

Cohabitation to Collaboration:
University Center Partnerships and the
Opportunity for an Ideal State of Collaboration

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DEDICATION

In dedication to my two favorite men:
my husband, Andrew, and my son, Torin.

“Family isn’t an important thing. It’s everything” – Michael J. Fox

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ABSTRACT

When you embark on a new roommate scenario, sharing space is not always an easy adjustment. This holds true in cohabiting higher education arrangements as well, such as university centers (UCs) where more than one academic institution come together to share a campus. Over time, the hope is that the institutions will evolve from ‘roommates’ to ‘partners,’ beginning to share resources, rewards, and working together to achieve the mission of the university center. This study was designed to dig deeper into the university center model and investigate how co-location of universities may influence the level of partnership. Specifically, this study aimed to assess whether (and if so, how) cohabiting institutions at university centers can foster and grow into collaborative partnerships. Through an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, this study used a survey and interviews to discover how partnerships were currently working at university centers and identify the areas of strength and weaknesses brought on by cohabiting with one another. Using statistical tools such as independent t-tests, one-way ANOVA and thematic coding, the quantitative and qualitative strands of research brought together a unique response to the research questions. The findings show that the key actors and structure of UCs are the most hindering factors when partners try to engage in greater levels of partnership. Most UCs are described to be operating at a cooperative level. Furthermore, most UC representatives believe that collaboration would be ideal, but is not necessary for UC success; insinuating that being ‘roommates’ may be as good as it gets. Cohabitation is not a golden ticket to collaborative UC partnerships.

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INTRODUCTION

Imagine the typical process of moving into an apartment with a new roommate. Each roommate has signed his or her portion of the lease and there is a binding contract between roommates and the landlord to offer space for living. In essence, there is cooperation between the roommates to share living space and adhere to the formal requirements of the lease. Beyond that contractual relationship, nothing is required legally. In an optimistic scenario, this roommate arrangement would blossom into something more robust. Maybe the roommates begin to coordinate who has full use of the apartment on certain nights if friends are invited over to socialize. Beyond this coordination, a sense of further collaboration may even occur as the roommates continue to grow their social relationship in addition to the expectations of any agreement, sharing trips to the grocery store and purchasing like items together to make their favorite meals for an evening of shared activities. In this scenario, the fact that these roommates were cooperatively living together played a large role in the development of a social relationship full of various levels of coordination and collaboration. Cohabitation enabled the shift from cooperation to collaboration.

The narrative above offers a unique analogy to cohabiting organizations, such as institutions at higher education university centers. University centers housing multiple universities on one campus are seen as a cost-effective way to fill a void of higher education opportunities within a particular region and act as a mechanism to remove program duplication and reduce funding issues and costs (Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999). Yet, with the cohabitation of faculty, staff, and students, the relationship amongst institutions may extend into a greater partnership and supportive climate stemming from the convenience of being ‘roommates.’ University centers offer an environment where cohabitation and cooperation could potentially grow into a partnership showcasing signs of coordination or collaboration, begging for further investigation as to the true impact of cohabiting organizations on the growth of collaborative partnerships.

Problem Statement & Rationale for Study

To fully understand the collaborative opportunities for a university center, it is important to recognize that university centers have a dual mission, which can differ from conventional campus institutions. Like conventional campus institutions, they must attempt to provide lifelong learning and service to students; however, they also must supplement the absent or lacking educational opportunities in a particular community and economy (i.e. ability to earn degrees from accessible and affordable colleges and universities) and work directly alongside many other institutions providing the same services (Nordberg, 2011). Thus, in order for university centers to fulfill their mission, they must remain strategically connected with all academic partners at the university center. Without this strategic connection, university center partners would be seen simply as separate branch campuses operating at a shared location.

Unfortunately, although an evident trend of university center development exists from the mid 1990's onward (Baus and Ramsbottom, 1999), the presence and understanding of collaborative factors between the institutions, or as I refer to them herein, "academic partners," needed to address this dual mission is habitually undefined and under questioned by those involved in the oversight of the centers (i.e. institutional administrators and university center leadership). Often, varying demands and requirements of the home institutions and university center administrations question current authoritative and organizational patterns, as well as the degree of partnership needed between the two contributors. Without efficient collaboration at university centers, academic partners may be forced to align with their home institution on policies, procedures, and events, instead of using the resources available on the university center campus. For example, without a student conduct code, academic partners adhere to their main campus code. Yet, in the instance of an incident on campus, the response to the violation is conducted sometimes 40-80 miles away at a campus with different student populations and resources. This misalignment hinders the ability of the university center academic partners to be a unified community resource and works against their ability to be collaborative (Norberg, 2011).

While it is suggested that the academic partners at university centers need to collaborate to satisfy the true intention of the center's mission (Baus, 2007; Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999), this does not indicate collaboration is automatic or quick to form in this setting. In fact, if one considers common collaborative theories, most collaboration is not immediate; there is a continuum of partnership engagement. This continuum begins with cooperation, can lead to coordination, and finally may grow into collaboration. In definitions outlined shortly, it is clear that as an alliance or partnership gains formality, structure, support, and leadership in addition to other resources, the partnership is more equipped to grow into one of coordination and later, collaboration (Mattessich, Murray-Close, & Monsey, 2001; Gulati, Wohlgezogen, & Zhelyazkov, 2012; Hord, 1986). When a university center is created, the cohabiting arrangement is most likely to begin in the cooperation phase, a phase of interaction while each participating institution retains individual accountability and authority, self-interest, and mostly separate organizational resources. The intention is that after creation, the academic partners grow into a realm of coordination and later, collaboration. However, this is only possible if the appropriate resources are developed and utilized to support a collaborative effort as suggested above. But what exactly are those resources?

While scholars and researchers present various, overlapping sets of resources and ingredients necessary for coordination and collaboration (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Appley & Winder, 1977; Bailey & Coney, 2000; Bryson & Crosby, 2008; Gray, 1989; Linden, 2002; and Mattessich, et. al., 2001), one specific set of factors has been developed in great detail comparing many recent theories and studies across many industries and environments: the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory. After the analysis of 133 studies, Mattessich et. al (2001) suggest there are 20 factors that influence the success of collaboration in organizations. Mattessich, et. al. (2001) have now provided a practical guide for the implementation of collaboration in public and private organizations.

In an effort to provide clarity on collaboration in university centers, this study investigated university centers to identify the factors of cooperation, coordination, and collaboration present in university center partnerships. By applying the WCFI tool to the

field of higher education, specifically university centers, this research adds another perspective to the current theories of collaboration and indicates whether organizations sharing space experience different collaborative successes and challenges. Coupling WCFI with in-depth interviews with university center representatives, this study provides support and knowledge so that university centers no longer continue to operate in the absence of strong partnerships, a state that would increasingly hinder their true potential.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is **to assess whether (and if so, how) cohabiting institutions at university centers can foster and grow into collaborative partnerships.**

Throughout the analysis, this inquiry also served as a basis to examine the following objectives:

1. To identify whether cohabiting university center academic partners follow the path of the collaboration continuum (cooperation to coordination to collaboration)
2. To examine if cohabiting organizations report common factors leading to collaborative success or failure
3. To identify if and how collaboration is suggested and/or mandated between university center partners.

By investigating these areas, public administrators in higher education will gain an increased awareness of the preparation necessary to implement university centers and have a greater understanding of how to grow successful partnerships among academic partners. Additionally, an improved understanding of the collaborations amongst cohabiting organization is valuable to scholars in higher education, economic development, public policy, and organizational studies.

Definitions

The following terms were key for identification, comparison, and analysis throughout this study:

Although the stages within the collaborative continuum can be described as many things, for the use of this analysis, the following definitions were developed and used by the author:

- **Cooperation** is defined as ‘the existence of low-risk, informal relationships between two or more organizations where common goals and missions are undefined and resources and authority are maintained individually.’
- **Coordination** is defined as ‘a semi-formal relationship between two or more organizations that have compatible missions and goals, yet maintain individual leadership, authority, and accountability, and exists to achieve a planned and desired project.’
- **Collaboration** is defined as ‘a formal relational system of two or more organizations with a common vision and shared interests aiming to meet goals that would be unattainable individually. Committed partnering organizations must maintain individual self-interest while continuing to share responsibility, resources, and accountability to achieve the desired goals.’

These definitions were based on a review of many scholarly definitions and studies (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Appley & Winder, 1977; Bailey & Coney, 2000; Bryson & Crosby, 2008; Gray, 1989; Linden, 2002; and Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey, 2001) surrounding the collaborative natures of multi- institutional campuses and were provided to all survey and interview participants for review prior to their participation in the study.

To achieve a common understanding of cohabitation, **cohabitation** was defined as ‘two or more organizations in a contractual agreement to share physical office space and spatial resources.’

In regards to the setting of the university center, the following terms were used frequently throughout the study:

- **University center**, which is also referred to as a multi- institutional campus, or partnership campus, among other names (see Table 2.1) is defined according to Norberg (2011) as a “campus where two or more distant educational institutions cooperate with each other and local development agencies to create new

educational and training opportunities in a locality deprived of such opportunities” (p. 8). For the use of this study, locations where campuses simply host classes without offering any on-site permanent services, such as a library, computer lab, food services, etc. were not included.

- Within the university center, the main actors are the academic partners. **Academic partners**, by my definition, were identified as ‘the individual universities who choose to join the university center campus.’ These academic partners are representatives of their home institutions, yet operate at a distant location. For each university, the **home institution** was identified as ‘the degree-granting institution that chose to offer a set of programs on the university center campus.’
- **Communal campus staff** accounted for those employees who serve all academic partners and remain a critical component of the campuses functionality. Although not direct employees of a particular academic partner, the communal campus staff exists to serve all students, faculty, institutional staff, visitors, and others while running the common services on-site. Often communal staff offer services needed for all students that are not institutionally specific (i.e. career services, student activities, library services) Communal campus staff duties could vary greatly at each university center, however.

Overview of Methods

This study used an explanatory-sequential mixed-method design to examine the collaborative nature of university centers, specifically investigating whether collaboration can grow from cohabitation. This method was chosen to allow the qualitative and quantitative measures to enhance and illustrate the impact of cohabitation on partnership engagement and the perceptions of the participants, enabling the qualitative phase to further elaborate on the data from the quantitative collection and analysis (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006; Creswell, 2006; Cameron, 2009). The quantitative strand aimed to provide a base of knowledge of the larger partnership situation at university centers as a method to examine what factors directly contribute to the shift from cooperation to coordination to collaboration. The qualitative strand of research investigated at a deeper

level into the partnerships and provided further light on how such factors directly contribute to that shift.

Quantitative data was collected via an electronic survey (25.6% response rate) of the self-identified centers engaged in the Association for Collaborative Leadership's 2009-2010 survey of university consortia, as well as additional university centers that opened their doors since 2010. The Wilder Collaborative Factors Inventory was used as the survey instrument. The qualitative strand of research was then developed based on phase I and allowed for additional in-depth inquiry of university centers by selecting a subset of the participants for further inquiry to provide further insight into the collaborative tendencies and directions of the university centers. Nine interviews were conducted during phase II. Descriptive statistics, independent t-tests, and One-Way ANOVA tests were used as part of the quantitative analysis tools. Thematic coding was used for the qualitative interview data. The results of these tools were brought together to produce the analysis and conclusions from this study and are discussed later in Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

Limitations

Due to the structure of the study, a few limitations should be noted:

1. Because the qualitative study portion focuses solely on university centers with only public university academic partners, this study may not be generalizable to private university involvement or campuses with either for-profit academic institutions or community colleges present as their collaborative tendencies and procedures could vary greatly due to different funding structures for these types of institutions.
2. Because of population breakdown, on-site representation and response rates, some academic partners at centers may be under-represented in the quantitative strand of the design. More control over this representation was accounted for during the qualitative strand.

Overview of Upcoming Chapters

The upcoming chapters continue to support the need for further inquiry into the phenomenon of university centers, opportunity for partnerships and shift from cooperation to collaboration. As suggested, the factors identified and studied in this research drive the successes and frustrations of university center administrators as they try to implement a collaborative partnership.

Chapter Two establishes a historical account of the evolution of higher education university center and provides a theoretical framework for partnership engagement. Chapter Three presents the explanatory-sequential mixed-method research design used in the study and elaborates on the features of the selected data collection and analysis tools. Chapter Four provides the results of both the quantitative and qualitative strands of research which precedes Chapter Five as it brings the results back together with the literature presented to answer the research questions. Lastly, Chapter Six makes final recommendations and offers concluding remarks.

Overall, as this dissertation suggests, research should continue to be developed and shared to assess whether cohabiting institutions at university centers can foster and grow into collaborative partnerships. The findings of this study provide organizations with the areas that are most helpful and hurtful to partnerships. With these findings, it is the hope that university centers can increase their understanding of the hurdles needed to overcome to raise a cooperative university center to a collaborative partnership.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To further understand the evolution of the university center and the integration of collaboration, this literature review focuses on the unique environment of higher education and its use of partnerships; multi-organization partnerships; collaboration theories and models; and the trend of cohabitation. By detailed investigation of these areas, this study used this review as a basis to evaluate the applicability of existing collaborations to the unique phenomenon of university centers.

The Unique, Constantly Changing, Environment of Higher Education

For an industry that attempts to avoid change (van Schoor, 2003), higher education is an environment of constant evolution and alterations. Since the beginning of higher education (around the 13th century), it has evolved many times (Roper & Hirth, 2005). From land-grant services and a strong focus on the research component in modern years, to connecting with communities and understanding the economic development commitment in recent decades, higher education institutions slightly shift their actions and foci to ensure their mission of not only providing education and teaching to the masses but also of maintaining the resources to do so.

Unfortunately, it is unknown how much longer the single campus structure of higher education can continue to support that mission. Those involved in higher education administration are recognizing the need to evaluate their basic approach to education (Barriers to Adoption of Online Systems in US Higher Education, 2012). Kiley (2013) notes that “most universities will have to lower their cost structures to achieve long-term financial sustainability and to fund future initiatives.” This shift is going to require colleges and universities to address challenges through a variety of technology, leadership, and structural changes in order to cut costs, create efficiencies, demonstrate value, reach new markets and prioritize programs. It is also hypothesized that the “higher education bubble” is bound to burst in the coming years (Cronin & Horton, 2009) as the massification, competition, and resource scarcity in higher education continues to grow beyond what most imagined. It has been said that the universities that survive “today’s disruptive challenges” will be recognized for their innovation and optimism (Christensen

& Eyring, 2013). Despite these trials and the unique environment facing higher education, the public continues to hold high standards for educational institutions despite decreased funding, many sharing the observation of Marian Gade: “Citizens need a choice of educational opportunities, institutions and programs with minimal geographic and demographic gaps, or access becomes a hollow promise” (Gade, 1993, p. 1).

New Education Structures and Opportunities

Historically, most universities were established as one centralized campus, aiming to serve a particular community and create a communal partnership to grow and direct their impact. However, to provide access to all geographies and demographics, higher educational institutions are beginning to alter that model by incorporating branch campuses, virtual campuses, and other systems to expand their services to students beyond their typical geographical reach. Newly created structures are used throughout the 17,000+ universities that are in operation today (Norberg, 2011). Branch campuses are a separate location from the main campus but offer an education of the same caliber as the home institution location. The branch campus model has seen considerable growth in the last decade. The number of branch campuses increased by 43% between 2006 and 2009 (Altbach, 2015). Online education has also been gaining traction in post-secondary education to help with revenue growth, serving non-traditional populations, improving retention, responding to space constraints, and managing costs (Bacow, Bowen, Guthrie, Lack, and Long, 2012). Yet, online education and a shift to this structure have many implementation barriers. Additionally, little data exists to compare the learning outcomes for online versus traditional, in-person instruction. In fact, mature, highly motivated students seem to outperform others disproportionately in online courses (Bacow, Bowen, Guthrie, Lack, and Long, 2012)

While these options address the challenge of access, the issue of dwindling resources remains. The State Higher Education Executive Officers Association produces an annual report on the status of state higher education finance. The most recent report eloquently states that “the substantial shift of responsibility for financing public higher education toward net tuition (from around 30 percent to 50 percent) in a dozen years is a significant

change for American higher education.” Currently, over half of states receive a majority of their financial support from student tuition dollars. In addition to the struggles mentioned above with costs and attracting students to the higher education market, this financial shift requires new ideas and innovations will continue to be a must in the industry of higher education. In addition to the branch campus and online instruction options, there is also an increase in academic partnerships designed to address to the challenges of access, structure, and resources. These partnerships can take many forms and can become quite elaborate to meet the needs of those seeking post-secondary education.

The Use of Partnerships in Higher Education

As suggested, partnerships in higher education are a form of flexibility and innovation to combat the shifts in the financial support and consumer expectations of post-secondary education. Partnerships in education can bring together various organizations and actors. They also utilize different organizational structures to meet their goals. For instance, Harman (1989) depicts a continuum of educational partnerships stemming from phases of voluntary cooperation to merger. The continuum mentions consortia as a middle status of partnership (i.e. member-based operational organizations that can serve a variety of purposes when united). Consortia are typically informal and provide services and programming for its members. Members of the consortia can be similar or dissimilar and can leave at any point of the partnership. The partnership phase continuum concludes with a merger in higher education. While not common in the general public’s opinion, mergers are an option to reduce capital costs and to fill a void in higher education options. Lang (2002) takes the continuum of partnership slightly further with a discussion surrounding the four basic types of public post-secondary education cooperation. While the laissez faire autonomy model requires little, if any, cooperation, the cooperative autonomy, provincial university, and government coordination models all encompass greater levels of partnership. These levels of partnership are impacted by various factors within the included institutions and the climate of higher education. Despite a quite extensive review of the partnership types by Harman (1989) and Lang

(2002), there is another type of partnership that stems from consortia that should be considered further: the university center.

New Partnership Model: The University Center

Many legislators and university administrators have revived a type of operation known as a university center where numerous universities come together at one location to fill a void in higher education within a particular region and share infrastructure and resources. As one of the few scholars giving attention to the multi-institutional campus, Norberg (2011) defines a partnership campus (his synonym for a university center) as a “campus where two or more distant educational institutions cooperate with each other and local development agencies to create new educational and training opportunities in a locality deprived of such opportunities” (p. 8).

