improvements. Tony’s work with EITC helped him to meet his
work goals at OFC, but both roles (OFC employee and EITC partner) fulfilled his role as committed community member.

**Carrie**

Carrie had recently quit her job of four years at a local bank when she became the paid coordinator for EITC, a position financed by a one-year grant the partnership received. Her position required her to help advertise the EITC program through posting and mailing fliers throughout the county, as well as to schedule clients at each tax preparation site. Although she was not hired to prepare taxes specifically, Carrie found herself dedicating many hours to completing and filing tax forms for clients. “I kind of volunteered…. I don’t think that was part of my job description, but there was flextime . . . it was understood if you were going to do a Saturday site, you could have some time off during the week to offset that.” When I interviewed Carrie in summer 2007, she was no longer employed by the EITC partnership. Funding for the position was finished, and she took a position at OFU. Like Tony, she was permitted by her supervisor to attend EITC meetings and volunteer a few hours each month during regular office hours. Carrie continued to help volunteers at EITC sites, but was less involved than when she was employed by the partnership.

**Summary**

Each partner felt personally committed to the success of the partnership and its programs; each also served as a boundary-spanner between their employing organization and the partnership. Each partner leveraged resources from their employing organizations to aid the work of the EITC partnership. Resources included funding, employee time, and space for the partnership to meet or to host tax preparation events. Each partner had gained approval from their supervisors for their involvement in the EITC partnership and felt their work in the
partnership served their employing organizations’ missions. For example, Tony reasoned that OFU received increased access to potential clients for their financial fitness workshops; Cindy suggested that CES’s mission was achieved by building local community capacity and providing direct services; and Victoria reasoned that UW-Umpachene mission was served because EITC was an interagency partnership that improved community members’ access to necessary services. Tina justified her involvement with the partnership by suggesting that WU students were provided important opportunities to practice skills and serve community needs.

Organizational Identities of Partners’ Institutions

Although many organizations were represented in the EITC partnership, the degree to which partnering organizations were involved with the oversight and activities of the initiative varied greatly. The employing organizations of key partners included, Umpachene United Way, Opportunities for Umpachene, Cooperative Extension Services, and Wilken College (described in Chapter 3). This section describes the organizations’ missions, a core component of their identities, as understood by the boundary-spanners.

United Way – Umpachene County

United Way’s mission was to build partnerships and maximize resources to improve the quality of life for local residents. United Way was also a “community impact organization” (Victoria), the convener of collaborations and coalitions for a better community. The Umpachene chapter raised hundreds of thousands of dollars each year and supported over 26 programs and services county-wide. The EITC partnership was the result of the executive director’s effort to move from its primarily fundraising mission, to becoming a leader in developing collaborations that initiated and supported partnerships between local nonprofit organizations to provide assistance to the poor and working poor in their communities.
Opportunities for Umpachene

Opportunities for Umpachene (OFU) was chartered as the Community Action Agency for Umpachene County. Its mission was to eliminate poverty through programs that promote family self-sufficiency. Programs included counseling on home purchasing and ownership, financial budgeting, and building credit. An employee of OFC (Tony) has been involved in the EITC partnership since the partnership’s beginning in 2004, but as an agency, OFC did not formally join until the 2005 tax season.

Cooperative Extension Services

The Cooperative Extension Services (CES) is a key outreach system of a state university. Its mission was to provide educational opportunities through business, community, and leadership development and to foster individual social and life skills to enhance the quality of life in its community’s youth and adult populations. CES provided space for the EITC program since 2004, as well as key personnel to supervise volunteer income tax returns.

Summary

Each of the organizations allowed at least one of its members to act as a boundary-spanner with the EITC partnership on its behalf. Each organization also committed resources to supporting its work, whether it was assistance with writing grants (OFU), space for meetings and tax preparation services (CES), or leadership and funding for the initial start up (UW). As one might expect, Wilken College held a different mission statement was broader and addressed students directly and society indirectly: to prepare students to become leaders in their careers and communities.
Content of Partners’ Communications

Partnerships in which partners openly negotiate key aspects of the project (roles, responsibilities, resources) and partnership (purpose, goals, recognition) may be more likely to accomplish their goals and last into the future (Foss, Boniauto, Johnson, & Moreland, 2003). Since the EITC-Umpachene partnership first started in 2004, partners have met each month to discuss aspects related the management of the partnership and its activities. Minutes of monthly meetings, my observations of one meeting, and partners’ interviews suggested that partners explicitly discussed a wide range of topics, including personal information, event and site planning, finances, and shaping the public image of the partnership. Interviews, observation of an hour-long partnership meeting, and analysis of partnership meeting minutes and copies of grants written between fall 2004 to spring 2007 provided the data for analysis of the partnership.

Personal Information

From my observations at one of the partnership meeting and my interviews with partners, it was clear that partners felt at ease with each other and had developed personal connections over the years. In my field journal I used for memoing after an observation of one of the EITC partnership meetings, I wrote about how the meeting began:

Tony comes in first just as Cindy and I are finishing our interview, which is about ten minutes before the meeting is scheduled to begin. Others file in and begin talking with each other about vacations they took, fairs they and their families attended, their weekend travel plans, and fishing. One partner had taught another’s kids to fish. Everyone is talking as a full group, not individually one-on-one, and everyone seems to know each other well and expects this type of small talk.
It was typical that partners’ shared information about their lives at the start of the monthly meetings.

**Event and Site Planning**

Planning for events and tax preparation sites were key topics of conversation during the meeting I observed and according to partners’ interviews. The majority of the meetings addressed issues related to preparation, supervision, and coordination of who would take clients’ appointments, set up the sites, and supervise the student volunteers. Partners shared invitations and fliers that had been developed to advertise their services, and sought revisions before the final publications were printed and disseminated. Partners discussed the resources needed at each of the sites, whether items were needed or supplies were running low.

In the meeting I observed, subcommittee members who were responsible for coordinating the Super Saturday (a day-long event to advertise the service) provided an update of their plans and asked the group for additional information, as well as approval. For example, one partner passed several pieces of paper to the rest of the group. First, she distributed a list of vendors who planned to attend the event. Partners were asked if they had relevant updates or suggestions for additional vendors. The partner in charge of the Super Saturday committee then spoke about an upcoming press conference about Super Saturday. Another list was distributed; it named the partners who were scheduled to speak to the press. It listed names, as well as the names of their employing organizations. Finally, a third list was distributed noting items still needed for the event. Partners discussed who would provide which items.

**Finances**

In addition to planning events and specific activities of the partnership, partners discussed the future of the partnership. Funds were an increasingly important and uncertain issue because
the partnership relied on the local United Way and a local credit union to pay for posters, newspaper advertisements, and notices given to employees of local businesses. Funding was uncertain because Victoria was not allowed to include items for the partnership in the next year’s UW budget. Instead, the partnership was required to apply to the UW national chapter for a grant. The partnership depended on grants to cover the office supplies needed at each VITA site, including paper and ink for the printer, and a stipend to pay a project coordinator. Cindy had taken clients’ appointments in the early years, but found that it took too much time for her to continue to do.

**Shaping the Public Image of the Partnership**

Partners also discussed shaping the image of the partnership so that the public would understand their efforts as the shared initiative of many organizations. In the meeting I attended, Tony presented a proposed logo design. He announced, “We approved the letterhead last month and we need to ensure that we have the right people on it.” He passed around the proposed logo on a piece of paper; it was an illustration of a hand holding U.S. currency. Framing the image of the hand was lettering that read “[Umpachene] Regional EITC Partnership”. The names of 11 organizations, including Wilken College, were stated in alphabetical order, each of which had contributed money or in-kind services, such as staff members’ or students’ time.

**Summary**

Monthly meetings served as a time during which EITC partners asked questions, raised concerns, solicited input or feedback, sought assistance from each other, and managed the logistics of running a volunteer income tax assistance program. In addition to conversations about immediate issues and day-to-day logistics, partners also discussed the future of the partnership, such as how it would be funded, who would seek funding and handle the money
once they received it. Partners also discussed shaping the image or branding the partnership to assert their partnership as a true collaboration between many organizations. Shaping their identity as a collaborative was intended to serve several purposes: to assuage clients’ fears about filing taxes with the IRS; to leverage resources from partners’ employing organizations; and to apply for and manage funds for the partnership’s activities and programs. The mission of the partnership, though not discussed in the monthly meetings, seemed reinforced by their image-shaping and grant-writing processes. The partnership’s mission was printed in several grant applications. So although it may not have been explicitly discussed between partners, it was publicly articulated.

**Partners’ Communication Styles**

Partners in the EITC partnership developed styles of interacting with each other. Tina told me about the monthly meetings and the collaborative nature of the EITC partnership in our early interviews, and I had the opportunity to observe the partners’ styles of interactions with each other when I attended a meeting. The meeting was friendly, yet purposeful and well organized. Although Victoria was clearly the leader who set the agenda, and the group seemed to follow parliamentary procedure, their style of discussion and processing issues as a group seemed intended to build consensus. Furthermore, partners sought to meet the goals of each partnering organization, in addition to advancing the goals of the partnership.

**Building Consensus**

Partners consistently asked for each other’s feedback and agreement on ideas and plans in the meeting I attended. For example, Victoria asked the group, “With your permission, I’d like to call (person) after this meeting and ask to get started with the campaigning at (place).” Reinforcing her collaborative tone, Tony used the same phrase, “with your permission,” several
times throughout the meeting when suggesting that he would do a particular action on behalf of the group. A review of previous meetings’ minutes showed that partners’ asked for feedback on nearly all aspects of the partnership and its projects, such as its budget and the fliers and posters that are distributed, as well as the wording of volunteer job descriptions (to assist in recruiting volunteers and student interns from a local college). The meetings were run using parliamentary procedure with formal motions made to accept decisions.

Later that day in my interviews, the importance of collaborative planning and decision-making was emphasized. Carrie told me that partners use their monthly meetings to discuss large as well as small decisions, from how to develop a grant proposal to deciding on the name of an event – such as Super Saturday, to choosing the colors of the fliers that would be sent out to advertise the program. “And so as a group, we would sit down and say, ‘These are the options. How does everybody feel?’ And everybody kind of made the decision. It was like a voting, I guess you could say. You know, as to what was the best fit for everybody.” Tony told me that although they have been working in recent months to formalize roles (chair, secretary, treasurer) in the partnership,

it seems to remain very shared power through the whole process. We really talk amongst ourselves. We’ve actually had folks join us, sit in on meetings, and be really frustrated because they couldn’t tell who held the crown of power. They were like, ‘Well, who’s the decision maker?’ We are. We all are. That’s another reason why I think the initiative works; we do a good job sharing the decision-making process.

Partners sought to achieve benefits for both the organizational partners, as well as the partnership. Tony spoke about the importance to “really look at the benefits in both directions.” He continued, “So, if your organization is coming into the partnership, we really want to look at
how it’s going to benefit your organization as well as the partnership.” He provided an example, “So what does [temporary job placement agency] have to offer a VITA initiative? Well, they offered… outreach (to potential clients and volunteers). It was beneficial to them because that was another service that they could offer to their temp employees – free tax service.”

**Partnership Identity**

The identity of the partnership, its mission, norms, and organizational structures were well defined. Partners shared similar perceptions about the core purpose of the partnership. Certain norms regarding partners’ involvement and ways of communicating were understood, if not always followed, by all partners. Finally, organizational structures were formally established that made explicit certain partners’ roles and responsibilities, as well as the responsibilities of the organizations they represented, with regards to enacting and preserving the partnership.

**Mission**

I found that partners seemed to view the purpose of the partnership similarly. In their own words, each of the partners told me that the core purpose of the partnership was to help to increase the self-sufficiency of low-income individuals and families in their local community. To meet this purpose, the program expanded beyond simply preparing clients’ taxes and advertising the program to also providing financial literacy workshops to help clients learn how to save money or develop relationships with financial institutions, such as banks. Tax preparation, program advertising, and financial literacy workshops were “three legs of the stool” that helped partners to meet their core purpose of helping individuals and families become economically self-sufficient.
**Norms**

The EITC-Umpachene partnership developed informal rules for behavior as how to work together as a group. Partners collaborated with each other, involving the group in decisions about the partnership, as well as the logistics and supervision of the VITA sites. Partners (as described in the section on how roles, responsibilities and resources were communicated in meeting) collaboratively discussed the partnership’s plans, actions, and procedures. In monthly meetings, partners’ shared updates with each other with the express purpose of getting the groups’ feedback and approval. They developed informal, but strong expectations that partners *attend meetings*.

*Attend meetings.*

Decisions about when and where to communicate may affect the tone and outcome of faculty and community partnerships, as partners who meet frequently and face-to-face may indicate to one another that they care about each other as well as their shared initiative (Sandy, 2007). When EITC partners congregated each month, they sat at tables that had been arranged into a large circle. In an earlier interview, Victoria described the importance of meeting in person; it facilitated direct communication and helped to develop interpersonal relationships between members. Interpersonal relationships, she felt were essential for “smooth[ing] lines of communication.” Tony, Cindy, and Carrie, also indicated the importance of frequent meetings in which partners met as a group; it helped to ease communication, made their work together efficient due to fewer misunderstandings, and it enabled partners to collaborate and seek agreement on nearly all aspects of the project and partnership.

Partners who did not regularly attend meetings violated the group norm. Though community partners recognized that Tina’s academic schedule made it difficult for her to attend
the meetings, at least one partner felt her absence hindered communication. The partner suggested that community partners were sometimes hesitant to raise issues they felt to be “sensitive,” such as problems they encountered with student volunteers. Partners who spoke together in person, the partner reasoned, worried less about their tone or message being offending or misunderstood than when they talked about issues over the phone or wrote about them in e-mails. It seemed from my interviews with Tina that she also recognized partners’ implicit expectations that partners attend the meetings. She tried to make as many meetings as she could, and she once sent a student leader to the meeting in her place.

**Collective responsibility.**

Collective responsibility of the partnership and its activities was also an established norm that was both implicitly understood, and, on at least one occasion, discussed explicitly by EITC partners. When Victoria announced to the group that she would have to step down from the leadership role of the group so that the partnership could apply to the United Way America for a grant (grant guidelines forbade granting funds to UW-led initiatives), the partners worked together to discuss who amongst them could step into that role. They considered the support they could each expect from their employing organizations, as well as the time each had to commit to fulfilling their roles outside of the official workday. Victoria told the group, “The way a good collaboration works is that everybody has a piece of the pie, whether it is small or large.” By the end of the meeting, the group had collectively decided that Tony and Cindy would share leadership responsibilities as co-chairs, and that Victoria would become the secretary.

Although not formally required, partners contributed personal time outside of their regular work hours (and for which they did not seek compensation from their employers, or in Carrie’s case, the grant) to ensure the success of the EITC initiative. Most of the partners also
volunteered to attend a workshop and take the IRS-administered exam, a requirement for all volunteer tax preparers, so they could supervise a site when needed or help out when volunteer numbers were low. For example, partners volunteered to take over the responsibilities of each other when one needed reprieve. Carrie, a newcomer to the partnership in winter 2006/2007, told me that she “quickly picked up on the spirit of cooperation” that partners demonstrated by their willingness to “extend a hand” when needed. She said she followed suit and volunteered hours beyond her regular work schedule to assist her fellow partners. Carrie told me, “If there’s something I could do to help pull it together, within the hours of my new position here, or help [Cindy] in the evenings, I would.” Her statement seemed to echo the sentiment of each of the EITC partners; they chipped in whenever needed, whether it was on “the clock” at work or personal time.

Ultimately, partners expected each other to attend the monthly meetings and to take on responsibilities for the benefit of the partnership. In a sense, the attendance at the monthly meetings helped to establish norms because partners spent a great deal of time together, cumulatively, over the years. Partners seemed acculturated to the norms of working together and taking responsibility for planning and supervising activities, as well as developing structures to ensure the longevity and effectiveness of the partnership (discussed in the following section). Norms seemed strongest among the key partners, Victoria, Tony, and Cindy. According to meeting minutes, they attended almost all of the monthly meetings, took on leadership roles for various activities (such as writing grants, supervising sites, and coordinating meetings) and were the lead voices in the meeting I attended.

Although Tina seemed aware of the norms, the extent to which she followed them was less than the extent to which Victoria, Tony and Cindy abided by them. This was also true for
other partners who seemed to attend the monthly meetings purely as organizational representatives whose intentions were to remain informed about, but relatively uninvolved in the partnership’s activities. Several partners served as conduits for information, or access to clients, resources, or students. For example, Tina attended only a few meetings each year and did not coordinate activities for the partnership. For the most part, she met with EITC partners to learn about that year’s projects and schedule so that she could help facilitate WC students’ participation in the program.

