



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY



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at New York University



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# Journal Of Student Affairs at New York University Volume X | 2014

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## A Letter From the Editor

Colleagues,

We are happy to present to you the 10th edition of the Journal of Student Affairs (JoSA) at New York University. Over the last several months, the authors and editors have worked diligently to create an accessible, contemporary, quality publication.

This past year has been one of improvement for the journal. One of the biggest changes we made was to our mission statement. We have focused our direction on creating a current publication that is attentive to contemporary issues in higher education. We believe that this new focus will help us in the future in narrowing down subject matter and establishing a more consistent reputation for the journal.

This publication also marks our first completely digital edition of the journal. After much input from the Higher Education and Student Affairs Department and previous executive boards, we have decided that this is the best direction for the journal. Not only does this action decrease the amount of paper used, but it allows for greater access to and distribution of the publication. It also changes the way that we market the journal. Another aspect of growth this year was the incorporation of professional development. As an executive board, we believe that we can produce a better publication if we support our authors and editors with the knowledge and skills required to do their job now as well as in their future endeavors in publishing. We also want to promote a greater interest in the publication process in general. This year, we were able to see our first professional development workshop hosted by Professor Gregory Wolniak. Professional development is an aspect of journal production that we hope remains intact for the years to come.

There are many people who made this publication possible. Our editors, both internal and external, have been assisting our authors in improving their manuscripts. Thank you for your insight and diligence. I would like to personally extend great thanks to the executive editorial board: Jossie Munoz, Alana Integlia, Amber Deister, and Alicia Kubes. These women are all innovative thinkers who challenged the notion of mundane and pushed for an atmosphere of development and sustainability. Without the passion and proactivity of this executive team, this publication would not have been possible. Thank you for a productive, educational, and fulfilling year and for helping to produce a 10th edition worthy of celebration. On behalf on the 2013-2014 executive editorial board, editors and authors, I am delighted to present you the tenth edition of the Journal of Student Affairs at New York University.

Lauren Jordan  
Editor-in-Chief  
JoSA Volume X, 2014

# Understanding How Student Activists Use Twitter

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## Abstract

With a surge of student activism emerging on college campuses throughout the world, student activists have moved from campus quads as places of protest and to social media as platform to reach out and inform citizens of the issues. This study focuses on the Twitter presence of two student movements over the course of six months. The research follows the Montreal Student Protests (#GGI) and the Ibero-American University Protest (#YoSoy132), which led to collecting 272 and 342 of the most popular Twitter posts, respectively. While not all posts originate from student activists, tweets posted with these hashtags fell within several emergent themes. These selected findings discuss the ways in which student activists movements use Twitter to inform and educate their followers and the public. The implications of this study highlight several key suggestions for future research and for practitioners. By understanding how student activists use Twitter, student affairs administrators can engage students through this new public space in order to enhance students' development and learning through activism.

## Introduction

From Tiananmen Square to Vietnam peace activism, protest movements have long captured our attention. The images from such movements we have historically received from national media television and print outlets; however, today, social media is a relatively new space for the dispensation of such images. In the last few years, we have seen increased levels of activism, in a way that we have never before seen<sup>1</sup>. The most recent and notable movements are the Occupy movement (USA), the M-15 Movement (Spain), and the Arab Spring movement (several Arab Countries). Because of these movements and others like them, Time Magazine named "The Protester" as the 2011

Person of the Year (Andersen, 2011). In recognition of a new era of global grassroots movements and protests, Time captured a phenomenon that will likely persist in the coming years. With a precipitous rise of civil disobedience and citizen action, higher education is not immune, as these images spread into the hearts and minds of college students all over the world. College students have been emboldened by these national and international protest movements. For instance, student-led branches of Occupy began protesting on several college campuses around the US. Some of the larger cases made national news, as campuses attempted to react to these protests, including: protesters interrupted the University of Michigan Board of Regents meeting (Mytelka, 2011), were pepper sprayed by University of California at Irvine campus police during a peaceful demonstration (Grasgreen, 2011), and worked with Duke University administration to stage a long-standing sit-in (Keller, 2011). While these protests are different in terms of scale and saturation of the legendary protests of the 1960's, college student activism is still alive and well (Levine & Cureton, 1998).

## Literature Review

Student activism, at its core, attempts to change policies, actions, or ideas by rallying supporters, shifting the public consciousness, and changing the social and political tide around a topic. While this is the outcome, activism has many manifestations and can be defined as "violent or peaceful, noisy or quiet actions taken by groups of people, some small and some huge, [in] attempts to alter society accordingly to the desires of those taking action" (Jordan, 2002, p. 8). Activism can take on many forms; however, this paper focuses on activism as a process of action that could result in

physical, emotional, or social risks, focusing on the ways these activists utilize Twitter.

Higher education in North America has a long history of being a unique hotbed for activism and protest (Altbach, 1989). As Sampson (1967) argues, higher education is by nature subversive, since education values questioning old ideas and replacing them with new ones. From an environmental perspective, higher education fosters a certain level of critical thought, provides room for dissent, and seeks democratic participation among students. Before 1930's, student activism emerged as a means to challenge campus authorities, especially concerning in loco parentis rules (Laufner & Light, 1977), and morphed into students questioning the role of higher education in society (Brubacher & Rudy, 1976; Baxter Magolda & Magolda, 1988).

In the 1960's, a new wave of activism emerged, largely tied to national issues such as women's rights, civil rights, the Vietnam War, and other social issues (Baxter Magolda & Magolda, 1988). But after the decade and a half of unrest, levels of student activism fell sharply. By 1975, the most pressing issues began coming to some resolution, such as the Vietnam War winding down (Altbach & Cohen, 1990). By the 1980's and 1990's, student activism continued to develop in waves. Activism became more localized and directive in nature. Several social movements, throughout universities in North America, helped to create women's centers, multicultural affairs academic departments and centers, LGBT centers, and ethnic studies programs on many college campuses (Rhoads, 1998).

### **Who are the Student Activists?**

Astin, Astin, Bayer, & Bisconti (1975) found that college students get involved in activism through different means. Their study included looking at students who had participated in protest against racial discrimination, college administrative policy, or the Vietnam War. Generally, they found that students became engaged in activism through paths such as student governance, student organizations, and peer groups (Astin et al., 1975). Later, Altbach (1989) went on to show how students who were involved in protests could be described through a series of conscribed rings. The innermost ring houses the smallest group of students, who have intimate knowledge of the issues and tend to be most radical in their approach. The middle ring is comprised of a larger group of students who

may be more willing to participate in protests and who sympathize with the cause. Finally, the outer ring is comprised of students on the periphery; they are likely to sympathize with the issues but rarely get involved (Altbach, 1989). All three groups are needed for activism to thrive on campuses; however, in this paper, activists are defined as only students who are engaged in the activity of social change.

### **Why Do Student Protest?**

Historically, one of the largest reasons for protest has been related to social issues (Baxter Magolda & Magolda, 1988; Light & Spiegel, 1977; Sampson & Korn, 1970). It is easy to see from the activism that emerged in the 1960's that many student protests have been in reaction to US policies and social injustice at state and local levels. As Rhoads (1997) concludes, activism is generally about the local level. Student protests and unrest have particularly boiled over when students felt the local effects of major national issues. When both are occurring at the same time, large and visible actions usually begin to unfold.