This new type of campus is utilized globally, including sites in the United States, China, Australia, and the Middle East, and since the 1990’s, has been a resurrected type of consortia for universities to consider (Baus and Ramsbottom, 1999). Currently, in the United States, there are an estimated 40-50 university centers in operation (“Association for Collaborative Leadership,” 2010). (Note: An in-depth understanding of the history and current operation of university centers may be underdeveloped due to the various naming mechanisms used to identify centers and other use of the term ‘university center.’ Table 2.1 notes the various names identified during research. The phrase ‘university center’ has also been used to represent research centers, specific locations with high university concentration, student unions, and others, making identification difficult).

By design, university centers are a mechanism to offer affordable access, remove program duplication, reduce funding issues and costs, and promote efficient operations and meaningful partnerships within the campus by leveraging resources (Norberg, 2011; Baus, 2007). Through leveraging common resources, university centers are able to add value, save money, share expertise, and generate increased learning opportunities (Larrance, 2002); all factors aim to achieve the educating mission of an institution while

maintaining the monetary capabilities to do so.

Table 2.1: University Center Naming Conventions

| Naming Convention | Number |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| College Center | 1 |
| College District | 1 |
| Consortium Center | 1 |
| Graduate Center | 2 |
| Higher Education Center | 16 |
| Higher Education District | 1 |
| Learning Center | 1 |
| Multi Institution center | 1 |
| Multi-University Center | 1 |
| Partnership Campus | 1 |
| Regional Center | 1 |
| Teaching Center | 1 |
| University Center | 17 |

Yet, not surprisingly, university centers have their challenges. The most common challenges for academic partners include dependency on its home campus, maintenance of self-autonomy, failure to attract additional students, difficulty in understanding the benefits of participation and concentration on certain disciplines, shared services and infrastructure, and ease of obtaining funding (Norbert, 2011; Baus, 2007).

Additionally, there is room for improvement in joint efforts surrounding marketing, governing processes, and future projections (Baus, 2007). Luckily, these challenges can be combatted through greater engagement of the academic partners.

While there are various models of university centers (i.e. public partners only, community college site-operating, public/private partners, etc.) there are many successful examples in operation currently, including the University Center of Greenville (UCG),

which opened its doors in 1989 and has since grown its six academic partners and garnered more space to serve their growing population. With over 60 programs offered, from 2000-2006, UCG saw a growth of 55 percent in student enrollment (Baus, 2007). The Atlanta University Center (AUC), bringing together five historically black colleges, was created in 1929 and is cited as the second oldest consortium of higher education in the United States (Jackson, 2007). AUC saw growth in their engineering programs, specifically in minority and female populations (now representing over one-fourth of their programs), and has graduated thousands of students since 1974 (Jackson, 2007). University centers continue to be a viable option for institutions to consider. In fact, there is a university center in Iowa currently being considered in lieu of allowing only one state university to operate in a particular region (Charis-Carlson, 2015). The Regional Regents Center in Iowa is set to open in 2016 in hopes of having three state university academic partners. Each of these examples cites collaborative partnerships as a fundamental component in the establishment and growth of university centers.

In order to ensure that university centers, like the Regional Regents Center, can continue to develop and succeed in their mission, further investigation and comparison to multi-organizational partnership research is necessary. Many consortia-type partnerships begun in the mid-1900's during the first wave of establishment failed to continue as true university centers (i.e. shut down or changed their structure) (Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999). Greater understanding of failed and successful multi-organizational partnerships will continue to aid in the understanding of how university centers can succeed and move into truly collaborative partnerships. Thus, research on multi-organizational partnerships is presented below.

Overview of Multi-Organizational Partnerships

As mentioned, higher education is no stranger to partnerships. There are many instances of 'joining up' (Cerych & Frost-Smith, 1985; Stein & Short, 2010; Amey, Eddy, & Ozaki, 2007) through industry partnerships, program partnerships, and other opportunities to come together to make the greatest impact when teaching and learning are involved, in addition to the university center option at the forefront of this discussion.

However, multi-organizational partnerships are not exclusive to higher education. In general, many industries are growing and beginning to allow partnerships to become a common occurrence in the workplace (Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998). As defined by Sullivan and Skelcher (2005), partnerships are “semi-autonomous organizational vehicles through which governmental, private, voluntary, and community sector actors engage in the process of debating, deliberating, and delivering public policy at the regional and local level.” Yet, few multi-organizational partnerships are the same (Atkinson, Wilkin, Stott, Doherty, & Kinder, 2002). They have varying models, purposes, sizes, and outcomes. Regardless of whether those partnerships are public-private partnerships, cross-industry, or within the same industry, multi-organizational partnerships are complex operations that require the appropriate resources to succeed.

Benefits of Partnerships

While multi-organizational partnerships are often suggested to be motivated by resource savings and aim to “deliver more with less” (Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998, p. 315), organizations come together for various reasons and obtain various levels of engagement; these reasons include purposes dealing with coordinated delivery, decision-making groups, consultation and training, operational team-delivery, and innovation (Andrews & Entwistle, 2010; Sorensen & Torfling, 2011). Additionally, if geographical and political contexts are considered when establishing a partnership, partnerships have been known to show additional benefits including conflict resolution, information sharing, networking, accountability, and transformative capacities (Asthana, Richardson, & Halliday, 2002; Sorensen & Torfling, 2011).

As a further example, the benefit of coordinated delivery and service integration is common among nonprofit organizations. A service integration approach is a significant partnership, as it “calls on agencies to combine organization structures through such procedures as sharing office space, sharing client information, sharing staff and coordinating staff assignments, and jointly applying for grants and engaging in joint budgeting” (Snavely & Tracey, 2000). This integration provides an abundant service to the clients of the organizations within a partnership. Additionally, this level of

engagement has been shown to be central to the forming of a more collaborative and successful partnership (Snavely & Tracey, 2000). This example is directly relatable to the university center operation in higher education discussed previously. By sharing staff, facilities, other infrastructure, and countless resources, the service integration and coordinated delivery benefit of partnerships has grown into a great service for those pursuing higher education in university-vacant areas. A few of the other benefits should also be visible in university center operations, such as information sharing, innovation, and decision-making groups based upon the unique environment and formal agreements. Still, the benefits of a partnership are not guaranteed and require strategic investment. As mentioned, benefits are often attributed to the type of model the partnership has chosen for its structure.

Partnership Models

Because partnerships can cross sectors, industries, paradigms and value systems (Riggs, Block, Warr, and Gibbs, 2013), there are many influences that can vary from partnership to partnership. Yet, numerous common models of partnerships are present in current literature. One important distinction, specifically in the realm of public partnerships, is whether a partnership is multi-agency or intra-agency (Barnett and Appleton, 2004). Multi-agency partnerships refer to efforts aiming to coordinate the activities of various agencies, while intra-agency partnerships brings together shared resources while dissolving independence for common and joint activities. Intra-agency partnerships are specifically addressed in this study based upon the structure of university centers.

There is also various taxonomy used in partnership modeling research (Carnwell & Carson, 2005; Andrews & Entwistle, 2010). One model of partnership specifically addresses the structure of university centers: the co-locating model (Atkinson, Wilkin, Stott, Doherty, & Kinder, 2002; Audit Commission, 1998; Bailey & Koney, 2000). This model showcases the ability of organizations to work in the same space, yet retain membership and employment in their home agency. This model stems from the belief in the importance of geographical context in a partnership. Asthana et. al. (2002) mentioned

supporting evidence for colocation and cohabiting partnerships in rural areas and areas that lack coterminosity. These partnerships have been garnering additional resources.

Despite the continual mention of geographical context in partnerships and coordinated delivery of services, detailed research on organizational cohabitation and colocation is underdeveloped (Bradbury, Edwards, & Maher, 2011). As this study focuses solely on a partnership model that requires colocation of its participants, understanding cohabitation from an organizational viewpoint is critical. The following section reviews the brief literature and consensus of organizational cohabitation. This literature will show that cohabiting organizations bring together the many facets and opportunities of partnership into a unique, yet complex structure unlike geographically separate organizations.

A Closer Look at Cohabiting Organizations

Cohabiting broadly references the action of living together; organizational cohabitation specifically addresses the workplace sharing of space (Bochicchio, 2014). This sharing may be with those one selects or those who were assigned. Given the lack of detailed definitions of organizational cohabitation, cohabitation is defined here as two or more organizations in an agreement to share physical office space and spatial resources, based on Bradbury, Edwards, & Maher's research (2011).

Cohabitation is most commonly found in libraries (Murvosh, 2012) and non-profit organizations (Bradbury, Edwards, & Maher, 2011), but has also been linked to organizations in health, wellness and social structures (Bochicchio, 2014). Additionally, there have been recent articles suggesting that the government may be looking into the benefits of colocating agencies (Mitchell, 2014). Cohabitation should not be considered a public-only phenomenon, however. For private industry, startup costs can be high; thus, sharing office space is a solution when rent is too high for a single operation.

Organizations that have participated in cohabiting efforts cite many benefits of such an arrangement, including increased visibility, common areas for meeting space, collaboration and networking, increased efficiency due to standardization and reduced

duplication, cost savings, and shared labor forces (Bradbury, et. al., 2011; Christensen and Drejer, 2010).

More specifically, a 2011 study looking at cohabiting nonprofit organizations (Tides, 2011) found the following:

- 86% of cohabiting non-profits said co-location had increased their effectiveness and efficiency
- 68% said it enhanced their ability to achieve their mission
- 65% reported increased staff morale
- 49% cited more revenue
- 80% said clients had an easier time accessing services.

With these findings, organizations are becoming more intrigued by the possibility of cohabiting, or at least partnering. That being said, partnerships are not the easiest initiative to begin or maintain. While the basic foundation of a partnership may be easily defined, the opportunities and resources needed to take the partnership to the next level unfortunately can become tortuous.

Beyond the Basics of Partnership

As suggested, multi-organizational partnerships may seem like an obvious framework for organizational success. And cohabitation may be a unique contributor. Yet, there are difficulties, as described above, to setting a successful partnership in motion. Often, there can be trust issues, as well as existing competition, communication issues, accountability confusion, and/or a lack of support to provide the partnership with the resources it needs to succeed (Salmon, 2004). Using collaborative techniques can address the issues above but with various models, interpretations, and expectations of partnerships, the partners must be invested in aiding the partnership's success. (Bradbury, et. al., 2011; Salmon, 2004; Atkinson et. al., 2002; Audit Commission, 1998; Bailey & Koney, 2000). Thus, with consideration of the many partnerships frameworks suggested by scholars to discover what the keys are to success, it is equally important to address the levels of partnership that exist.

Partnership Levels of Engagement

Within a partnership, there can be many levels of engagement and numerous words to describe the connection, such as collaboration, coordination or cooperation. While the terms collaboration, coordination, and cooperation may be used interchangeably in everyday jargon, in public administration and the study of intrasectoral partnerships, each has a distinct meaning on a continuum of partnership engagement (Gajda, 2004). There is often disagreement as to what constitutes cooperation, coordination, and collaboration in organizations (Riggs, Block, Warr, and Gibbs, 2013; Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey, 2001; Bryson and Crosby, 2008; Himmelman, 2002); thus further investigation and categorization is needed. Throughout current literature, there are various continuums presented to aid in the clarification and distinction of the progression of partnership engagement. As Riggs et. al. (2013) mention, partnerships move up and down in levels of their partnership engagement. Not all partnerships will operate at the highest level. But what is that highest level?

Histories of Partnership Continuum

While there have been differing continuums created by scholars, almost all note that collaboration is the greatest level of engagement (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bailey & Coney, 2000; Bryson & Crosby, 2008; Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey, 2001; Alford and O'Flynn, 2012). It has been described as the most demanding, due to the fact that it requires a greater level of planning, sharing, and integration. O'Flynn (2009) makes another important distinction of collaboration being greater and different because it cannot be purchased or demanded, as can cooperation for instance. However, it has been suggested that collaboration will only be pursued when the outcome cannot be attained without collaboration (Bryson, Crosby, and Stone, 2006). Based on the variance in the continuums and definitions of steps on the partnership continuum, numerous scholars' work was reviewed to identify conceptual overlap and common understandings of the features of each step:

- Hord's (1986) models of cooperation and collaboration, even decades ago, distinguish collaboration as a process in which there is much more communication, energy, and time spent than in cooperation. There must be mutual

interest between the partners. Resources spent and shared are greater.

Additionally, leadership is critical and control must be flexible to allow for organizational and personal factors to work together.

- Stemming from Hord's (1986) synthesis, Appley and Winder's (1977) definition of collaboration suggests the following characteristics:
 - Individuals in a group share mutual aspirations and a common conceptual framework;
 - The interactions among individuals are characterized by "justice as fairness";
 - These aspirations and conceptualizations are characterized by each individual's consciousness of his/her motives toward the other; by caring or concern for the other; and by commitment to work with the other over time provided that this commitment is a matter of choice." (Appley and Winder, 1977, p. 281)
- Gray (1989) values self-interest in collaborations above all else and believes that the understanding of interdependence is a prerequisite for collaborative action. Good intentions are not sufficient. Gray (1989) typically finds that the phases of any collaborative process must include program setting, direction setting, and implementation to ensure success.
- Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey (2001) through the creation of The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory developed a clear difference between cooperation, coordination, and collaboration, using their working definition of collaboration as "a mutually beneficial and well defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals." They continue to note the need for commitment, shared responsibility and resources, and mutual authority and accountability.
- Work on partnership progressions has continued to evolve well into the 21st century with scholars such as Linden (2002), Ansell and Gash (2008), and Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2006) supporting the work of the scholars above.

While each scholar may have a slight variation of the terms collaboration, coordination, and cooperation, there is considerable overlap in the direction of these models. The upcoming definitions bring together these commonalities and serve as a strong basis for the Partnership Continuum presented in Table 2.2.

Definitions

Through examination of these definitions and others (Huxham, 2003; Bailey and Koney, 2000; Schottle, Haghsheno, and Gehbauer, 2014), consensus of defining these terms began to form. Thus, during this study:

- Collaboration will be defined as “a formal relational system of two or more organizations with a common vision and shared interests aiming to meet goals that would be unattainable individually. Committed partnering organizations must maintain individual self-interest while continuing to share responsibility, resources, and accountability to achieve the desired goals.”
- Cooperation will be defined as “the existence of low-risk, informal relationships between two or more organizations where common goals and missions are undefined and resources and authority are maintained individually.”
- Coordination will be defined as “a semi-formal relationship between two or more organizations that have compatible missions and goals, yet maintain individual leadership, authority, and accountability, and exists to achieve a planned and desired project.”

Using these definitions and scholarly review, partnerships appear to engage in a continuum, following a path of cooperation to coordination to collaboration, as represented in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Collaboration Continuum



Based on the works of Ansell & Gash (2008), Appley & Winder (1977), Bailey & Coney (2000), Bryson & Crosby (2008), Gray (1989), Linden (2002), and Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey (2001).

Getting to Collaboration

Based on the continuum above, the end stage is achieved when reaching a collaborative partnership. Theoretically, this continuum could work in both ways (i.e. a collaboration shifting back to a cooperative or coordinated state of operation); however, that is not the optimal direction. Because of the many elements contributing to partnership engagement, within each phase there exists a range of partnership engagement. For example, some partnerships may show weaker cooperation prior to achieving stronger cooperation. Once it surpasses stronger cooperation, a partnership could move to the coordinated state. Aiming to find a strong, distinct sense of the difference between cooperative and collaborative actions, there are many existing theories of collaboration and models showcasing key components of reaching collaboration. These models and features are critical to understanding just how a partnership can continue to move on the continuum in a positive manner.

- First, the relationship of key actors must be an open and trusting relationship with a shared power and leadership structure (Linden, 2002; Grey, 1989; Bailey & Koney, 2000; Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006).
- Secondly, partnership typically happens in stages. While most scholars have slightly different stages, the overall track is similar. Gajda (2004) presents the stages of collaboration development and distinguishes the importance of partnerships passing through stages in order to achieve “effective performance” (p. 71). In her findings, collaborations should proceed through steps of assembling, ordering, performing, and transforming. Linden (2002), Grey (1989), Bailey and Koney (2000), and Clarke & Fuller (2010) suggest similar life cycles.
- Lastly, it is critical to recognize that strategic partnerships are intentional and often constructed to attain goals otherwise unattainable if the alliance did not exist

(Gajda, 2004; Huxham, 2003; Linden, 2002; Bryson, Crosby, & Stone, 2006).

By design (and according to these models), collaboration is seen as the optimal state of being (Alford and O'Flynn, 2012), but is it necessary for successful operation?

Organizations understand the value of partnership; yet often cannot fully and distinctly identify which actions are truly collaborative efforts versus actions that should be characterized as cooperative or coordinated. For this reason, this study continues the focus on the partnership continuum and uncovers the opportunities and frustrations of reaching the perceived optimal state of partnership: collaboration.

A Framework for Partnership Engagement

In order to understand collaboration and the path to its achievement, an understanding of the full partnership continuum is essential. While the continuum is mentioned in many scholars' research as showcased above, very few go into great detail on how a partnership shifts from one stage to the next. Still, these features and changes are necessary to aid university centers in their partnership development. These features, according to Bryson, Crosby, and Stone (2006) should include the environment, processes, structure and governance, contingencies and constraints, and outcomes and accountabilities. Based upon the literature reviewed, a chart detailing the progression of each element of partnership was generated and is presented in Table 2.2.

To develop Table 2.2, a synthesis of the literature was conducted to categorize the areas and elements commonly described in by the researched scholars. After synthesis, four major categories were identified. Consistently, scholars described features that addressed power, relationships, means to achieving partnership and ends to a partnership. Within these categories, 13 elements were identified as key features of partnerships: authority, control, leadership, key actors, structure, communication, vision/goals, purpose, planning, resources, rewards, strategic risk and operational risk.