**Distinct**

Each participant frequently used the terms “we” and “us” when describing the partnership’s activities. Perhaps even more indicative of a shared sense of we, was the development of an EITC partnership logo that identified each of the contributing partners. The purpose of the logo was to “brand” (Tony’s term) the partnership so that potential clients and funders recognized who was involved in the partnership. The purpose of the logo, Tony told the EITC partners, was to manage the image of the partnership, through “branding,” to its current and potential clients and funders.

The partnership’s logo, in addition to proving recognition of its organizational partners, was also deliberately established to help the partnership to manage their image to potential clients. Victoria explained,

We’re in a transition phase right now where we have to separate ourselves from our organizations we represent, in some way, and (we need to) present ourselves to the community as our own thing. People tend to have their own stigma associated with particular organizations. What we don’t want is for that to skew people’s perception of the work of the work that the committee (VITA partnership) is doing, because of the
stigma that might be related to a particular agency. For example, people who owe taxes are reluctant to come to the site because they see the IRS is a partner. They say, ‘They’re going to audit me if I go and get my taxes done. I haven’t filed my taxes in ten years.’ Or, ‘I’ve never paid taxes’ or whatever.

Partners’ wanted to develop the partnership as a distinct organizational entity that was separate from the partnering organizations as a way to ensure that all partners received equal recognition for their contributions. In its current state, the partnership relied on the OFU to serve as the grant writer and conduit for state funding.

They tend to be the organization that is out front a lot, as far as the state is concerned. And they don’t want it to be positioned that way. They want everyone to know that this is a partnership… It’s not a United Way Project; it’s not a Wilken project; it’s not an OFU project. We’re all doing it together. We all bring something of value to the table.”

The partnership’s image, therefore, had become an important point of discussion. Partners’ found that although they knew the intentions and the level of involvement of each organizational partner, the management of the partnership’s image was essential to their long-term success with clients and funders.

**Organizational Structures**

Organizational structures include formalized roles and systems for facilitating the partnership’s work that partners openly negotiate (Maguire & Richards, 1996). In my interview with Victoria, she reflected on the need to establish the partnership as a distinct organizational entity:

Collaboratives are hard to fund because they aren’t self-sufficient; they are always associated with a lead organization. For the last three years, it’s been either United Way
or Opportunities (for Umpachene). If [the EITC Partnership] ever decided to become a 501C3, a nonprofit, it would be completely independent and autonomous. It would have an advisory board, or some sort of governing board that would be completely different from the way we’re running it now. It would make it eligible to apply for and receive more funding. Right now, we have to decide which organization is going to serve as the financial conduit… This year, the partnership will have to apply for a grant from United Way for continued funding (rather than it being a line item in the budget Victoria submits to the UW board of directors, as it is currently).

The granting of funding was also required by the employing organization of one key partner to justify his involvement with the partnership. If the grant he wrote on behalf of the partnership but through his employing non-profit organization was not funded, he would not be able to dedicate as much of his work time to assisting the partnership. The EITC partnership contained three structures that organized partners’ roles and the work of the partnership, leadership and committees, staff position, and an accounting system for handing the inflow and outflow of money on behalf of the partnership.

Leadership and committees.

As shown earlier in this chapter, partners explicitly discussed and assigned leadership roles, including co-chairs, secretary, and treasurer, to help coordinate the work of the partnership. Additionally, the partnership developed committees that were charged with the task of addressing special events or particular activities and tax preparation sites. Each partner was expected to join one of several sub-committees to address certain responsibilities, such as soliciting donations from for-profit agencies, writing grants, or providing financial literacy workshops to clients. For example, the Super-Saturday sub-committee was responsible for
organizing, supervising, and advertising the one-day, statewide event that advertised the program to clients through local media and canvassing.

**Staff position.**

Carrie was the only paid member in the partnership during the 2006 tax season. She was hired as a part-time employee and paid on a grant given to the EITC partnership by UW. Although funding ran out for her position at the end of the tax season, partners applied for and hoped to receive future funds that would allow them to hire a part-time administrative staff member to schedule clients’ appointments, one of the most time consuming aspects of the partnerships’ activities.

**Accounting system.**

The United Way and several businesses donated money to EITC to help facilitate its work. In the monthly partnership meeting I observed, partners discussed who would take over management of the funds; Victoria could no longer include funds for EITC in her budget at UW and she could not be the chair of the committee when the partnership applied for a grant from the UW. Tony had agreed to take on the responsibility as the treasurer of the group.

**Summary**

The EITC partnership developed formal structures to organize partners’ roles and responsibilities. The partnership contained a chair, secretary and treasurer, as well as subcommittees. The partnership also had, for one year, a paid staff position to reduce the amount of time Cindy dedicated to answering clients’ questions about the services and scheduling appointments. Finally, the partnership also developed systems for handling funds, which helped to pay for the office supplies and staff person. On the whole, the partnership contained relatively formal organizational structures.
**Enduring**

The formal organizational structure established by the EITC partnership was prompted as a result of Victoria’s direct intentions and involvement. As the UW executive director, she was charged to establish the EITC partnership in such a way that it could and would maintain the volunteer income tax assistance program, indefinitely. Her intention from the very start of the project was to establish 501C3 status so that the partnership would be formally recognized as an independent entity. Ultimately, Victoria and her partners were successful in developing organizational structures to allow the partnership to continue without the support of the United Way, which had underwritten much of the partnership’s expenses.

**Summary - EITC**

Each of the community partners received support from senior administrators in their employing organizations, which helped them to continue their involvement in the partnership. Victoria, Cindy, and Tony each had the support of the board of directors in their respective nonprofit agencies and served as representatives of their employing organizations to the partnership. In each of their cases, they initiated the program and sought support of their supervisors or administrators; none were mandated to join the partnership or to continue participating. Each approached the partnership as a part of their professional work responsibilities. However, the personal commitments that community partners felt towards the direct service mission of their employing organizations, carried over to the EITC partnership as well.

The EITC partnership had purposively developed system for communicating explicitly, openly, and frequently about all aspects of the partnership from the logistics of the projects to the organizational structure and funding of the partnership. All members were invited to participate
in monthly meetings, to serve on sub-committees, and to provide and solicit input regarding the partnerships’ plans and activities. Implicitly understood by all members, was the expectation that partners follow integrative communication processes and work, in good faith, towards accomplishing the goals of the partnership.

The EITC partnership had developed a relatively defined partnership identity by the time I began my study. Interviews suggested that partners held a coherent, or shared understanding, of the purpose of the partnership. Though partnership activities had expanded from simply preparing taxes to providing financial literacy workshops, and connections to financial institutions, the added activities each met the overall mission to increase individuals’ economic self-sufficiency. Certain norms were established regarding partners’ attendance and involvement in the partnership. The norms seemed to be established by Victoria in particular, most closely followed by the most active partners, including Tony and Cindy, but understood by all. Finally, organizational structures were increasingly formalized over the years in an effort to establish the partnership as an inter-organizational entity. Again, Victoria, Tony, and Cindy played lead roles in defining and taking on organizational titles, such as chair and secretary. On the whole, the partnership seemed to have developed a partnership identity that was defined by a shared mission, shaped by behavioral norms, and guided by formal organizational structures.
CHAPTER 9: KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTNERSHIP IDENTITY

In this chapter, I (1) present key characteristics of Partnership Identity; (2) present aspects of partners’ employing institutions’ organizational identities, partners’ social identities, and communications that may be linked to the development of a Partnership Identity (3) discuss similarities and differences across partnerships that did or did not have a Partnership Identity and explore the role of Partnership Identity in facilitating effective and long-term faculty-community partnerships. Partnership Identity is a concept that I developed as a result of a pilot study of the TCBI partnership and literature reviews on various types of partnerships, communication and negotiation styles, and identities. In this section, I explore the idea that partnerships, like organizations, may have identities that partners perceive in common and which guide their actions and interactions. I explore defining characteristics of Partnership Identity, using organizational identity (“who we are as an organization”) (Albert & Whetten, 1985) as a heuristic. Table 7 provides an overview of each of the five partnerships, the partners’ pseudonyms, employers, and job titles, as well an acronym key.
Table 7. Partners' Pseudonyms, Employers, Job Titles, and Acronyms (Entire Study)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Employer, Job Title</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TCBI</td>
<td>George</td>
<td>ESU, Engineering Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Owen</td>
<td>ESU, Architecture Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Josh</td>
<td>GU, Landscape Architecture Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carl</td>
<td>RCTC, President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Timothy</td>
<td>RCTC, Vice President and Director of Facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP</td>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>ESU, Geography Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Garrett</td>
<td>ESU, Senior Research Associate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matt</td>
<td>ST, Manager of Public Works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>ST, Elected Councilperson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIP</td>
<td>Caroline</td>
<td>WC, Geography Professor &amp; Director of ICER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>City Schools, Director of Adult Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>Tina</td>
<td>WC, Economics Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyler County</td>
<td>Elaine</td>
<td>DSS, Director of Administrative Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>CAP, Manager of Family and Youth Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EITC</td>
<td>Tina</td>
<td>WC, Economics Professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umpachene</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>UW, Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>Tony</td>
<td>OFU, Director, Regional Financial Fitness Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carrie</td>
<td>OFU, Administrative assistant, EITC coordinator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cindy</td>
<td>CES, Finance &amp; Office manager</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Acronym**

ESU  | Eastern State University
GU   | Grasslands University
RCTC | Red Clay Tribal College
TCBI | Tribal College Building Initiative
STEP | Shafer Township Energy Partnership
ST   | Shafer Township
RIP  | Refugee and Immigration Partnership
CSD  | City School District
RIC  | Refugee and Immigration Center
WC   | Wilken College
ICER | Institute for Community-Engaged Research (at Wilken College)
DSS  | Department of Social Services
CAP  | Community Action Program
IRS  | Internal Revenue Services
UW   | United Way
OFU  | Opportunities for Umpachene
CES  | Cooperative Extension Services
Characteristics of a Partnership Identity

In this section I compare partnerships with and without Partnership Identity (alternately referred to as Identity). My cross-case analysis revealed that three partnerships appear to have Partnership Identity and two do not, as defined by the following five characteristics, which emerged from my analysis as defining aspects of Partnership Identity: (1) whether partners hold unified or separate beliefs regarding that which was core to the mission of the partnership; (2) whether partners self-categorize themselves as members of a distinct entity; (3) whether partners develop organizational structures to facilitate the work and longevity of the partnership; and (4) whether partners believe the partnership will endure in the face of changing partners or resources, such as funding. The TCBI, VITA and EITC partnerships exhibited all four characteristics and had an Identity. Although the RIP partnership exhibited two of the four characteristics, they were not sufficient for a Partnership Identity. The STEP partnership exhibited none of the characteristics, and hence, did not have a Partnership Identity.

Unified Missions

The partnerships with Identities were those in which partners embraced one or a unified set of core reasons for the partnership’s existence – why they were working together. I labeled partnerships as having unified missions if faculty and community partners articulated the importance of their partners’ mission as if it were their own. For example, in response to my question about the mission of the partnership, partners with unified missions spoke both of their primary purpose and their partners’ primary purpose as justifications for why they worked together. In the VITA and EITC partnerships, partners identified single missions that were core to their reasons for the partnership, whereas TCBI partners articulated two components of a unified mission.
In the VITA and EITC partnerships, Tina (WC) and her community partners spoke about a single purpose, to improve the financial future of low-income families through providing assistance with tax returns. Tina spoke of how her perspective of the partnerships’ purposes shifted as a result of her experience. The learning experience for WC students was part of the reason she decided to become involved in the partnership. She described the economic assistance the partnership provided to low-income individuals and families as the abiding reason for her continued involvement. Hence, Tina’s view of the mission was almost solely focused on serving low-income community members. Karen (CAP) noted that she had not before thought about the purpose of the partnership, explicitly, but that “[a]t its basic level, the main purpose is to have people file their income taxes and get returns and to have that resource given to them for free in an ethical, friendly and professional manner.” Likewise, Elaine told me, “our mission [is] to try to help the low-income so they [don’t] have to search out places… that charge two [to] five hundred dollars to get their taxes done.” Tina and her community partners’ descriptions of the mission of the EITC echoed that of VITA’s partnership. Victoria’s response that the partnership was to “move [low-income] people towards self-sufficiency” was representative of the rest of her community partners’ responses.

I also labeled the TCBI partnership as having a unified mission. Faculty and community partners mentioned two core reasons as comprising the mission of the TCBI partnership; 1) to provide educational opportunities for students enrolled in the TCBI-affiliated courses, and 2) to improve the physical infrastructure of RCTC’s campus as a common good for the Tribal community. Partners spoke about both aspects of the mission. Josh (GU) and Owen and George (ESU) spoke about the importance of hands-on experiences for their students’ learning, as well as the importance of addressing the structural needs of the tribal college and community.
Timothy suggested that partners’ individual missions had evolved into one holistic mission. He said,

as the partnership has evolved, I’d have to say they’re shared goals… I think the goals initially were pretty institutionally driven for each institution. I think that has evolved. I think there is more of a shared goal of doing these projects benefiting all of us, not just working in the facility to get training for [ESU and GU students]. I see it more as a single purpose in mind for all of us. That’s how I see it.

Carl (RCTC) also described both purposes as being core to the partnership. In response to my asking, “how would you describe what the partnership is about, its essence?” Carl said “getting something mutual out of it. Sort of like a symbiotic relationship where we exist for each other. Later in the interview he suggested, that he and his partners had “found a commonality of purpose” in meeting “the needs of the [Tribal] community” and the “educational value” of the project for undergrads involved in the design-build project. Although educating ESU and GU students was not their initial reason for becoming involved in TCBI, Timothy and Owen viewed the partnership as being about both education and meeting community needs.

In the RIP partnership, Caroline (WC) and Jessica (RIC) embraced each other’s missions and had a unified vision for the partnership. Both Caroline and Jessica wanted to enhance WC students’ education and the adult education program. They even “contested” over whose mission should guide their decisions about projects that students could pursue through the program.

Partners with unified missions in the TCBI, EITC, VITA, and RIP partnerships often spoke of having their own reasons for entering the partnership, but also spoke of having come to embrace their partners’ objectives as essential justifications why they remained involved.
Although they initially embraced separate individual missions, the partners voiced a unified vision of the partnership.

In contrast, faculty and community partners in STEP emphasized different priorities in their articulations of the partnership’s mission. In my response to my question, “what is the purpose of the partnership?” Garrett admitted, “[w]e never really talked about that sort of thing.” When I asked Susan whether the partnership had developed a shared vision or mission, she told me “[Matt] and I, we feel the constraints and needs of our bureaucracy, whereas [Adam and Garrett], I think, feel the push of wanting to get this going for their students…” Likewise, Matt discussed his interests in developing an energy management plan, but did not talk about student learning as key to the mission of the partnership. ESU partners spoke about the partnership primarily from the perspective of educators. Garrett told me that in his first meeting with the community partners, he told them, “from our point of view, this was a service-learning project for our students. If it had no value [to the Township], then it was their decision. We [Adam and Garrett] were not getting into the planning process.” Likewise Adam told me that although he “want[ed] to do environmental good” he was “coming at it from an educator’s point of view. I want to see what I can do for my students.” The ESU partners believed the Township served as a local case study for the students to learn about various practices and policies that affected greenhouse gas emissions.
### Table 8. Indicators of Whether Partnerships had Unified Missions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Unified Mission</th>
<th>Separate Missions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EITC</td>
<td>1. “move [low-income] people towards self-sufficiency” (Victoria)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. “help prepare taxes and educate members of the community” (Tony)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. “everybody has the same goals… to provide [tax preparation] service” (Tina)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>1. “The main purpose is to have people file their income taxes…” (Karen)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. “Our mission is to try to help low-income” (Elaine)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCBI</td>
<td>1. “found a commonality of purpose… the needs of the Tribal community… [and the] educational value” for ESU/GU undergraduates” (Carl)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. evolved so there is “a shared goal… a single purpose” (Timothy)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. sustainable design education and assist Tribe and RCTC (George, Owen, Josh)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIP</td>
<td>1. focused on teaching students about refugee issues as assisting clients (Jessica)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. focused on students to “serve” the community/Center, as well as teaching about issues (Caroline)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP</td>
<td>1. “We (Matt and Susan) feel the constraints and needs of our bureaucracy, whereas [Adam and Garrett] feel the push of wanting to get this going for their students” (Susan)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. “From our point of view, this was a service-learning project… we were not getting into the [ST] planning process” (Garrett)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. “I’m coming at it from an educator’s point of view” (Adam)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Distinctive

In the organizational identity literature, the term “distinct” is conceptualized as those aspects that make organizations different from other organizations (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Albert and Whetten suggest that organizational members assign importance to the ability to distinguish one’s organization from others – to stand apart from others in a meaningful way, such a through reputation or types of services and products. Organizational identity is, after all, what makes us “us” rather than “them,” According to Turner (1991), categorization of oneself and others as part of a distinct group suggests that partners share similar perspectives of the partnership and may be likely to seek and expect support from each other.