### **Purpose of the Study**

With the increase in student activism and national and international unrest, the literature around student activism has slowed since the mid-1990's. Prior research has informed campus administrators about the tactics students use in protests, who student protesters are, and the issues that spark student protest. But, without a current understanding of student activism, college administrators are at a deficit. Instead of supporting students in developing citizenship, campus administrators have fallen far short of fostering such democratic aims. As one step in developing an understanding of student activism, I attempt to look at the way two student movements have used social media to engage their members and followers. For the purposes of this paper, I use selected findings to discuss in part how student activists use Twitter to inform their members, followers, and the public through the dissemination of information and photos, images, and art.

### **Methods**

Using traditional research as a means for understanding protests is especially hard, because activism often start at the grassroots level, shows up sporadically, and is rarely sustained for more than a year or two (Altbach, 1997). Moreover, activism is bound by time and space, and usually focuses on a specific issue or set of

issues, which can be best understood by using a case study approach (Rhoads, 1997). This approach helps define the parameters of the data, by using only Twitter posts that contain the desired hash tags (#GDI and #YoSoy132). These cases were selected due to their recent and on-going protests, significant use of Twitter, and their proximity to the US.

By using cases to draw on a specific sample, the data that emerges can be understood through a discourse analysis (Zappavigna, 2012). As Zappavigna argues, Twitter is a particularly interesting phenomenon, because it creates “searchable talk” that gives insight into the larger discourse surrounding an issue or topic. Discourse analysis views text as a social practice, where researchers can use three separate forms of discourse analysis, which are to analyze the language texts, analyze the distribution and consumption of text, and analyze the events that surround the text (Fairclough, 1995). Thus in the case of Twitter, I developed a coding scheme to identify the theme(s) for each tweet. Thus, in this case, the utility of discourse analysis is that the researcher is able to build a story about the content of student activism on Twitter and the way in which twitter is used to facilitate information sharing.

### **Student Protest Cases: Montreal and Mexico City**

The first is a case study that involves a group of Quebec student demonstrators who, in conjunction with several student organizations, protested a decision the Quebec Cabinet made to increase university tuition from \$2,168 to \$3,793 between 2012 and 2017 (CBC, 2012). Starting in February 2012, students at Université Laval protested this new policy by going on strike. Soon after, several university professors at Université du Québec à Montréal joined the strike. By March, over 166,068 students protested in Montreal (Ridley, 2012). Known by some as the “Maple Spring” uprising, the protesters named the movement the *grève générale illimitée* (#GGI), French for “general unlimited strike” (Democracy Now, 2012). The second case is a student movement called Yo Soy 132, dubbed the “Mexican Spring.” The controversy began when Peña Nieto held a campaign event Ibero-American University, where student voiced their dissent towards him and his prior actions. Specifically students were referring to a civic dispute in 2006 that involved the police breaking up a local protest, which resulted in two protesters being killed by the police, along with allegations of rape and other acts of violence towards

protestors. After Peña Nieto’s appearance at Ibero-American University, the media reports stated that dissenters had smuggled in protesters, and they were not students at all. In a rebuttal, the students posted their 131 student identification cards. Because of this video, another student tweeted, “I am the 132nd Student” and thus gave birth to the hash tag #YoSoy132 (I am 132) (Dzodan, 2012).

### **Information about Data**

In order to capture the most widely circulated information, I used only the top posts, which is a term used by Twitter to denote those posts which have been re-tweeted and or viewed most frequently. I searched each hash tag, and garnered the top posts from the last 6 months which lead to 272 posts from the #GGI movement and 342 posts from the #YoSoy132 movement. Because both of these movements are in places that use French and Spanish, I used Google Chrome’s automatic translation process. Because of the method of searching for only top posts, posts that were not retweeted, that may cast these movements in a negative light, would not be included. This is a significant limitation; however, those tweets were not widely seen and would not have the same kind of impact as those that were retweeted often and thus became top posts.

### **Findings**

These selected finding focus on two of the major themes that emerged throughout both movements. Student activists, and their supporters, used twitter in order to: share information about their cause and using graphics as a mean of education. To illustrate these themes, I use multiple quotes from both movements, where each post includes the user’s account name (@) and the exact text (translated, if not in English) that they posted, including hash tags (#) and links.

### **Information Sharing**

**Social movements rely heavily on the ability for activists to engage their followers and the general public** and inform them of the current state of affairs. By using Twitter as a portal for sharing information, activists could keep communication flowing among all of their followers, while also ensuring their message made it to followers. While the two movements used Twitter for this function, the content of their messaging was varied.

For #GGI, activists tweeted often about the policy around the lack of funding for education in Canada.

Tweets often mentioned the cost of education, the rise in tuition, and the lack of support for undergraduate education. But beyond just the access and affordability of higher education, supporters would also tweet about the policies and politics around both education and the protest itself. For instance:

@EthanCoxMt: “Really heartening to see #NDP13 vote to refer the education motion to add a position on free education and anti-police brutality. #ggi”

This tweet was in response to the National Democratic Party of Canada putting #GGI’s primary issues on their platform. These kinds of tweets allowed people to keep up to date with the most current news and information, without the need to rely on formal media outlets. As for the #YoSoy132 movement, the education and information tweets focused on two areas. First, tweets were directed at the media and government, in an effort to inform people that the both institutions were corrupt and selling propaganda. Two such tweets included:

@RadioamloInform: “RadioamloInforma: #YoSoy132 London: Letter in response to the Televisa-#theguardian joint statement [http:// dlvr.it/2w3VFc](http://dlvr.it/2w3VFc)”

@Soy132MX: “Televisa is 40 years of total control. Don’t let them continue to rule our country. #YoSoy132 [http://www.youtube.com / watch? v = cQh4Cm\\_jLG10 ...](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQh4Cm_jLG10)”

Both of these tweets attack Televisa, which is the single largest Spanish speaking news outlet in the world, and has been seen, at least among #YoSoy132 supporters, as a propaganda tool of the Mexican government. In cases like these, supporters are creating acts of resistance, through information sharing with an attempt to change public perceptions about the information they are receiving from mainstream sources. Lastly, both movements also used twitter to share organizing ideas and strategies. This kind of education took the form of tweets that linked to new methods of protesting, ways of engaging citizens, and additional tactics for growing the movement. One example was a tweet within the #YoSoy132 movement which stated: @cghUNAM: “# Yosoy132 : The main task of the student movement right now is to regroup, raise awareness [http:// fb.me/2C9qFR10B](http://fb.me/2C9qFR10B)”

The link goes to a blog that aims to provide a way to grow support. One of the methods that was identified is to provide more English language information, for supporters who may not be in Mexico or do not speak fluent Spanish.

### Graphics as Education

Student activist used the full capabilities of twitter by sharing photos of protests as they unfolded, capturing video to show police brutality, or displaying art that was produced by one of the activists. The graphics and art often took the form of photos, paintings, elaborate signs, or graffiti. The photos and videos were used to document actions as they unfolded, usually depicting the interactions between protestors and police, the size of the rallies, and signs and art done by supporters. For the art, in almost every case popular images were used of famous individuals, with words incorporated into the art. In most of the pictures and artwork, protestors attempted to engage followers with not just words but visual pictures that can incite emotions and reactions differently than just a 160 characters (the maximum length of a tweet)<sup>2</sup>. Discussion and Conclusion

In using social media, student activists have recreated activism for the 21st century. Without the need for mass media to pick up a story line, activists now have a direct communication path to the public. By using social media, movement organizers and supporters can create unfiltered, user-generated content, which in prior generations consisted of hard to circulate newsletter or pamphlets. But today, the tactics and approach may differ than past generations, but the goal is the same: increase awareness, flex their collective muscle, and create change.