Table 2.2: Elements of the Partnership Continuum

| Category | Elements | Cooperation | Coordination | Collaboration |
|----------------------|--------------------------|---|---|---|
| POWER | Authority | Retained by each partner | Retained by each partner | New structure for authority with division of labor |
| | Control | Retained by each partner | Some shared control | Shared control |
| | Leadership | Retained by each partner | Some shared leadership | Distributed |
| RELATIONSHIPS | Key Actors | Driven by individuals in organization | Driven by individuals in organization with partner organization support | Organization provide full commitment for a trusting and open relationship |
| | Structure | Informal | Semi-Formal | Formal with defined relationships |
| | Communication | As needed | Established channels of communication | Shared information is key |
| ENDS | Vision/Goals | Independent goals and vision | Compatibility of goals and vision | Common vision and goals while maintaining self-interest |
| | Purpose | Interaction to avoid conflict; short-term | Interaction for one project | Interaction for one or more projects otherwise unattainable by one partner; long-term |
| | Planning | Retained by each partner | Some joint planning needed | Joint |
| MEANS | Resources | Independent | Some shared resources | Shared resources |
| | Rewards | Separate rewards | Shared rewards | Shared rewards |
| | Risk: Strategic | Low risk | Low risk | Shared risk |
| | Risk: Operational | Low risk | Some shared risk | Shared risk |

Based on the works of Ansell & Gash (2008), Appley & Winder (1977), Bailey & Coney (2000), Bryson & Crosby (2008), Gray (1989), Linden (2002), and Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey (2001).

As shown in Table 2.2, each element listed is critical to the success of partnerships and

continues to build in engagement and formality as a partnership moves from cooperation to coordination to collaboration. For example, each partner in the partnership retains leadership in the cooperation phase. As it moves into more of a coordinated partnership, one would see an increase in shared leadership. As it moves into a true collaboration, there is even greater shared leadership that is distributed throughout the partnership.

As mentioned above, because of the abundance of elements factoring into the level of engagement, a partnership may see weaker or stronger levels of engagement within each phase on the continuum prior to moving forward or backwards. The progression of each element and identifying where an organization and/or partnership is on the continuum is critical to further understanding of partnership engagement, especially university centers.

It is also critical to remember that while each element plays a part towards achieving collaboration, not all are required for collaboration to exist. To further investigate the elements, their role in if and/or how collaboration is achieved in the university center setting; a tool is needed that brings together the wide range of collaborative elements.

A Tool for Testing Collaboration in University Centers

The tool chosen for the quantitative phase of this study encompasses the elements in Table 2.2 and incorporates the models and theories outlined above: The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory. The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI) was created after an extensive review of 130+ successful collaborations and the influential factors involved (many of these studies and publications were reviewed for this research). Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey (2001) identified 20 proven factors that influence successful collaborations. Categorized into six areas (environment, membership characteristics, process and structure, communication, purpose, and resource), these factors have been tested through multiple studies and deemed generalizable by the researchers. All factors are listed in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Wilder Collaboration Factors

| Environment | Membership Characteristics | Process and Structure | Communication | Purpose | Resources |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| History of collaboration or cooperation in the community | Mutual respect, understanding, and trust | Members share a stake in both process and outcome | Open and frequent communication | Concrete, attainable goals and objectives | Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time |
| Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the community | Appropriate cross section of members | Multiple layers of participation | Established informal relationships and communication links | Shared vision | Skilled leadership |
| Favorable political and social climate | Members see collaboration as in their self-interest | Flexibility | | Unique purpose | |
| | Ability to compromise | Development of clear roles and policy guidelines | | | |
| | | Adaptability | | | |
| | | Appropriate pace of development | | | |

(Based on the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory; Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey (2001))

The WCFI has been confirmed as researchers (Czajkowski, 2006; Townsend & Shelley, 2008; Meister & Guernseym, 2005) continue to validate the factors, as well. It has been used in the medical/health professions field (Olson, Balmer, and Mejicano, 2011), social services (Perrault, McClelland, Austin, and Sieppert, 2011; Ziff, Willard, Harper, Bangi,

Johnson, and Ellen, 2010), and in the assessment of public agencies (Brown, 2005). Some of these studies found WCFI very applicable to their industry (Olson et. al., 2011; Brown, 2005), while others only found a subset of the factors indicative of their collaborations (Perrault et. al., 2011). These examples have allowed for a more systematic approach to collaboration research, applying the factors and inventory to various environments and organizational structures.

Yet, while this inventory (see Appendix B for full outline) and Table 2.2 were designed to aid organizations in identifying and transforming collaborative partnerships, it is fundamental to remember that not all organizations and arrangements are the greatest environment for collaborations and inevitably, some collaborations will fail. Using the WCFI as a tool for this study to evaluate Table 2.2 and the partnership continuum will allow for a greater understanding of the successes and failures of these collaborations.

Conclusions from the Literature

The current state of higher education calls for new models to meet the needs of citizens in terms of access, as well as devoted resources required to offer an affordable education. The university center model is a viable option for many regions to consider; yet it is necessary to ensure that these centers will have the resources needed to succeed. By further investigating multi-organizational partnerships, it is evident that partnerships have the opportunity to grow into a more successful and integrated partnership when the right factors are at play. Many scholars note collaboration as that key piece for success and believe it truly allows for the partners to grow beyond cooperation and coordination to attain successful collaborative partnerships. But how does a university center encourage and ensure that partners will evolve from cohabiting cooperation to coordination to then fully engaging in a collaborative partnership? This study used this literature review as a basis for investigation of the partnerships at university centers, the impact of cohabitation on those partnerships, and whether said partnerships are able to move through the partnership continuum to reach a perceived optimal state of collaboration. The aim of the research is to identify the elements of university center partnerships needed for partnership progress and collaboration success. This allows for the university center

model to be more understood in its benefits and hopefully used more frequently to ensure higher education is accessible and affordable.

METHODS

To examine the collaborative nature of university centers, specifically investigating if collaboration can grow from cohabitation, an explanatory mixed method design was chosen. This design also allowed the qualitative and quantitative measures to illustrate the impact of partnership and the perceptions of the participants, and enabled the qualitative phase to further elaborate on the collaborative nature of university centers found in the quantitative phase. The following paragraphs describe the implementation of the methods used to address the partnership of university center administrators and academic partners as co-locating organizations.

Research Design

This study used a mixed methods design (Greene, Caracelli, and Graham, 1989; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003) implementing both quantitative and qualitative strands of research. Both strands were needed to offer various viewpoints to examine the central research questions and were executed during all phases of research, including data collection, research, and analysis. Allowing for greater validation in a study, this approach, often described as pragmatic (Ivankova, Creswell, Stick, 2006; Creswell, 2003), can also offer explanation for variance in research (Morgan, 2013; Cameron, 2009). However, there are many designs within mixed methods research, with varying purposes, integration, priority, and timing of the research strands (Morgan, 2013).

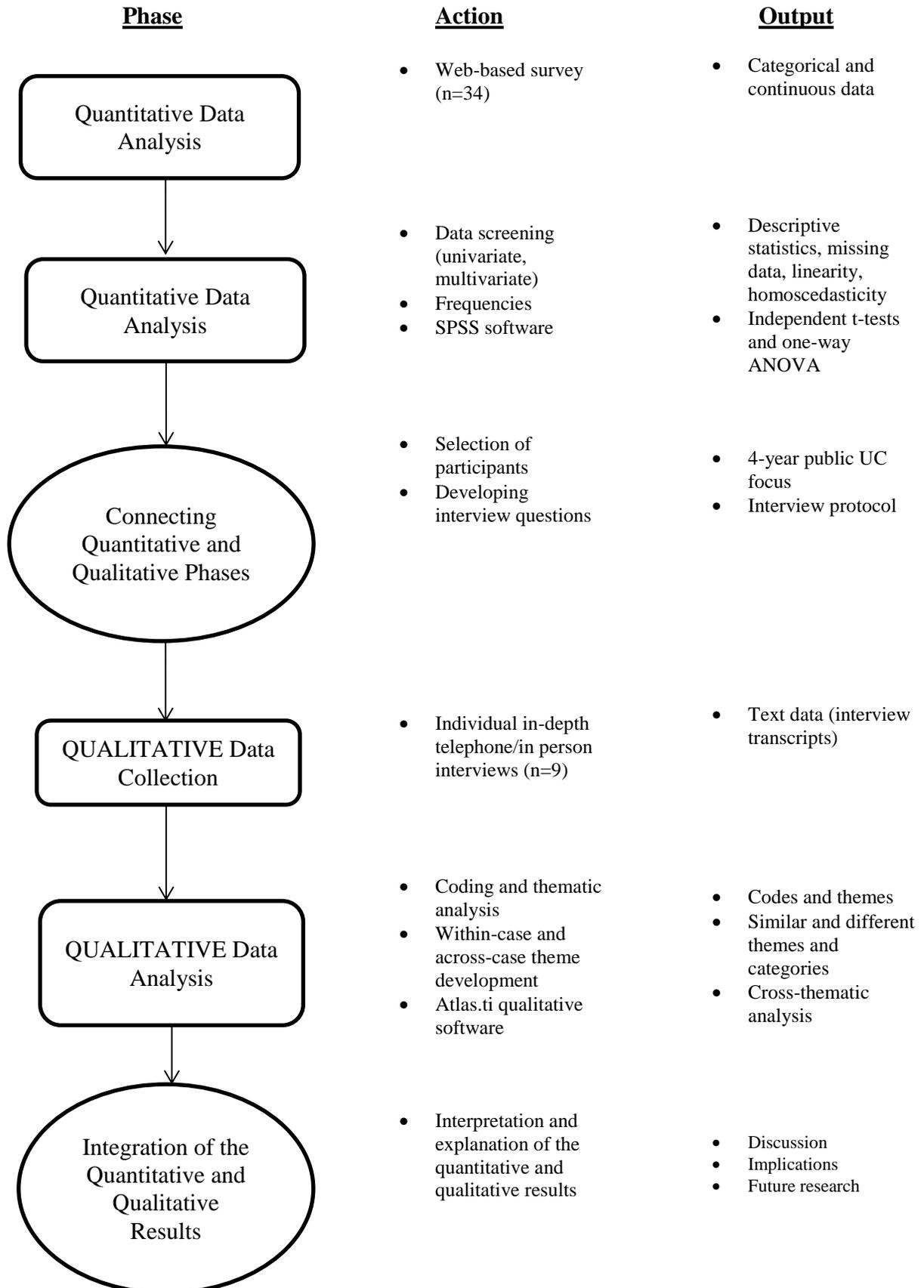
- The interaction of strands in mixed methods can be independent or interactive. Essentially, are the strands being used together or occurring separately? In this study, the interaction of the strands was necessary to shed more light into the phenomena of collaboration at university centers. More specifically, a mixed methods design was chosen for this study to serve a developmental purpose (based on Greene, Caracelli and Graham's (1989) reasoning typologies for mixed methods), allowing one strand to impact and develop the second strand's focus and purpose. The quantitative strand helped to focus the qualitative strand, as the quantitative strand aimed to provide a large-scale overview of

university center partnerships. This snapshot allowed the qualitative strand to focus more deeply into partnership's development, presence, and interaction. The developmental typology was used in lieu of using the design for expansion or complementarity purposes, which are common uses of mixed method research (Creswell, 2003). Those typologies would have put more emphasis on the quantitative strand than was necessary for this study.

- Various levels of strand priority (or comparative importance) exist as well in mixed methods designs: equal priority, quantitative priority or qualitative priority. Regardless of order, weighting of priority should be arranged and considered in the design choice. For this study, the qualitative strand held priority, despite its use as the second strand (Creswell, 2003; Morgan, 2013). Explained in more detail in the coming paragraphs, the quantitative strand was simply used to provide the background information to then focus the detailed nature of the qualitative strand (again, supporting the developmental interaction of the two strands).
- Depending on how the strands will work together in mixed methods, timing can be concurrent or sequential. Different phases of research may also have varying timing arrangements. The selection of timing is dependent on the type of mixed methods research design chosen (Morgan, 2013). As mentioned above, this study used one strand of research to impact and develop the next; thus, this study utilized a design that has sequential timing.

While there are many research designs, using the factors above (Creswell, 2003) the Explanatory Sequential mixed methods approach was used in this study. The Explanatory Sequential design begins with a quantitative data collection and analysis phase followed by a qualitative data collection and analysis phase. The inferences made at the end of phase one (quantitative) aid in the design, focus and purpose of phase two (qualitative) (Cameron, 2009). Phase two is grounded in the results from phase one (Ivankova, Creswell, Stick, 2006). Phase one also allows for the researcher to purposefully select the participants for phase two. Once both phases are complete, final interpretations are conducted using both strands.

Figure 3.1: Methods Flow Chart



This type of design was chosen for the quantitative strand to offer a broad understanding of all types of centers and their understanding of existing cooperation, coordination, and collaboration amongst academic partners. The quantitative phase also assisted in the selection of the participants in the second strand, as the qualitative strand aimed at a focused and detailed understanding of one specific type of centers, by providing descriptive indicators.

While this design is fairly straightforward and allows for more than one strand of research while keeping the strands integrated, it also has limitations. Due to the sequential nature of the design, it can be time consuming. Also, in some studies the feasibility for both strands is questioned (Ivankova, et. al., 2006). However, in this study both strands had a strong participant base and the ability to continue through surveys and interviews, removing the major implications of these potential limitations.

A flow chart of the design, as well as the procedures and outputs of each phase of the research is provided above in Figure 3.1. As shown, the study began with the quantitative data collection through an online survey. Once complete, a brief analysis of the quantitative data was conducted to influence and develop the qualitative strand participants and the focus of the qualitative data collection instrument, in-depth interviews. After completion of that strand, qualitative analysis was completed. Results of both strands were then integrated to make the final determinations.

Overall, the explanatory sequential research design gave this study the ability to use both quantitative and qualitative strands to gain high level insight into deep, informative accounts of the collaborative climate at university centers. As the upcoming sections detail, each strand was critical in understanding the complexity and non-uniformity of university center partnerships.

Target Population and Sample

The target population for this study was the administration at university centers. As defined previously, a university center is a “campus where two or more distant

educational institutions cooperate with each other and local development agencies to create new educational and training opportunities in a locality deprived of such opportunities” (Norberg 2011, p. 8). Utilized globally, including sites in the United States, China, Australia, and the Middle East, university centers may also be referred to as a partnership campus, multi-university, multi-institutional campus, or an education hub, among other names. As Table 2.1 demonstrated, there is little consistency in the naming convention of these existing partnerships. Higher education center and university center are the most commonly used terms based on the review of names and mission statements.

Such partnerships in higher education are mainly seen as a mechanism to remove program duplication, reduce funding issues and costs, and promote efficient operations and meaningful partnerships within the campus (Norberg, 2011; Baus, 2007). Deeply invested in the community in which they are located, these centers are commonly utilized in lieu of creating a new university or allowing only one university to serve a particular region. This is the case for The Universities of Shady Grove, which is located in Rockville, Maryland (“About USG”, 2015). Residents of Montgomery County were leaving the area to obtain a four-year degree. Thus, the University System of Maryland created this university center to allow nine of its state institutions to offer programs at a single location in the county. Now, the county is served by this center and the academic partners continue to expand their offerings to meet the needs of the region. With nine academic partners, over 80 degree programs, and nearly 4,000 students, The Universities at Shady Grove is exceeding its initial expectations of county service.

However with such complex operations, there are bound to be problems and difficulties at university centers. These include dependency on partner university institutions, lack of ability to attract additional students and money, misconceptions and difficulty in understanding the benefits of participation and concentration on specific disciplines, shared service and infrastructure, and ease of obtaining funding (Norberg, 2011). An additional layer of complexity arises for those working at the university centers, as they must maintain vertical relations between their home university and horizontal relations

between academic partners, all while concentrating on the blending of learning, specialization, communication, involvement, and increased access.

Again, considering the many complexities and naming conventions recently cited, identifying the university centers for this study proved to be time-consuming and challenging. However to jumpstart the identification of university centers in operation, a list of university centers was acquired from the Association for Collaborative Leadership (ACL) from a 2009-2010 survey where partnerships self-identified as a university center (or appropriate synonym). ACL is an educational, research and professional organization dedicated to developing leadership capabilities and advancing higher education collaboration and focuses on furthering the understanding of consortia leadership and collaboration in higher education ("Association for Collaborative Leadership," 2015). ACL is recognized as a leader in higher education collaboration and inter-institutional leadership and aims to highlight the feasibility and effectiveness of higher education consortia like university centers. Again, due to the varying naming conventions, starting with a self-identified data set from a reputable organization like ACL provided the best basis for identifying the centers currently in operation. The list was then reviewed to confirm that each of the centers were still in operation through internet research. Seven university centers were found to be inactive or had reduced their operation to only include one academic partner (essentially becoming a satellite campus for that institution). A few centers had added academic partners, expanding their engagement. Additional research was also conducted to identify university centers that had opened after 2010, using the synonyms listed in Table 2.1 for internet searches. Upon further review of all previously identified and newly recognized university centers, the details (i.e. location, types of institutions, degree type, and staffing structure) were captured to provide a first look at the current climate of university center structure.

Participants

The final list of operating university centers was confirmed at 46 centers with 156 primary center contacts; this became the participant list for the quantitative phase of research. Appendix B provides a list of those centers. The primary center contacts

included communal leadership at the university center, as well as leaders of the academic partner institutions present at the university center. Both sets of leaders are included to ensure both perspectives are recorded, as there may be differences in perceptions and experiences given their varying roles in the operation. Of the 156 contacts, approximately 1/3 of those contacts were identified and categorized as communal staff employed to represent all institutions at the university center. The remaining 2/3 of contacts were considered institutional personnel aiming to specifically push forward individual institutions' involvement with the university center.

As the upcoming sections elaborate, each phase of research included different subsets of the compiled university center list. The participant list becomes more specific as the purpose of the strand of research becomes more detailed in the content it is aiming to investigate. For the quantitative phase, all contacts on the list previously mentioned were included as participants. Of the 156 participants invited to participate in this phase, 40 responses were received (a response rate of 25.6%). 34 responses were considered viable due to six having incomplete data. Of the 34 respondents, 10 represented university center communal staff, while 24 represented institutional academic partner staff. The participants for the qualitative phase were then selected from those who responded to the quantitative phase. Because university centers with only four-year public universities as partners are uncommon and public to public organization collaboration is lacking in scholarly research, the qualitative participants included only those respondents who represent a four-year public university center. Again, this included both communal staff and academic partner staff to offer the viewpoints of various levels of involvement and perspective. 20 respondents identified themselves as representing a four year public university, however not all of them were part of a university center including only four year public universities. In fact, only five university centers were identified as only including four year public universities. Of those survey respondents, eight represent The Universities at Shady Grove. Due to the researcher's professional relationship as an academic partner staff member at this university center, they were removed from the qualitative phase to remove any potential bias. This allowed for nine participants during

the qualitative phase representing five university center operations.