However, findings from this study showed that faculty-community partnerships were not characterized by comparisons (one partnership from another), but rather by cohesiveness (feeling a part of an identifiable entity). Partnerships that had Partnership Identities were characterized by partners’ articulation of themselves and their partners as members of a single team. They spoke of their work as contributing to the collective work of the partnership, rather than solely serving their own interests or those of their employing institutions. Therefore, my definition of distinctive as a characteristic of Partnership Identity is tied to whether members categorize themselves and their partners as part of an interdependent team, not how they categorize themselves as different from other partnerships.

All partners in TCBI characterized themselves as members of a team. Timothy was very explicit about his perceptions that he and his partners were members of a partnership. He said, “I talk in terms of partnerships and I talk about these projects,” “I think there is a shared identity… there is equality in [TCBI].” Carl also told me that he told others “we’re in a partnership” with the faculty partners. An incident that revealed a sense of shared identity was the site selection for
the daycare center. Carl, Timothy, George, and Owen approached the RCTC board members as a unified team. Carl remembered, “We tried to point out to the board all of the [things] that would interfere with getting this project done.” George told me about how the TCBI partners struggled together to figure out how to work with the RCTC board to establish an agreement. Thus, partners in the TCBI partnership categorized themselves as members of a team whose individual work contributed to the collective efforts of the partnership.

Partners in the VITA partnership also categorized themselves as members of a team. Elaine, for example, always used the term “we” when describing the involvement of students; “there were only a couple of students who we had to kick out;” “the ones we get” (emphasis added in each instance). Karen said she talked “a lot” about VITA as a “partnership,” and often used the term “we” to describe their work together. Tina spoke of her work with her community partners almost entirely in terms of “we” throughout each of our conversations. Describing the numbers of clients the partnership returned, for example, she said “we’re not growing as fast as we did those first years… We’re getting close to our saturation point… We increased a little bit every year now…” She spoke about how each partner contributed (to “us”) through their expertise, resources and time, and that Elaine was “our” accountant.

Tina’s categorization of VITA as part of her ingroup was most clear in contrast to her descriptions of the EITC partnership. For example, speaking of her role in the EITC partnership, Tina told me, I just provide my experiences [with volunteer tax assistance programs], because we’ve (VITA) been doing it longer up here and so that’s been helpful for them (EITC) I think.” Further, she told me how Victoria organized the EITC community partners and that “they meet once a month year-round” (emphasis added). Thus, Tina’s categorization of herself as part of the
VITA partnership was evident in how she categorized herself as somewhat of an ancillary member of the EITC partnership.

Although Tina did not express a sense of “we-ness” in relation to the EITC partnership, other community partners in EITC felt as though they were members of a team. Each participant frequently used the terms “we” and “us” when describing the partnership’s activities. For example, in telling me about guests’ surprised response about the lack of hierarchical decision making in the monthly meetings, Tony indicated that they felt part of a team. The guest had asked Tony, “who’s the decision maker?” and he responded, “We are. We all are.” Perhaps even more indicative of a shared sense of we, was the development of an EITC partnership logo that identified each of the contributing partners. The purpose of the logo was to “brand” (Tony’s term) the partnership so that potential clients and funders recognized who was involved in the partnership. Therefore, community partners were careful to establish a clear sense of their partnership as a team comprised of many individuals from various organizations.

Partnerships Without Identities were characterized by partners’ categorization of themselves and their partners as members of a work group (Robbins & Judge, 2007). Unlike a team in which members’ individual contributions are integral to the functioning and effectiveness of all involved, a work group consists of persons who shared information for the sole purpose of developing or advancing progress on a specific project. I labeled partnerships as having a sense of “me or us” versus “s/he or they” if partners did not describe themselves as part of a collective, or their work as contributing to the collective work of the partnership. Partners in STEP tended to discuss serving interests or needs, rather than serving the partnership.

Although Susan described STEP as a “partnership,” she spoke as though the faculty and community partners were on different teams that were working together to meet their respective
interests. Susan talked about the partners being open to working with each other, though from different “sides of the street.” Matt described working with Adam and Garrett as a “good working relationship” and included it as one of many relationships he had with ESU employees (e.g., faculty members, researchers, director of facilities). I asked him, “How do you talk about your relationship? Do you call it a partnership, a collaboration, a project?” He responded, “collaboration or project would be a better” way to describe the relationship than a partnership.

Garrett told me,

   I would characterize it as loose; the partnership as loose (pause)… we have a jointly perceived goal in general outline…. They are trying to take advantage of what we have to offer, which is person power, student power, some knowledge, and they can pick our brains.

Adam described the partnership as “a very good relationship,” but one in which “they [ST] see it as the university providing a free service and we’re [Adam and Garrett] doing it willingly, and gratefully even, and they’re grateful for us helping them out.”

   I also labeled RIP as not having a distinct group identity because Caroline and Jessica believed it was a relationship between “her” and “me.” As noted above, the partners believed they had an interpersonal relationship – not a separate group to which they belonged.
### Table 9. Indicators of Whether Partnerships were Distinctive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Distinctive</th>
<th>Not Distinctive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| EITC        | 1. “we” – used by all partners frequently  
2. partnership logo | |
| VITA        | 1. “we” – used by all partners frequently  
(e.g., there were only a few students we had to kick out” – Elaine) | |
| TCBI        | 1. “I talk in terms of partnership…”  
(Timothy)  
2. “We’re in a partnership…” (Carl)  
3. faculty and community partners approached RCTC as a unified team when negotiating issue of where to build the daycare center  
4. partnership logo | |
| RIP         | 1. Partners spoke in term of “her” and “me”  
2. “It’s a friendship” (Jessica)  
3. “It’s really contained in the form of my work up there and nobody else’s” (Caroline)  
4. not inter-institutional, but personal - Caroline | |
| STEP        | 1. “collaboration or project would be a better way” to describe the relationship than partnership (Matt)  
2. “I would characterize…the partnership as loose…we have a jointly perceived goal in general outline…” (Garrett)  
3. partners work from “different sides of the street” (Susan)  
4. “a very good relationship…they [ST see it as the university providing a free service…” (Adam) | |

### Organizational Structures

Partnerships with Partnership Identities were characterized by the presence of formal and informal structures that coordinated partners’ work and established partners’ roles and
responsibilities within the partnership. The EITC, TCBI and VITA partnerships developed formal social structures in which the social positions and relationships between them were explicitly specified and were defined independently of partners’ personal characteristics and relations of persons occupying the positions (Scott, 2003). For example, at the EITC partnership meeting I observed, partners discussed who would fill the positions of chair, secretary, and treasurer. Partners nominated one another and agreed on persons to fill each of the positions. In the TCBI and VITA partnerships, each partner had a task identity, whole identifiable pieces of work. Task identity is the perceived extent to which the job involves a whole identifiable task (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). For example in TCBI, George was responsible for writing and submitting grants and supervising construction, Josh was responsible for designing and constructing the landscape, and Carl and Timothy (RCTC) were responsible for coordinating logistics at the tribal college. In the VITA partnership, the partners each spoke of their specific tasks. Elaine was responsible for coordinating the training of volunteers and supervising and filing tax returns; Karen was responsible for scheduling clients’ appointments, publicizing the VITA services to potential clients, and writing grants to support the work of the partnership; and Tina was responsible for coordinating students and providing computers and printers for the sites. Blau and Scott (1962) write that “the conception of a structure or system implies that the component units stand in some relation to one another and, as the popular expression ‘The whole is greater than the sum of its parts’ suggests, that the relation between units add new elements to the situation” (p. 206). Partnerships with Identities were also those in which partners had developed task identities, whether formally recognized in the form of titles, or informally recognized in the form of assuming responsibility for whole tasks.
Groups with Partnership Identities also had accounting systems to manage grant monies and support staff (some of which were paid) that coordinated and facilitated the partnership work. In each of the cases, at least one partner used the financial services department of their employing institution to deposit, manage, and allocate money on behalf of the partnership. In TCBI, finances were handled by accounting services at ESU and RCTC. For the most part, George and the accounting staff at ESU handled grant-related funds, whereas bank Carl and staff at RCTC handled loans for construction. In VITA, finances for the partnership were handled and distributed by CAP and WC. In EITC, UW handled the finances for the first few years, but was later handed to OFU. In each of the three partnerships, at least one person was paid a wage or stipend for their specific work with the partnership. In TCBI, a private contractor, graduate students, and summer support staff were hired on grants that funded the partnership. In VITA, Elaine and two student leaders were paid stipends for their work for the partnership. In EITC, Carrie received a salary for her part-time work coordinating clients’ schedules for each of the sites. The partnership hoped to secure additional monies to finance a similar position in the future.

The RIP and STEP partnerships did not contain organizational structures to fund, support, or coordinate the partnership’s activities. Partners did not have positions, either formally or informally, within the partnership that were separate from their roles as members of their employing institutions. For example, Susan’s (ST) position in the STEP partnership was tied to her position as a councilwoman. Her role was defined by her own advocacy and political interests in furthering the partnership. Caroline (WC) and Jessica (RIC) also did not have systems to support their work. They worked with each other and did not create systems that could allow others to facilitate or coordinate the work of the RIP partnership.
Table 10. Indicators of Organizational Structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Organizational Structures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EITC</td>
<td>Chair, secretary, treasurer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accounting system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paid staff member (one year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>Task identities (positions are separate from person)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paid staff member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCBI</td>
<td>Leader/PI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accounting system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paid Staff/personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIP</td>
<td>- none -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP</td>
<td>- none -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Belief that the Partnership Will Continue**

Partnerships with Identities were characterized by partners’ expectations that the partnership could and would continue despite changes in persons and resources. Partners in such partnerships felt that even if certain members were no longer involved, the partnership would continue – partners would find a way to sustain it. This definition of enduring differs somewhat from the way it is explicated in the organizational identity literature as the temporal continuity of that which is core to the organization (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Although the mission of the partnership may remain, I found that partners who believed in a shared sense of “we” also sensed that the partnership itself would continue. The TCBI, VITA, and EITC partnerships were characterized as expected to endure despite (potential) changes in their memberships.

Timothy felt quite certain that the TCBI partnership would continue; he told me “the partnership is not determined by the individuals within the partnership. You can change the faces of the players in the partnership, and hopefully, the partnership will continue.” Likewise, Carl, George, and Timothy explained that they were developing ways to remain connected after there was no longer any space left to build on RCTC’s campus. They discussed developing a summer workshop program in which ESU students provided workshops on how to build and maintain...
sustainable homes. Although the activities of the partnership might change, partners were committed to continuing to find ways to extend and expand their work together. As Josh put it;

I know on paper, it’s all about sustainable housing technologies, but I don’t think that’s what it’s about I think it’s the commitment to the partnership. I think that’s why [Owen] has been here for so long as a designer; it’s not because there are a lot of new techniques he gets to try out as a sustainable designer. It’s more because he gets to be a part of this organization... You know, so it’s this commitment to this partnership [Josh’s emphasis]… we could do [these projects near ESU]. There are other underserved areas…

Community and faculty partners believed they would continue to find ways of working together within the context of the partnership, even if they had to find new types of projects on which to collaborate.

Partners in the VITA partnership also suggested that the partnership would endure changes in persons, primarily because it already had. In response to my question whether the partnership was an entity that was capable of sustaining itself over time and through different iterations of people, Elaine responded,

I think so. I mean, right now this partnership has been going on for six years and it just seems to get stronger. I think that it had a lot to do with everybody involved, but [Samantha⁶] left and [Tina] filled right in. [The IRS representative⁷] has stayed in it, and [Lara⁸] left for a little and then came right back into it. It just seems to stand on its own and get stronger.

⁶ Samantha was a WC faculty member who was one of the three initiators of the partnership.
⁷ The IRS representative provided tax software and training support to the partnership. She was unavailable for an interview.
⁸ Lara was one of the three initiators of the partnership and was Karen’s supervisor. Karen had taken over Lara’s responsibilities in the partnership at the time of this study,
The persons who began the partnership had each left the partnership, yet Elaine believed the partnership continued essentially unchanged. Tina also believed that “someone” at WC would step in to facilitate students’ involvement in the program. Although she did not indicate who would replace her, should she leave, she had a sense that she could find someone who would.

Partnerships Without Identities were characterized by partners’ expectations that the partnership would not continue past the current project or if partners left the partnership. Partners felt that the partnership would discontinue if they were no longer involved. Partners in the STEP and RIP partnerships did not expect the partnership to endure their leaving of the project and were not committed to sustaining the partnership for its own sake.

Although partners in STEP acknowledged that they could find additional projects to mutually benefit each other, they did not expect the partnership to continue beyond the two-year commitment. Garrett noted, “This partnership was designed for a finite mission, to cover four [semesters].” Adam told me,

At the end of the next spring semester, we should be able to turn over things to the [Township] so that they really have a great solid foundation to get their mitigation process going. Of course, “we’ll be looking over their shoulder and keeping in contact with them, but we’re not going to work on it anymore. The idea is to move onto other entities, like maybe the townships [near Shafer Township].

Garrett and Adam discussed wanting to find other townships throughout the region to serve as case studies for future class projects. Garrett talked about “partnering” with other municipalities “to do… inventor[ies]” and the potential of working with an inter-governmental group “to grow an inventory and plan to cover the whole region.”
Caroline (WC) did not believe her service-learning partnership with Jessica (RIC) would continue if she were to stop participating. “it is really so contained in the form of my work up there and nobody else’s” (Caroline’s emphasis). Caroline and Jessica did not feel that they had a partnership that needed to be preserved or extended to new areas in order to make it last into future years. Caroline worked with Jessica to identify projects only when she was teaching a course in which she wanted to integrate service-learning experiences, which was sometimes only once a year. Caroline and Jessica may not have felt it necessary that their partnership continue because Caroline maintained what she called “a partnership” with the Center, generally. She developed relationships with several staff members at the Center, including the executive director, and served on the board of directors. The fate of her service-learning partnership with Jessica, therefore, affected neither her friendship with Jessica, nor her other roles or relationships in the Center. In both STEP and RIP, it was unlikely that any of the partners’ roles could or would be filled if they left the partnership because their roles were so specifically tied to particular professional interests and responsibilities, not to positions established within the partnership.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Will Continue</th>
<th>Will Not Continue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| EITC        | 1. Partnership applied for a multi-year grant  
2. Partners elected leadership for following year  
3. Plans to file for 501C3 status | |
| VITA        | 1. “the partnership has [lasted] six years and it just seems to get stronger… it just seems to stand on its own…” (Elaine)  
2. believed “someone” from WC would replace her if she left the EITC or VITA partnerships (Tina) | |
| TCBI        | 1. “the partnership is not determined by individuals… you can change the faces… [and] the partnership will continue” (Timothy)  
2. partnership is about “commitment” to this partnership” (Josh)  
3. “develop relationships so there’s sustainability…” (George) | |
| RIP         | 1. Partnership may continue if Caroline teaches a course on refugee/immigration policy. If not, the partnership will not continue (Caroline & Jessica) | |
| STEP        | 1. “This partnership was designed for a finite mission…” (Garrett)  
2. “we’ll be…keeping in contact with them, but we’re not going to work on it anymore. The idea is to move onto other [townships].” (Adam) | |
Summary

In this section I presented five key characteristics that were present in partnerships where partners appeared to have a sense of “we” with respect to other members of the partnership and the partnership itself. Those characteristics were: (1) unified missions, (2) informal and/or formal organizational structures, (3) expectations to continue the partnership, (4) articulations of the partnership as a distinct and identifiable entity. In the following section, I revisit the first three components of my initial conceptual framework and present findings related to (1) organizational identities of partners’ employing institutions, (2) partners’ social identities, and (3) partners’ communications with each other. These three aspects were included in my conceptual framework because I expected them to be associated with whether a partnership formed a Partnership Identity. I then present similarities and differences across partnerships with and without Identities in relation to these three aspects.

Organizational Identity

Members of organizations use their organization’s identities as guides for directing their own behavior and resources (Pratt, 2000). An organization’s identity, therefore, may influence individuals’ perceptions of what is most essential to the organization, and, by extension, what is most essential for their own work roles as well. In this section I present key aspects of the organizational identities of partners’ employing institutions.

Higher Education Institution Missions

All of the faculty partners held broad and complex views of their institutions’ organizational missions, regardless of institution type. Across all cases, faculty partners believed that that the ultimate purpose of their institutions was to advance society through teaching and scholarship. Faculty from ESU and GU spoke about the land-grant history of their institutions
and told me that the central purpose of their institutions was to educate the state’s “sons and daughters” and to contribute scholarly expertise for the benefit of the state and society. Faculty at WC, a liberal arts college, emphasized their teaching mission over their scholarship duties. In particular, faculty spoke about preparing students to become responsible leaders in whatever occupations they chose after graduation. All faculty partners’ views of their institutions’ identities were similar in the sense that they focused on advancing society through education and scholarship.