This research has implications for students, administrators, and researchers. For students, using social media is a way to move an issue forward. Because these posts were the “top posts,” as determined by Twitter, posts that shared content and images where the most reoccurring and widely seen by Twitter followers. In other words, sharing content about an issue, without the filter of institutions or media, was the most prevalent and possibly the most desirable form of communication to supporters. In order to get their message out and re-tweeted, student activists should ensure that they are poignant, clear, and use visuals in their information sharing.

By understanding the ways social media is harnessed by student activists, administrators can be better prepared to respond and engage in dialogue, either through social media or through other means. As Biddix, Somers, and Polman (2009) argue, administrators must be willing to use activism as a space of learning and development for students to become actively engaged citizens. One way of engaging with

students, which was seen in the #GGI protest was that police used Twitter in order to provide clear communication to protesters about the possible ramifications of their civil disobedience. The Montreal Police posted, “NOTICE : The #manifencours has been declared an unlawful assembly. People must disperse. Arrests could be made. #GGI.” While the protesters had no intention of cooperating, these kinds of interactions allowed both sides to intentionally plan how they would engage the other side and create a more civil and peaceful process.

Lastly, the implications for research are numerous. While looking into using Twitter posts as data and methods for analyzing post content, I found a dearth of information about using social media as a tool for data collection. Researchers must begin to create methods that are particularly focused on using social media as data. Social media is a rich space where people share things they care about, reaffirm ideas that others have posted, and where both micro-level and macro-level conversations are happening. Additionally, researchers must refocus on new social movements and issues of protests and activism. While there have been both a lull in actual activism and research, a reemergence of activism is occurring, which uses new tactics built on old ones and is driven by a generation that is distinct from prior generations. Without a new source of activism literature, practitioners, students, and administrators will be ill-equipped in working with activists and may find themselves stuck with new problems that they have yet to face.

As a fundamental part of the educational process and the democratic aim that higher education espouses (Biddix, Somers, & Polman, 2009), student activism will continue to have a place on college campuses. While protests are a physical representation of the actions of activists, college administrators must understand and be able to respond to a new era of social media as a platform for student activism. To be clear, the goal for administrators is to understand the new tactics of activism in order to create sites of learning and dialogue, and not as a means for stopping the democratic outcomes of students becoming engaged citizens of their community. Student activists and administrators have the ability and the responsibility to use protests as a means for creating learning spaces on campus. While the issues are unique to that campus, the learning objectives are similar. One of the most common goals of protestors is to create dialogue, and as within an educational institution we are responsible for creating conversations about difficult topics and social issues.

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# **Studies in Success: Factors That Influence Academic Gains for High Achieving African American Male Students**

**Ryan Johnson**

**University of South Carolina**

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to explore the academic experiences of highly successful African American male graduates of small, private liberal arts colleges. Using a qualitative approach, fourteen highly successful alumni from selective, private colleges were purposefully selected for the study, including seven African American males and seven white males. In semistructured interviews, participants retrospectively described positive experiences they associated with their academic success in college, a departure from the traditionally negative approach used in most academic studies associated with African American male students. Though the study identified significant common ground between the two participant groups, several key differences emerged. African American students stressed the importance of religious faith, open mindedness, and campus organizations in helping them succeed academically. White students described the importance of making “mechanical” academic adjustments, such as improving study habits and developing organizational skills. Both participant groups agreed on numerous success factors, including the “smallness” of the liberal arts college and close interaction with professors and staff. The study observes the importance to all students of learning in a closeknit environment. Participants described how the small college created for them a deep sense of connection across the campus, making it easier to take risks that helped them develop academically. The study makes several policy suggestions for improving African American male student academic success, in particular by addressing issues of religious faith.

## **Introduction**

A significant gap exists in the college achievement of African-American students when compared with

similarly situated white students, and this gap is most pronounced with respect to African-American males (Wiggan, 2008). Milner (2007) suggests that the majority of existing research focuses on negative attributes of people and communities of color in examining this achievement gap. Researchers have done relatively little exploration into the successful college experiences of African-American males. Accordingly, this qualitative study sought to identify academic success factors for high-achieving African-American male students at small, private colleges.

## **Literature Review**

The African-American male achievement gap has been explored from a number of perspectives, including learning gains, persistence, mentorship, and institutional effects (Strayhorn & Devita, 2008; Flowers, 2003a). One of the primary reasons African-American students leave college is because of poor performance (Nora, Cabrera, Hagedorn, & Pascarella, 1996). In addition, African-American male students learn significantly less than white students in the first three years of college (Flowers, 2003a). Further, even successful African-American students expend much more effort to achieve the same results as white students (Campbell, 2010). African-American males are also less likely to become academically and socially integrated into college life, and have difficulty seeking help and developing useful relationships (Strayhorn, 2008). Strayhorn and Devita (2010) also examined African-American males in the context of the liberal arts college, finding that African-American males collaborate and interact less with their peers at smaller colleges than at graduate institutions. African-American male students also benefit in unique ways from their experiences at historically-black colleges and universities, such as engaging more deeply with the institution and continu-

ing on to post-graduate study at higher rates (Pascarella, 2004). Other studies show that historically black colleges are beneficial to African-American students because African-American students are of critical mass at these institutions (Palmer, 2010).

Faculty, staff, mentors, and authority figures also contribute to African-American academic success. Specifically, access to African-American college alumni, counselors, and mentors has positively influenced African-American student success, as has completing college in residency (Flowers, 2004a; Flowers, 2004b; Herndon, 2004). Family interaction, particularly early in life, is also an important influence on the educational experience of African-American students (Herndon, 2004). In addition, programs that create “day one” connections to the institution, such as bridge programs, help generate improved outcomes (Hughes, 2010).

### Methodology

This research was conducted as a qualitative, historical biography, based on a purposeful sample of fourteen high-achieving male participants from four selective to highly selective private colleges in North Carolina and South Carolina. The participant group consisted of seven African-American male alumni and seven white male alumni who completed college between two and ten years prior to the conduct of the study. Each participant had a minimum GPA of 3.20 for completed college work and an SAT score of at least 1050. A series of two one-hour interviews were conducted with each participant. These interviews were designed to gather memory-elicited data from participants regarding their academic success in college, using “co-production” methodology established by Eich (2010). Interviews were transcribed and coded, and were supplemented with complete field notes. Significant themes were identified and analyzed, using Pascarella’s General Model for Assessing Change (1985) as a conceptual framework. Pascarella’s model suggested that student change is a product of a cascading set of factors: pre-college/student background; structural and organizational characteristics; institutional environment; contact with agents of socialization; and, quality of student effort.

### Research Questions

The key research questions in this study were:

- What factors do high-achieving African-American male alumni attribute to their successful academic

experiences at small, white liberal arts colleges?

- How do these factors differ from the academic success factors attributed by high-achieving white alumni?

- How did these success factors contribute to successful academic experiences of both African-American and white alumni at small, white liberal arts colleges?

### Summary of Findings

In analyzing this participant group and their experiences, it was possible to draw conclusions about the factors that made these individuals so academically successful. While the study resulted in a number of findings, this paper focuses on the most surprising themes that emerged. Though the study identified significant common ground between the interview groups, this paper focuses on key differences that emerged in the data between the two groups.

“Instrumentalists and Explorers”

The most unique finding in this study was that African-American male participants took an “instrumentalist” approach to their undergraduate education, while white students took an “explorer” approach. These were terms coined in the 2011 Carnegie Report about liberal arts education and its relationship with the business disciplines (Colby, Ehrlich, & Sullivan, 2011).