Research Permissions and Ethical Considerations

Prior to performing any work involving participants, all ethical and confidentiality implications were considered and any necessary actions to ensure participant wellbeing were completed. Participants in the quantitative phase reviewed and approved the confidentiality statements as the first step in the survey process. All participants in the qualitative phase reviewed and signed a confidentiality statement, as well as granting permission for our sessions to be recorded. This study received IRB exemption in October 2015.

Data Collection Phase I: Quantitative Phase

The quantitative phase of this study aimed to frame the current collaboration status of university center partnerships. The survey tool, outlined in more detail shortly, allowed for scaled response of their interactions and experiences to coordinate with the phases on the collaboration continuum. The primary method of data collection was a questionnaire sent to the participant list in Appendix A. The intention was to capture a broad understanding of how the university centers are seeing, using, and experiencing cooperation, coordination, and/or collaboration.

The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory questionnaire was used as the survey tool. This tool was originally developed and validated by the Wilder Research Center. After an extensive review of successful collaborations and the influential factors involved, Mattessich, et. al. (2001) of the Wilder Research Center identified 20 factors (see Table 2.3) that influence successful collaborations. These factors are categorized into six areas: environment, membership characteristics, process and structure, communication, purpose, and resource. All factors have been tested in multiple studies and are deemed generalizable by the researchers (Mattessich, et. al., 2001). After conducting the research, the Wilder Research Center created a questionnaire designed to address the 20 factors with 40 Likert-scale style questions that investigate the details of the organizations actions related to collaboration and partnership.

Upon review of the questionnaire, small adaptations were made to align the questions with terminology common in higher education and university centers. Table 3.1 details those replaced phrases. These changes were implemented to make the survey more relatable and understood by the higher education professionals completing the survey and ensure phrases were identifiable by the participants. Mostly, the adaptations provided slightly more specificity to the questions to gain applicability to the higher education environment.

Table 3.1: Phrase Replacement

| Original Phrase | Replacement Phrase |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Organization/Agency | Institution |
| People | Institutional Representatives |
| Collaborative Group/Project | University Center |
| Community | UC Community |

Additionally, preliminary questions were added to the beginning of the survey to capture basic descriptive/demographic data. First, participants were asked to name the university center in which they are involved. Their institutional identity was not requested; however, these responses aided in the selection and solicitation for interviews of representatives at the public four-year university centers. The second question added asked participants to identify themselves as an institutional academic partner or a communal university staff. This question dictated which question path they would follow to capture even more specific information regarding their institution or organization.

- If a participant selected the academic partner designation, they were then asked to provide the student enrollment of his/her institution at the university center, the student enrollment at their home institution, the distance between their operation at the university center and their home institution. Each of these questions is critical to gaining a greater picture of how institutions vary at university centers.

- If a participant selected the communal staff designation, they were asked to select the types of colleges and universities included in the center's operation. They were also asked to enter the total student enrollment at the university center.

After these sets of specific questions were completed, all survey participants were directed to the core Wilder Collaboration Factors inventory questionnaire to answer 40 Likert-scale questions.

The survey was created in and distributed by Survey Monkey via email. All emails for the participant list were entered into Survey Monkey's application for distribution. The first distribution of the survey gave participants a deadline of three weeks to respond. The initial distribution resulted in 20 responses. Reminders were sent with one week remaining and one day remaining to both those who started but did not fully complete the survey, as well as those who had not shown any action. After the three week period, 35 participants had responded. To garner more support, extended and individual outreach was conducted to garner more response. This was done through phone calls and emails to the non-responders. At the end of this period, the survey garnered 40 participants, 34 who fully completed the survey.

After completion of the quantitative data collection, the focus was turned to the qualitative phase to elaborate and dig deeper into the university center partnerships. As described above, the applicable quantitative respondents then became the basis for the qualitative phase.

Data Collection Phase II: Qualitative Phase

The qualitative phase of this study was designed for a more comprehensive analysis of university centers by allowing for elaboration of the collaborative aspects of operation. Using interviews, the study went beyond closed-ended survey questions and enabled responders to provide in depth details about their level of interaction with UC academic partners. The primary method of data collection consisted of interviewing representatives of the four-year public partner university centers. The intention was to allow for the

researcher and interviewee to share views and opinions on the subject matter, in this case how the interviewee perceives the partnership continuum at university centers and the impact of cohabitation on the partnership continuum.

Participants in this phase included academic partner and communal staff representatives from the five university centers identified in the quantitative phase of this study. This specific population of university centers was selected to increase research on multi-organizational public partnerships in higher education. Again, it was critical to explore and interview both communal leadership and academic partner leadership to ensure all views of the partnership are considered. To begin finding specific representatives willing to be part of interview phase, emails were sent to all academic partner and communal staff at the university centers requesting involvement. This resulted in nine interviews (five academic partner staff and four communal staff).

Each interview was scheduled for 30-60 minutes and was recorded. Prior to each interview, each participant was provided with the informed consent form to complete and return, as well a print out of the collaboration continuum chart (see Table 2.2) and the definitions of collaboration, coordination, and cooperation used in the study. This information was used during the interview process to aid the participants in identifying areas of strengths and weaknesses. Of the nine interviews, three were conducted in-person. All others were completed via phone. Phone interviews became necessary due to geographically dispersed participants and limited availability. While phone interviews do not allow for visual social cues as do face-to-face interviews, phone interviews do still offer synchronous communication which was critical to gain more spontaneous and impulsive responses from the participants (Opdenakker, 2006). Additionally, because university centers and the involvement of academic institutions varies so greatly, standardization of place would have been quite difficult. Thus, the researcher felt that both the in-person and phone interviewees were given the same flexibility to respond to prompted questions and cues through the conversations.

The interviews were designed to elaborate on the data collected in phase I. With semi-structured, open ended questions, the questions allowed for greater knowledge generation and deeper conversation. This also allowed for the interviewees to take the interview where he/she thinks is valuable (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). While each interviewee did take his/her interview in a particular direction based on the university center operation represented, a set of questions guided the conversation (see Appendix D). The list of questions began with background questions to gain a better understanding of the participant's role. Once this structure was provided, questions referencing university center partnerships began. All participants were asked to share their perspective on the partnerships at the university centers. After this question however, many participants primed the researcher to ask more detailed questioning regarding the way all parties work together at university centers. Thus, the interview protocol during the beginning of the interview allowed for further probing and investigation. After talking specifically about the partnerships, questions began to focus on the larger themes of cooperation, coordination, and collaboration.

Analysis Design

With data collection complete, data preparation was necessary to ensure that the data was ready for analysis. The subsections below review the techniques used to prepare the quantitative and qualitative data for further investigation.

Quantitative Data Preparation

The quantitative data preparation began with closing the survey response tool in Survey Monkey in November 2015. Once closed, the data was exported and prepared for coding prior to conducting any analysis. With categorical responses including the type of employee completing the survey, distance from UC to the home institution, type of academic partner institution, and type of university center, it was necessary to give each of these variables an appropriate code for analysis. Lastly, to prepare the collected data for analysis, all incomplete responses were reviewed. If a respondent did not complete questions beyond the basic UC and institutional identifying descriptive questions, they were removed from the data set. However, if respondents simply missed or skipped a

question but progressed through the entire survey, they remained included. Of the 40 survey respondents, six were removed due to incomplete responses.

In addition to the data collected through survey questions, additional variables were calculated and added to the data set. Based on the instructions for survey analysis in the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory (WCFI), all data should be reduced to the factor level before analysis. Some factors contain one question from the survey, where others contain up to four or five. Appendix B shows how each question was reduced to the factor level.

The WCFI suggests calculating the average of the scores for those questions considered within each factor. This data remains ordinal data as it does not possess a normal probability distribution. Beyond the factor level analysis, categorical averages were also calculated. The WCFI research separates the 20 factors into six categories. While the WCFI scoring mechanism does not call for categorical level scoring, analyzing the data at this level was an area for subject matter expansion. Thus, similarly to the factor level variable creation, category average variables were generated.

Qualitative Data Preparation

The qualitative data preparation began with the process of transcribing the nine interviews. Of the nine interviews, four were university center staff and five represented academic institutions at university centers. As mentioned previously, all participants at this stage were involved with four-year public institution university centers and all hold positions at the Director level or higher within their institution/organization. The interviews varied between 30-60 minutes. Transcriptions were completed manually with the assistance of audio software to slow the recording speed. All transcriptions were reviewed for accuracy after the initial transcription.

Thematic Coding

In order to discover the deeper meaning of the qualitative data, thematic analysis was used. As suggested by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2015), thematic analysis allows the

researcher to form pattern recognition which later becomes the themes and categories for analysis. This was supported by other scholars (Dodge, Ospina, & Foldy, 2005; Dixon-Woods, Agarwal, Jones, Young & Sutton, 2005) in their claims that thematic coding allows for deeper recognition and interpretation of the data. ATLAS.ti version 7 was used as the primary tool to conduct the thematic analysis. All transcripts were uploaded into ATLAS.ti and the coding commenced following the steps as outlined by Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2015):

1. Developing a code manual
2. Testing the reliability of codes
3. Summarizing data and identifying initial themes
4. Applying template of codes and additional coding
5. Connecting codes and identifying themes

To begin, based upon the author's generated Partnership Continuum Chart (Table 2.2), an initial code manual was created to identify the elements referenced in the interviews, as well as the positive or negative indications of the identified statements (see Table 3.2: Initial Code Manual (step 1)) .

Additionally, larger scale codes were used to associate statements with the levels of the continuum (i.e. cooperation, coordination, collaboration). The reliability of the thematic coding was then assessed by ensuring that codes were consistently applied to statements and reflected the proper feeling of the responder (step 2). After the data was reviewed thoroughly and numerous times to garner an understanding of the data and how analysis may be best completed, an initial set of themes was identified and additional codes were prepped for further investigation (step 3). These codes, while based on the Partnership Continuum Chart (Table 2.2) were elaborated to capture the various phases of the elements on the chart. Since each phase of the continuum views the element differently, understanding the level and positive and/or negative reference was critical.

Table 3.2: Initial Code Manual

| Initial Set of Codes (+/-indicators) | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Authority | Rewards |
| Communication | Risk: Operational |
| Control | Risk: Strategic |
| Key Actors | Structure |
| Leadership | Vision/Goals |
| Planning | Overall: Collaboration |
| Purpose | Overall: Cooperation |
| Resources | Overall: Coordination |

Table 3.3: Code Definitions and Frequencies

| Code Definitions and Frequencies | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|-----|
| Category | Code | Definition | Qty |
| Elements of Partnership Continuum Chart | Structure - Negative | Negative association with the structure of the UC and its impact on partnership | 22 |
| | Key Actors - Negative | Negative association of key individuals impact on UCs | 19 |
| | Communication - Negative | Negative association with methods and amounts of communication within UC | 7 |
| | Leadership - Negative | Negative association with the leadership of UCs | 7 |
| | Communication - Positive | Positive association with methods and amounts of communication within UC | 6 |
| | Key Actors - Positive | Positive association of key individuals impact on UCs | 6 |
| | Planning - Positive | Positive association with the planning processes within UCs | 6 |
| | Purpose - Positive | Positive association with the purpose of partnership within UCs | 6 |
| | Resources - Negative | Negative association with the impact of resources on partnership within UCs | 6 |

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| Authority - Negative | Negative association with structure of authority within UC | 5 |
| Control - Negative | Negative association with division of control in UCs | 5 |
| Planning - Negative | Negative association with the planning processes within UCs | 5 |
| Purpose - Negative | Negative association with the purpose of partnership within UCs | 5 |
| Resources - Positive | Positive association with the impact of resources on partnership within UCs | 5 |
| Vision/Goals - Negative | Negative association with the visions and goals of the UC overall | 5 |
| Leadership - Positive | Positive association with the leadership of UCs | 4 |
| Rewards - Positive | Positive association with rewards of partnering within UC | 3 |
| Authority - Positive | Positive association with structure of authority within UC | 2 |
| Structure - Positive | Positive association with the structure of the UC and its impact on partnership | 2 |
| Rewards - Negative | Negative association with rewards of partnering within UC | 1 |
| Risk: Operational - Negative | Negative association with operational risks when partnering | 1 |
| Risk: Operational - Positive | Positive association with operational risks when partnering | 1 |
| Risk: Strategic - Negative | Negative association with higher level strategic risks when partnering | 1 |
| Control - Positive | Positive association with division of control in UCs | 0 |
| Risk: Strategic - Positive | Positive association with higher level strategic risks when partnering | 0 |
| Vision/Goals - Positive | Positive association with the visions and goals of the UC overall | 0 |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|--|----|
| Broad Characteristics | Overall: Cooperation | a semi-formal relationship between two or more organizations that have compatible missions and goals, yet maintain individual leadership, authority, and accountability, and exists to achieve a planned and desired project | 15 |
| | Overall: Coordination | the existence of low-risk, informal relationships between two or more organizations where common goals and missions are undefined and resources and authority are maintained individually | 7 |
| | Overall: Collaboration | a formal relational system of two or more organizations with a common vision and shared interests aiming to meet goals that would be unattainable individually. Committed partnering organizations must maintain individual self-interest while continuing to share responsibility, resources, and accountability to achieve the desired goals | 2 |
| Additional Identifications | Indicated Area of Issue | areas identified as problem or issue areas for the UC to move towards collaboration | 8 |
| | Misuse of 'Collaboration' | using the term collaboration to reference a level of partnership that doesn't match the definition above | 5 |
| | Collaboration is Optimal | for UC success, collaboration is optimal but not required | 4 |
| | Collaboration is Necessary | for UC success, collaboration is necessary | 2 |
| | Worthy Note/Reference | Worthy notes or references made by respondents | 2 |

With a full list of codes and confidence in the mechanisms developed, the codes were applied to all interview transcriptions (step 4). Table 3.3 showcases the code definitions and frequencies which then allowed for next step (step 5) of theme development to occur.

With the data preparation complete, the study was ready for further analysis and discovery. The following chapter discusses the tools and techniques used in the analysis and present the results from those tests. As will be shown, the quantitative data brought

together many statistical tools to analyze the various types of data. For the qualitative analysis, thematic coding was used as the primary tool. Together, the results of this study offer a unique perspective on level of partnership engagement at university centers.

RESULTS

With the data collection process complete, this chapter details the analytic tools used to examine the data and present the findings and patterns found in the two strands of research. However, before doing so, it is important to review the research questions used to guide the processes. The primary purpose of this research is to assess whether cohabiting institutions at university centers can foster and grow into collaborative partnerships. This ideal is addressed by the following three research questions:

1. To identify whether cohabiting university center academic partners follow the path of the collaboration continuum (cooperation to coordination to collaboration)
2. To examine if cohabiting organizations report common factors leading to collaborative success or failure
3. To identify if and how collaboration is suggested and/or mandated between university center partners.

Keeping these questions at the forefront of the collection and analysis processes allowed the study to remain strategic in its use of the two data collection methods. To review, the first strand of research included a survey conducted to capture the basic characteristics of university centers and used Likert-scale questions to gauge the level of partnership and engagement currently underway at university centers. The second strand of research consisted of semi-structured interviews with representatives at public four-year university centers. These in-depth discussions were centered on the current partnership structure, levels of partnership, and factors that engage and dissolve partnership at the studied university centers. The quantitative data gathered during the first strand led to the focus and areas of exploration of the interview strand of data collection. This will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

Quantitative Tools and Findings

Based upon the research design, the analysis portion of the study began with quantitative analysis to provide a foundation of the current collaborative climate of university centers.

Reliability Testing

First, to ensure that the factors in the group were closely related and would have greater internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha was used ensure that there is high relative internal consistency amongst the questions within the categorical levels.

Table 4.1: Reliability Coefficients for WCFI Categories

| Category | Variables Included (#) | Cronbach's alpha |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Environment | 6 | 0.896 |
| Membership | 6 | 0.831 |
| Process & Structure | 13 | 0.922 |
| Communication | 5 | 0.800 |
| Purpose | 7 | 0.927 |
| Resources | 3 | 0.702 |

Table 4.1 shows the reliability coefficients for each of the categories in the WCFI. Reliability coefficients of .70 or higher is considered acceptable in most social science research studies. As shown, all categories produce a reliability coefficient over .70, suggesting that the categories have reliability when condensed to that level.

The purpose of using the categorical level variables is to allow for an even greater level look at the elements influencing partnership. By considering the factors at the category level, partnership engagement can be understood in a larger context. This will enable organizations and partners to improve their work on partnership engagement from a greater strategy. With this strategy, it is the hope that more organizations can develop into partnering organizations with a focus on the areas that make the largest impact on its success.

Descriptive Statistics – The Survey Respondents

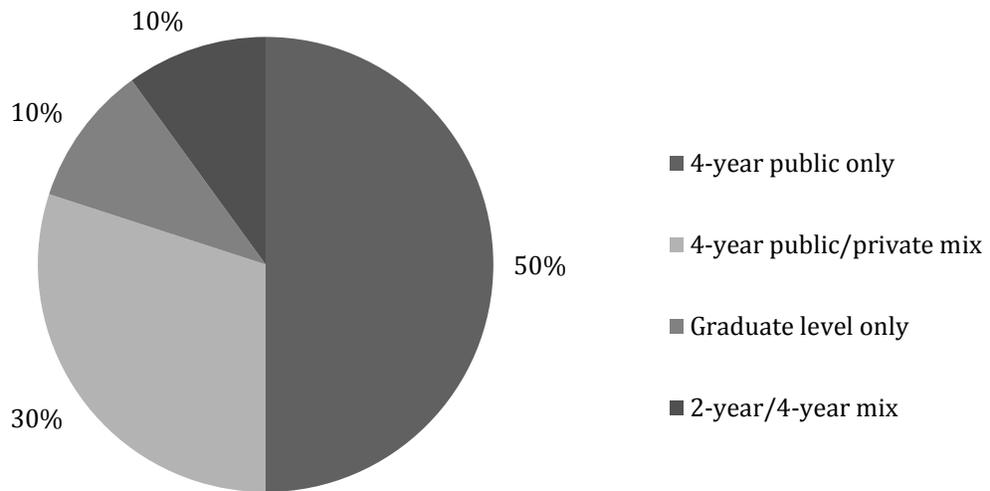
Descriptive statistics are often used to create a foundation and visual of the data collected by describing and summarizing the data at basic levels. Descriptive statistics can be presented as tabulated descriptions, graphical descriptions or represented through

commentary. In this study, descriptive statistics were used to form a basis for more extensive analysis, to describe the distinguishing characteristics of university centers currently in operation and elevate the basic understanding of the level of partnership based on the index variables created.