**Community Agency Missions**

The organizational identities of the community agencies in which community partners worked were relatively narrower than the identities of the institutions of higher education. The missions of the institutions in which community partners were employed were each focused on providing direct services for specific populations. For example, CAP helped low-income individuals and families in Tyler County to become self-sufficient; UW helped to raise money and develop partnerships to improve the quality of life for residents in Umpachene County; RCTC helped to enhance educational and cultural opportunities for members of the reservation and Tribe; and the Refugee and Immigration Center (RIC) served recently arrived refugee and immigrants in the region. Each of the community partners described their employing organizations as institutions that provided direct services.

**Social Identity**

Social identity is an individual’s sense of belonging to certain groups (Turner, 1991). For example, a professor may recognize multiple social identities with regards to discipline (e.g., “I am a geographer”) and roles (e.g., “I am an educator)(Colbeck & Weaver, 2008). How persons
categorize themselves as members of certain groups who play particular roles may influence their perceptions and actions (Mulford, 1984).

Faculty partners’ identities.

Analysis of interviews revealed that faculty partners served four different roles through their partnership, including educator, scholar, public intellectual and vested community member (summarized in Table 12). All faculty partners served educator roles; they viewed the partnership as a component of their teaching duties. Faculty partners in two partnerships (TCBI and STEP) served scholar roles; they viewed the partnership as a component of their scholarship work as they learned more about their fields of study. Two differences between partners’ social identities in the five partnerships were whether faculty partners viewed themselves as vested community members and/or as public intellectuals.
Table 12. Faculty Partners’ Social Identities Within the Partnership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Scholar (project relates to primary area of study)</th>
<th>Scholar (project is only a tangential area of study)</th>
<th>Public Intellectual (contribute own expertise to community problem)</th>
<th>Educator</th>
<th>Vested Community Advocate or Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TCBI</td>
<td>J G</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>J O G</td>
<td>J G</td>
<td>J G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEP</td>
<td>A G</td>
<td>A G</td>
<td>J O G</td>
<td>J G</td>
<td>J G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EITC</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>T</td>
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<tr>
<td>RIP</td>
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Letter is the first letter of faculty partners’ names

Vested community member.

Caroline (WC), Tina (WC), Josh (GU) and George (ESU) participated in their partnerships as vested community members. Tina was forthright about her desire to volunteer in her community. She had been a VITA volunteer as a doctoral student and continued to volunteer as a professor. She commented that working on the tax assistance projects was “really the only community service thing I do in my life anymore” due to her busy academic and family schedules. Caroline also spoke of her partnership with Jessica as a way to give back to her community; she wanted the students to serve the adult education program “in ways that benefit the staff and programs... I’m committed to having students enhance their resources and efficacy.” Like Tina, Caroline also felt that she ought to contribute her time to helping others in her regional community; “With my level of education, my income, some of my time should be spent in community service.”

Public intellectual.

George, Owen, (ESU), Josh (GU), Adam and Garrett (ESU), all members of public land-grant universities, described their work with the community partnerships serving their public
intellectual roles (contribute own expertise to community issue). Adam compared the service he and Garrett provided ST partners to the service an expert consultant would provide a client. Adam told me, “they know that they’re getting something for free and that we’re providing a lot of expertise and knowledge that they have no clue about.” Garrett talked about the greenhouse gas mitigation project as “truly a public service.” He and Garrett contributed their expertise gained from developing similar inventories and reports. The three faculty partners in TCBI contributed their expertise to the tribal college and community. Owen said, “We bring a certain amount of professional skills and technical skills to the project, everything from grant writing to actually building things.” George and Josh also spoke about the opportunity the partnership provided them to apply their areas of expertise in ways that improved the lives of others.

**Community Partner Identities**

All community partners discussed their partnership as fulfilling both professional and personal roles simultaneously. All community partners enacted service provider roles; they viewed their partnership work as a component of their professional responsibilities at the community agency. All community partners enacted roles as vested community member; they viewed their partnership work as a component of their personal and civic responsibilities to participate in the communities in which they lived. However, several community partners also viewed themselves as educators to the undergraduate students involved in the service projects. In this section I describe community partners’ social identities as service providers, vested community members, and educators (summarized in Table 13).

**Table 13. Community Partners’ Social Identities Within the Partnership**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Service Provider</th>
<th>Vested Community Member</th>
<th>Educator</th>
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Each of the 11 community partners viewed their partnerships with faculty members primarily as extensions of their institutional roles as community-based service providers. Victoria (UW) and Karen (CAP) spoke bluntly about the direct connection between the two roles, explaining that their paycheck covered their work with EITC and VITA partners, respectively. Matt (ST) was responsible for supervising the township’s public works and the STEP partnership was an extension of his role as director. Jessica (RIC) was the director of adult education and believed the RIP partnership helped her to support ESL instructors, and thereby, serve clients. Elaine (DSS) felt as though her involvement in the VITA partnership, though ancillary to her position as DSS, was in keeping with her duties to serve community members. Carl and Timothy (RCTC) also believed the TCBI partnership was a way of fulfilling their duties, as administrators at the tribal college, to serve their community by providing educational services and resources. On the whole, community partners viewed their participation in the faculty-community partnership as a component of their roles as community-based service providers.

**Service provider.**

Each community partner spoke of choosing their careers due to a sense of wanting to help others. Tony (OFU), Carrie (OFU), and Cindy (CE) noted that members of community agencies regularly “volunteered” to help each other out (within and across agencies in the same locale)
because of their commitments to serving the community. Elaine (DSS) felt that even though she was paid a stipend, her work with the partnership was “personal;” she wanted to assist her community members in getting their tax returns filed – she even made several house calls to homebound clients. Although community partners were personally committed to serving that role, their personal commitment was to their chosen profession and not to the partnership, necessarily. Community partners viewed themselves as playing their institutionally recognized role of service provider. Carl (RCTC) described his work at the tribal college and with the partnership as his way of enhancing the quality of life for his community members. He and Timothy (RCTC) were strong advocates for higher education and felt that the partnership allowed them to serve their roles as not only professional administrators, but also as persons who were truly vested in the tribal community. Finally, Susan (ST) felt the partnership helped her to serve her role as a councilwoman, a role she chose because of her commitment to enhancing the quality of life for her neighbors and conserving the Townships’ natural areas and resources. Her interest in helping the community and environment, she told me, “was very personal.” Matt was interested in helping the Township to which he belonged and for whom he worked to “do the right thing.”

*Educator.*

At least one community partner in the VITA, EITC, RIP, and TCBI partnerships identified as serving an educator role within the context of the partnership. Elaine (DSS) met with WC students several times at the start of each semester to help them understand tax laws and procedures so that they could pass the IRS-administered exam for volunteer tax preparers. She and Tina spoke about her role as an educator throughout the semester, teaching students not only about tax preparations, but also about the economic and social circumstances of their
clients. Similarly, Cindy (EITC) told me about her enjoyment working with students to teach them about the clients they served, as well as helping them with tax preparation questions. Jessica (RIC) visited Caroline’s (WC) classroom to introduce students to the mission, clients, and context of the Refugee and Immigration. Carl (RCTC) visited students on ESU’s campus nearly every year to introduce them to the college, the Tribe, and their culture. While on the reservation, Carl welcomed students and spoke to them about preserving language, sites, and culture.

**Faculty Partners as Vested Community Members and Community Partners as Educators**

Four partnerships contained faculty partners who viewed themselves as vested community members and community partners who viewed themselves as educators. All partners in these partnerships followed collaborative styles of communication and discussed plans for future projects. Two of these partnerships openly discussed the issue of credit and recognition, but two did not. One partnership contained faculty partners who did not view themselves as vested members of the community and community partners who did not view themselves as educators. The communication style followed in this partnership was not collaborative, but cooperative, and partners discussed neither plans for continuing nor the issue of credit and recognition.

**Communication**

This study sought to understand how partners negotiated key aspects of their partnership. Observations of TCBI during my pilot study and subsequent review of literatures suggested that partners who negotiated using integrative processes may develop equitable outcomes while preserving, or even developing, strong relationships. My findings concerning negotiation processes show that in the other four partnerships (VITA, EITC, STEP, RIP), the partners
described their communications with each other as conversations, discussions, or agreements. I also found that partners could not provide examples of issues they negotiated or discussed, and so questions about negotiation process were not useful. Instead, of negotiation processes, I heard partners discuss communication styles.

Hardy and colleagues (2005) posit that a collective identity is created through certain types of discourse. Gray and colleagues (1985) also note that individuals construct ideas about members of their working groups through the act of communication. How partners speak to one another and the topics they discuss, therefore, may not only help to facilitate the completion of a project, but it may also facilitate the development of a Partnership Identity.

In this section I present key findings that emerged from my analysis of partners’ communications with each other. Across all cases, I found that partners spoke to each other about their purposes, roles, responsibilities, and/or resources, as expected by my initial conceptual framework (Chapter 3). However, partners differed with regards to communication style and whether they discussed the continuation of the partnership and credit or recognition. There appeared to be a connection between differences in communication substance and style and the social identities of members within the partnership.

**Collaborative Style**

Partnerships in which faculty partners viewed their partnership work as a component of their social identities as vested community members included EITC, VITA, TCBI and RIP. Collaborative communication was exhibited by the tone, frequency, and format of partners’ conversations that emphasized willingness to engage with and listen to each other’s interests for the purposes of co-learning, power sharing, and relationship building. Collaborative communication emphasized and reinforced partners’ inter-reliance on each other. Hardy and
colleagues (2005) refer to this style of communication as “cooperative talk” and suggest that collaborative styles of communication help to create common constructions of what the partnership is about and what partners are doing together as a team because all partners’ ideas are part of decision-making processes. Collaborative communication emphasizes similarities, mutual affiliations, and shared interests (Hardy et al., 2005).

Communication between partners in the EITC partnership was the most collaborative of the five cases. At monthly meetings, partners provided reports of their individual activities (e.g., establishing an advertising campaign, setting up computers, applying for grants, developing the partnership logo). It seemed no decision was made unilaterally. Tony told me that a previous guest to the group could not identify the lead decision maker in the EITC partnership. He told the guest, “We do. We all do,” signifying shared power among the partners in making decisions about the activities and direction of the group.

Partners in VITA partnership also followed a collaborative style of communicating. They communicated regularly by phone and e-mail and depended on one another to ensure the three sites were prepared to receive clients each week. Elaine’s description of her partners’ willingness “to sit and listen to one another and if there is a problem” suggested a sense of interdependency; they communicated their concerns and helped one another. Although the VITA partners did not meet as regularly as the EITC group, partners called each other to discuss plans and to solve problems together. Tina told me, “staying in touch with one another, that we know is crucial for the success of the program."

George, Josh, and Owen, faculty partners in the TCBI partnership, worked intentionally to develop a collaborative style; they wanted to establish shared power in planning and making decisions about the building and landscape projects. ESU and GU faculty asked and listened to
their partner’s needs and wishes before making any important design or construction decisions. Timothy noted that he was initially surprised by how involved he was expected to be in informing faculty partners’ decisions about the project, despite his inexperience in “construction stuff.” He told me that he and his faculty partners were involved in “open communication – talking all of the time.” Even when Timothy felt the faculty partners could make the decision on their own, they asked him anyway. He told me, “there was a reason for that. Yeah, the opportunity for input and to know that what you’re saying is being heard, not just listened to.” Josh told me he was insistent on developing a collaborative relationship because he felt it was an important element in fostering trust between partners, a key component in architecture projects in which contracts were not signed. Despite the thousands of miles between campuses, partners saw each other several times a year and spoke over the phone often to maintain their style of collaborative communication.

Caroline and Jessica also followed a highly collaborative style of communicating with each other. As noted in Chapter 9, Caroline visited Jessica at RIC before the start of each course in which she wanted to incorporate service-learning. Caroline told me that “certainly [she] would never [set up projects] over the phone.” She seemed to feel that meeting together in-person was important to signify her respect for Jessica as a co-collaborator in developing the list of projects available to students. In our interviews, Caroline emphasized the importance of working with Jessica to ensure that both of their interests were being met (education and service). Because Jessica and Caroline’s interactions seemed to emphasize and reinforce their inter-reliance on each other, I categorized their communication as following a collaborative style.

Owen (ESU) was an exception to the pattern. He did not identify as a vested community advocate in relation to his work with TCBI, yet he followed a collaborative style of
communication. He did not make decisions unilaterally without consensus from his community partners. Owen spoke about his careful attempts to include the community partners in developing the design and architectural features of the buildings. He spoke about “design literacy” and how he helped teach them about his work and how aspects of their culture could be incorporated into the design of the building. Owen fostered a sense of collaboration as he learned about the Tribe’s culture and significant symbols, colors, and concepts and they were learning how to integrate their culture into the design of building.

**Communication about Future Projects and Credit**

Developing additional initiatives beyond their current project was a topic that was associated with partnerships in which faculty partners felt they served their vested community member roles and community partners served educator roles through their partnership work. Each of the partners in the TCBI partnership told me that they had already begun to make plans to work together for the following year. George, Carl and Timothy discussed five and ten year plans for the college and ways the partnership could be involved. Partners also discussed the conversations that demonstrated partners’ intentions to establish a continuous partnership. Tina and her partners in EITC and VITA also discussed plans for the following year. Many of the discussions seemed to be focused on how to improve the management of the program so that it ran more smoothly for partners and students. Partners from both partnerships met at the end of the year to discuss what worked, what did not work, and the goals they hoped to achieve the following year. Overall, partners in the TCBI, EITC, VITA, and RIP partnerships planned for the continuation of their partnership through future iterations of the same project or by discussing new areas of opportunity.
Although Caroline and Jessica expected to continue their service-learning partnership, it seems they did not talk together about the next semester or year’s projects to the same extent that partners in the TCBI, EITC, and VITA partnerships did. In large part, this may have been because Caroline did not teach a service-learning course each semester. Therefore, it seemed that they discussed continuation of the partnership in a general sense, but not certain projects specifically.

Partners in the STEP partnership believed that there might be future opportunities for working together because of the expertise Adam and Garrett could provide to the Township, but did not make plans to continue the partnership. Susan hoped that Adam and Garrett would be available for future consultations regarding the Township’s energy plans. Matt also felt that Adam and Garrett might be useful partners in the future, but he also discussed them as one of many faculty partners from ESU who could serve as resources. The STEP partners did not identify additional projects on which they could work.

The issue of credit and recognition for partners’ work was a second topic that was associated with two of the four partnerships in which faculty and community partners felt they served their vested community member roles through their partnership work. In each of my interviews, I asked partners whether they ever discussed how work that was done on behalf of the partnership was to be presented to others outside the partnership. Only partners in the TCBI and EITC partnerships discussed the issue of how partners would be recognized and give credit for their work. Partners in the EITC partnership discussed the issue of recognition in several of their monthly meetings (one of which I attended). They spoke about “who is a partner?” and spoke of the importance of having and using a logo to ensure that the names of the institutions that partners represented were identified in all of their publications.
Members of the TCBI partnership had also discussed credit and recognition for shared work, though they did so indirectly. As discussed in Chapter 4, faculty and community partners told me about a story that they shared with each other: RCTC had dissolved a previous partnership due to the partnering entity’s repeated failure to include them in media events and to recognize them as partners in the project. Therefore, the issue of recognition and credit was discussed indirectly; partners understood the importance of providing each other with proper recognition and credit for the partnership’s work.

The VITA partnership differed from other partnerships with faculty members who were vested community members because partners did not explicitly discuss the issue of credit and recognition. Though not discussed explicitly, VITA partners’ responses suggested that credit was, in fact, an important topic that should be openly discussed to ensure a sense of equality and unity between members of the partnership. I heard from each of the three partners that the “program generates a lot of press” (Tina). The WC public relations department regularly posted the activities and accomplishments of the program, which Tina and her community partners seemed to feel emphasized the students’ work over that of the community partners. Although she tried to make sure both CAP and DSS were recognized as integral partners, she felt that there was a “battle about who’s getting recognition for this program.” In a separate interview, one of the community partners told me she felt that her work and her employing organization’s contributions were overshadowed by the students’ work at the university, particularly with regards to recent media attention received by the partnership. She felt disappointed that the students and faculty member had received a disproportionate amount of attention in the media, and felt that they were not equally recognized for their roles.” The community partner felt “a negative shift” in terms of how equally partners were recognized in the media for the work done
by the partnership. Therefore, interviews with VITA partners suggest the importance of credit in developing partners’ sense of equality and unity.