Instrumentalists focus on specific academic metrics, such as minimum program GPA; specific course requirements; and, test scores required for entry into desired programs. They measure the success of outcomes by “checking off” accomplishments in a linear fashion.

White students in this study can best be described as “explorers.” Explorers are experimenters, willing to travel a non-linear path in their pursuit of learning, viewing education as a customized, qualitative experience (Colby, Ehrlich, & Sullivan, 2011). They make their way through academic programs in a meandering fashion, measuring their success by the quality of their experiences rather than by their ability to “check boxes” in an academic program of study. They typically viewed their education, and academic success, as a chance to obtain a well-rounded experience.

Alternatively, African-American participants frequently described their academic experiences in “instrumentalist” terms, both in the way they defined academic success and in the way they pursued it. They were motivated by highly tangible, well-defined measures: high grades, employment prospects, and

maintaining scholarships. This instrumentalist view emerged strongly, particularly in the quotation below from a Furman graduate. He describes how he made sure to cover certain course requirements with advanced placement credit, rather than risk damaging his grades at Furman.

One thing would be the fact that I never took an English class at Furman. I'm going to tell you one thing. I'm a game player. I like to play the game. I play the game and I like to win the game. I took English before I got to Furman, and when I got to Furman people who didn't hadn't been so fortunate. They had to take English 11, and they were getting killed, I mean murdered, making C's, F's, D's. They struggled.

His use of the term "game" is critical because it suggests he believed tangible outcomes were more important than the process of learning, a classic illustration of instrumentalism. Other participants echoed this view. One Wofford participant stated "I was only motivated to go to school and get a quality education so that I would be able to have a sustainable career, something that I truly enjoy doing." Similar to the Furman participant, a participant at Davidson described a similar purpose: "Graduating. Keeping a decent GPA, especially the 3.0 I needed to keep my scholarship. Not Phi Beta Kappa- I don't care. I only got that because I had the GPA." Despite the prestige associated with Phi Beta Kappa, his focus was on the outcome: keeping scholarship funding. Though many students described success in terms of grades, African-American participants in this study focused keenly on "instrumental" measures such as obtaining a desired career, getting good grades, and navigating the academic system.

White students frequently took an "explorer" approach to their education, defining their academic experience in terms of experimentation, broad learning, and finding personal fulfillment. A Davidson participant stated "It's not feeling like you're there just to do well on a test. You're there to help further the subject, researching the subject, that sort of thing." This feeling was echoed in the words of a Furman participant:

I think people need to find something they are passionate about and follow it. I know too many people who have come into school, parents pushed them to something like pre-med. Then

they do poorly and one day they pretty much have to tell their parents no. They end up in art or doing well in something else and I think finding out your innate interests, talents is one of the biggest keys to success.

Achieving a degree at a small private college had special significance to most African-American participants in this study: it proved they had been successful in a challenging social and academic setting. Since many African-American participants in this study felt social discomfort, they naturally measured success using more tangible, objective measures that were easy to define and understand: good grades, highly-reputable institutions, and career potential. These students were saying, hypothetically: "Things are tough here, but I know that as long as I can get good grades, get a good job, and graduate from this reputable institution, I will have done what I set out to do." While they frequently defined their academic success and struggles in social terms, they sought academic success as instrumentalists.

Alternatively, white students approached success in college holistically, seeking broad learning and a wide range of experiences. They expected to succeed, and had little anxiety that they would not. Given these circumstances, the white participants in this study did not feel the need to focus on specific, tangible measures of academic success. Their approach was relaxed, and they reported that in order to succeed, they needed only to make certain key academic adjustments. Figure 1 below demonstrates this effect on both white and African-American participants.

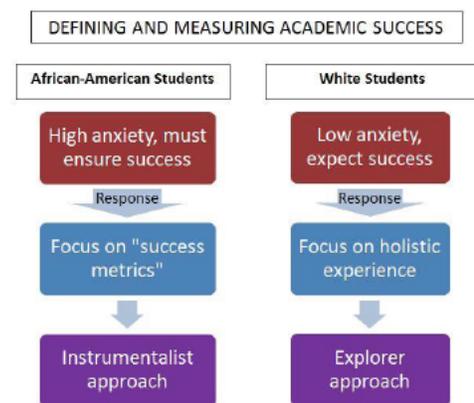


Figure 1. Approaches to Academic Success by Participant Group.

Religious faith dominated interviews with African-American participants, and was certainly the most important academic success factor associated with the African-American demographic group. Participants spoke about faith in personal, experiential terms, and in terms of their participation in faith-based campus initiatives and groups. Faith was often a bridge between the “home community” and the “college community” for these students. It was also a critical coping mechanism during difficult times, such as the freshman year. By relying on faith, African-American students in this study were able to reduce or deflect some of the pressure they experienced on campus. Some spoke of adversity at college in terms of being “God’s plan,” which helped them take a longer-term view of their campus experience, and enabled them to see difficulty as something that needed to be endured for greater long-term good. Faith helped these students stay focused on their studies, persist to graduation, and see the experience on the small, private college campus as spiritually meaningful. Quotes from African-American participants provided a poignant illustration of how faith helped them cope with difficult times. One student described his experiences in strong emotional terms: “I remember nights where I would come into my dorm room and just sit down on the floor and pray, asking God to get me through it. Without it [prayer and the Bible] I wouldn’t have been able to handle it.” Another participant echoed this theme as well. “Spirituality, my belief in God was tremendous. God was there with me, and helped me have courage.” A Furman student, currently employed as a high school principal, described his college experience in terms of a spiritual journey:

Life is a gift that God has given you, so I said to myself- why waste the gift? Everybody is not going to like you, and what you choose to do is bigger than any person. You are here (at this college). God has a plan for you. You have a purpose.

African-American participants in this study considered faith to be integral to their academic success. Alternatively, white students made almost no mention of faith during the interview process.

### **White Students and Academic Adjustment**

The white students who participated in this study reported that academic adjustment, or the mechanics of learning, was a critical factor in their academic suc-

cess. Academic adjustments, as defined in this study, were specific, mechanical behaviors that were not social in nature, and in most cases were confined to the individual. White students in this study described their academic success in terms of their own ability to learn how to study and prepare in the way one might follow a cooking recipe. Usually this manifested in dispassionate terms such as: when to study or not study; where to study; whether to study alone or in groups; and, specifically how to go about the process of studying. Frequently white participants went into great detail about how they learned to study, discussing methods such as taking graphic or non-graphic notes, studying where they could view or not view others, or recopying notes when they came home after class. Only one African-American participant was specific about a study method, but it was not a dominant theme in his interview.

This finding suggests that academically-successful white students at small, private colleges have already satisfied many of their non-academic needs. They focus more clearly on the remaining issues that affect their performance, such as mechanical adjustments to study methods and becoming accustomed to specific professors. This does not imply that African-American students are not making similar academic adjustments. Rather, it suggests that when considering important factors in their academic success, other issues are significantly more important to the African-American demographic group. As a result, when implementing programs on campus, student affairs professionals should consider the possibility that specific campus interventions may benefit demographic groups in very different ways.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The findings in this study were limited primarily by the qualitative nature of the research, which sacrifices generalizability for depth and richness of detail. However, though not generalizable, the results of the study may be transferable to similar situations and circumstances (Patton, 2002). Other limitations of this study are its limited geographical footprint and its focus on successful students at small, private colleges. In all qualitative research the researcher is the data-gathering instrument, and the findings in this study may therefore be shaped by the researcher’s own worldview.

