

SUCCESS AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE
TRI-COLLEGE UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM

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Candice Allar

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Success and Sustainability of the Tri-College University Consortium

By

Candice Allar

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to document the history of the Tri-College University (TCU) consortium from 1969 to the present. The two research objectives are to:

1. Identify the factors which played an important role in the success and sustainability of the Tri-College University Consortium.
2. Conduct an evaluation of the needs, satisfaction, and concerns of current and past faculty and administration involved with the Tri-College University Consortium.

Both research questions were addressed with the use of a structural equation model developed and tested by Schmidt (2000) to identify the conditions, common values, attitudes, themes, and patterns of behaviors that contribute to consortia or collaborative longevity.

The findings of the study supported many of the principles associated with Schmidt's research. Those principles were documented in Schmidt's research in the form of constructs within a systems context. The two main systems included: organizational structures and the adaptive process. The following constructs associated with organizational structures, specifically with organizational support, (Executive Function: Commitment and Organizational Control Structure), along with the associated constructs for the adaptive process (Archival, Status Monitoring Function, and Action) were supported in Schmidt's data as significant indicators of consortium success and sustainability.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	x
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of the Study	2
Significance of the Study	3
Limitations of the Study.....	5
Definition of Terms.....	5
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW	7
Collaboration in Higher Education	7
Success and Sustainability of Inter-Institutional Collaboration.....	10
Tri-College University History	13
Tri-College University Structure	19
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY	22
Participants.....	22
Data Collection	22
Research Design.....	24
Instrumentation	25
Data Analysis.....	26
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS.....	27
Participant Demographics.....	27

Research Objective 1	28
Executive Function: Commitment	29
Executive Function: Organizational Control Structure.....	33
Archival.....	36
Status Monitoring Function	38
Action.....	41
Research Objective 2	43
Challenges of Collaboration	43
Institutional Impact	45
Factors of Success and Sustainability	46
The Future of Tri-College University.....	47
CHAPTER 5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	49
Summary	49
Commitment	49
Benefits of Participation	50
Consortia Goals and Priorities	51
Future Direction of Tri-College University	52
Conclusions.....	53
Recommendations.....	54
REFERENCES	55
APPENDIX A. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	60
APPENDIX B. SAMPLE NOTIFICATION LETTER	63
APPENDIX C. SURVEY INSTRUMENT	64

APPENDIX D. A TIMELINE OF TRI-COLLEGE UNIVERSITY76

APPENDIX E. IRB APPROVAL.....83

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning Commitment from Current Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, and College/University Presidents and Vice-Presidents.....	30
2. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning Commitment from Past Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, and College/University Presidents and Vice-Presidents.....	30
3. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning Institutional Benefits from Current Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, and College/University Presidents and Vice-Presidents	31
4. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning Institutional Benefits from Past Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, and College/University Presidents and Vice-Presidents.....	32
5. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning Personal Benefits from Current College/University Presidents and Vice-Presidents	33
6. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning Personal Benefits from Past College/University Presidents and Vice-Presidents.....	33
7. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning Consortia Characteristics from Current Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, College/University Faculty, and Program Directors	35
8. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning Consortia Characteristics from Past Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, College/University Faculty, and Program Directors	35
9. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning Consortia Goals, Policies and Priorities from Current Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, and College/University Presidents and Vice-Presidents	37
10. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning Consortia Goals, Policies and Priorities from Past Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, and College/University Presidents and Vice-Presidents	38
11. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning the Status Monitoring Function of the Consortia from Current Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, College/University Faculty, and Program Directors.....	40

12. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning the Status Monitoring Function of the Consortia from Past Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, College/University Faculty, and Program Directors.....	41
13. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning the Programs and Activities of the Consortia from Current College/University Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Faculty, and Program Directors.....	42
14. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning the Programs and Activities of the Consortia from Past College/University Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Faculty, and Program Directors.....	43

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Participant Demographics	28

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the early twentieth century, consortia have been a means for shared opportunity and collaboration among institutions in response to emerging economic and political problems faced in higher education. Throughout the past century, modern consortia have evolved into highly collaborative arrangements. Collaboration, in comparison to coordination or cooperation, both defined later in this chapter, is the most intense way organizations work together while maintaining separate identities (Ray, 2002). Neal (1998) proposed that the contemporary concept of academic consortia was a product of the 1960s and early 1970s when higher education was operating in an expansionist mode (p.46). Baus and Ransbottom (1999) added that consortia formed during this time to “address common issues through cooperative initiatives in response to student needs, economic pressures, and federal government incentives” (p.3).