**STEP Partnership: Cooperative Style**

The STEP partnership differed from the other four cases with regards to its style and content of partners’ communication with each other. Partners did not follow a collaborative style of communication and they did not discuss the issue of credit or future projects. Matt and Susan spoke of their meetings with Adam and Garrett primarily as a time for receiving project updates and to answer questions or provide data. Adam and Garrett also suggested that their conversations with Susan and Matt were like that of a consultant working with a client; they interacted for the purpose of getting more information so they could develop a more complete report. In the meeting I observed, Adam and Garrett described different sets of recommendations students might list in their final report to the Township and asked Susan and Matt to provide feedback about which types of recommendations would be most useful. Although the partners were very collegial with each other, I noticed that the interactions between the two groups seemed different from the other partnerships I studied. Although all of them focused on project logistics, the others had developed communication styles that emphasized interdependence, whereas partners in the STEP partnership developed a style that maximized efficiency, independence, and autonomy.

Partners in the STEP partnership followed a coordinating style of communication. A coordinating style of communication, for the purpose of this study, is defined in contrast to collaborative style, and is exhibited by the tone, frequency, and format of partners’ conversations that emphasize that information is shared as needed and for the purpose of helping each member perform work within his or her own area of responsibility (Mattessich, et al., 2001). I suggest
that partners who follow coordinating communication styles, in contrast to following collaborative styles, reinforce independence and autonomy by interacting primarily to share information and/or preferences. Like a study group that convenes to “cram” for a big test, partners may come together repeatedly to share information, but they do not spend much time on developing the relationships between members. Though members of the group may work together intensely and develop relationships with each other, members expect that after the project is finished (or test is taken), the group will disband. The partners involved took on needed roles to assist the project, but they functioned relatively independent of each other.
Table 14. Indicators of Partners' Communication Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership</th>
<th>Collaborative</th>
<th>Cooperative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EITC</td>
<td>1. joint planning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. shared power in decision-making</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. “with your permission I will [complete a particular task for the group].” (Victoria, Tony)</td>
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<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>1. joint planning – ensure preparation of sites (all)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. “willingness to sit and listen” (Elaine)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. stay in touch regularly (Tina)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TCBI</td>
<td>1. joint planning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. continually informing decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. visit each other to discuss in-person</td>
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<tr>
<td>RIP</td>
<td>1. joint planning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. consider each others’ goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>STEP</td>
<td>1. Pitch proposal (consultant/client-like)</td>
<td>1. Establish clear boundaries between partners’ roles and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Establish clear boundaries between partners’ roles and responsibilities</td>
<td>3. Communicate only to exchange information and gain approval for decisions, not to develop interdependence</td>
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Summary

Partnerships in which faculty partners served as vested community members and community partners served as educators were also those who followed collaborative styles of communication in which they emphasized shared decision-making, shared power, and consensus building. They also discussed plans for future partnership projects. These findings about communication were true for the TCBI partnership, even though one partner, Owen, did not view himself as a vested community member. In contrast, Adam and Garrett who did not serve roles as vested community members and Susan and Matt who did not serve roles as educators
followed coordinating communication styles and did not discuss plans for future partnership projects.

**Similarities and Differences between Partnerships With and Without Identities**

Similar across partnerships with and Without Partnership Identities, partners enacted multiple social identities simultaneously. Community partners served professional identities as service providers, as well as personal identities as vested members of their communities. All of the faculty partners served professional identities as scholars, educators, and public intellectuals. Faculty partners in four of the five partnerships were also vested members of the communities that were served by the partnerships’ activities.

Faculty partners who were vested in their communities were also members of partnerships with Identities. Faculty members who were vested in their communities communicated collaboratively with their community partners, also a characteristic of partnerships with Identities. In the TCBI partnership, however, Owen (ESU) followed a collaborative style of communication even though he was not a vested member of RCTC or the Tribal community.

Developing a unified mission, a key characteristic of Partnership Identity, was found in the RIP partnership, which I labeled as not having an Identity. This finding suggested to me that partnerships that have unified missions may not develop Partnership Identities. Therefore, Partnership Identity is not only defined by a shared vision of the partnership, but also by other elements.

Partnerships with Identities developed nurture norms, expectations that partners will support, celebrate, and encourage one another in ways that are above and beyond that which is necessary to facilitate the project. Though often expressed in friendly ways, such as partners
asking about one another’s families or work, nurture norms extended beyond interpersonal relationships and included activities that benefited the employing institutions or communities. For example, Tina facilitated the regional housing seminar for OFU, and George helped RCTC develop five- and ten-year strategic plans for the campus’s buildings and facilities.

Partners in partnerships with Identities developed organizational structures to help organize and facilitate the activities and finances of the partnership, whereas partnerships Without Partnership Identities did not. Partners in partnerships with Identities secured external funding, hired staff and students to help coordinate student schedules and project activities. Partners took on task specific roles, such as accountant, project coordinator, and student facilitator. They recruited additional persons to join the partnership, either to contribute new resources, knowledge, and skills, or to replace a partner who must leave or be absent from the partnership and its activities.

Two major differences between the partnerships with an Identity and those Without Partnership Identity were their relative emphasis on their expectation to continue the partnership beyond the current project activities and the distinction of themselves and partners as “we.” Partners in partnerships with Identities expressed intentions to maintain the partnership as a means of furthering shared interests. Partners in partnerships with no Identities expressed intentions to complete specified projects with clear end dates. Partners in partnerships with Identities spoke of their partners and themselves as members of a team. Partners in partnerships with Identities frequently used the term “we” to describe their activities within the partnership, indicating a sense of shared initiative, rather than separate actions. Partners in STEP referred to one as if members of separate teams. Partners in RIP referred to one another as colleagues and friends, but not as members of a distinct team or group.
The RIP had a unified mission and the partners developed certain expectations as a result of the friendship they shared. However, a Partnership Identity was not developed. The partners did not share a sense of “we” in the sense that they were members of an organizational entity and they did not expect it to continue beyond their own departures. Their relationship allowed them to coordinate service-learning projects, but it did not include others or structures so that it would or could continue into the future. Because there was no sense of “we” that extended beyond their relationship, I concluded that the partnership itself had not established a sense of identity that contained norms and missions to guide the work of others who might wish to join.

Discussion

Partnership Identity may help partners make sense of what it means to be partners with each other. Clark, Gioia, Ketchen, and Thomas’s (2007) study of transitional identity formation in organizational mergers between hospitals suggests the importance of socio-cognitive features in facilitating or inhibiting the integration of partners’ vision for the organization. Transitional identity is the “interim sense” of how partners perceive what the host organizations “are becoming” (p. 19) as they merge together. In their study, the construction of a temporary identity helped members to overcome a long history of distrust and disagreements because it provided the “freedom” (p. 21) for members to cognitively detach themselves from a previous organizational identity and to realign themselves as members of a new organization. Gricar and Brown (1981) argue that the construction of an intergroup entity (such as a partnership) allows for the gradual development of norms that guide interaction among partners and may provide a provisional identity (Ibarra, 1999) in which partners create a temporary and evolving sense of self within the context of the partnership.
The concept of Partnership Identity follows in the tradition of research that explores the role of individuals’ and organizations’ identities in partnership effectiveness (Güney, 2004; Clark, Gioia, Ketchen, & Thomas, 2007; Rothman, 1997; Hardy, Lawrence, & Grant, 2005; Hicks, 1999; Gray, 1989). In sum, this approach suggests that partners initially draw on the identities of the organizations they represent to establish whether they will partner, but must come to a new and shared agreement on the identity of their partnership if the collaborative effort is to be successful. By extension, the success of faculty-community partnerships may depend on boundary-spanners’ abilities to relinquish existing ways of thinking of themselves as members of separate organizational entities and to forge, instead, new consensually shared ways of making sense of the partnership’s identity.

**Nurture Norms**

The development of nurture norms, informal but clear expectations of how partners were to behave as members of the partnership, may be an outcome of Partnership Identity development. To explore norms in partnerships, I analyzed participants’ interview transcripts for comments about how they perceived that they or others should act toward others within the partnership. Expectations for how one acts as a member of a particular organization provided clues as to the presence of shared group identity (Haslam, 2000; Turner, 1985; Turner et al., 1987). I asked participants, “if you were introducing a newcomer to the partnership, what are some of the implicit rules or guidelines that you would tell them to follow?”

I found that all the partnerships with Partnership Identities exhibited norms about nurturing the relationship (referred to here as *nurture norms*), whereas only one of the two partnerships Without Partnership Identities did. Borrowing from Dorado and Giles (2005) definition of nurturing behaviors between faculty and community partners, I define a nurture
norm as the expectation that partners will engage in conversations and activities that can be described using the verbs: nurture, cultivate, support, encourage, cherish, celebrate, develop, care for, foster, and related synonyms. The TCBI, VITA, EITC, and RIP partnerships were characterized by nurture norms.

Two key examples suggest that the TCBI partnership had developed nurture norms. First, apart from the summer project, faculty and community partners visited each other throughout the year, despite the considerable distance between campuses. Faculty partners spoke about the importance of meeting face-to-face with their community partners to discuss aspects of the projects, but perhaps, more importantly to foster open communication and develop trust. Josh articulated the need to nurture the partnership through personal visits. He told me that the community partners

value face-to-face trust… Phone calls are pragmatic and they work in certain contexts, but from my experience [working with RCTC partners] for a couple of years on design work is that they value the relationship and the relationship requires face time, to use a cliché. And so that was totally a response. I fl[ew] out to [the reservation].

Carl and Timothy also took turns visiting ESU’s campus each year. They visited the classroom to help prepare students for their visit to the reservation; they met with students, faculty and staff as a way of getting to know each other; and on one occasion, George and some ESU students drove with Carl to see the American Indian Museum in Washington, DC. Because of these visits, Carl told me that he had gotten to know his faculty partners “on a personal basis. I’ve gotten to know them so well that they aren’t afraid to come to me with issues, and I’m not afraid to come to them with issues.”
Second, faculty and community partners celebrated each other in the ways they introduced each other to the students during the first days of orientation on the reservation. For example, Carl called his faculty partners “friends” and recounted the previous projects completed by the partnership. Timothy purchased and personally delivered a dozen pizzas to the students and faculty during a break from construction work. Carl, Timothy and other community members from the reservation periodically joined the students and faculty partners for dinner.

The VITA partnership also developed nurture norms. In response to my question about whether the partnership had developed implicit rules for behavior, Tina (WC) described how partners fostered open communication by developing caring relationships;

in [Tyler] it’s very much personal [sic]… They’re friends, I consider them friends even though we work only on the VITA program together and I see them a lot during certain times of the year and then don’t talk to them for months, but there’s a sense of personal connection. Staying in touch with one another, that we know, is crucial for the success of the program. And it works that we know each other quite well; we don’t personally hang out or anything.

Elaine described the normative behavior of partners as “very cooperative, very willing… if I need them to be here, they are here. Very friendly….” I asked her why partners worked together so well, and she told me that each partner was “willing to compromise, listen to other people’s opinions… [be] flexible.” I labeled the VITA partnership as containing nurture norms, though one partner did not speak about them, because of the norms indicated by Elaine and Tina’s comments.

Community partners in the EITC partnership developed nurture norms. They asked about each other’s families and vacations. Several members often shared meals together after the
meetings. They offered to help each other with their partnership activities and responsibilities related to the partnership. Tina was not able to make it to each of the meetings, or to attend the impromptu lunches that sometimes occurred afterwards, because of her schedule at WC. Thus, she was not as consistently involved in nurturing activities as her community partners. However, she celebrated the partnership by hosting the end-of-the-season dinner and she nurtured her relationship with OFU by agreeing to host and co-chair a daylong housing symposium and workshop at the Wilken College.

Caroline and Jessica developed expectations that were based on their friendship. Caroline and Jessica told me that their conversations were never purely about the service-learning projects, but always contained personal elements as well. They discussed their families and jobs. When Caroline went to the Center for other business, she usually “popped in” to Jessica’s office just to say hello.

Thus, the TCBI, VITA, EITC, and RIP partnerships had developed nurture norms. Partners felt that appropriate behavior included those activities that cultivated, supported, encouraged, cherished, celebrated, developed, cared for, and fostered the relationship between partners, and ultimately, the partnership.

By the end of the first year together, STEP partners had not developed nurture norms, implicit expectations that they should foster the relationship between partners and cultivate the partnership itself. Garrett told me, “[w]e try to do a lot of work independently [while] trying to go down the same path together...” Faculty and community partners tended to treat one another as if in a client-consultant relationship. They interacted primarily to share information and to make decisions that helped the faculty partners to facilitate students’ work. In contrast to the partnerships with nurture norms (VITA, EITC, TCBI, RIP), STEP faculty and community
partners did not contact or see each other beyond that which was required to facilitate the project. They appreciated one another’s work, but did not seek to further develop the relationship. The partners maintained separate responsibilities – the community partners as service providers and the faculty partners as educators.

**Structuration and Communication**

Giddens’ (1984) theory of structuration suggests that partnerships are cognitive and socially developed structures. That is, partnerships are not brought into existence at the moment that formal procedures, positions, and resources are set in place, but rather, when members perceive the presence of a partnership. Therefore, partnerships may be brought into existence through members’ assumptions and adoptions of rules (expectations) and resources, as well as by formal organizational structures as partners collectively make sense of their perceived reality, and in so doing, establish seemingly externally imposed sociocognitive and behavioral norms. Interactions between faculty and community partners may serve as the medium through which partners develop a Partnership Identity. Beech and Huxham (2003) suggest that partners may progress through interlocking cycles in which collaborators view each other as partners and subsequently treat each other as partners. The cycle of forming a Partnership Identity may begin, for example, when Person X identifies herself as a member of the partnership. Person X, through conversations with Person Y (the individual with whom Person X is collaborating), may indicate the belief that she is a member of the partnership. If Partner Y interprets Partners X’s identity as a member of the partnership, then Partner Y is likely to treat Partner X as a member. Ultimately, partners’ individual perceptions of a shared Partnership Identity will become crystallized as partners reinforce their notions of each other as members of the same group through their conversations and interactions. Beech and Huxham’s model of cyclical identity formation
highlights the significance of one’s perceptions of self and others in how she or he communicates with others.

Dorado and Giles (2004) found that partnerships in the first few semesters tended to spend a great deal of time getting to know one another brainstorming ideas, discussing goals or needs, and gathering information about each other, in general. The authors found that learning behaviors were dominant in early stages of partnering, when partners were learning about each other and identifying ways to work together, but they also occurred throughout the lives of some partnerships. Beech and Huxham’s (2003), as well as Hardy et al’s. (2005) theories about perception and communication in collaborations suggests that faculty and community partners are not only communicating about procedures, but also about identities. How faculty and community partners interact is part of the process whereby partners develop a Partnership Identity. Partners who follow collaborative communication styles may be more likely to develop Partnership Identity than those who do not.

*Transformation*

Enos and Morton (2003) suggest too often “we think of campus-community partnerships as linear, transactional relationships” (p. 24) when they have the potential to transform the individuals, institutions, and communities involved. Enos and Morton borrow from Burns’s (1978) concept of transformational leadership to suggest that partnerships can be “dynamic, joint creations in which all the people involved create knowledge, transact power, mix personal and institutional interests, and make meaning.” Transformative partnerships, like Burn’s concept of transformative leadership, may “raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (p. 20), compelling partners to develop mutual support for a common mission. Enos and Morton also observe from experience and observation that it is difficult to predict how partnerships will
develop” – whether they will be transactional or transformative. Findings from Partnership Identity suggest that transformative relationships are the result of partners developing a shared sense of “we.” Partners’ ability and willingness to transform their ways of thinking about roles, partnerships, and the organizations they represent may stem from a cognitive shift that takes place when partners see themselves as their partners as “we” rather than “us and them.” Partners who establish a unified mission and organizational structures, view the partnership as distinct and believe the partnership can and will continue into the future, have a platform from which they can build trust and engage in transformation.

Partnership Identity may help to facilitate the effective and committed functioning of a faculty-community partnership. Without a shared and cohesive sense of “we,” the faculty-community partnership may look and work less like a shared effort partnership and more like a for-profit contractual service between organizations in which one provides a service in exchange for another service, opportunity, or benefit. In faculty-community partnerships, which, generally, do not have contractual agreements, Partnership Identity may provide the needed social and organizational structures for long-term collaboration. In the following chapter, I discuss the implications of these findings for practice and research.
Purpose of the Study

Campus-university partnerships are increasingly prevalent (Rhoads, 1998) as universities look to service-learning and other types of community-based pedagogies to foster students’ cognitive and affective development outcomes, including self-confidence, social responsibility, civic-mindedness, and personal efficacy (Kezar & Rhoads, 2001; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). As successful service-learning experiences rely on developing effective campus-community partnerships (Furco, 2001), it is important to understand what factors lead to successful collaboration among individual faculty and community partners.