## Conclusion

This study identified numerous academic success factors that African-American male students, as well as white students, associated with their success at small, mostly white liberal arts colleges. African-American participants in this study discussed academic success in terms of social relationships, interaction, and motivation. Their college experiences could be characterized as quests, or spiritual journeys. They experienced anxiety, and overcame it by way of their religious faith. Alternatively, white students spoke about their academic success in terms of an “academic experiment.” Their success factors were typically mechanical and unrelated to social experiences. They felt little social anxiety, and accordingly expected to succeed academically by tweaking their approach to learning and achieving high grades. These disparate findings are important because they underscore the dramatic differences between the ways African-American and white students experience the college environment and explain their own academic success. African-American students face significant social hurdles at small private colleges. This study suggests that an improved African-American student experience could be achieved through greater understanding of the social challenges these students face at small, mostly white private institutions, as well as the importance of religious faith in helping them navigate these experiences.

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**Historically Black Colleges and Universities  
More Relevant Than Ever Before  
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**Abstract**

The following paper aims to examine the relevance of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and the role they play in today's society. While HBCUs were originally designed to segregate Black students from Whites, these institutions have continued to play an important role in Black education. HBCUs served as the primary point of access to higher education for Black Americans for more than a century and though this role has shifted since the 1960s, these institutions continue to make significant contributions to society and to the education of Black students, graduating approximately twenty percent of Black undergraduates. Yet, critics of HBCUs argue they are unnecessary in today's climate and that administrators should aim to provide a climate of access and equity in all institutions. This paper will provide evidence of their necessity by discussing how HBCUs continue to fill an education gap for Black students and provide recommendations for how they can remain relevant in today's society.

**Introduction**

The Higher Education Act of 1965 defines a historically Black college or university as an institution "established prior to 1964, whose principle mission was, and is, the education of Black Americans" (Avery, 2009, p.329). Originally conceived to provide higher education to Black Americans separate from that of the White American higher education system, the purpose of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) has shifted. With the recent election of a Black president and efforts to promote racial diversity across institutions, many have speculated that these institutions are no longer necessary (Bettez & Suggs,

2012; Hurtado & Ruiz, 2012; Jackson & Nunn, 2003). Gasman, et al. (2010) note:

Created in an effort to segregate Blacks and prevent them from attaining equal status, HBCUs still managed to provide valuable opportunities for Black students. Despite the benefits that they provide and their role as a social equalizer in American society, HBCUs continue to be devalued by the larger White community (p.30).

Some have argued for reallocating funding toward equity efforts within predominantly White institutions (PWIs) as opposed to upholding separate institutions dedicated to the education of Black Americans (Jackson & Nunn, 2003). There is a "persistent meta-narrative that characterizes HBCUs as inferior to historically White institutions (HWIs), or perhaps no longer needed in a so-called 'post-racial' America" (Bettez & Suggs, 2012). However, proponents of HBCUs argue that these institutions continue to be important in serving the needs of Black students and still play an integral role within the American higher education system (Gasman & Hilton, 2012).

HBCUs have gone from being the primary source of higher education for Black Americans to being questioned entirely in the span of one hundred years. While their necessity in the 21st century is disputed, one cannot question the positive effects that HBCUs have had on Black Americans, who still attend these institutions in large numbers. The following paper furthers this argument by examining the continued necessity of HBCUs and the role they play in today's society. In addition, I will make suggestions for how

these institutions can remain competitive within the field of higher education where their validity is constantly questioned. While HBCUs are being discussed as one sect of institutions in this paper, it is important to note that many differences can be found among HBCUs today and the challenges discussed may not be applicable to all institutions.

### **The Significance of HBCUs in the 21st Century**

HBCUs were developed as a response to the lack of education among free Black Americans in the early 1800s (Bettez & Suggs, 2012; Gasman & Hilton, 2012). They remained the primary point of access to higher education for Black Americans for more than a century. However, today students of color can legally access any institution in the United States and are even recruited due to a push for racial diversity and affirmative action efforts (Gasman & Hilton, 2012; Redd, 1998; Roebuck & Murty, 1993). Mbajekwe (2006) notes that as a result HBCUs have struggled with “how to carve out a space in the new and emerging environment” that “would protect and expand the economic and cultural interests of Black institutions” (p.14).

While enrollment numbers have significantly decreased in the past fifty years due to expanded access, HBCUs still graduate one fifth of Black students who earn undergraduate degrees and make up three percent of the colleges and universities within the United States. They also continue to retain and graduate Black students at higher rates than PWIs (Avery 2009; Bettez & Suggs, 2012; Gasman, et al., 2010). Almost three fourths of all Black doctors and dentists, half of all Black public school teachers, and almost half of all Black women who received their degrees in the science, technology, engineering, and math fields between 1995 and 2005 received their degrees from HBCUs (Albritton, 2012; Avery, 2009).

Cynthia L. Jackson (2003) discusses the Black experience within secondary education, noting that the current system often fails to meet Black cultural needs, may demean their self-esteem, and does not allow for diverse forms of expression. She attributes this to the “gulf between White teachers and Black students, the lack of Black leadership within administration, and curriculum development (Jackson & Nunn, 2003, p.63). Hurtado and Ruiz (2012) found that the majority of underrepresented students at less diverse insti-

tutions have experienced some type of racial discrimination and 32.4 percent of underrepresented students at less diverse institutions report discrimination in the form of offensive visual images. Black students also have disproportionately bad experiences within the public secondary education system which partly attributes to their underrepresentation within the higher education system (Jackson & Nunn, 2003). While many of these issues are indicative of a larger systematic problem, HBCUs are at least for now part of the solution. Traditionally HBCUs have played a major role in access and educational attainment among Black students. However, these institutions are starting to expand access to higher education for students from all racial and ethnic backgrounds. Kim (2002) says that “Black colleges enroll students who otherwise might not be able to attend college because of social, financial, or academic barriers” (p.387). HBCUs educate students who “have weaker academic backgrounds, who are mostly first-generation college-bound, and who are economically disadvantaged and/or experience racial discrimination” (Newkirk, 2012, p.80). Approximately eighty percent of the students who attend HBCUs are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and/or are first-generation students (Jackson & Nunn, 2003). In order to best serve these students, these institutions have focused on expanding their remedial programs (Jackson & Nunn, 2003; Kim, 2002; Newkirk, 2012; Willie, et al., 2006). Additionally, many offer financial assistance and lower tuition rates allowing students who may not get the chance otherwise to go to college which ultimately serves the wider community (Kim, 2002).

Jackson and Nunn (2003) argue that the main difference between HBCUs and majority institutions are “in the nature of the students who are served, how they are served, and the purpose for serving them” (p.30). Despite their inclusion of students from a variety of backgrounds, HBCUs still focus on the Black community and aim to “advance the self-concept and group identity of Black youth and to cultivate the community and political activism of Blacks for Blacks locally, nationally, and globally” (Jackson & Nunn, 2003, p.30). HBCUs offer a multicultural curriculum with the dual goal of educating their students as American adults and as part of the Black community (Jackson & Nunn, 2003; Willie, et al., 2006).

These institutions are one of “the only social institutions in the United States that support, reinforce, and amplify the racial identity of Blacks” (Jackson &

Nunn, 2003, p.42). They emphasize the development of a Black identity and culture in a way that PWIs may not be prepared to (Newkirk, 2012). Thus, Black students have the opportunity to develop a stronger sense of self and researchers have found that Black students are happier at HBCUs than at PWIs (Kim, 2002). Black students attending HBCUs have been found to report a more positive relationship with the environment, climate, and culture within the institution than Blacks at PWIs (Jackson & Nunn, 2003).