Of the 34 complete survey responses, ten represented communal university center staff. Over half of the respondents represented four-year public institutions (see figure 4.1). Of these university centers represented, semester enrollments spans from 100 to 3,900 students.

24 survey respondents represented the academic partner institutions with the majority originating from a public university (see figure 4.2). Institutional enrollment at university centers spans from 40 to 24,000 students. Additionally, the majority of institutions are involved with university centers located less than 50 miles from their home campus.

Figure 4.1: Type of University Center Operations based on Survey Respondents



Descriptive Statistics – Likert Scale Variables

The Likert scale questions used to form the factor-level variables showcase the perceptions and understanding of level of partnerships at each university center. As figure 3.3 below illustrates, all averages fall between 3.0 and 4.0 on the five-point Likert-

scale. Factor 3 (favorable political and social climate) has the greatest average score at 3.9. Hovering right around 3.0 are the two lowest factor scores: factor 7 (ability to compromise) and factor 9 (multiple layers of participation).

Figure 4.2: Type of Academic Partner Institutions at UCs based on Survey Respondents

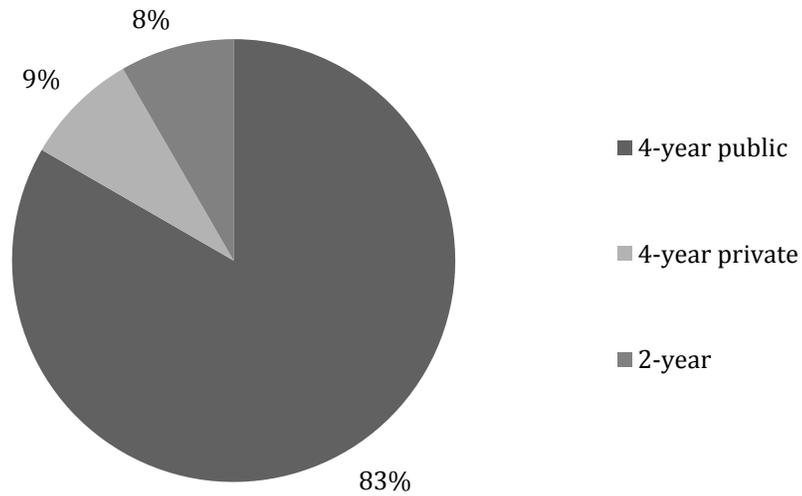
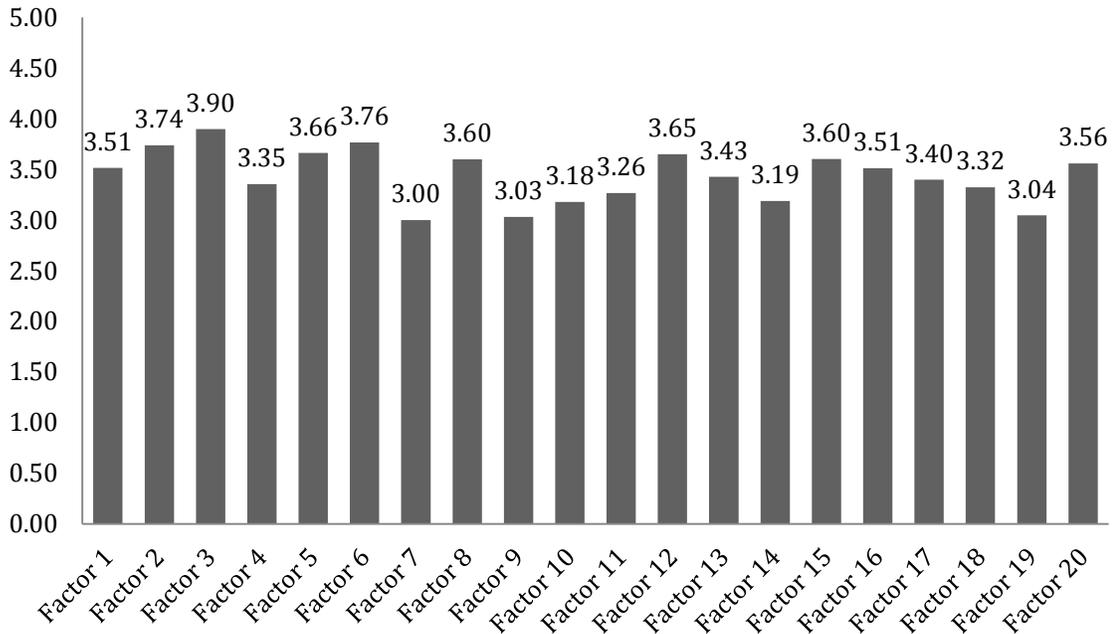
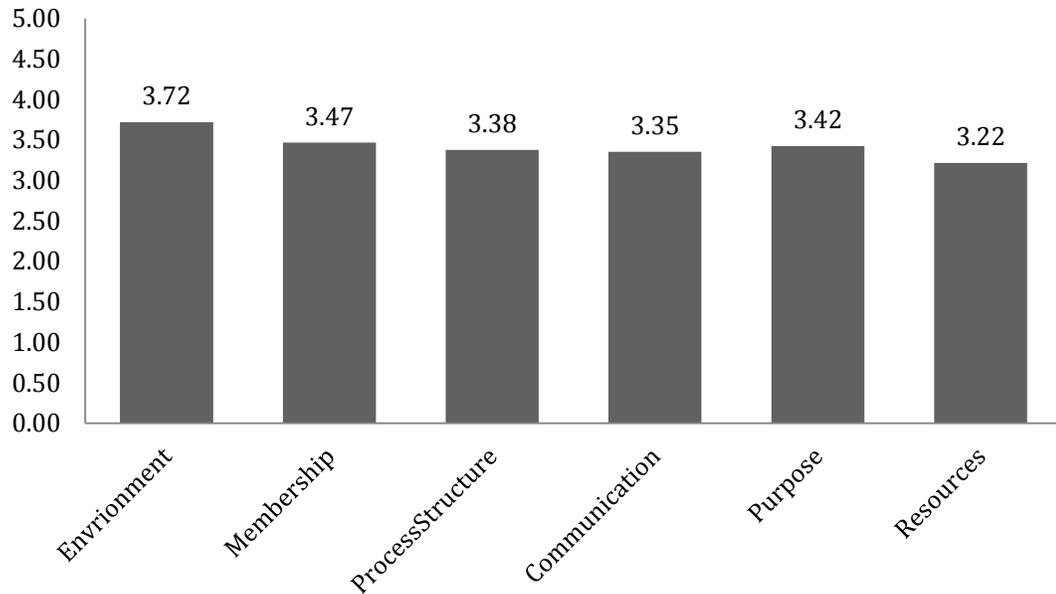


Figure 4.3: Averages of Calculated Factor Scores



Similarly, the categorical averages of the calculated categorical average scores show fairly even scores between 3.0 and 4.0. Again, while the WCFI calls for factor level analysis, this study expanded its analysis to include categorical level to examine if any differences existed.

Figure 4.4: Averages of Calculated Category Scores



The Environment category scored the highest at 3.72, while the Resources category scored the lowest at 3.22 (see Figure 4.4).

Further quantitative analysis was conducted to increase the understanding of the current status of university centers and the differences that may exist between the various center models and academic partner make-up. Regression analysis, as discussed in the next subsection, elaborates on those tests and outputs.

Tools for Further Analysis

Within the university center model there are various types of institutions, organizational structures, and operating systems. As this study captured these differences as variables, additional analytics tools were used to identify relationships amongst said variables.

While these tools do not directly determine causality, correlation could be determined.

Additionally, there are continual discrepancies in the selection of quantitative tools for analyzing Likert scale data (Clason & Dormody, 1994; Allen & Seaman, 2007). Thus, this study considered regression modeling to compare means. Specifically, the analysis concentrated on looking at the type of employees responding (i.e. academic partner staff versus communal staff), type of academic institutions, and type of university center mix of institutions. As the next few paragraphs suggest however, not all tools were valid due to the small respondent base, types of variables, and reduction of variables to factors.

Ordinal logistic regression is often used for Likert scale data analysis, since Likert scale data is by default ordinal data without normal probability distribution. To analyze the factors in relation to available independent variables, the factor average variable was used. It is assumed that this maintains the abnormal probability distribution (Allen & Seaman, 2007). As the analysis was conducted, multiple errors and warnings were given in SPSS. This can be attributed to the low number of respondents in some of the questions as academic partners and UC communal staff answered different questions (due to survey design). Thus, ordinal logistic regression would not be the best fit for this analysis. Linear regression was also suggested in the literature as a possible tool for analyzing Likert scale data. However, all independent variables are categorical and do not pass the assumptions of the test.

Analyzing at the Factor Level

Thus, since the analysis at hand requires a test that accommodates categorical independent variables and continuous dependent variables, independent t-tests and the one-way ANOVA were used to determine significance. The first independent t-test conducted compared academic partner staff and UC communal staff in regards to the factor scores.

Figure 4.5: Independent T-test – Type of Employee

Independent Samples Test

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of | | t-test for Equality of Means | | |
|-------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------|------------------------------|--------|-----------------|
| | | Variances | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| | | F | Sig. | | | |
| Factor18Sum | Equal variances assumed | .006 | .940 | 3.310 | 32 | .002 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | | | 3.500 | 19.215 | .002 |

| | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|--|-------|
| | | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Factor18Sum | Equal variances assumed | 2.342 | .707 | .901 | 3.783 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | 2.342 | .669 | .943 | 3.741 |

Only one factor response varies by the type of staff member: Factor 18 (Unique Purpose) with a significance value of 0.02 (as Figure 4.5 shows). The Group Statistics output below (Figure 3.6) suggests that UC communal staff rank this factor higher than academic partner staff.

Figure 4.6: Group Statistics for Independent T-test – Type of Employee

| Group Statistics | | | | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|----|------|-------------------|--------------------|
| | | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| Factor18Sum | UC Communal Staff | 10 | 8.30 | 1.703 | .539 |
| | Academic Partner Staff | 24 | 5.96 | 1.944 | .397 |

Next, numerous independent samples t-tests were conducted comparing the academic partner type of institutions (i.e. 4-year private vs. 4-year public; 4-year public vs. 2-year). No factors were identified as significant in this evaluation as all p values were greater than 0.05.

Lastly, to compare the institutional mix of university centers, a one-way ANOVA test was conducted. This allows for more than two variables to be tested at the same time. Again, only one factor response varies by the type of staff member: Factor 17 (Shared Vision) with a significance value of 0.034 (as Figure 4.7 shows).

Figure 4.7: Factor One-Way ANOVA – Type of UC

ANOVA

Factor17Sum

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|----------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| Between Groups | 45.733 | 3 | 15.244 | 5.765 | .034 |
| Within Groups | 15.867 | 6 | 2.644 | | |
| Total | 61.600 | 9 | | | |

Figure 4.8: Descriptives for one-way ANOVA – Type of UC

Descriptives

Factor17Sum

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | Minimum |
|----------------------------------|----|------|----------------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|---------|
| | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | |
| 4-year public only | 5 | 5.60 | 1.817 | .812 | 3.34 | 7.86 | 3 |
| Grad level only | 1 | 3.00 | . | . | . | . | 3 |
| 4 year public/private mix | 3 | 9.33 | 1.155 | .667 | 6.46 | 12.20 | 8 |
| 2 year/4 year public/private mix | 1 | 9.00 | . | . | . | . | 9 |
| Total | 10 | 6.80 | 2.616 | .827 | 4.93 | 8.67 | 3 |

| | Maximum |
|--------------------|---------|
| 4-year public only | 8 |
| Grad level only | 3 |

| | |
|----------------------------------|----|
| 4 year public/private mix | 10 |
| 2 year/4 year public/private mix | 9 |
| Total | 10 |

The descriptives (Figure 4.8) suggests that 4-year public/private mix and the 2-year/4-year public/4-year private mix rank this factor (shared vision) higher than 4-year public only and grad level only staff (means of 9.33 and 9.00 respectively).

Overall, while the factor level analysis did not show great differences between the respondents and the features of UC, the lack of significant variable results in the t-test and ANOVA analyses shows that regardless of whether a factor is ranked high or low, most involved in the UC see the partnership similarly. Next, with the factor level analysis complete, each of the previous tests were conducted at the categorical levels as well to determine if particular categories show different responses based upon the type of employee, institution, or UC model.

Analyzing at the Category Level

As discussed previously, categorical level analysis is not directly outlined in the scoring mechanism for the WCFI. However, looking at the variables at this level is critical to making larger, higher level determinations of how UCs are succeeding and failing in regard to partnerships. Independent t-tests were first conducted to analyze academic partner staff and UC communal staff in regards to the category scores. No variables were found to be significant in this test. Next, independent t-tests and a one-way ANOVA were conducted looking at the type of academic partner institution. Similar to the factor level analysis, no variables were found to be significant. Lastly, a one-way ANOVA test was conducted looking at the type of UC institution mix. Upon review of the output, one category was found to be significant with a p value of 0.02: the category of Membership (see Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9: Category One-Way ANOVA – Type of UC

| ANOVA | | | | | |
|------------------|----------------|----------|---------------|--------------|-------------|
| Membership Index | | | | | |
| | Sum of | | | | |
| | Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| Between | 178.533 | 3 | 59.511 | 7.218 | .020 |
| Groups | | | | | |
| Within | 49.467 | 6 | 8.244 | | |
| Groups | | | | | |
| Total | 228.000 | 9 | | | |

Figure 4.10 suggests that again, the 4-year public/private mix and the 2-year/4-year public/4-year private mix rank this category highest with means of 24.33 and 25.00 respectively. The membership category includes the following factors:

- Mutual respect, understanding, and trust
- Appropriate cross section of institutions
- Institutions see collaboration as in their self interest
- Ability to compromise

Figure 4.10: Category Descriptives for one-way ANOVA – Type of UC

| Descriptives | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Membership Index | | | | | | | |
| | | | Std. | Std. | 95% Confidence Interval for | | Min |
| | N | Mean | Deviation | Error | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | imu |
| | | | | | | | m |
| 4-year public only | 5 | 18.20 | 2.280 | 1.020 | 15.37 | 21.03 | 16 |
| Grad level only | 1 | 11.00 | . | . | . | . | 11 |
| 4 year public/private mix | 3 | 24.33 | 3.786 | 2.186 | 14.93 | 33.74 | 20 |
| 2 year/4 year public/private mix | 1 | 25.00 | . | . | . | . | 25 |
| Total | 10 | 20.00 | 5.033 | 1.592 | 16.40 | 23.60 | 11 |

| | Maximum |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| 4-year public only | 22 |
| Grad level only | 11 |
| 4 year public/private mix | 27 |
| 2 year/4 year public/private mix | 25 |
| Total | 27 |

Moving Beyond the Quantitative Findings

The quantitative findings showcase the current status of university centers in operation by providing descriptive statistics and differences amongst the various survey respondents. Overall, the findings suggested that currently the university center administration and academic partner staff identify a favorable political and social climate to be the highest ranked factor in university centers. The ability to compromise and the presence of multiple layers of participation were ranked lowest. Overall, the environment of the university center is ranked highest while the resources of the center rank the lowest. The findings also showcased differences amongst the respondent type. Communal UC

administrators rank unique purpose higher than academic partner staff. Shared vision and the overall category of membership rank higher in university centers that do not have a mix of institution type. This data was used in the framing of the qualitative interview strand, to ensure the inquiry captures the areas of greatest confusion, opportunity, and difference. For this reason, the survey questions, as discussed later in the chapter, deliberated the factors and categories shown to be significant in the study, including the intersection of the academic partners with and without the inclusion of the UC communal staff, how purpose and vision is identified across the UC campus, and the elements that hinder or help the growth of partnerships. Also, the high involvement of four-year public universities in the academic partner respondents and the university center institutional make-up led the study to its focus on the four-year public university exclusively in the qualitative phase. The quantitative analysis provided a sufficient overview, allowing the qualitative strand to elaborate on the findings. The following section of the chapter provides an overview of the qualitative data analysis and results.

Qualitative Results

The qualitative data garnered from the interview process allowed for greater understanding of the current state of university centers and identification of opportunities for improvement and partnership growth. The thematic coding technique described in the methods section presented evident trends in the data, providing support for the quantitative findings. These trends were brought to light through many layers of discussion when conversing over university center partnerships. The results of the qualitative data collection and analysis presented by each theme with supporting statements are outlined below.

Results of Thematic Coding

Upon completion of the data coding, review, and analysis, four major themes emerged: (1) key actors played a large part in the structure and operation of the university centers (for better or worse); (2) the structure of the university center deeply impacts the ability to, and desire to, participate in partnerships; (3) cooperation is the stage in which most university centers operate; (4) most university centers find that collaboration is simply

optimal, not required. Not only did these themes emerge in the number of codes identified, but they emerged over many topics and questions, touching many areas of the partnership. These results address the larger partnership picture at the university centers, as well as the factors that are impacting the growth of collaboration. By further investigation of these four themes, it is clear that partnership at university centers can be greatly impacted by a few factors and may not need to be as far into the continuum as scholars may suggest in order to be successful.

Theme 1: Key Actors

The influence of key actors became clearly apparent during the data analysis as there were consistent references across interviews to groups and individuals impacting the past and future of university centers. Key actors are those individuals who have the ability to influence the operation and partnership of university centers. In each interview, key actors, such as the high level administrators of academic partners and the state education governing board, were identified. Other key actors could also include community and business leaders.