Faculty and community partners come from very different organizations. Their employing institutions have different expectations for how members should act, what projects they should pursue, and which values they should embrace (Clark et al, 2007; Gray, 1995; Güney, 2004). Partners’ organizational contexts may influence how they view and interact within the partnership – and difficulties may arise as partners step outside of their employing institutions as boundary-spanners between higher education and community institutions (Sebring, 1977). However, individuals are complex and hold social identities that extend beyond their employing institutions. How partners view themselves and their partnership, as well as how they communicate with one another may be associated with multiple contextual factors.

This study borrowed from social and organizational identity theories and explored the idea of Partnership Identity – the sense that the campus-community partnership is distinct and separate from the host organizations. This study explores whether and under what conditions partners in a campus-community partnership develop a shared sense of “we” within the context
of their partnership work. Partnership Identity may be associated with the longevity and sustainability of partnerships.

Four questions guided data collection and analysis of five partnerships: 1) How do the social identities of boundary-spanners affect their perceptions of their employing organizations’ identities? 2) How do boundary-spanners’ social identities and their perceptions of their organizations’ identities affect the way they approach and negotiate the partnership? 3) To what extent does the partnership itself have an identity? 4) If the partnership has an identity, what are its core characteristics?

**Conceptual Framework Overview**

I developed a conceptual framework to guide but not limit my study of faculty-community partnerships. Informing my conceptual framework were theories and empirical research from the fields of management and organizations, service-learning, and community-engagement. Theories that guided my explorations of partnerships included social identity, organizational identity, boundary-spanning, and negotiation. Social identity is how somebody views her or himself in relation to others and a member of groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Organizational identity is how members of an organization view that which is essential to “who we are as an organization,” those features that are core, distinct, and enduring (Albert & Whetten, 1985). Boundary-spanners are organizational representatives who are “intimately involved with the day-to-day relationship building activities and operations within the developing partnership” (Noble & Jones, 2006, p. 897). Research suggests that boundary-spanners may experience tensions between their roles as organizational representatives and partnership members (Kahn et al., 1964; Organ, 1971; Stern & Green, 2005). Research on negotiation processes in interorganizational and service-learning partnerships suggest that how
partners negotiate key issues influences their relationship together (Güney, 2004; Fisher et al., 1991; Foss et al., 2003; Polvika, 1995).

These literatures and theories helped me to conceptualize the ways in which faculty and community partners perceived themselves as members of their employing organizations and the ways the identities of their organizations may have influenced their social identities as boundary-spanners. Previous research suggests that organizational identities may affect how faculty and community partners perceive themselves in their boundary-spanning roles and how they interact with those outside of their employing institutions (Mulford, 1984; Noble & Jones, 2006; Sebring, 1977; Williams, 2002). For example, partners’ perceptions about the organizational identities of their employing institutions may affect whether they choose compete or cooperate with others, and the extent to which they feel they can be flexible when negotiating objectives (Noble & Jones, 2006). Additionally, I explored topics discussed between faculty and community partners and the ways in which they interacted through communicative processes (e.g., frequency, medium for communication). Partners’ styles of interaction were included to understand how, if at all, certain communicative processes influenced the development of a collective identity (Hardy et al., 2005). Understanding the key characteristics of Partnership Identity and the factors that influence its development is likely to provide important insights into why some faculty-community partnerships become successful and long-lasting initiatives, while others do not.

**Methods**

To explore Partnership Identity characteristics and development, I used a multiple case strategy to investigate five university-community partnerships (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2003). Partnerships were the unit of analysis. Data collection methods included direct observation of partners’ meetings, interviews with faculty and community partners directly involved in
managing the partnership and its activities, content analysis of partners’ and partnerships’ websites, meeting minutes, and media publications, and interviews with senior-level administrators at faculty partners’ institutions. I conducted multiple interviews of seven faculty members, 11 community partners, and six senior-level administrators. Partnerships were purposefully selected from one public land-grant university (ESU) and one private liberal arts college, both of which had administrative offices to support faculty members’ scholarship and teaching in the community. Partnerships were selected if they facilitated student learning through service experiences. A list of the partnerships, the partners, job titles, and employing organizations is included in Chapter 9 (Table 7).

All interviews were transcribed and entered into NVivo, a qualitative software program, to help me identify emergent themes while preserving participants’ voices throughout the reiterative processes of building theory by grounding it in the case study data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). I followed a reiterative process of identifying themes and building key concepts, which were then reflected in my model of Partnership Identity. My study suggests relationships between partners’ organizational identities, social identities, communication, and Partnership Identity, which serve as a platform for working propositions and future research on faculty-community partnerships.

**A Model for Partnership Identity Development**

Partnerships differed in whether partners developed a Partnership Identity. The presence of Partnership Identity was based on whether partners viewed the partnerships as having a unified mission and whether partners developed shared understandings of “who” the partnership was. Key characteristics of Partnership Identity that emerged from my analysis included: a unified mission, partners’ perceptions of belonging to a group that was distinct from their
employing institutions, the presence of organizational structures that facilitated the work of the partnership, and partners’ beliefs that the partnership would continue beyond the current project. My model of Partnership Identity development suggests processes by which faculty and community partners may develop a shared sense of ingroup identity (“we” rather than “us and them”). In the cases I studied, Partnership Identity was associated with the organizational identities of partners’ employing institutions, partners’ social identities, and discussions of particular topics using certain styles of communication and negotiation (see Figure 3). This preliminary model for Partnership Identity development indicates characteristics present in the three partnerships with Identities (EITC, VITA, TCBI), but not all present in the two partnerships without Identities (STEP, RIP). This model may serve as a starting point for future research on Partnership Identity in faculty-community partnerships.

**Figure 3. Model for Partnership Identity Development**

* Items in bold text were associated with Partnership Identity development. Items not in bold text were explored but not associated with Partnership Identity development across the five cases.

The model for Partnership Identity development shows those aspects of faculty and community partners’ identities and communications that appeared to have a connection to the
development of a Partnership Identity. Partnerships in which faculty partners viewed themselves as vested community members and those in which community partners viewed themselves as educators were characterized by communications about continuing the partnership and sharing credit. Partners in partnerships with Identities also tended to follow collaborative styles of communication, whereby partners worked interdependently and developed many levels of communication with one another. Collaborative styles emphasized shared status and shared power.

Findings and Working Propositions

In this section I discuss findings from this study and suggest working propositions that can be tested with larger populations of faculty-community partnerships. The use of the case study strategy allowed for an in-depth exploration of aspects that may influence whether partners develop a Partnership Identity. Analysis across the five cases facilitated preliminary theory development to explain how partners’ identities, their organizations’ identities, and their ways of communicating may influence the development of partnership identities.

Social Identities of Boundary-Spanners and their Perceptions of their Employing Organizations’ Identities

Organizational and social identity theories have received substantial research attention as a means for understanding members’ perceptions and behaviors while working within a particular institutional culture or environment (Bartel, 2001; Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Pratt, 2000). This study explored how faculty and community partners’ views of “who we are” as members of an organization (Albert & Whetten, 1985) may have influenced their perceptions of “who I am” (Haslam, 2001; Turner et al., 1987) when engaging in partnership work with community members. I describe key findings regarding how partners viewed their employing
institutions’ identities and how they viewed their social identities in the context of the partnerships. Across all types of organizations present in the study (public land-grant universities, private liberal arts college, community agencies), partners enacted social identities that were rooted in professional and personal roles.

Faculty partner as public intellectual.

At both types of higher education institutions, faculty partners defined the identities of their colleges and universities according to their tripartite missions: education, research, and service. Faculty partners at the two public land-grant institutions tended to emphasize the importance of applying research to public issues or problems, in addition to educating the “sons and daughters” of the state. Faculty partners at the private liberal arts college emphasized the importance of teaching students to be responsible and engaged members of society. In this small sample, faculty members varied across institutional type as to whether they also served public intellectual roles. All five faculty members from ESU and GU (public, land-grant universities) viewed their partnership work as an act of service whereby they contributed their expertise to address a community issue or problem. They fulfilled public intellectual roles. However, neither faculty member from WC (private liberal arts college) served their partnerships through the application of their expertise. The scope of their shared work did not require it, and further, it was not their main area of scholarship. Hence, across the five partnerships, I found that all partners served educator roles, but that only faculty from ESU and GU served public intellectual roles.

Although there appeared to be a difference with regards to whether faculty partners viewed themselves as public intellectuals in their partnerships, this difference did not seem to be associated with how faculty partners communicated with community partners or whether a
Partnership Identity was developed. In partnerships involving faculty from land-grant institutions, partners in the TCBI partnership followed a collaborative style of communication and developed a Partnership Identity, whereas partners in the STEP partnership followed a cooperative style of communication and did not have a Partnership Identity. Therefore, the role of public intellectual, which was associated with faculty partners employed by public land-grant universities, did not seem to be associated with differences in how partners communicated with one another. Although I found differences between faculty partners’ social identities between the two types of higher education institutions, the differences did not seem associated with Partnership Identity development.

*Faculty partner as vested community member.*

Four of the seven faculty partners also spoke about their personal commitments to addressing a particular social issue that affected specific populations of people. They felt vested in the communities. Tina wanted to assist low-income families; Caroline wanted to assist refugees and immigrants in her region; and Josh and George wanted to assist tribal members living on a reservation. Similar to half of the 68 faculty members included in O’Meara’s (2008) study who were motivated by a personal commitment to specific places, people, and social issues, Tina, Caroline, Josh, and George felt personal connections to and cared deeply for the communities they served. Tina spoke of her involvement as the “only thing” she does to contribute directly to the welfare of the community in which she lived. George spoke about “having an identity” when he visited RCTC; he, according to Carl, was like an adopted member of the tribe. In Tina’s case, and perhaps similar to the other faculty partners presented in the case studies, she viewed synergies between her institutional and personal service roles as a professor and community member. However, I did not see any relationship between types of institution
and whether partners viewed themselves as vested community members, because partners from both institution types viewed themselves as vested community members in the context of their partnership work. Future research with larger samples of partnerships may reveal whether faculty members’ views about whether work as vested community members is associated with institution type.

Community partner as educator.

At least one community member in each of the three partnerships with Identities held social identities as educators within the context of their partnerships. In one case (TCBI), a partner had a doctorate in education and was the president of a tribal college. In two other cases, community partners felt they were educators because of the teaching components of their partnership work. In each of these cases, however, community partners viewed themselves as educators in the context of the partnership, though this role was not a part of their work at the community agency. In the RIP partnership, the community partner was an educator to WC students but the partnership did not have an Identity. All except one partnership (STEP) contained community partners who viewed themselves as educators in the context of the partnership.

Partners’ Social Identities and Substance and Style of Communications

In this study, I explored the relationship between partners’ social identities within the context of the partnerships and how and what they communicated with each other. A growing body of research supports the notion that partners’ individual senses of who they are when they are together play an important role in whether partners effectively collaborate and are successful in their partnership objectives (Clark et al., 2008; Gray et al., 1985; Güney, 2004; Hardy et al., 2005; Huxham & Vangen, 2005; Thompson, 2005). Faculty and community partners who view
their partnership work as boundary-spanners on behalf of their employing institutions may have expectations about the objectives of the partnership and how it should function. However, partners’ social identities within the context of the partnership may expand beyond the boundaries of their employing organizational institutions to include other social identities.

Across the five cases, faculty partners who were vested community members and community partners who were educators followed collaborative styles of communication with one another. Collaborative communication was exhibited by the tone, frequency, and format of partners’ conversations that emphasized willingness to engage with and listen to each other’s interests for the purposes of co-learning, power sharing, and relationship building (Gray, 1989; Hardy et al., 2005; Huxham & Vangen, 2005). Hardy and colleagues (2005) refer to this style of communication as “cooperative talk” and suggest that collaborative styles of communication helps to create common constructions of what the partnership is about and what partners are doing together as a team because all partners’ ideas are part of decision-making processes. Mattessich, Murray-Close and Monsey (2001) suggest that in collaborative relationships, “many ‘levels’ of communication,” including informal relationships to produce “a better, more informed, and cohesive group working on a common project” (pp. 23-4). This pattern remained consistent in the TCBI partnership in which Owen was not a vested community member but communicated collaboratively with his community partners anyway. These findings suggest the following propositions that may be tested with larger populations:

**Proposition 1a:** Faculty partners whose role in the partnership is primarily related to their social identities as academics may be more likely to develop coordinating styles of communication.

**Proposition 1b:** Faculty partners whose role in the partnership is related to their social identities
as academics and vested community members may be more likely to develop collaborative styles of communication.

Analysis across the five cases also revealed that partnerships in which faculty partners believed they served their roles as vested community members discussed plans for continuing the partnership. Spears, Doosje, and Ellemers (1999) suggest individuals may strive to maintain connections to certain groups because the meaning of their social identity (who I am) with that group is “a valued end in itself” (p. 83). The authors suggest that this desire to maintain certain social identities may “help to explain social cohesion and social loyalties: we may not be able to live with ourselves if we desert our group when it needs us – not least if our group is an important part of ourselves” (p. 83). Involvement with the partnership may have helped to solidify faculty partners’ feelings of solidarity with their community partners, especially since community partners were likely to have been viewed as fellow community members.

Proposition 1c: Faculty partners who are vested members of the communities in which their partners operate are more likely to discuss plans for continuing the partnership into the future than partners who are not vested members of the communities.

The issue of credit arose as a potentially important for discussion between faculty and community partners. However, within- and across-case analyses revealed that whether the topic of credit was related to partners’ roles was uncertain. Partners in two of the three partnerships that included faculty as vested community members explicitly discussed the issue of recognizing partners’ involvement in the partnership and providing due credit for its outcomes. However, Tina was involved in two partnerships, one of which did discuss the issue of credit (EITC) and one that did not (VITA). Additionally, the issue of credit was raised in the EITC partnership by Victoria and other community partners, not Tina. Therefore, although the role of credit may be
important if partners are to feel as equal partners in a shared partnership, as suggested by Karen (CAP), it was not clear that there is any association between one’s role and whether credit was explicitly discussed. Future research may reveal that discussing credit and recognition may be an important component of Partnership Identity formation because partners not only tell each other that they want to be associated with each other, but it also may help avoid hurt feelings if partners feel excluded or ignored as partners.

**Links between Communication and Partnership Identity**

The previous section indicates that certain social identities may be associated with communication substance and strategies between faculty and community partners. In this section, I present possible connections between communication substance and styles and whether a Partnership Identity was present in the faculty community partnerships.

*Collaboration style.*

Clark et al (2008), Hardy et al (2005), and Huxham and Vangen (2005) suggest that how partners interact, and particularly how they communicate, may be linked to whether partners from different groups view themselves as part of a collective entity. In particular, Hardy et al. (2005) suggest that collaborative styles of talk may be important in the development of a shared group identity. This was true for all of the partnerships with Identities in this study. Faculty and community partners adopted collaborative styles of talk. However, I also found that partners in RIP followed collaborative styles of talk, but did not develop a Partnership Identity because they lacked other key characteristics of Partnership Identity. This finding suggests that collaborative styles of talk may be necessary, but not sufficient for the development of a Partnership Identity.

While individuals may signal the expectation or desire to work together as if members of the same team through collaborative communication styles, individuals may also signal their
expectation or desire to work as members of separate groups (Hardy et al., 2005). For example, Clark et al. (2008) found that members of two hospitals that were merging together into a single hospital system discussed differences between the two merging organizations five times as often as they discussed similarities, thereby enhancing their sense of separateness between groups. Partners who use assertive tones and terms establish and reinforce a sense of separateness and autonomy (Child & Faulkner, 1998; Hardy et al., 2005). Their findings were consistent with communication between the faculty and community partners in the STEP partnership. Their interactions were typically focused on specific projects or tasks. In their first meeting, they discussed their limited reliance on each other and reinforced the notion of separate responsibilities and objectives by getting in touch with one another for the purposes of furthering their shared project. Though collegial, the communications tended to reinforce a sense of cooperation, rather than collaboration.

**Proposition 2:** Partnerships in which most faculty and community partners follow a collaborative style of communication are more likely to develop a Partnership Identity than partners who follow a cooperative style.

**Future projects.**

Partnerships with Partnership Identities also discussed and planned specific projects and activities following the completion of the current project. I also noted that the three partnerships relied on external funds to pay for partnership activities, such as advertising the VITA and EITC tax preparation sites or to pay for the construction of buildings on RCTC’s campus. Therefore, partners’ discussions of who they were as a group and the development of a Partnership Identity may have been associated with the presence of grants and other types of external funds required for partnership activities. Through the grant writing process, members were required to make
sense of who they are as they articulate who their members are, how they are connected to one another, who will be responsible for various aspects of the work, and the expected outcomes of the partnership. In these instances, partners were conscious of building and managing the image of the partnership – how it appeared to funders. Hence, the grant may have facilitated a sensemaking exercise in which partners’ collectively defined “who we are” as a partnership.