This supportive environment found at most HBCUs may explain the higher retention rates (Kim, 2002). Kim (2002) found that these institutions promote healthy racial development while being just as effective at promoting academic development among their students despite their severe lack of resources in comparison with PWIs. Kim (2002) explains that this can partly be attributed to a positive campus climate but is mostly likely also linked to mentorship opportunities available at HBCUs. HBCUs provide Black students with Black role models and create an environment that helps to foster relationships between students and professors creating mentoring opportunities which ultimately contributes to higher retention rates (Kim, 2002; Mbajekwe, 2006; Newkirk, 2012; Willie, et al., 2006).

### **Challenges Today**

Despite all of the positive evidence demonstrating their success, HBCUs continually have to justify their existence and relevance in the 21st century (Willie, et al., 2006). Some legislators have suggested doing away with the institutions altogether or merging them with PWIs within the state, especially in the wake of the recent economic crisis (Albritton, 2012). Others feel that America is now “colorblind” or that we live in a post-racial society and thus institutions that contribute to the education and development of specific racial groups are unnecessary (Allen & Jewell, 2002; Bettez & Suggs, 2012). Since HBCUs “have been preoccupied with defending their right to exist, they have not had the privilege of fully explaining their educational goals and methods from which others (majority institutions) might benefit” (Willie, et al., 2006, p.4). As a result, “low endowments, low enrollments, administrative and financial mismanagement, heavy debt, and/or loss of accreditation” are common issues they face (Avery, 2009, p.338).

### **Funding and Accreditation**

While financial problems have primarily been at the core of accreditation issues among HBCUs, others have lost accreditation due to institutional effectiveness, poor faculty qualifications, and other compliance issues (Newkirk, 2012). Yet funding continues to be one of the most pressing issues facing HBCUs (Bettez & Suggs, 2012). States are faced with fewer resources due to the state of the economy and some argue that state legislatures have failed to strengthen HBCUs in order to appropriate more money for majority institutions (Albritton, 2012; Allen & Jewell, 2002). These institutions already have smaller endowments than majority institutions so they operate primarily on tuition (Jackson & Nunn, 2003; Newkirk, 2012). As a result, at least twenty five percent of HBCUs were operating in the red during the mid-1990s (Jackson & Nunn, 2003; Newkirk, 2012). Almost all of the HBCU endowments fall within the lowest quartile of endowment market values today. This quartile is equal to approximately five tenths percent of the total dollar amount held in university endowments (Drezner & Gupta, 2012).

A large number of HBCUs have been placed on probation or closed due to financial issues in the past few decades (Drezner & Gupta, 2012; Mbajekwe, 2006). Researchers have demonstrated how the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (a prominent accrediting body in the South) has targeted HBCUs more harshly for financial infractions than PWIs. Since 1989, almost half of the institutions that have lost their accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools have been HBCUs (Drezner & Gupta, 2012; Newkirk, 2012). Some blame the fiscal management of HBCUs as the reason for their financial difficulty. However, in a study done by Drezner and Gupta (2012) that compared the fiscal management of HBCUs and PWIs, researchers found no difference in their fiscal management techniques.

### **Recommendations for Moving Forward**

President Obama said that the only way for HBCUs to “excel in the current economic and social environment is to focus on increasing degree attainment and other student outcomes” and that they “need to show, in measurable ways, that they are adding considerable value to the lives and livelihood of their students” (Gasman, et al., 2010, p.2). While current data shows how HBCUs have positively impacted society and the Black community, HBCUs need to be more vocal

about their accomplishments and their necessity within today's society. In essence, they need to prove their value to the community at large. Willie, et al. (2006) summarize this idea: "It is important for Black colleges to recognize that their contribution has been not for the benefit of Blacks only but for the good of the entire system of higher education in this nation" (p.4).

### **Stressing the Unique Components of HBCUs**

In order to make themselves competitive in the current climate HBCUs need to stress the components of their institutions that make them unique in nature. For example, Willie, et al. (2006) discuss how HBCUs should continue to focus on mentoring as an important component of the HBCU experience. PWIs may not have the opportunity to provide connections with professors and form a network of support within the college community. Mbajekwe (2006) and Willie, et al. (2005) also suggest highlighting the HBCU focus on service and leadership as this is something that differentiates them from PWIs.

In addition, schools need to publicize their accomplishments as individual institutions. For example, North Carolina A&T State University trains a disproportionate number of Black engineers. Bowie State University grants a large number of masters' degrees in computer science and information sciences to Black students (Mbajekwe, 2006). Highlighting achievements such as these could potentially help to increase enrollment and funding.

### **Funding**

As mentioned earlier, funding remains one of the biggest concerns for HBCUs. Many of these institutions are operating with large deficits and many legislators question whether it is worth funding these institutions moving forward (Redd, 1998). Moreover, many leaders at HBCUs are not properly trained to deal with funding issues (Willie, et al., 2006). Thus, moving forward it is important to train those in leadership roles on effective ways to fundraise and balance budgets because this has become an essential role of an HBCU president (Willie, et al., 2006). One of the major components of being able to successfully fundraise is convincing others that the institution is of value and worth investing in (Mbajekwe, 2006). This should be done again by publicizing features that make the institution unique both as an HBCU and as an institution.

Others have brainstormed different ways of in-

creasing HBCU funding ranging from forming partnerships with other institutions to hiring staff in Washington to lobby for the institution (Mbajekwe, 2006). Regardless of the method, one thing is clear; HBCUs need to be strategic in their efforts to increase funding for their schools. Individuals in leadership positions at these institutions need to adequately educate themselves and hire staff well-versed in fundraising and budgets in order to remain competitive with PWIs.

### **Increasing Diversity**

Gasman (2012) argues that one way to make HBCUs more relevant within the wider community is for these institutions to further embrace diversity. She says that since Blacks are choosing to attend majority institutions in such large numbers, HBCUs must reach out to those from all racial and ethnic backgrounds in order to survive. Willie, et al. (2006) and Allen and Jewell (2002) argue that these institutions have a history of practicing diversity and inclusion and as our society becomes increasingly multicultural, HBCUs should be on the forefront of this movement. This in turn will not only help these institutions to remain competitive with PWIs, but it will also contribute to create a more dynamic learning experience for their students. While this may seem counterintuitive to the mission of HBCUs, Gasman (2012) argues that, despite the growing diversity, these institutions can still remain true to their mission. This can be done by educating all students on Black American history and the contributions of HBCUs, maintaining longtime campus traditions, adding new traditions to be more inclusive, and continuing to employ Black faculty and staff and enrolling Black students.

### **Research**

HBCUs should further validate their institutions by providing data on the student experience within these institutions. It is recommended that further research be done on the student experience and student development at HBCUs versus PWIs, student retention, and student success among other factors. These variables should be considered for both Black students and other racial groups at these institutions.

Hurtado and Ruiz (2012) recently completed a study that reveals the high rates of discrimination and stereotyping still present on traditional college campuses. They found that underrepresented college students at less diverse institutions experience higher feelings of exclusion and more racial incidents than

those on more racially diverse campuses. Data such as this should be harnessed and further explored so that HBCUs can discern what qualities make them more successful in serving underrepresented students.