In most cases, the references to key actors were negative and interviewees were skeptical about the level of involvement of the actors on university center success. As described by the interviewees, the key actors retain most of the authority and high level decision making, leaving the university centers feeling stuck and often powerless. As one academic partner leader quite directly suggested:

“It is the Board of Regents pulling the strings. So long as you have them pulling the strings, it will be the structure they set up...because those decisions are made by key actors at the Board of Regents and high levels, we never get to the full trusting open relationship.”

In this instance, the Board of Regents (the state education governing board) is deeply and directly related in strategic and high level decisions that are trickling into the operations of the university center. This oversight and impact removes much of the authority, power, and leadership from the academic partners and the UC administrators. Furthermore, it brings out a sense of distrust as stated. With reduced autonomy,

discretion, and opportunities for growth, the staff and faculty at these university centers are discouraged from partnering and advancing to being fully collaborative.

A seasoned academic partner leader also discussed a specific change to course offerings where authority is changing from academic partners to the Board of Regents. The general education host at a university center was recently changed abruptly and politically, causing frustration and uncertainty with many of the academic partner representatives.

“It’s hard because of what the Board of Regents just did [changed the general education course provider at the university center], so now we are looking at some of the key factors being driven by one institution. Before that, our authority was more retained.”

A significant change such as this immediately creates a separation between the partners. While one partner may be excited about the opportunity, another partner feels slighted and disadvantaged. Relationships are tested and the rewards from being part of a partnership are no longer shared. Again, autonomy is removed and power is retained mainly by one partner.

Academic partners accentuated this point by citing that institutions are even mandated to be involved in university centers by key actors. Two university center administrators mentioned this was the case at their centers:

“Our Board of Regents sets up which courses get offered by who at the university center. It was mandated.”

and

“We’re there because there was interest at the system level in us being there.”

This requirement, or mandated involvement, immediately puts strain on the UC to manage effective partnership. As mentioned above with the shift in general education courses, the change appears to be political and may inadvertently cause friction between academic partners. Shared vision and goals are lacking and partners are left questioning their purpose when it is dictated by others. Distributed leadership on site at university centers in this scenario is difficult.

There is further interview support that when decisions are made at such a high level, the leadership on the ground at the university center is not consulted. While the state education systems are assumed to be knowledgeable about their state's needs, the representatives on site at these locations also work to have a strong connection with the community the university centers are serving; making the fact that key actors are rarely engaged in UC representatives on decisions even more troubling. One UC Director cited similar actions to those above in regards to adding programs:

“Our Board of Regents determines and must approve programs and academic services that are offered at any UC.”

Another UC Director mentioned that:

“Institutional Vice-Presidents or Provosts would engage in the conversation of services and programs with the Office of the Chancellor and that is how it would come about. I wouldn't be involved at the UC director level in that conversation. That happens at the executive level.”

An academic partner at the director level noted:

“There is probably a shared vision or goal, and if there is, it is at the Board of Regents level. However, it sure isn't communicated to anyone here [at the UC].”

Again, this leaves the partners and administrators at the UC questioning their purpose and ability to influence the partnerships on campus. With the Board of Regents 'calling the shots' and designing the UC,, there are limited opportunities for the academic partners to take advantage of cohabitation and build a collaborative environment.

There were even suggestions as to the lack of influential key actors involved in UC operations. A seasoned academic partner with experience working with multiple universities within a university center stated:

“Key actors...we haven't gotten the key actors; they haven't got it together. I would say resistance is higher up. I think the resistance is simply that we haven't figured out at the system level how to do it [partner] effectively.”

As the quotations above suggest, many decisions regarding the university center involvement and direction stem from key actors. Those involved on the ground or lower

levels of the organizations (i.e. director/dean levels) often see these decisions as forceful, mandated, and the overall approver. However, these directors and academic partner staff also seem to recognize the investment of the state education:

“It’s a growing process...They [the State System of Higher Education] have put millions of dollars into this effort and they’re certainly not going to let it fail.”

It is important to recognize that while most interviewees mentioned the state education system as key actors, some interviewees discussed other key actors in a more positive manner, especially the impact of the neighboring community at large. The communities surrounding the university centers have been invested in the success and impact of university centers, providing support and direction. Both academic partners and UC communal staff provided examples of the type of impact their communities had made on the UC:

“The closest nursing program was 200 miles away. The community really supported the addition of it [a nursing program at the UC], needed it, and advanced the idea of bringing the program.”

and

“Our building was given to [the state] by the city. They gave it to them with the intent of bringing access to higher education to the western portion of the state.”

Other interviewees also mentioned how engaged they were with the community with recruitment and economic development initiatives as well. Given that the intention of university centers is often to serve the community in which it is located, the involvement of community is critical and often desired. The community becomes a key actor and a force to fulfil the economic needs of their constituents. Together, the community and the academic partner can create a shared purpose, vision, and goal and work together to share the rewards.

Overall, key actors are a major contributor to the establishment and continual growth of university centers. These major actors include the top administrators of the academic partners, the state education governing boards, and local communities. As the quotations above show, in most cases the decisions of the key actors may not sit well with those on the ground at the university centers. The high level authority and action creates an

environment of frustration and curbs the flexibility of the partners. Furthermore, as the next section explains, the key actors significantly impact the structure of the university center operation.

Theme 2: Structure

While no two university centers are set up exactly alike, the structure of the university center has significant impact on many facets of the operation. The structures may be informal and flexible or more formal and/or rigid with defined relationships – each of which will impact the level of partnership available between the academic institutions. The structure of university centers was detailed and mentioned many times through the interview process. And once again, the discussions from the responders do not reflect positive associations with the current structures of the UCs.

First, there are many academic structural concerns. While there appear to be various levels of partnership that include academic integration, when institutions partner on academic offerings, they require a level of flexibility and trust. One academic program partner mentioned,

“We have politics galore...My students are going to be taking their prerequisites from my competitor.”

At this particular university center, one institution is selected to offer the general education requirements. The students of one institution will be taking their general education courses from another institution. It just so happens in this instance both of these academic partners offer the same bachelor’s program.

Another academic partner explained a different scenario with the following reference:

“At this point, we’re kind of separate academic institutions at the UC offering programs that don’t interfere with each other or compete with each other... We’re operating as separate entities and we should be one”

These quotes directly correlate with the cooperation phase of the partnership continuum. Being described as separate suggests that little to no factors have even begun the transition to coordination, such as authority, rewards, resources, and vision/goals. These factors, and others, cannot be separate if the level of partnership engagement wants to

achieve the ideal of collaboration.

Furthermore, some university centers do not currently engage in curriculum partnership, despite the call from academic partners to begin this level of engagement. Yet, from the university center administrator stand point, the interviews brought out another organizational structure:

“My role is to work with each of the individual universities. If there is any academic collaboration that happens at the university level and that wouldn’t include us.”

At this university center, most partnerships seem to be binary. Integration with more than two partners is limited based upon the structure of the UC and expectations of the UC Director. The UC Director finds academic partnership to be outside of the university center’s responsibility, but instead the responsibility of the academic partners exclusively.

Beyond the structure of UC influencing academic partnerships, logistical partnerships also seem to have their struggles. The level of engagement between the UC staff and academic partner staff varies greatly with vast differences in opinions of what is appropriate. One university center director discussed their current set-up:

“It [our structure] varies with departments and offices. One school’s admissions and recruiting office, we might have a very positive working relationship for an extended period of time. Another one there might be quite a bit of alienation or estrangement and misunderstanding. It depends as much on the designed structure and the individuals on both ends. A lot of it depends on the leadership involvement and what kind of investment or philosophy the president presents and expects from their institution to follow.”

Other UC directors agree that it varies by the institution how they structure the support and work with one another:

“There are institutions that simply see us as an office building and a hotel. They very clearly don’t need any input from us programmatically. They don’t need any advice from us. They want their offices clean and comfortable. And they want

their classrooms available when they want to teach. Otherwise, stay out of my way”

and

“I mean I think that it’s very interesting in a higher education center because we do in some ways have to operate in our silos because of different expectations of us, of our students, and the programs.”

In these discussions, it seems as though being non-collaborative is acceptable. They are tolerant of the desire to work independently and not share much of anything. Again, this brings the conversation back to the cooperation phase of the partnership continuum. However, even though these university centers mention the silos and inability to partner in most cases, the representatives did not discount the fact that they learn from one another while being at the university center. The suggestion was merely that this learning is only possible when the investment of institutions is comparable to one another. The interviewees suggest that comparable investment of resources is not always the case, especially when it comes to physical presence of staff members on the campus.

One factor that emerged through the interviews plays a significant part in these descriptions: the impact of presence on the campus. Each of the university centers has differing levels of representation on site. If academic partner representatives are housed at the university center, the level of logistical partnership shifts and seems to be a more positive and integrated experience. Unfortunately, most academic partner representatives are not located on site at the university center. One academic partner staff member mentioned that only two of the seven institutions at her university center location have dedicated staff at that center’s location.

“We are well served by the administrative support staff at the center. We all pay, as the partner institutions, a proportional share of those administrative costs. On our main campus, I know the UC Director’s staff is only a phone call away.”

This shows that at a higher level, they have the administration on-site at the UC as a shared resource. However, they are using it in lieu of investing their own human capital into the operation, suggesting again that the institutions are viewing UCs as hotel-like space for academics. Without staff on site representing one’s academic institution it

would be hard for partners to engage in shared operation risk, strategic planning efforts, and active communication. Considering the structures explained above, it is also not shocking that the respondents have called their structures “mildly productive,” “highly political,” and “set up with a top-down view.” Academic partners have various expectations of structure; university center communal staff tries to follow the structure that was outlined by their key actors.

Overall, key actors and structure appear to be the greatest elements hindering both academic partner and communal staff from fully working together and engaging in a collaborative level of partnership. The key actors set the structure for the university centers, often without consultation or inclusion, and the structure is limited or unclear regarding the expectations or possibilities within university centers. The respondents showcase these factors quite strongly with the negative references in these areas. The respondents also commonly had suggestions to remedy some of the issues. Considering these two themes, the following themes shift the focus to a higher level of analysis, looking at the current status and operation of university centers.

Theme 3: Cooperation

Identifying the level of partnership most commonly observed at a university center provides a greater understanding of how all the elements come together to make partnership work or fail. During the interviews, direct questioning was aimed at having the respondents determine the current status of their university center. As the coding incidences suggest, cooperation is more frequently identified. However, the messages of the respondents during this section provide greater insight than simple majority. Whether it is intended to operate at this level of the continuum or expected to grow into something more, university centers are most often staying in the cooperative phase, with a few making strides toward coordination.

Throughout the interviews, the level of engagement of both the UC communal staff and the academic partners was described at the level of cooperation, either by using the term explicitly as a descriptor or describing the level of partnership in their activities.

According to a university center director, below is how she identifies her operation as one of cooperation:

“We are cooperative from a center perspective because of the things that need to occur at the center, making sure space is utilized as efficiently and effectively as possible; for instance we have eleven classrooms so everyone couldn’t have classes at the same time at every day. From that perspective, I think we are definitely cooperative.”

This statement aligns with the continuum description of what a cooperative partnership entails. It shows a cooperative level of structure, risk, planning, and purpose. Another academic partner interviewed suggests the same classification, sharing examples of why they remain in the cooperative phase,

“I think at this point, if I had to look overall, we’re probably looking at being more cooperative. Power, control, leadership, none of it is collaborative... We have independent budgets. We do not share resources.”

Other interviewees shared very similar statements, citing cooperation and entry level partnership traits and basic communication and expectations. These were mentioned in a reference to key actors or the structure.

“It’s definitely not collaboration, I’ll tell you that. We do not have a trusting and open relationship. I would say it is more cooperative. It’s very much driven by the people in the positions. When I describe how much it varies, it often varies because of whom is in what position and what their perspective is or what their agenda is...Our goals and visions are not compatible, they’re competitive.”

These strong feelings show how heightened the strains of partnership can become. In an environment where competition should be removed as much as possible, the UC directors in multiple interviews mention a competitive nature present at their UC.

There were also mentions of university centers engaging at a higher level; more so coordinated and collaborative. A university center director said:

“I would say we are more between the coordinated and collaborative spectrum. And it depends what we are talking about. In the academic partnership we would be more coordinated, but on the other hand with things such as service to a

student, my team doesn't worry about their institution. There's a lot of collaboration on that end"

In this example, the respondent was describing her UC communal staff and the service to all students regardless of their academic partner affiliation. However, no specific examples of collaboration were cited, but instead further description was given of a cooperative or coordinated activity.

Only one academic partner staff member placed themselves higher than cooperation, describing their operation as a coordinated effort.

"I think we are more of a coordinated model. We are as institutions providing the discrete academic programs. There is the coordinated on-site administrative staff that is coordinating who gets what rooms. The UC coordinates our program delivery as it comes to space utilization."

However, again, there is some questioning about the true coordinated effort with the examples provided. These activities are described more as cooperation by other interviewees when looking specifically at the continuum and level of engagement needed for production.

Beyond these citations, there are also references to collaboration which could be characterized as a misuse of the term. For example:

"Because of our small size, I think we stay in tuned with each other's needs. We have a lot of collaboration that is informal and ad hoc. I'm pretty insistent that we don't stay in our silos and that we talk things over."

While the statement above may claim collaboration is present, based on the definitions molded for this study and found in other scholarly works, the type of partnership described does not match collaboration. In fact, looking at informal and ad hoc partnerships on the partnership continuum chart would more appropriately be categorized as a cooperative event. Most often, these partnerships allow for partner-retained power, communication, resource sharing, and planning are conducted on an as needed basis, and the risk is low. Looking at those variables, this UC falls into the 'cooperation' phase on the partnership continuum.

From the statements above and other coded quotations, it is clear that university centers by default are not in a collaborative state. In fact, most described their operation directly as a cooperative partnership. Those who identified the partnership as something higher were not able to provide specific examples of how their partnership engaged at those higher levels. However, despite the low level of engagement and misuse of terms, almost all respondents identified the need and room for growth in their partnerships. With that growth over time, the partnerships could transform into more coordinated or collaborative engagements. It is equally critical to understand, however, that the phases on the continuum may include weaker or stronger levels of engagement within a phase. Transitioning from one phase to another is not ‘simple’ given the number of elements needed in establishing partnerships. For example, it may take some UCs time to work from being a weak cooperative to a strong cooperative.

Theme 4: Collaboration is Optimal

University centers may want to see growth over time, yet the question still remains if collaboration is necessary for success or simply optimal. While the respondents were split on the topic, two times the number of interviewees suggested that collaboration was optimal but not required. A UC Director of a small center stated:

“No [collaboration is not a requirement], but collaboration sure is beneficial. I think they can absolutely be independent. I’ve watched it so often here in the state. Many of those who call themselves UCs are actually only one institution. But when there is more than one, why not try to be collaborative? It’s much more fun when it’s more collaborative, because I’ve been there.”

This particular director has worked at multiple university centers and mentioned that other centers, in addition to her current station, were much more collaborative and supportive on a regular basis.

Two other UC representatives mentioned similar thoughts on the topic:

“Collaboration is perfect, it is the Holy Grail and we haven’t achieved it yet. But we are still doing ok without it.”

and

"I'd say if you want the best, it is optimal. And we should. We offer all of these different majors that we could collaborate on."

In addition, some centers appreciate the flexibility to be a partner at any of the stages on the partnership continuum; one even referring to the academic partners as 'free agents,'

"I think it is an optimal scenario. I think there are lots of models for these university centers and they provide a good deal of the coordination skills that are necessary. But they allow us to do our academic programming there. I could be doing my part from anywhere. I'm a free agent renting space which is nice and helpful. Collaboration could be nice but the flexibility is good too."

In these examples, most respondents suggested that collaboration could make a significant positive difference in the operation of the UC. However, it is not completely necessary because there are other perks of remaining at the cooperative or coordinated stages. Certain areas and features of the partnership may be better served by collaboration than others.

However, those who believe it is necessary had strong points as well, citing the changes in higher education delivery and the larger benefits:

"I think collaboration is necessary to succeed, especially with the changes in higher education. To be effective, we're going to need to collaborate even more than we have in the past."

And

"I think it is needed for success and having come from a place with collaboration and wide open communication lines, and how we all benefitted one another, I see it as necessary and I know it can work."

While there is not a consensus as to whether collaboration is necessary or simply optimal, the respondents agree that collaborating at university centers has its benefits. Since the university centers do not describe their current status and engagement as collaborative, and assuming that the university centers in existence are at least moderately successful since they remain in operation, it is understandable that the majority see collaboration as

an enhancement, not a requirement. Yet, as the themes suggest the key actors and structure of the university centers play a large role in that enhancement opportunity.

Bringing Together the Results

As the quantitative analysis found, most influences and factors studied only slightly favored the descriptor ‘agreement’ on the Likert-scale (with scores between 3.0 (neutral) and 4.0 (agree)). According to these findings, decisions do not penetrate many layers of the organization and are not often finding compromise in the partnership. Meanwhile, the political and social climate and the environment of university centers are highly regarded. Overall, the current environment of the university center is ranked highest while the resources of the center rank the lowest. The findings also showcased differences amongst the respondent type. Communal UC administrators rank unique purpose higher than academic partner staff. The “shared vision” factor and the overall category of membership rank higher in university centers that do not have a mix of institution type. These findings led the research into deeper discovery during the qualitative phase.

The four major themes found in the qualitative research come together to paint a larger picture of the university centers active today. Overall, it appears that the key actors involved and structure designed for the university center play a large role in the typical cooperative stage of UC partnerships. Yet, despite the call for improved relations with key actors and less rigid, more inclusive structures, respondents do not necessarily see collaboration being a requirement for a university center’s success. While it may be assumed by some that university centers would be collaborative due to features of co-location, UCs are most likely to be cooperative enterprises. To further that discussion, collaboration does not appear to be a requirement for a UC to be deemed a success by its administrators. It is only an optimal state of being. Given these outcomes, university centers have the opportunity to become better partnership hubs.

The two strands of research support one another with the awareness of the key actors and the potential impact on power, structure, and decision making. With minimal layers of participation in the structure and operation of the university centers, as described in the

interviews, the key actors are not engaging the on-site representatives. Without investment and feeling engaged, the want and desire to compromise and later collaborate is lost. However, in the quantitative data, resources seem to be a major concern of those on site. This was rarely discussed as one of the major issue areas of university centers in the in depth interviews.