Proposition 3: Partnerships that rely on external funding are more likely to develop formalized partnership structures than those that do not.

Credit.

The TCBI and EITC partnerships had Partnership Identities and discussed the issue of credit, how partners were to be recognized for their contributions to the partnership and its outcomes. The VITA partnership had a Partnership Identity but current members did not discuss the issue of credit, though founding members may have done so previously. Openly discussing the issue of credit appeared to be an important topic for discussion among partnerships with Identities because it reinforced the notion that they were working together as a team. In the VITA partnership, one of the partners perceived an imbalance with how partners were recognized for their work. The community partner perceived the imbalance of recognition also as an imbalance of shared power. The STEP and RIP partnerships Without Partnership Identities did not discuss the issue of credit. Therefore, analysis across the cases suggests faculty and community partners should discuss issues related to credit and recognition for their partnership work. This finding led me to develop a working proposition about the problem of not discussing issues of credit and recognition.

Proposition 4: Faculty and community partners who do not discuss issues of credit and recognition may undermine the development of a Partnership Identity.
This finding also suggests the importance of discussing issues of credit and recognition with partners who are new to the partnership. In the case of VITA, founding members of the partnership may have voiced informal expectations or developed formal policies that were not known by current partners.

**Implications for Practice**

Findings suggest five key characteristics that may be important for those faculty members, administrators, and community partners who hope to establish long-term partnerships between community agencies and higher education institutions.

**Recommendations for Faculty Partners**

Findings showed that partners in partnerships with Identities developed nurture norms, the expectation that partners would cultivate the partnership by attending to each other in ways that extended beyond the facilitation of the partnership. Partners who followed nurture norms, such as assisting each other with non-partnership projects, demonstrated their care for one another and their desire to help one another. Although outside of the primary activities of the partnership, nurturing activities may help to develop a lasting and strong partnership wherein partners see themselves as members of a single team. Therefore, additional work may not be seen as an “add on” or “extra,” but rather as part of partnership maintenance. Viewed from this perspective, partnerships are comprised not only of a series of project-related transactions, but of commitments to helping one another as caring and compassionate colleagues. Hence, faculty members who engage in nurturing activities are not simply melding their personal and professional commitments; they are acting as good stewards of a partnership by fostering the relationship, not just the project.
This study showed that four of the five partnerships involved community partners who viewed themselves as educators in the context of the partnership – even though they did not discuss specific learning outcomes with faculty partners. This finding was consistent with Sandy’s (2007) study of 99 community partners which found that although most faculty-community partnerships tend to follow this community needs-based rather than student learning-based focus of communication, many community members want to be involved as co-educators in students’ learning. Faculty partners should ask their community partners about the extent to which they want to be involved in teaching the students at the start of their work together. Faculty members may find that, rather than a burden, community members may want to serve as co-educators and can help to inform and enhance the curriculum. Though unintended, the consequence of not involving community partners as co-educators and not talking about student learning is that faculty may reinforce stereotypes of about who handles the service and learning activities of the students. Faculty partners, therefore, may falsely distinguish between the educator and service facilitator roles when community partners also view themselves as student educators.

Faculty members who are invested in the communities being served by their community partners may wish for partnership activities to continue despite their own short- or long-term absences. The presence of organizational structures may be important for helping newcomers to the partnership understand how they can join the partnership, what roles need to be filled or developed. Clear organizational structures allow newcomers to assess the partnership and to determine whether and how they can become involved. This was true for Josh who joined the partnership because the partnership already had established role and funding structures to facilitate and sustain the partnership. He found that because the partnership already contained
certain organizational structures, it was much easier for him to join and be a part of the partnership than to form his own. He felt that there was “a certain stability” that resulted from the presence of organizational structures, whereas he had worked in other partnerships in the leader changed and the partnership “evaporated.” The extent to which interorganizational structures are created and sustained by partners may significantly affect the long-term sustainability of such voluntary, joint initiatives, as well as their effectiveness (Salk & Shenkar, 2001). Therefore, I recommend that faculty and community partners discuss ways to structure the partnership so that it may incorporate others, but also so that it can sustain the loss of a partner.

This study suggests that faculty and community partners should also address issues of identity – who they are together as a single and unified team – if they hope remain together beyond the current project. In this study, partners who focused on the activities of the partnership solely did not address the larger issue of “who we are together.” Though they had worked together for nearly two years, the partners in STEP never established a unified mission or took steps toward ensuring their group lasted into the future to collaborate on additional projects. Though partners saw opportunities for future collaboration, it seemed unlikely that they would continue. There were no expectations that they would continue to assist one another in their personal or professional goals through shared activities. This finding suggests that partners who address the partnership itself, establishing key aspects of a Partnership Identity, may be more likely to make efforts to continue the partnership than those who focus solely on completing particular tasks and accomplishing certain goals.

Community Partners

This study showed that faculty partners may vary with regards to whether they view themselves as vested members of the community being served by the community partner – and
whether they are vested community members may not depend on where they live. Faculty members in STEP were residents of the Township, but viewed themselves primarily as educators and scholars. They were more motivated to apply their scholarship and teach students than they were to help their particular community. However, faculty members in TCBI lived thousands of miles from RCTC and the tribal community, yet faculty partners felt genuinely invested in the community. It appeared that faculty members of TCBI became invested in the Tribal community through their partnership experiences. Vestment in the community was associated with a desire to continue the partnership beyond current activities. Therefore, faculty members who are or who become vested in the community being served may be more likely to continue the partnership than those who are not. Community partners who hope to develop long-lasting partnerships may benefit from connecting faculty to members of the community and helping them to see themselves as important members, as well as contributors, to the community.

This study also found that faculty members’ participation in partnerships was related to personal desires to address a social issue or to assist a community. In many of their cases, faculty partners did not feel supported by their department colleagues and they felt their work coordinating student’s service projects was a voluntary overload. Across the cases, none of the faculty partners were required, or even expected, to develop partnerships for student learning with community agencies. Therefore, faculty partners may sometimes feel overwhelmed if they are the sole faculty members involved. For example, Caroline admitted to feeling “burnt out,” but continued the partnership because of Jessica’s interest in having students work in her program. This raises the question, what can community partners do to help establish a system that will help to facilitate and sustain the partnership given the understanding that service is often seen as an overload in the their faculty partner’s professional work? Findings from this study,
suggest the importance of involving multiple faculty members to share or shift the workload. For example, when Samantha left the VITA partnership, Tina took on her responsibilities within the partnership. Additionally, developing clear organizational structures (such as identifying positions and how grants will be handled) within the partnership may allow community partners and their faculty partner to solicit additional faculty members to join the partnership. Partnerships that have organizational structures may allow faculty members to envision themselves fulfilling particular roles within the partnership – they save time and effort by not having to develop their own.

Working with members of other organizations was common for many of the community partners in this study. Furthermore, community members seemed to feel relatively at ease in their boundary-spanning roles compared to their faculty partners. In part, a sense of comfort may come from the close association between the identity of their employing community agency and their partnership work. However, researchers have found that role tensions may be diminished by increased frequency or experience with boundary-spanning activities (Kahn et al., 1964; Organ, 1971). Community members may find that faculty members who are new to partnerships with community members may experience a greater sense of ambiguity and uncertainty as to how their boundary-spanning fits into their academic work at the university or college than faculty members who have previous experience working with community partners. Therefore, community partners may find that faculty members who are developing a partnership for the first time may be relatively reserved and may act cooperatively -- but not collaboratively--- and may not nurture the relationship above that which is required to accomplish their individual or institutional goals. Community and faculty partners should speak openly about their purposes for
the partnership and how their shared efforts can help serve their institutional roles as service providers and faculty members, respectively.

**Directors of Centers for Community Engagement**

One of the reasons why faculty partners may not have discussed specific student learning outcomes with community partners may have been because the faculty partners had not yet articulated how particular service activities would teach students about particular components of the curriculum. One reason may be that faculty members may not know which opportunities may be available through the community agency, so they want to be flexible. Another reason may be that faculty members do not have specific goals for student learning. One faculty member told me that she did not have specific goals; she simply wanted students to see how a nonprofit agency operates. Her assumption that was by simply being involved, students would develop awareness about how nonprofits work. While flexibility and openness is important for identifying projects that are mutually beneficial to students and community agencies, it is also important that faculty members articulate what they want students to learn. Research suggests that service-learning that is tied to curricular objectives may enhance students’ disciplinary learning more than service that is not tied to curricular objectives (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2004). The focus on academic content and outcomes is a hallmark of service-learning and a key differentiator from non-academic service.

I recommend that directors should help faculty members to approach students’ service activities as they might approach students’ laboratory experiment or written assignments. They should have an idea of what objectives they expect students to fulfill. Linking objectives for student learning with specific activities or projects may help faculty to assess the quality of the educational experience, help community partners to understand what activities are most
beneficial to students, and help students understand the connections between their classroom- and community-based work.

Several of the faculty-community partnerships attracted considerable attention from senior administrators and public relations staff at ESU and WU. For example, Tina’s work with EITC and VITA was often cited in the WC president in her public addresses about the effectiveness of hands-on learning and WC’s role in assisting their local communities. Journalists from national newspapers interviewed Tina and her students about their service with VITA and EITC and the contributions they made to the community. Though public recognition of one’s work may help to encourage faculty to continue their partnership work, the attention to the partnership from outsiders may inadvertently raise community partners’ concerns about how and the extent to which they are recognized alongside of faculty partners and students. Interviews with community partners in VITA revealed that the issue of equally shared credit lingered as an issue because it was not openly discussed. In partnerships in which credit was discussed (EITC, TCBI) community partners did not raise concerns about being left out or as though they were unequal partners. Partners in the EITC partnership were particularly deliberate with regards ensuring that partners were equally recognized for their contributions to the partnership and its activities.

These findings suggest that directors of centers for community engagement should recommend to faculty and community partners that they openly discuss issues of credit and recognition at the start of the partnership to ensure that each participant understands the importance of recognizing all partners in their articulations to others, particularly the media or public relations staff. These conversations should also be had with newcomers to the partnership and should not be assumed, as may have been the case in VITA. Furthermore, directors should
consider suggesting that partners develop a succinct statement, or even a logo, that can be used to recognize the institutions that partners represent. The EITC and TCBI partnerships both developed logos that both faculty and community partners could use in their advertisements or publications about the partnership. The EITC logo listed the names of each of the institutions represented by faculty and community partners. Directors may design a generic symbol for faculty-community partnerships that faculty and community partners can adapt to include the names of all institutions involved.

**Recommendations for University Administrators**

Research on various forms of community-engaged scholarship points to tensions that exist when faculty members feel their faculty roles between service, teaching, and research are fragmented (Boyer, 1990; Kellogg Commission, 2000; O’Meara & Rice, 2005; Colbeck & Wharton Michael, 2005). Although faculty may simultaneously hold multiple role identities (e.g., researcher, instructor, department member, etc.), tension may exist where time is constrained or priorities are unaligned (Colbeck, 2002). In this study, I found that although faculty members believed their department colleagues felt their service roles were separate (“an add on”) from their roles as scholars and educators, faculty partners viewed their service roles as integrated with their academic work. They viewed their work with community agencies as synergistic activities that incorporated, simultaneously, the three components of their academic work, teaching, scholarship and service. This finding was consistent with other studies (Colbeck, 2002) and suggests that promotion and tenure portfolios that require faculty members to report their teaching, scholarship and service activities in separate files, may be in appropriate for faculty who are engaged with communities.
This study also shows that faculty members may look beyond their departments for legitimacy and support for their partnerships with community agencies. In each of the cases, faculty members did not feel supported by colleagues in their department, in Josh’s (GU) case, he was even warned by a mentor to desist his partnership work with TCBI because it took valuable time away from publishing, the key criterion for tenure. However, faculty members understood their partnership work as fulfilling the service missions of their college or university. This finding suggests that university administrators who are vocal advocates of community-engaged work may help faculty partners to see their partnership work as legitimate and valued by the institution. Though academic colleges and departments may have their own identities (Kuh & Whitt, 1988), this study suggests that faculty members engaged in community partnerships may perceive legitimacy and support for their work beyond the boundaries of their college or department colleagues.

Implications for Research

This study provides an identity-based approach for studying faculty-community partnerships. Implications of this study’s findings are suggested for research on organizational identity, social identity, communication, and Partnership Identity. Suggestions for future research are also provided.

Organizational Identity

Much research in the service-learning and community engagement literature asserts the primacy of organizational context in shaping faculty partners motivations and ability to develop partnerships with community agencies (Colbeck & Michael, 2006; Ellison & Eatman, 2008; O’Meara, 2008). The institutions of higher education included in my study were purposely chosen due to the presence of institutional support for community-engaged scholarship and
teaching. Each had an office or center that supported this kind of faculty work. Despite the presence of organizational support structures, faculty continued to experience a sense of “going it alone.” They believed that their efforts helped to advance the mission of the university and was recognized as good work by senior level administrators, but the extent to which they were truly supported, particularly through promotion and tenure, remained unclear.

Some authors (Enos & Morton, 2003; Morphew & Hartley, 2007; Weick, 1976) have argued that the loosely coupled nature of institutions of higher education may make it difficult for faculty members to determine which activities are most essential to the core mission of the institution. Morphew and Hartley (2007) show that most institutions of higher education embrace an “all purpose” mission. The result, the authors argue, is a lack of clear direction at the institutional level as to what faculty should be doing. Findings from this study support the notion that faculty members tend to maintain a broad view of their organizational identities. When speaking about the core purpose and values of their institutions, faculty members mentioned each component of the tripartite mission, education, research, and service. Future research should explore why, given the same broad mission statements, some faculty members view community partnerships as legitimate academic activities while others do not. Understanding the factors that influence faculty members’ perceptions of “what counts” as service may help practitioners and advocates of community-engaged scholarship to address the concerns and/or criticisms of those who believe that service work outside of the academy is “extra” or an “add on” to their professional obligations.

Social Identity

A social identity approach to faculty-community partnerships focuses on the interrelationships of people and groups (Turner, 1999). Specifically, it explores the idea that
individuals view themselves and others differently, depending on group categories. Therefore, the answer to “who I am” is dependent on which roles are salient at the time the question is asked (Turner, 1999). For example, a female psychology professor who is also a mother and basketball fan may introduce herself as a professor at a professional conference, a mother at her child’s school musical, and a basketball fan at a sports bar. Further, which role she is enacting (professor, mother, fan) is likely to be associated with certain behaviors. She may be act collegial at a conference, maternal with her children, and rowdy at a sports event. Therefore, individual social identities are multi-faceted and the salience of each may vary according to circumstance.

This study showed that faculty and community partners viewed their partnership work as serving multiple identities simultaneously. Faculty partners were educators, scholars, public intellectuals, and vested community members within the context of their partnerships with community members. Community partners were educators, service providers, and vested community members within the context of their partnerships with faculty members. This finding supports Colbeck and colleagues’ work (Colbeck, 2008; Colbeck & Michael, 2006; Colbeck & Weaver, 2008) that suggests that faculty may view their community-engaged work as a synergistic activity whereby they integrate their teaching, research, and service roles into a single activity.

Though many researchers assume that these academic identities are “distinct, mutually exclusive, and conflicting” (see Braxton, 1996; Colbeck, 1998), this study supports the growing body of research that suggests faculty who participate in community-engaged scholarship and teaching also view the synergies between the three identities and their associated activities.

In addition to finding synergies between their academic roles, faculty members also find synergies between their academic and personal identities. Similarly, community partners also did not differentiate between their professional identities as service providers from their personal
identities as vested community members. In this study, five of the seven faculty partners discussed their identities as vested community members as reason for their involvement in the partnership. This finding supports research that suggests that personal goals may play an important role in their workplace (Colbeck & Michael, 2006; Ford, 1992; O’Meara, 2008). Future research with larger populations may help to explain why some faculty members view themselves as vested community members while others themselves as professional consultants.

**Communication**

The findings in this study regarding communication and negotiation showed that in faculty-community partnerships, partners viewed their interactions with each other as communication, not as negotiation. As noted in Chapter 3, the idea that how partners negotiated decisions together may play an important role in whether they viewed each other as members of the same group (Partnership Identity) was developed as a result of my pilot study of TCBI. However, subsequent interviews with members of the other four partnerships revealed that partners did not interpret their decision-making as negotiations. This finding suggests that the term, negotiation, may be associated with assertive or aggressive behaviors. Though partners undoubtedly negotiate to make decisions and resolve conflicts, faculty and community partners may not see their conversations as negotiations, but rather as one partner put it “agreements.” This finding suggests that although negotiation research may provide useful strategies for joint decision-making, the term collaboration may be better received by community-engaged practitioners. Collaborative communication emphasizes similarities, mutual affiliations, and shared interests (Hardy et al., 2005).