### Conclusion

HBCUs have played an instrumental role in the education of Black Americans throughout history and continue to do so today. While many argue that they are no longer necessary in an environment where Black students are granted access to majority institutions, data shows that Black students are often more successful and retained at higher rates within HBCUs than PWIs. These institutions have been one of the driving forces in helping to create a Black middle class – graduating Black engineers, teachers, and lawyers in large numbers. They continue to be “a primary source of degrees for Blacks, and in some major fields, they produce more than would be expected” (Jackson & Nunn, 2003, p.39).

These successes are partly attributed to a supportive environment that is conducive to positive racial identity development and consciousness, allowing for a positive Black student experience that unfortunately PWIs are not always able to provide. However, now HBCUs are not only serving Black students but have expanded to serve the needs of a more diverse student population. This includes a variety of racial and minority groups, a large number of first-generation students, and low-income students who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education. In this way, they are continuing to provide access to higher education for students who have historically been unable to attend college.

Hopefully America will eventually reach a point where majority institutions can adequately serve the needs of their Black students and offer further access to lower performing students. However until larger systemic changes are made, that reality is not in the foreseeable future. HBCUs continue to be instrumental in serving the needs of all students within the American higher education system despite the challenges they currently face.

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# **International Branch Campus Leadership: Challenges Faced and Best Practices Developed by Higher Education Professionals**

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### **Abstract**

International branch campuses (IBCs) represent a relatively recent phenomenon in higher education. As IBCs continue to operate across the globe, leadership issues faced at these campuses merit further study. For this paper an IBC is defined as a degree granting campus operating in a host country under at least partial management of a home campus located in the home country. A review of literature on IBCs and leadership with sections focusing on structural, human resource, political, and symbolic institutional concerns is presented. IBCs require leaders to face new and unique challenges while contending with the familiar issues common to many types of higher education institutions. The use of a variety of organizational frames enables leaders to succeed at IBCs. As IBCs remain a volatile type of higher education institution – opening and closing around the globe – it is important for both practitioners and researchers to assess what factors lead to successes and failures in this arena. Adapting existing leadership styles and skills to the needs of IBCs, with a focus on how the culture of these institutions develops together with and separately from the home institution will assist individuals in becoming successful leaders.

### **International Branch Campus Leadership: Challenges Faced and Best Practices Developed by Higher Education Professionals**

International branch campuses (IBCs) represent a relatively recent phenomenon in higher education. For this paper an IBC will be defined as a degree-granting campus operating in a host country under at least partial management of a home campus located in the home country. Institutions began forming IBCs in the mid-20th century; growth was initially slow but began to increase in volume during the 1980s with continued expansion in this sector in recent years (Lane, 2011).

At the end of 2011, there were 200 international branch campuses operating (Katsomitros & Lawton, 2012). The challenges faced and best practices developed by higher education professionals serving as leaders at IBCs merit further study. This study is particularly pertinent as the success level of IBCs varies greatly with some flourishing year after year and others quickly closing.

IBC higher education professionals face the challenge of determining when it is best to adopt the solutions of the home campus and when a unique solution must be developed to address an issue that arises at the branch campus (Hughes, 2011; Shams & Huisman, 2012; Sakamoto & Chapman, 2012). It is important that the individuals involved formulate a clear vision of how closely they wish the IBC to mirror the home campus and in what areas the IBC should be unique. This vision will be informed by the students the IBC is meant to serve, the host country where the IBC is operated, and the goals set by the home institution when opening the IBC.

The purpose of this paper is to examine IBC leadership challenges and best practices through the lens of four organizational frames. Academic literature on IBCs and leadership will be utilized in this examination. This paper will begin with a review of literature on IBCs and leadership with sections focusing on structural, human resource, political, and symbolic institutional concerns. Then, a discussion of the literature, including a summary and limitations, will be presented. A statement of personal biases will be provided. The paper will conclude with final thoughts, applications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

### **Literature Review**

The literature on IBCs and leadership of higher education professionals will be presented in four sections

utilizing the four organizational frames presented by Bolman and Deal (1991, 1997): structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. This model was chosen due to the varied nature of the issues IBCs face. An organizational model focused on one aspect, such as a purely teleological, evolutionary, or cultural model would not allow the same breadth of issues to be explored. While other multiple frame models exist, the four focuses of Bolman and Deal are particularly useful for both compartmentalizing issues and exposing the ways in which issues arise throughout various aspects of IBC operation. Higher education professionals may view challenges and make decisions using different combinations of frames depending on the situation and their own leadership style (Bolman & Deal, 1997).

**Structural frame.** The structural frame “posits that effective organizations define clear goals, differentiate people into specific roles, and coordinate diverse activities through policies, rules, and chain of command” (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 511). Structural challenges frequently are the focus of higher education professionals when institutions are considering opening a new IBC and will persist throughout the operation of the new campus (Harding & Lammey, 2011). Leaders will be continually challenged with geographic, personnel, policy, and time related barriers between campuses. Lane (2011) stresses the importance of crossing campus, administrative, and temporal boundaries for successful leadership of IBCs. Some of these barriers can be adjusted through structural changes; for example, personnel and policy barriers can be removed by developing business practices for cooperation between staff and aligning policies at the home campus and IBC (Gopal, 2011; Harding & Lammey, 2011; Hughes, 2011; Lane, 2011). Other barriers such as the geographic separation, time-zone differences, and workweek differences are inherent to IBCs (Lane, 2011). Leaders need to recognize these barriers and make adjustments to accommodate individuals at both campuses (Lane, 2011).

Business practices that can alleviate barriers related to personnel are important when attempting to select and prepare staff for an IBC. The policies created should include evaluation of hiring practices and trainings to inform the ongoing process of building a successful IBC staff (Gopal, 2011). Evaluation of IBC quality and alignment with the home campus ensures that an underachieving branch campus does not tarnish the reputation of the home campus. In order to

maintain quality and ensure alignment, institutions may provide opportunities for exemplary employees to transition to similar positions at the IBC, serve on search committees, and train IBC employees with similar functions.

IBC operation challenges higher education professionals with issues that are without precedent at the home campus. Despite the difficulties leaders may have in applying home institution policies at an IBC, considering – and when appropriate mimicking – home institution policies is beneficial for creating a sound structure (Harding & Lammey, 2011; Hughes, 2011). When supervisors of IBC staff are based at the home campus, it can be difficult to address issues that arise at the IBC that are not easily managed with established policies and practices of the home campus (Hughes, 2011). IBC and home campus staff must work together to develop and agree upon new procedures to successfully resolve these issues (Hughes, 2011).

**Human resource frame.** The human resource frame focuses on the fit of the organization and the individual (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Bolman and Deal (1997) state, “A good fit benefits both: individuals find meaningful and satisfying work, and organizations get the talent and energy they need to succeed” (p. 105). The human resource frame should influence leaders making hiring and admissions decisions as the fit of a person to both the culture of the home institution and the IBC is important for the success of that employee or student (Bolman & Deal, 1997).

The fit for faculty of IBCs is particularly crucial as it can be difficult to attract candidates when, “Research active senior academics are usually reluctant to leave their work at home campuses and junior academics fear that working overseas will limit their chances for promotion” (Wilkins, 2010, p. 396). Additionally, few external candidates will join an IBC prepared to assimilate to the cultures of both the home institution and IBC. In discussing the necessity for cross-cultural training for faculty at IBCs, Gopal (2011) stresses the human resources frame with a focus on investing in the workforce to improve both performance and the institution (Bolman & Deal, 1997).