Additionally, the structure at UCs is deeply rooted in the environment of the operation. Yet, structure is seen as a major area of concern based upon the interviews but environment is highly ranked in the quantitative results. While there are other factors at play within the environment category mentioned in WCFI, structural design is at the core of that category. This disconnect in the data suggests that as the respondents think more actively about what is helping and hindering partnership at UCs, the issue of structure becomes more apparent.

To further investigate the similarities and differences between the two strands of research, the next chapter will present these areas with the quantitative findings, bringing them together with scholarly research and the qualitative results to resolve greater themes and discussions.

DISCUSSION

University centers are unique within higher education and each university center operationalizes their work and partnerships differently. Driven by key actors, to meet the needs of the community, the structure and engagement at university centers cannot be reduced to a template. Yet, this study increased the understanding of how cohabiting academic partners begin to engage and grow as partners within these unique higher education models. Aiming to assess whether (and if so, how) cohabiting institutions at university centers can foster and grow into collaborative partnerships, this study also served as a basis to identify a path to collaboration, examine the factors of success and/or failure on the way to collaboration and discover how mandated involvement may play a part for university center partners.

The quantitative findings suggested that currently university center administration and academic partner staff identify a favorable political and social climate to be the most significant collaborative factor in university centers. The ability to compromise and the presence of multiple layers of participation were ranked lowest. Overall, the environment of the university center is ranked highest while the resources of the center rank the lowest. The findings also showcased differences amongst the institution type of the respondent. Communal UC administrators rank 'unique purpose' higher than academic partner staff. The factor used to question shared vision and the overall category of membership ranks higher in university centers that do not have a mix of institution type. The qualitative results developed into four major themes: key actors are critical in the beginnings and development of university center partnerships and expectations; the UC structure impacts the ability for academic partners and UC administrators to partner. It appears that most commonly this impact is negative; cooperation is currently the most common level of engagement as identified by the interviewees; and collaboration has been identified as an optimal outcome of UC partnership but not required for the university center to be considered a success.

Table 5.1: Elements of the Partnership Continuum

| Category | Elements | Cooperation | Coordination | Collaboration |
|----------------------|--------------------------|---|---|---|
| POWER | Authority | Retained by each partner | Retained by each partner | New structure for authority with division of labor |
| | Control | Retained by each partner | Some shared control | Shared control |
| | Leadership | Retained by each partner | Some shared leadership | Distributed |
| RELATIONSHIPS | Key Actors | Driven by individuals in organization | Driven by individuals in organization with partner organization support | Organization provide full commitment for a trusting and open relationship |
| | Structure | Informal | Semi-Formal | Formal with defined relationships |
| | Communication | As needed | Established channels of communication | Shared information is key |
| ENDS | Vision/Goals | Independent goals and vision | Compatibility of goals and vision | Common vision and goals while maintaining self-interest |
| | Purpose | Interaction to avoid conflict; short-term | Interaction for one project | Interaction for one or more projects otherwise unattainable by one partner; long-term |
| | Planning | Retained by each partner | Some joint planning needed | Joint |
| MEANS | Resources | Independent | Some shared resources | Shared resources |
| | Rewards | Separate rewards | Shared rewards | Shared rewards |
| | Risk: Strategic | Low risk | Low risk | Shared risk |
| | Risk: Operational | Low risk | Some shared risk | Shared risk |

Based on the works of Ansell & Gash (2008), Appley & Winder (1977), Bailey & Coney (2000), Bryson & Crosby (2008), Gray (1989), Linden (2002), and Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey (2001).

To bring these strands together, analysis of literature was used to allow the data to take greater shape and showcase what is important in the research and how it is valuable to

future research. These knowledge claims undoubtedly enhance the understanding of cohabiting organizations and the unique operation of higher education university centers. To explain and expand on the knowledge claims discovered in this dissertation, the discussion chapter will use the Elements of Partnership Continuum (Table 5.1) developed by the author to bring the literature and results together. The four categories, power, relationships, means, and ends, will be discussed by considering the included elements and relatable findings. These categories must co-exist and build upon one another to create a collaborative environment. Furthermore, there are many complex factors within each category that can shift the level of engagement along the continuum. As displayed in the upcoming pages, it is not easy to grow from organizational neighbors into collaborative partners. It takes work, time, engagement, resources, and flexibility.

Category 1: Power

In the partnership continuum, power addresses the elements of authority, control, and leadership. It brings together the sources of influence and command and the levels of which the elements are retained by the UC representatives as the partnerships proceed through the continuum. The three elements in this category become more shared and distributed throughout the progression from being fully retained by academic partners (cooperation) to being shared across the involved parties (collaboration). This is supported by scholars who suggest that shared leadership and power is critical for collaboration to exist. For example, Snively and Tracey (2000) advocate for joint staff action as that level of engagement has been shown to improve partnerships. Hord (1986) was very clear that leadership is necessary and control must be flexible to allow for partnerships to survive. Many other scholars (Linden, 2002; Grey, 1989; Bailey & Coney, 2000; Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bryson & Crosby, 2008) support shared power and leadership structure as a requirement for collaboration.

Supporting the strong influence from the literature, the study found these elements to be critical as suggested. The factors associated with power (and the factors leadership, authority, and control) in the WCFI (mainly factors 2,9 and 20; see Appendix B for

listing) ranked higher than other factors, suggesting that UC representatives and academic partners find these areas to be more advanced on that partnership continuum than others. Yet, throughout the interviews, there were no references to positive control experiences. Authority and leadership were not suggested as strong indicators (positive or negative) in the success or failure of partnerships. However, many leaders felt that they were restricted by the key actors (i.e. state education governing boards). Thus, from the study, there are conflicting views of how power plays a role in partnership engagement and development. The continuum suggests that shared and distributed is necessary for the ideal collaborative environment. But the data shows that power struggles could be swept up in larger issues such as structure and key actor influence.

This conflict mostly stems from the confusion of on-site authority, power and control and the greater level of those elements that remain at the level of the key actors (i.e. state education governing board). Staff and administration on site at university centers, especially the academic partners, felt as though they had some power and control over their operations. Yet, when talking in more detail, the level in which they have that power and control does not encompass the level one would expect. As the quantitative data showed, having multiple layers of participation involved in decision making was ranked quite low. The overall feeling after the qualitative phased remained that the staff and administrators control what they can and feel empowered to take authority over. Yet, because of the limited exposure to higher level decisions and vision, their power is cut off and often limits the ability to develop a partnership which would require greater decision making control. Obviously, it would be a strong statement to say that power (i.e. leadership, control, and authority) do not contribute to a partnerships success and the ability to collaborate at UCs. However, from the research it appears there are greater influences at play that bring power into a more intricate web of influence.

Category 2: Relationships

Relationships are described in the partnership continuum with elements that can impact the level and substance of partnership relations: key actors, communication, and

structure. These elements become more organized, formal, and strategic as the partnership moves through the continuum. In the previously reviewed literature, structure is suggested in partnerships and collaboration by almost every scholar; this includes the scholars specifically looking at university center partnerships and co-location models of organizational structure (Atkinson, Wilkin, Stott, Doherty, & Kinder, 2002; Audit Commission, 1998). Key actors also are commonly regarded to showcase mutual interest and relationship development (Linden, 2002; Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bailey & Coney, 2008; Mattessich, et. al., 2001). Communication is suggested less frequently in the literature independently but is often considered as part of leadership and other elements. Not surprising given the literary support in this area, relationship building is deemed quite significant in the success of partnerships. This is an area that the data from the study supports quite strongly.

In the quantitative analysis, the data suggests that respondents were neutral on the impact of communication and structure. The presence of multi-layers involvement factor was ranked lowest, serving as a connection with the current structure of UCs and involvement of key actors. The favorable political and social climate factor, which was ranked highest of all factors on the WCFI, relates somewhat to key actors as the political authority for UCs is most often the state education governing board. This would fall into key actors on the partnership continuum. The qualitative analysis differs somewhat from the quantitative strand. Overwhelmingly, structure and key actors were discussed in every interview at length. Negative indicators were used in both factors with very little reference to positive experiences in these areas. With the key actors forcing a structure on the UC operations, relationships amongst representatives and academic partners are then dictated by the structure established. Communication was discussed less frequently but had equal acknowledgement of positive and negative experiences. Thus, it is clear that in this area, the qualitative interviews provided much more detail of what UC staff and academic partners are feeling. While there may have been some confusion or overlap during the survey, the semi-structured interviews opened up the conversation as suggested in the results chapter.

With the high level of detail, emotion, and reference throughout the interviews, structure is clearly a large area for improvement now and in future design. It is often too rigid or viewed as not strategic or inclusive. UCs will never have one template for structure, but it should be understood that the structure may evolve as the UC evolves in partnership as well. Expectations are also impacted by structure. Unfortunately, with most structures being set from the top down (i.e. state education governing system), key actors also play a significant role. Key actors, as described, are currently a large source of frustration for this very reason. UC administrators often feel like decisions are made by the key actors regarding structure, academic programming, and resource allocation without consultation of those on site working with one another within the UC and with the community externally. Increased understanding of key actors' roles and possible ways to integrate the multiple layers of participation would aid university centers in working towards greater partnership. Additionally, greater understanding would help create more appropriate expectations for both UC communal staff and academic partners.

Unfortunately, structure and key actors are major contributors to stalling and/or prohibiting, these factors are large, complex, and often political. Shifts to the structure or the level of involvement of key actors will take time and joint action from the UC communal staff and academic partners. From the differences amongst these groups during the interviews, that in itself will also be a complex feat.

Category 3: Ends

Within the Partnership Continuum, the ends category is critical to understanding why collaboration and partnership is even discussed. Bringing together the elements of vision/goals, purpose, and planning, the hope is to end up on more common, united ground. A common vision and large picture is continually mentioned by scholars as prime benefit of collaboration and partnership (Linden, 2002; Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bailey & Coney, 2008; Mattessich, et. al., 2001). Good intentions are not enough; planning and a strong purpose are necessary (Gray, 1989). Scholars continually mentioned that the common purpose is to achieve something otherwise unattainable by

one partner. This brings a unique opportunity to university centers. By sharing space, academic partners have already broken down one hurdle. This allows more focus on finding the common goal and purpose, plus the vision of how to get there. Planning is mainly seen as an extension of getting to a vision and focusing on the purpose.

The quantitative data shows that these factors are considered of medium importance (specifically factors 16, 17, and 18). The WCFI purpose category also fell in the middle of the rankings. The qualitative data suggests that most interviewees believe the purpose of the UCs was understood but often forgotten. However, little positive discussion was had surrounding vision and goals. Typically, it was in reference to the top having different goals and visions than the middle and bottom levels of the organizations. Planning was almost extinct from discussion, except for the connection to key actors planning for the university centers without much consultation. This disconnect enlightens an area of concern, given the strength of the literature surrounding the purpose and planning of partnerships. Additionally, without know what and why you are working towards as an end purpose, the means used to attain the product is meaningless.

Because the visions and goals of a UC are imperative to its development, existence, and unique opportunity in higher education, it was surprising that this area did not appear more frequently and significantly in the data. However, the ideal scenario and the literature do not take into account the disconnect between the top level and bottom level in regards to vision, purpose, and structure (as previously discussed). For UCs to succeed, this cannot continue to be an issue. The vision and goals of the UC must be connected amongst all partners and key actors. While each institution has its own identity and means in which an institution tries to meet the purpose and vision of a UC may vary slightly, if the partners cannot agree on their vision and goals, then what is the purpose of the UC? The UC must at least unite on this element in order to ever succeed at moving to a coordinated or collaborative state. Additionally, these elements should be more highly regarded as important by the UC communal staff and academic partner representatives. Yet, without planning, all of this is lost. An academic institution may have a common vision with a sense of purpose; but without planning efforts to design and achieve those goals and purposes, success would be quite difficult. Lacking these areas, it is expected

that most UCs would identify their operations as a cooperative partnership at this time, which does not require a shared vision, goal, purpose, or combined planning efforts.

Category 4: Means

The means on the continuum represent the elements that help an organization get to the purpose of its partnership. In this instance, it specifically includes resources, rewards, and strategic and operational risk. In a true collaborative partnership, these elements would be as shared as possible. The literature describing the means is mainly focused on the resource and rewards; leaving risk to brief mentions and explanations (Linden, 2002; Ansell & Gash, 2008; Bailey & Coney, 2008; Mattessich, et. al., 2001). Co-locating operations are very focused on saving resources. This can be done through shared space, shared staffing, and shared services. The rewards are also commonly represented when considering participating in a partnership. This is a benefit because most rewards in a partnership are not feasible by one organization. Yet, competition still exists and this can often cause reluctance is full reward sharing.

The quantitative data shows that currently resources are viewed as a scarcity. Factor 19 on the WCFI specifically addresses resource allocation and is ranked second lowest in current operations at UCs, suggesting that resources are quite scarce in UC operations. The factors addressing self-interest and reward rank much higher. In addition to the rather light showing in the quantitative data, rewards, risk, and resources were almost absent from the qualitative interviews. Mostly attributed to the fact that interviewees were not interested in talking about these factors, this simply reinforces the claims that there are larger elements at play causing frustration and difficulties or helping partnerships succeed. While representatives acknowledge that resources are scarce at UCs, they do not see more resources as an immediate fix. The lack of mention of risks may be explained by the limited literature and factors in the WCFI survey tool. However, with the unique mission of UCs and state support and direction, it is understandable why risk may not be a major area of concern for the academic partners and UC communal staff. In many situations, the efforts of university centers are an added bonus to home institution operations. While the risk of failure does exist, it is not nearly a great as a failure on the

main campus mainly due to levels of investment. Furthermore, if state education governing boards strongly dictate and design UCs, the risk more so falls with them, rather than the academic partners.

Overall, given that UCs can make a great difference in increasing rewards when increasing shared resources, it is unfortunate to see that the elements required to get to a more collaborative partnership are mostly off the radar of UC and academic partner representatives.

Looking at the Continuum as a Whole

The partnership continuum and its phases have been supported by the quantitative and qualitative findings. Certain elements are more common and highly regarded than others, but the respondents and interviewees can see how the continuum could evolve if more elements were present. As the literature suggests, movement on the continuum is not easy. Where this research expands the literature is in the identification of the elements that are most hindering and/or helping partnerships at UCs. With the data suggesting that key actors and structure are the major elements hindering greater collaboration, if these are never remedied, will UCs reach collaboration? From this study, the answer is no. Because of the major impact of these elements, despite greater levels of engagement on other elements, key actors and structure influence the power dynamic of authority, control, and leadership. They also influence the means and ends of how UCs can get to their true purpose and vision.

While collaboration is the ideal, from the identification of cooperation as the most common level of engagement at UCs, there is much work to be done at UCs in the other element areas as well. Even the shift from cooperation to coordination would provide UCs with greater output and partnership. Since many of the interviewees seems to be unsure of the potential for greater partnership, the small adjustments over various elements may be the best method for slow, but steady progress to a more collaborative UC. This may manifest itself in a shift from weak to strong cooperation before achieving coordination in some UC operations.

Overall Importance and Research Question Implications

Understanding the partnership continuum at this level of investigation allows for organizations to comprehend why partnerships may be succeeding or failing. The literature surrounding cohabiting organizations is still limited so it is not surprising that the literature currently present for multi-organizational partnership is not completely applicable in this scenario. Thus, this study has great importance on the future of university centers and other public cohabiting organizations. It is clear through this study that the state education governing boards have a large impact on public university centers, creating a unique structure to overcome. These two factors are currently hindering organizations from making the progression on the partnership continuum. It is unknown from this study whether UCs have the ability to make the leap to the next level of engagement. And because some partners do not find it a necessity for UC success, it may not become the goal or the vision. Still, the opportunity is there and over time as the UC model in higher education continues to evolve, collaboration remains the optimal status of partnership.

Areas for Further Thought/Investigation

Beyond the major areas discussed above, there are a few findings that call for further investigation. First, according to the literature, it was surprising to find that leadership does not play a larger part in the level of UC partnership. All of the academic partners spoke very well regarding the UC Directors. However, little credit was given to that leadership structure during the interview discussions. Bringing the study down to the level of the director may provide more information on the impact of leadership on UC partnership evolution. Furthermore, the inclusion and ranking of communication as an integral part of partnership was unforeseen. Communication is often suggested as a key to relationships; thus, its involvement in cohabiting organizations should not be minimal. Lastly, exploring the disconnect between certain elements between the quantitative and qualitative led to questioning if those on-site truly understand their purpose and larger impact on the vision. When discussing the purpose of UCs, very few directors were confident their staffs would know the true passion behind their work. Working to understand the shared vision from the top to the bottom of the organization will be

critical for success. Without understanding the purpose of one's institution, there is little hope for understanding the purpose of all institutions working together within the UC to create a collaborative partnership.

Limitations

Despite the strong outcomes of the study, it is important to consider the limitations of this study. First, because the qualitative study portion focuses solely on university centers with only public university academic partners, this study is not generalizable to private university involvement or campuses with for-profit academic institutions or community colleges present as their collaborative tendencies and procedures could vary greatly due to different funding structures. Additionally, because of the small 'n', a greater response rate would have been supportive in drawing more generalizable outcomes from the results. While both strands of the study resulted in enough respondents to conduct and analysis the research, as the university model grows, garnering more investment from the UC community would be necessary.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Higher education is at a pivotal point as it embarks on a time of decreased funding, increased public scrutiny, and differing modes of service offerings. Universities and colleges need to be more nimble, flexible, and creative than before. Thus, various models of post-secondary education are gaining steam, including the university center model. The university center is a partnership campus including multiple universities at one location. By bringing together the resources to operate and succeed as a university, university centers offer a unique opportunity for higher education: cohabitation.

This study was designed to dig deeper into the university center model and investigate how co-location of universities may influence the level of partnership. Specifically, this study aimed to assess whether (and if so, how) cohabiting institutions at university centers can foster and grow into collaborative partnerships. Throughout the analysis, this inquiry also served as a basis to examine the following objectives:

1. To identify whether cohabiting university center academic partners follow the path of the collaboration continuum (cooperation to coordination to collaboration)
2. To examine if cohabiting organizations report common factors leading to collaborative success or failure
3. To identify if and how collaboration is suggested and/or mandated between university center partners.