Findings from this study suggests that although communication about future projects and credit may play a role in the development of Partnership Identity, how partners negotiate difficult
challenges may serve as a critical incident in which partners’ either choose to join together as “we” or to remain separate members of different teams. For example, TCBI partnership also suggested that the act of negotiating the location for the childhood center was a formative experience whereby partners developed a sense of who they were as a team. Faculty and community partners worked together, as if on the same side of the negotiating table, to work develop a plan that was acceptable to the RCTC board of directors and the Tribe’s elders. Future research on how events that require substantial and difficult negotiations may help to illustrate how negotiation strategies may influence development of Partnership Identity.

**Partnership Identity**

The notion that participants in a work group may develop a shared group identity is found throughout literatures on collaboration (Beech & Huxham, 2004; Hardy et al., 2005; Huxham & Vangen, 2005) and higher education-community partnerships (Enos & Morton, 1999; Palermo, McGranaghan & Travers, 2006). For example, Enos and Morton (2003) suggest that partners in transformative partnerships develop a “group identity in larger definition of community” (p. 25). That is, the faculty and community partners develop a sense of who they are that takes into account, not only academic interests such as teaching and research, but also strives to meet the needs of the community. Palermo et al (2006) infer the presence of a shared group identity in their discussion about developing a partnership, “not merely a coalition or information-sharing group” (section 3.3). However, in each case, the authors do not explicate what it means to have an identity, or, how an identity is separate from collegial or friendly relationships between partners. My definition of Partnership Identity contributes a working definition that suggests five key components of a group identity that may be shared by faculty and community partners. The
definition looks beyond interpersonal relationships, which though important, are not sufficient for developing a lasting sense of “who we are” as an organizational like entity.

The idea that partners who develop a shared group identity are more likely to succeed in meeting their goals and to last long-term is suggested in literature on service-learning partnerships and supported in the literature on collaborative partnerships. For example, Huxham and Vangen (2005) suggest that a degree of “ingroup-ness” may be formed if collaboration members “come to have a sense of purpose and adopt group norms and values” (p. 188). Members that develop a shared group identity may be more likely to see other participants of the group as partners and to “buy into” (p. 188) the group.

Literature on organization and governance in higher education (see for example, Brown, 2000) tends to focus on culture and its powerful effects on organizational members. Organizational culture is the “amalgam of beliefs, ideology, language, ritual, and myth” (Pettigrew, 1979, p. 572). Organizations with strong cultures are thought to enhance organizational success because they provide a sense of purpose and direction that is not found in organizations with weak cultures (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). Though partnerships may develop particular values and norms, key aspects of organizational culture, this study suggests that leaders of partnerships should focus on developing the partnerships’ identities. Leaders should focus more directly on developing a unified mission and vision for where the partnership is going, rather than on developing a particular culture of interacting. Indeed, a partnership culture may develop out of the formation of a Partnership Identity, which includes nurture norms and shared values.

**Unified mission.** Findings from my study suggested that partners with Partnership Identity developed a sense of “ingroup-ness” – they held similar views regarding who they were
as an organization and enacted nurture norms. Partners that developed a shared Partnership Identity not only discussed their own interests or expected outcomes for the partnership, but they came to a shared understanding about the core purposes of the partnerships. Faculty and community members who maintain different views about the core mission of the partnership, therefore, may feel committed to only those aspects of the partnership that serve their interests. They may not feel ingroup associations and commitments to their partners. Future studies on failed and successful partnerships may provide a better understanding as to whether partners without unified mission are less likely to endure than those with unified missions.

*Distinctive.* As discussed in Chapter 2, persons who share an ingroup identity are likely to feel emotional ties towards other members of their group, or at the very least, feel that they share some responsibility for the welfare of the group. In my study, I found that partners who categorized themselves and their partners as “we” also were committed to the success and longevity of the partnerships. Clark et al., (2008) found that the “erosion of two merging organizations’ former identities and the emergence of a distinct and shared identity was crucial” (p.1) to the success of the merger they studied. The authors suggest that language may have played an important role in how partners perceived each other as part of the same or separate team or organization. Future research with larger samples of partnerships should explore the connection between the partnership being a distinct entity and partners’ feelings of commitment to continuation of the partnership.

*Belief that partnership will continue.* The belief that the partnership will continue emerged as a key characteristic of partnerships in which partners’ had a shared sense of “we.” That is, partners believed that who they were, their group, was capable of and should continue despite changes within and challenges to the partnership. Adapting Albert and Whetten’s (1985)
notion of enduring as a defining feature of organizational identity, I suggest that the partners’ beliefs about whether the partnership itself will continue may be as critical to shaping and defining identity of the partnership as its mission. That is, partners who assume the partnership will endure may be more likely to act as if it will happen. Partners’ beliefs that the partnership can, will and should continue, partners may develop processes and structures for continuing the partnership indefinitely. The belief that the partnership would continue suggests a temporal continuity of the partnership itself, as well as its core mission.

*Nurture norms.* This study suggests nurture norms are an important outcome of Partnership Identity. This finding is consistent with social identity research that suggests persons who participate in groups tend to see their own group members in a more favorable light than others. They are more likely to favor other group members, feel emotionally attached to the welfare of group members and the outcomes of the group, work more efficiently, communicate better, and feel a greater sense of morale and job satisfaction with members of their group. Further, Tajfel’s (1972) studies on individual and group behavior found that the mere act of naming or assigning member of a group (even if randomly selected) had the effect of creating an ingroup identity and fostering ingroup favoritism.

Partners in partnerships with Identity held implicit expectations that they should nurture the partnership beyond that which was required to complete specific tasks. Palmero, McGranaghan and Travers (2006) suggest that in their very first meeting together, partners should establish “operating norms,” a set of ground rules that partners jointly develop to “get the partnership off to a good start” (section 3.5). Examples of operating norms provided by the authors include, mutual respect, listening to one another, agreeing to disagree, and decisions will be made by consensus.” That partners should explicitly discusses one another’s expectations
regarding communication, processes, and outcomes is a common theme that runs through nearly every study of or guidebook for interorganizational collaboration (Mattessich et al., 2001). Operating norms not only help to avoid misunderstandings, but also help to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of interorganizational partnerships because partners have a sense of each others’ interests, preferences, and desires.

In several of the partnerships I studied, however, partners did not necessarily talk about their expectations for how the partnership would be “operated,” but rather, they had developed implicitly understood expectations. Four of the five partnerships (TCBI, EITC, VITA, RIP) established nurture norms, or implicit expectations that partners would treat one another in ways that fostered their relationship. Implicit norms may influence partners’ actions even more than explicit ground rules that are established at the start of the relationship because they are often assumed or taken for granted (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). That is, partners enact norms without consciously being aware that they are following any particular rules for behavior.

Some authors suggest that partners should nurture the partnership through informal meetings and by participating in shared activities that are beyond the scope of the partnership. For example, Greene-Moton, Palermo, Flicker and Travers, (2006) suggest that partners engage in “sweat equity” (section 4.2.3), doing something for nothing, such as participating or contributing to partnership members’ activities, or socializing such as going out for a meal or a drink. In their study of faculty-community partnerships, Sandy and Holland (2006) found that community partners hoped, and perhaps even expected, to engage in nurturing activities, such as sharing a cup of coffee together. In their study, one community partner told them, “[y]ou can’t assume the partnership will stay what it is. It needs to be fed” (p. 10). Faculty and community members in the partnerships with Identities similarly felt that partners needed to nurture the
relationship, not just attend to the logistics of the project.

In her study of 99 community partners, Sandy (2007) found that “[a]spects of valuing and nurturing the partnership relationship were uniformly emphasized as the highest priority” (p. 8) among all participant focus groups. The development of nurture norms may suggest why some partners enter committed stages of partnership and nurture the relationship in ways that go beyond managing a specific project, as suggested by Dorado and Giles (2004).

Future research should explore associations between nurturing norms and the effective functioning and longevity of partnerships. In particular, it would be useful to understand the extent to which partnerships should be nurtured. Faculty and community partners often “fit in” partnership work into already very busy schedules, so while they may want to interact and help one another out beyond their current project, their ability to do so may be quite limited.

Finally, future research should explore whether Partnership Identity is developed through deliberate planning or whether it may develop unconsciously. Does one need to be aware of a Partnership Identity to have one? Preliminary findings from this study suggest Partnership Identity may be developed and defined through partners’ discussions of grants (who they are together, what they will accomplish, and how they will manage the work), recognition (how they want to be portrayed in the media and other public outlets), and other types of image management (such as developing partnership logos).

**Summary**

Establishing a Partnership Identity may be one strategy through which faculty and community partners develop a sense of comfort, openness, and security when working with each
other, three elements that may be necessary for effective long-term collaboration. The formation of shared Partnership Identity may help to facilitate the effective and committed functioning of a faculty-community partnership. Without a shared and cohesive sense of “we,” the faculty-community partnership may look and work less like a shared effort partnership and more like a for-profit contractual service between organizations in which one provides a service in exchange for another service, opportunity, or benefit. In lieu of contractual agreements, Partnership Identity may provide partners with a unified understanding of “who” they are together, the trust that each will work on the other’s behalf, the structures to continue, and the faith that the partnership will not simply disappear.
REFERENCES


Appendices

Appendix A. Informed Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM [New Participants - Interview]
The Pennsylvania State University

Title of Project:  Alliance Identity in Public Scholarship Initiatives

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Purpose of the Study:  
The purpose of this independent project is to study the way in which faculty-staff-community members interact and negotiate decisions within a partnership, and how these interactions may or may not lead to a greater sense of a shared partnership identity. Ultimately, the purpose of the study is to identify the primary reasons for university-community partnerships effectiveness.

Procedures to be followed:  This study involves two forms of participation: observations and interviews.

- **Observations** will occur during the time that the partnership is active. Observation may occur during construction projects, in public, and during meetings with others who are involved in the community-university partnership.

- **Interviews** will require approximately 60 - 75 minutes of your time for a one-on-one interview. The interview will be recorded and the researcher will take notes.

Additionally, we may contact you at a later date to follow-up on any questions that I may have not understood well the first time. These questions are to help us seek clarity with regards to your intended responses.

Please indicate on the line(s) below your preferred mailing address (U.S. postal mail service or e-mail account):

__________________________________________________________

Please indicate your preference in how you would like to participate in this study:

(sign your initials)

Yes, you may include my title/position.

This is how I would like my title to be listed: ________________________________.

(sign your initials)

No, please do not use my title/position.

1. **Benefits:** This study will help AIHI coordinators to improve their understanding of the partnership thereby providing opportunities for increased communication and understanding with community partners.

   This study benefits society as findings will be shared with other institutions and centers involved public scholarship or service learning partnerships.

2. **Statement of Confidentiality:** All records (both written and audio) will be kept confidential. Position/titles (with permission) will be used in place of names and all records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet both on-site at the project site and at Penn State University.

3. **Right to Ask Questions:** You can ask questions about this research. Contact Emily Janke at (814) 571-2118 with questions. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact The Pennsylvania State University’s Office for Research Protections at (814) 865-1775.

4. **Compensation:**
   There is no compensation for participation. I thank you for your time and thoughts.

5. **Voluntary Participation:** Your decision to be in this research is voluntary. You can stop at any time. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer.

You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to take part in this research study. If you agree to take part in this research study and the information outlined above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

_____________________________________________  _____________________
Participant Name (please print)     Date

_____________________________________________  _____________________
Participant Signature      Date

_____________________________________________  _____________________
Person Obtaining Consent     Date
Appendix B. Interview Guide - FACULTY 1

Thanks so much for meeting with me for a second time. Today I’d like to learn more about your involvement and thoughts on your work with [Community partner].

1. What is the purpose of your work with [Community partner]?
   a. Has this remained stable or has it changed over time?
2. How long have you been working together?
3. Why did you choose to work with [Community partner]?
4. Who is involved?
5. How, if at all, has the [partnership] changed since its conception?
   a. Probes: values, purpose, norms
6. Have the persons involved in the [partnership] changed over the years? Can you tell me about how that has affected the [partnership]? If so, what kinds of changes, if any, did the entry or exit of individuals affect the purpose of the partnerships, how it’s been managed, or the relationship just in general?
7. What kinds of things do you discuss? Has your style or the content of the conversations changed over the years?
   [Purpose, Resources, Roles & responsibilities, Credit]
8. What kinds of words would you use to describe your relationship with community members?
9. Would you say that the partnership has its own set of core values, which may be 2 or 3 guiding principles that have lasted throughout the partnership? [intrinsic value and important to those inside the partnership, so fundamental they don’t change]
10. Beyond the conversations and relationships that have to occur to facilitate the activities of the project, are there any additional ways in which you work to sustain the partnership?
    a. Have there been any major incidents or problems that have had to been resolved?
       What was that like for you?
11. How does the partnership fit in with your own sense of who you are? It is something that resonates with how you see yourself?
    Probes: professionally, personally
12. How does the partnership fit in with your work at Institution’s name?
13. Do you feel like your work is rewarded at Institution’s name?
    Probes: awards, promotion, tenure
14. Do you plan to continue working with [Community partner] in the future?
15. Do you feel like the partnership is accomplishing your goals and the goals of your partners?

In our next conversation together, I’m going to ask you some questions about why this partnership works and the role that department and institutional norms play in negotiating your work with [Community partner].
Appendix C. Interview Guide - FACULTY 2

I am going to ask you to talk about two areas in today’s interview, [institution’s name] and role as a faculty member at [institution’s name]. First, I am interested in hearing your thoughts on what makes [institution’s name] [institution’s name].

1. What would you say are [institution’s name]’s core values – that small set of maybe 2 or 3 timeless guiding principles? [intrinsic value and important to those inside the org, so fundamental they don’t change]

2. Can you talk about an example of how [institution’s name]’s core values are manifest in daily life of faculty here?

3. What would you say is [institution’s name]’s purpose – it’s reason for being? What would be lost if [institution’s name] ceased to exist?

4. How are these core values or purposes translated at the department level? Are there different values or purposes or do the institutional ones hold true?

5. How do these fit in to your own sense of who you are professionally and personally? Do these values or purposes resonate with how you see yourself?

6. How does service-learning or community engagement fit in at [institution’s name]? Probe: Values, purposes, norms

7. Is community engagement rewarded? In what ways?

8. What are some norms that have been generated around working with communities as a teacher? Are these norms university-wide or just within your department?

9. How do you think that the context of working at [institution’s name] has influenced your desire and ability to work with community partners?

10. What community partnerships have you been a part of in your professional career?

11. Can you tell me about some of your experiences? What were/are they like?

12. Can I call or e-mail you if I have any questions I need clarified?
Appendix D. Interview Guide – ADMINISTRATOR

1. What would you say are [institution’s name]’s core values – that small set of maybe 2 or 3 timeless guiding principles? Intrinsic value and important to those inside the org; so fundamental they don’t change?

2. Can you talk about an example of how [institution’s name]’s core values are manifest in daily life of faculty here?

3. What would you say is [institution’s name]’s purpose – it’s reason for being? What would be lost if [institution’s name] ceased to exist?

4. In your experience as a faculty member, how are these core values or purposes translated at the department level? Are there different values or purposes or do the institutional ones hold true?

5. How does service-learning or community engagement fit in at [institution’s name]? Probe: Values, purposes, norms

6. Is service-learning or community engagement rewarded? In what ways?

7. Are there any disincentives either formally or informally to participate in service-learning teaching activities?

8. What are the administration’s expectations for faculty who work with community partners for service-learning? Is this different for faculty who engage in community-based research, but who don’t involve students? In other words, are there different norms with regards to teaching versus researching in the community?

9. What encourages faculty’s work with community partners?

10. Are there any documents you could provide that would help me understand the role or relative importance of service-learning and/or community engagement at [institution’s name]?

11. Can I follow up with you either via e-mail or phone if I have any clarifying questions about what we talked about today?

THANK YOU!
VITA - Emily M. Janke

Education

B.A., Environmental Geography, Colgate University, 2001
University of Bradford, England, January-May 2000
University of Wollongong, Australia, July-December 1999

Professional Experience

University of North Carolina-Greensboro, Fall 2008 –
Assistant Director of Service-Learning, Office for Leadership and Service-Learning
Pennsylvania State University, 2004-2008
Research Assistant, Center for the Study of Higher Education
Darrow School, 2001-2004
Director, Hands-to-Work Program, 2003-2004
Co-Director, Samson Environmental Center, 2002-2004
Science Teacher, 2001 – 2004
Colgate University, 1998-2001
Instructor, Outdoor Education Program

Publications