Retention of students is influenced by their fit with the IBC (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Hughes (2011) states, “If the distance between what students expect from the ‘brand’ of an institution and the teaching and learning experience they receive is too great, they will find a different institution to attend” (p. 27). Additionally,

Wilkins (2010) asserts, "If international branch campuses do not achieve standards of quality comparable with their parent campuses, then it is quite possible that the branch campuses will fail to attract students in sufficient numbers to enable their survival" (p. 391). Institutions depend on students for revenue and as the client for their service; therefore, ensuring fit between the students' needs and expectations with the product the IBC delivers is imperative for higher education professionals (Bolman & Deal, 1997). Wilkins (2010) recommends that IBC leaders survey the host region's educational systems and design programs to fit the needs and desires of the target students.

**Political frame.** IBCs exist in a complex internal and external political environment, thus the political frame is pertinent for higher education professionals at all levels of the institution. Savvy leadership is needed to determine the distribution of resources, which may be inequitable between campuses. How the home campus prioritizes IBC issues is a reflection of the distribution of power and its variety of sources (Bolman & Deal, 1997). The political dynamics between the home campus and the IBC faculty can lead to a disenfranchised IBC faculty if healthy professional relationships are not maintained (Dobos, 2011). A lack of emphasis on fostering and maintaining professionalism between home and branch campus staffs leads to friction between coalitions, negatively impacting the political climate of the institution (Bolman & Deal, 1997). The home campus may face an eventual loss of control of the IBC if the isolation of staff members becomes complete (Dobos, 2011).

Political struggles between the institution operating the IBC and the host country also challenge leaders. Lane (2011) states, "... [IBC higher education professionals] need to be aware of the stability or fragility of the local environment. Most IBCs are located in developing nations, where both governments and the higher education sectors may be in flux" (p. 10). Higher education professionals must balance assuming financial risk and relinquishing control to an external party when considering the financing of IBCs by the home institution and/or the host country (Sakamoto & Chapman, 2012).

An additional coalition in the political arena facing IBCs is made up of the accrediting agencies that both the home institution and IBC answer to. Accreditation issues for IBCs illustrate how leaders at all levels must deal with complex political issues as all offices are involved with providing documentation for accreditation

agencies to review (Dobos, 2011; Harding & Lammey, 2011; Kinser, 2011). IBCs must negotiate and bargain in order to achieve accreditation when the requirements of different agencies in the host and home country are at odds (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Kinser, 2011). **Symbolic frame.** Bolman and Deal (1997) state, "Symbols embody and express an organization's culture – the interwoven pattern of beliefs, values, practices, and artifacts that define for members who they are and how they are to do things" (p. 217). Staff members at IBCs frequently have experiences that vary greatly from those at the home campus and these experiences influence cultural development (Dobos, 2011; Hughes, 2011). Dealing with the subculture of an IBC can be challenging for higher education leaders who must navigate a variety of subcultures, in addition to maintaining an overarching institutional culture (Kuh, Siegel, & Thomas, 2001).

An IBC eventually develops unique symbols that distinguish it from the home campus. This development is due to external influences surrounding the IBC and can be magnified when there is too much separation or independence from the home campus. These distinct symbols may present challenges for leaders if they oppose home campus symbols and traditions (Lane, 2011). This challenge extends from the founding of an IBC throughout the process of creating and maintaining a culture at the IBC that reflects the host country and the home institution (Lane, 2011). Higher education professionals must determine when to embrace differences and when to push the IBC culture to conform to home campus culture (Bolman & Deal, 1997). This balance is difficult to maintain, particularly when members of the home institution or host country feel that they are not represented within the IBC (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Hughes, 2011).

The addition of an IBC can affect the culture of the home campus. Kuh et al. (2001) state, "Over time, the influx of newcomers can challenge and change the status quo" (p. 51). This shift to becoming a global institution represents a symbolic change and the integration between campuses is imperative to the success of the institution as a whole (Lane, 2011). IBC leaders face ever-present cultural decisions, necessitating the symbolic frame to underpin and inform other frames when considering issues.

## **Discussion**

Summary of literature. The literature demonstrates the necessity of a multi-frame view for successful

IBC higher education professionals as topics surfaced repeatedly in the different frames. The salience of culture makes the symbolic frame crucial for IBC higher education professionals to employ throughout their transforming, strategizing, and managing efforts. Sakamoto and Chapman (2012) caution leaders using the symbolic frame to not overlook the concerns of other frames, by stating, “The risk is that enthusiasm for the symbolic benefits may overshadow and mask operational problems that need attention” (p. 266).

**Limitations.** Researching IBC higher education professionals’ challenges and best practices led to the identification of limitations in the literature. The relative newness of the phenomenon of IBCs in the history of higher education leads to a deficient amount of literature on these organizations, limiting the scope of research available. Recent studies have helped to fill the gap in academic literature; however, more work will be needed before a comprehensive picture of IBC leadership exists. Researchers need time to digest the recent studies and respond to, expand upon, or refute current findings. The lack of an accepted definition for IBCs is another limitation for the literature. Each author defines IBCs differently and is thus addressing a different organizational group. Until a single definition is accepted and widely used, it is difficult to accurately compare results between studies.

### **Personal Biases**

As an employee of an IBC based at a home campus, I have experienced challenges and learned best practices discussed in this paper. This paper is meant to provide an overview of knowledge garnered from academic literature on this topic; however, the applications for practice section is informed by my professional experiences as well as the literature. I have purposefully limited the use of examples from my experiences in all other sections to maintain objectivity.

### **Conclusion**

Furthering the understanding of challenges faced at IBCs and some best practices that have emerged is crucial to the continued success of IBCs. IBCs require higher education professionals to face new and unique challenges while contending with familiar issues common to many types of higher education institutions. The use of a variety of organizational frames enables higher education professionals to succeed at IBCs. As IBCs continue to open and close around the globe it is important for both practitioners and researchers to assess what factors lead to successes and failures in

this type of institution.

**Applications for practice.** Higher education professionals who currently work at institutions operating IBCs or who are considering transitioning into a role within an IBC should familiarize themselves with the literature relating to this topic. Practitioners should be willing to look at issues from a variety of frames and be open to the ideas of the different internal and external stakeholders. Transparency and communication with all involved parties will help practitioners to operate a successful IBC. Structural concerns will require higher education professionals to adapt existing policies to meet the needs of the IBC. For example, an IT department may need to adjust the day and time when technological systems are down for scheduled maintenance to accommodate varying workweeks. Human resource concerns impact the selection of higher education professionals and students for IBCs. Admissions professionals must carefully select students who will be able to excel at the IBC and integrate successfully with the home campus students and staff. Political finesse is required to maintain buy-in from the home institution and within the host country while balancing the needs of institutional stakeholders. Higher education professionals may employ bargaining skills to ensure that the needs of their department are met at both the home institution and the IBC. In considering the symbolic frame, higher education professionals should be acutely aware of cultural differences between the campuses. Adjustments must be made to localize the culture and mission of an IBC in order for the campus to be successful. Promoting cultural understanding and the development of a new unified institutional culture representing both the home campus and the IBC minimizes clashes.

### **Recommendations for future research.**

Future research on IBC higher education professional leadership issues is needed to assist in the continued development of this institutional type. One area for further exploration is comparison of leadership challenges and successes at domestic branch campuses with those at IBCs. Additionally, longitudinal studies tracking the leadership and institutional progressions of a set of IBCs would be informative for viewing trends and discovering what factors are most salient to the successes and failures of different IBCs. A final recommendation for research is further case studies of IBCs to distill the differences within this organizational type and help form a definition for an IBC versus other offshore and study abroad programs.

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