By examining the literature, it was evident that the university center model is a growing trend and more research was needed. As a partnership model, multi-organizational partnership and cohabiting organization research was conducted to offer further insight on how partnerships succeed and how the levels of partnerships may engage while sharing space. As the literature suggested, a continuum of partnership exists with collaboration being the highest and most optimal level of engagement. But question remained if this was true with cohabiting institutions at a university center partnership?

Through an explanatory sequential mixed methods design using surveys and interviews as tools, this study discovered how partnerships are currently working at university

centers and the areas of strength and weaknesses brought on by cohabiting with one another. Using statistical tools such as independent t-tests and one-way ANOVA as well as thematic coding, the quantitative and qualitative strands of research brought together a unique response to the research questions.

The quantitative findings suggested that currently the university center administration and academic partner staff identify a favorable political and social climate to be the highest ranked factor in university centers. The ability to compromise and the presence of multiple layers of participation were ranked lowest. Overall, the environment of the university center is ranked highest while the resources of the center rank the lowest. The findings also showcased differences amongst the respondent type. Communal UC administrators rank unique purpose higher than academic partner staff. The “shared vision” factor and the overall category of membership rank higher in university centers that do not have a mix of institution type.

The qualitative results showcased four major themes:

- key actors are critical in the beginnings and development of university center partnerships and expectations
- The UC structure impacts the ability for academic partners and UC administrators to partner. It appears that most commonly this impact is negative.
- Cooperation is currently the most common level of engagement as identified by the interviewees.
- Collaboration has been identified as an optimal outcome of UC partnership but not required for the university center to be considered a success.

From these results, university centers and the academic partners involved can begin to understand the unique nature of a partnership campus. In general, it does not appear that university centers are following the suggested continuum. This is mainly because the UCs are not getting beyond the cooperative or coordinated status. Most often, the initial structure of university centers plays a major part in the lack of progression as it is debilitating and restrictive. Furthermore, this structure is set up by key actors, who most

often are actually not on site at the UCs. At a greater level, cohabitation may influence these elements, but according to the findings, structure and key actors are the greater pieces hindering partnership progress. Collaboration may not be a requirement for success; it is still considered an optimal level of achievement. To move forward in the continuum, university centers need to have the flexibility to adapt and edit their structure as academic partners change and grow. University centers need the key actors to be more aware of that need. Until then, it is unclear if the majority of university centers will ever reach true collaboration with academic partners down the hall or across the quad.

This study is just the beginning of increased understanding of cohabiting public organizations and the university center model for education. Because of the limited research in these areas, there is ample opportunity for further research. Specifically in the realm of non-public university centers, further investigation would make this study more generalizable. Additionally, this study could be revamped to a one-site exclusive research study, allowing for a deeper analysis of one center. Using WCFI to dig deeper into the faculty, staff, and student lens of one center could provide a greater perspective of university center partnerships from many angles. Furthermore, with the growing public organization partnerships, this study could be transferrable to another sub area of public policy.

When one works in close proximity to another person or organization, there is an assumption that a relationship will build beyond its original point of origin. Similarly to the roommate scenario presented in the introduction of this dissertation, colleagues can grow beyond acquaintances. Organizations can see opportunities outside of their sole mission. However, cohabitation is not a 'golden ticket' to partnership development. There must be key elements and features of the partnership to allow it to grow and transform into something more. This study suggests that simply because higher education has called for a model placing multiple institutions on one campus does not imply these institutions will work together. With thoughtful design, strategic oversight, and time, partnerships can grow. Yet, this is not the norm at university centers.

With the knowledge gained from this study, it is the author's hope that university centers can change this status quo. University centers and other public organizational partners have the opportunity to become collaborative partners. While it may take time to muddle through the cooperative and coordinated phases, the opportunity is there. And while success need not be measured by the achievement of collaboration, it is the opportunity of university centers true impact that cannot be lost.

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APPENDIX A: LISTING OF UNIVERSITY CENTERS

| Current Name | State | Number of Institutions | Type of Institutions | Degree Level | Site Location Type | Central Staff? |
|---|--------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Advanced Minnesota | MN | 9 | Public/Private | 4-year/2-year | CC=based | Y |
| Alamo Colleges | TX | 4 | Public/Private | 4-year | Independent | Y |
| Atlanta University Center Consortium, Inc. | GA | 4 | Private | 4-year | Independent | Y |
| Auraria Higher Education Center | CO | 3 | Public | 4-year/2-year | Independent | Y |
| Black Hill State University Regional Center | SD | 5 | Public | 4-year | Independent | Y |
| Cape College Center | MO | 3 | Public | 4-year/2-year | Independent | Y |
| Capital University Center | SD | 3 | Public | 4-year | Independent | Y |
| East Williamson County Higher Education Center | TX | 2 | Public | 4-year/2-year | Independent | N |
| Eastern Shore Higher Education Center | MD | 7 | Public/Private | 4-year/2-year | CC based | Y |
| Erma Byrd Higher Education Center | WV | 3 | Public | 4-year/2-year | Independent | N |
| Greenville Higher Education Center | MS | 3 | Public | 4-year/2-year | CC-based | N |
| Jefferson Higher Education Center | WA | 8 | Public/Private | 4-year | CC-based | Y |
| Lone Star College-University Center | TX | 6 | Public/Private | 4-year | Independent | Y |
| Low Country Graduate Center | SC | 4 | Public/Private | Graduate | Independent | Y |
| Macomb University Center | MI | 11 | Public/Private | 4-year | CC-based | N |
| Madeline Briggs University Center | MI | 2 | Public/Private | 4-year | CC-based | N |
| North Idaho Higher Education | ID | 5 | Public | 4-year/2-year | Independent | N |
| Northwestern Michigan College University Center | MI | 8 | Public/Private | 4-year | Independent | Y |
| PASSHE City Center | PA | 4 | Public | 4-year | Independent | Y |
| Quad-Cities Graduate Study Center | IL | 10 | Public/Private | Grad | Independent | Y |
| RCC/SOU Higher Education Center | OR | 2 | Public | 4-year/2-year | Independent | N |
| Roanoke Higher Education Center | VA | 16 | Public/Private | 4-year/2-year | Independent | Y |
| Southern Maryland Higher Education Center | MD | 10 | Public/Private | 4-year | Independent | Y |

| | | | | | | |
|--|----|----|----------------|---------------|-------------|---|
| Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center | VA | 7 | Public/Private | 4-year | Independent | Y |
| Stevenson Center for Higher Education | MI | 4 | Public | 4-year/2-year | CC-based | N |
| Texas State University Round Rock Campus | TX | 3 | Public | 4-year/2-year | Independent | Y |
| The Learning Center for Rapides Parish | LA | 4 | Public/Private | 4-year | Independent | Y |
| The New College Institute | VA | 9 | Public | 4-year/2-year | Independent | Y |
| The Southern Virginia Higher Education Center | VA | 9 | Public/Private | 4-year/2-year | Independent | Y |
| The Universities at Shady Grove | MD | 9 | Public | 4-year | Independent | Y |
| The University Center at Dallas | TX | 3 | Public | 4-year | Independent | Y |
| The University Partnership at LCCC | OH | 12 | Public/Private | 4-year/2-year | CC-based | Y |
| University Center of Greenville | SC | 7 | Public | 4-year/2-year | Independent | Y |
| University Center of Lake County | IL | 20 | Public/Private | 4-year | Independent | Y |
| University Center of Lansing Community College | MI | 5 | Public/Private | 4-year/2-year | CC-based | Y |
| University Center of North Puget Sound | WA | 7 | Public/Private | 4-year | CC-based | Y |
| University Center of Northeastern Maryland | MD | 5 | Public/Private | 4-year | Independent | N |
| University Center of Southern Oklahoma | OK | 3 | Public | 4-year | Independent | Y |
| University Center Rochester MN | MN | 2 | Public | 4-year/2-year | CC-based | N |
| University Center South Dakota Public Universities & Research Center | SD | 6 | Public | 4-year | Independent | Y |
| University Center-Salt Lake City Community College | UT | 4 | Public | 4-year/2-year | CC-based | N |
| University of Houston System at Sugar Land | TX | 5 | Public | 4-year/2-year | CC-based | N |
| University Partnership Center | FL | 16 | Public/Private | 4-year | Independent | Y |
| USM at Hagerstown | MD | 6 | Public | 4-year | Independent | Y |
| Virginia Beach Higher Education Center | VA | 3 | Public | 4-year/2-year | Independent | N |

APPENDIX B: WILDER COLLABORATION FACTORS INVENTORY

The Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory

| Factor | Statement | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral, No Opinion | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|---|-------------------|----------|---------------------|-------|----------------|
| History of collaboration or cooperation in the community | 1. Agencies in our community have a history of working together | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 2. Trying to solve problems through collaboration has been common in this community. It's been done a lot before. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Collaborative group seen as a legitimate leader in the community | 3. Leaders in this community who are not part of our collaborative group seem hopeful about what we can accomplish. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 4. Others (in this community) who are not a part of this collaboration would generally agree that the organizations involved in this collaborative project are the "right" organizations to make this work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Favorable political and social climate | 5. The political and social climate seems to be "right" for starting a collaborative project like this one. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 6. The time is right for this collaborative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Mutual respect, understanding, and trust | 7. People involved in our collaboration always trust one another. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 8. I have a lot of respect for the other people involved in this collaboration. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Appropriate cross section of members | 9. The people involved in our collaboration represent a cross section of those who have a stake in what we are trying to accomplish. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 10. All the organizations that we need to be members of this collaborative group have become members of the group. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Members see collaboration as in their self-interest | 11. My organization will benefit from being involved in this collaboration. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ability to compromise | 12. People involved in our collaboration are willing to compromise on important aspects of our project. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Members share a stake in both outcome | 13. The organizations that belong to our collaborative group invest the right amount of time in our collaborative efforts. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| Factor | Statement | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral, No Opinion | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|--|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| | 14. Everyone who is a member of our collaborative group wants this project to succeed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 15. The level of commitment among the collaboration participants is high. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Multiple layers participation | 16. When the collaborative group makes major decisions, there is always enough time for members to take information back to their organizations to confer with colleagues about what the decision should be. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 17. Each of the people who participate in decisions in this collaborative group can speak for the entire organization they represent, not just a part. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Flexibility | 18. There is a lot of flexibility when decisions are made; people are open to discussing different options. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 19. People in this collaborative group are open to different approaches to how we can do our work. They are willing to consider different ways of working. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Development of clear roles and policy guidelines | 20. People in this collaborative group have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 21. There is a clear process for making decisions among the partners in this collaboration. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Adaptability | 22. This collaboration is able to adapt to changing conditions, such as fewer funds than expected, changing political climate, or change in leadership. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 23. This group has the ability to survive even if it had to make major changes in its plans or add some new members in order to reach its goals. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Appropriate pace of development | 24. This collaborative group has tried to take on the right amount of work at the right pace. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 25. We are currently able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the people, organizations, and activities related to this collaborative project. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Open and frequent communication | 26. People in this collaboration communicate openly with one another. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Factor | Statement | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral, No Opinion | Agree | Strongly Agree |
| | 27. I am informed as often as I should be about what goes on in the collaboration. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 28. The people who lead this collaborative group communicate well with the members. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Established informal relationships communication links | 29. Communication among the people in this collaborative group happens both at formal meetings and in informal ways. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 30. I personally have informal conversations about the project with others who are involved in this collaborative group. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Concrete, attainable goals and objectives | 31. I have a clear understanding of what our collaboration is trying to accomplish. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 32. People in our collaborative group know and understand our goals. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 33. People in our collaborative group have established reasonable goals. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Shared vision | 34. The people in this collaborative group are dedicated to the idea that we can make this project work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 35. My ideas about what we want to accomplish with this collaboration seem to be the same as the ideas of others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Unique purpose | 36. What we are trying to accomplish with our collaborative project would be difficult for any single organization to accomplish by itself. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 37. No other organization in the community is trying to do exactly what we are trying to | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Sufficient funds, staff, materials, and time | 38. Our collaborative group had adequate funds to do what it wants to accomplish. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| | 39. Our collaborative group has adequate "people power" to do what it wants to accomplish. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Skilled leadership | 40. The people in leadership positions for this collaboration have good skills for working with other people and organizations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

APPENDIX C: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Overview and Informed Consent

You are invited to participate in a research project about the evolution of collaboration amongst cohabiting organizations at higher education university centers due to your employment and involvement in the administration of a higher education university center. This online survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary, and responses will be kept confidential to the degree permitted by the technology being used. There are no known risks associated with this research study. You have the option to not respond to any questions that you choose. The results from this portion of the study will be combined with other study portions for final analysis.

If you have any questions about the research, please contact the Principal Investigator, Ashley Waters via email at ashley.waters@ubalt.edu or the faculty advisor Dr. Aaron Wachhaus at awachhaus@ubalt.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact the UBalt Institutional Review Board (IRB) at 410-837-6199.

By clicking “NEXT” below you are indicating that you are at least 18 years old, have read and understood this consent form and agree to participate in this research study. Please print a copy of this page for your records.

Involvement at University Centers

- * 1. What is the name of the university center location in which you work?
- * 2. Which of the following best describes your work at a university center?
 - An employee of an institution offering classes at a university center
 - An employee of a university center operation (not affiliated with one specific institution)

IF AN EMPLOYEE OF AN INSTITUTION

Institutional Data

- * 3. How would you best describe your institution?
 - 2-year college
 - 4-year public college/university
 - 4-year private college/university
 - Graduate level only university
 - Other (please specify)
- * 4. What is the approximate annual enrollment at your institution at the university center? (Please round to the nearest hundred)
- * 5. What is the approximate annual enrollment at your institution at the home campus/main location? (Please round to the nearest hundred)

* 6. The home campus/main location for your institution is located how many miles from the university center?

- less than 50 miles
- 50-100 miles
- 100+ miles

IF AN EMPLOYEE OF AN UNIVERSITY CENTER OPERATION

Regional Center Data

* 3. Which of the following types of institutions are present at your university center?

(Select all that apply)

- 2-year college
- 4-year public college/university
- 4-year private college/university
- Graduate level only university
- Other (please specify)

* 4. What is the approximate annual enrollment at the university center? (Please round to the nearest hundred)

Collaboration at your University Center (UC)

Please use the definition of collaboration below to guide your responses to the questions below:

Collaboration: a formal relational system of organizations with a common vision and shared interests, responsibility, resources, and accountability to achieve desired goals.

There are no right or wrong answers. If your opinion falls between two numbers, choose the lower number.

* 5/7. Please rank the following statements:

Strongly Disagree *Disagree* *Neutral/No Opinion* *Agree* *Strongly Agree*
N/A

- Institutions in the UC community have a history of working together
- Trying to solve problems through collaboration has been common in this UC community. It's been done a lot before.
- Leaders in this UC community seem hopeful about what can be accomplished.
- Others in this UC community would generally agree that the present institutions are the "right" institutions to make this UC work.
- The political and social climate of the UC seems to be "right" for collaboration.
- The time is right for UC collaborations to occur.
- Institutions involved in the UC always trust one another.
- My institution has a lot of respect for the other institutions involved in the UC.
- The institutions involved in the UC represent a cross section of those who have a stake in what we are trying to accomplish.

- All the institutions that we need to be a part of the UC community have done so.
- My institution would benefit from being involved in UC collaborations.
- Institutions involved in the UC are willing to compromise on important aspects of the UC community.
- The institutions that belong to the UC invest the right amount of time in our efforts.
- The institutions that belong to the UC community want the UC to succeed.
- The level of commitment among UC institutions is high.
- When the UC community makes major decisions, there is always enough time for institutions to take information back to their institutions to confer with colleagues about what the decision should be.
- Each of the institutional representatives who participate in decisions in the UC community can speak for the entire institution they represent, not just a part.
- There is a lot of flexibility when decisions are made; institutions are open to discussing different options.
- Institutions in the UC are open to different approaches to how we can do our work. They are willing to consider different ways of working.
- Institutions at the UC have a clear sense of their roles and responsibilities.
- There is a clear process for making decisions among the institutions at the UC
- The UC and its institutions are able to adapt to changing conditions, such as fewer funds than expected, changing political climate, or change in leadership.
- The UC has the ability to survive even if it had to make major changes in its plans or add some new institutions in order to reach its goals.
- The UC community has tried to take on the right amount of work at the right pace.
- Institutions are currently able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the people, collaboration, and activities related to the UC community
- Institutions at the UC communicate openly with one another.
- Institutions are informed as often as they should be about what goes on at the UC.
- The institutions who lead communicate well with the UC community.
- Communication among the institutions at the UC happen both at formal meetings and in informal ways.
- Institutions have informal conversations about collaboration with other institutions who are involved at the UC.
- Institutions have a clear understanding of what the UC is trying to accomplish.
- Institutions at the UC know and understand the goals of the UC community.
- Institutions at the UC have established reasonable goals for the UC community.
- Institutions at the UC are dedicated to the idea that they can make the UC work.

- My institution's ideas about what we want to accomplish as a part of the UC seem to be the same as the ideas of others.
- What the UC is trying to accomplish would be difficult for any single institution to accomplish by itself.
- No other individual institution in the UC community is trying to do exactly what the UC is trying to do as a whole.
- The UC has adequate funds to do what it wants to accomplish.
- The UC has adequate “people power” to do what it wants to accomplish.
- The people in leadership positions within UC institutions have good skills for working with other institutions in the UC community.

The above questions were adapted from the Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory. Mattessich, P., Murray-Close, M., & Monsey, B. (2001). Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory. St. Paul, MN: Wilder Research.

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE

Please identify your role at the university center.

How would you describe your relationship with the other academic institutions at the university center?

Do you all work together to accomplish tasks on campus? If so, what type of projects and partnerships?

- Looking at the collaboration continuum chart, where would you say your university center is on the continuum (i.e. cooperation, coordination or collaboration)?
- Looking at the elements listed on the chart, are there specific items listed that you think play a part in helping your partnerships and <stage mentioned above>?
- Looking at the elements listed on the chart, are there specific items listed that you think play a part in hindering your partnerships and <stage mentioned above>?

Overall, do you think collaboration is necessary for a university center to succeed or is just an optimal state of being? Why/Why not?

Is there anything else about university centers and working with one another you would like to share?