According to Pritzen (as cited in Armstrong, 1997) “consortia in the twenty-first century have become vehicles for consolidation, focus, and self-preservation” (p.2). Although some of the needs and pressures currently facing higher education are different than in the 1960s and 1970s, May and Smith (1992) suggested that institutions continue to turn to consortia as part of the solution to those issues. External pressures, such as increases in tuition and fees, reduced state funding for institutions, decreases in the availability of federal grant and loan money, increased student debt burdens, and the heightened demand for institutional accountability are all pressing problems facing higher education in the twenty-first century (Dickeson, 2004).

Regardless of the motivating factor, consortia have been perceived to be both an affordable and realistic approach to many problems in higher education. Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) have proposed the idea that organizations are often interdependent, with management actively seeking partnership opportunities. The success of these partnerships depends on many factors, which will be discussed in detail in the literature review. Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) defined success in general terms, stating that “a successful consortium supports its participants through shared risk and reward, at the same time strengthening the capacity of each partner college to pursue its unique institutional mission” (p.3).

An example of one successful consortium is the Tri-College University (TCU) in Moorhead, MN and Fargo, ND. This consortia, includes three institutions, which are different in composition and mission. The idea for TCU evolved in 1962 after a meeting of representatives from universities in five Midwestern states, including: Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Nebraska. Representatives at this meeting concluded that the Fargo Moorhead area offered the best opportunity for the development of cooperative programs in the upper Midwest (Jones, 1991). Members of TCU are: Concordia College, a private 4-year liberal arts college, affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America; Minnesota State University Moorhead, a public 4-year liberal arts university; and North Dakota State University, a public 4-year land grant institution.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to document the history of the Tri-College University (TCU) consortium from 1969 to the present. The two research objectives are to:

1. Identify the factors which play an important role in the success and sustainability of the Tri-College University Consortium.
2. Conduct an evaluation of the needs, satisfaction, and concerns of current and past faculty and administration involved with the Tri-College University Consortium.

Significance of the Study

Higher education is becoming increasingly competitive. Financial constraints, such as decreases in state funding and private endowments, and rising costs are forcing institutions to operate more efficiently, with less financial support. In order to be competitive, institutions must reduce costs and contain tuition rates, while improving the quality of educational programs and support services they offer. In addition to financial concerns, a study conducted by the American Council on Education, as cited in Eckel, Hill, & Green (1998), detailed additional challenges facing higher education. Administrators and faculty members surveyed in that study identified the following issues:

- Pressure to contain costs and keep higher education affordable.
- Public demands for educational and financial accountability.
- Increased demands for educational quality and excellent teaching, with their attendant implications for promotion and tenure policies and practices, teaching loads, faculty productivity, and curricula.
- The growth of alternative models of post-secondary education delivery including distance education, corporate universities, and transnational delivery.
- The explosion of knowledge produced both inside and outside the academy.

- The need to serve an increasingly diverse society.
- The pervasive impacts of technology on all areas of higher education (p. 4).

Increasing the quality of educational programs and services to remain competitive, while dealing with prevailing financial, political, and social constraints can be difficult for institutions. As a result, institutions turn to consortia as a means of dealing with the many challenges facing higher education. Offerman (1997) observed that “collaboration is a means to deal with expectations for higher education institutions to become efficient, productive and cost-effective” (p.28). Twigg (1994) further suggested that collaboration is indeed a method for colleges and universities to meet the needs of students in the twenty-first century. Twigg further contends, “it is time to move beyond the walls of our individual colleges and universities to join forces with other institutions, with corporations, and with public policy makers to revitalize American higher education” (p.13).

There is a long history of collaboration among institutions of higher education, but not all collaborations have proven successful or sustainable. Literature on consortia concludes that collaboration will continue to evolve and be utilized as a means to increase educational opportunities to a greater number of students. Offerman (1997) suggested a need for further research, stating that “it is desirable to learn what we can from both successful and failed collaborations to identify actions or circumstances that may enhance the potential for future success” (p. 28).

Limitations of the Study

The research presented in this paper is limited to one higher education consortium and may not be representative of other consortia. Furthermore, because this consortium is a combination of four-year private and public institutions, research findings of this study can be drastically different as compared to other consortia with different compositions.

Additional limitations include: small sample size and a short time period of study. Pidduck (2005) stated that case study research by its nature is limited with small sample sizes.

The case study approach used in this study provided data and opinions regarding the success and sustainability of TCU from both the current and past presidents of each institution, the current and past TCU provosts, as well as faculty and administration instrumental in the development and current administration of TCU and its programs. Although key participants are valuable as primary resources, such information may be biased. Bias of this nature can originate from personal experience, perception, or normal memory loss due to the transitory nature of personal recollection. Construct validity will be addressed by the use of the survey used in this study, as it has already been tested in a past research study conducted by Schmidt (2000).

Definition of Terms

The following definitions were used by the researcher throughout this study to differentiate between commonly interchangeable terms.

Collaboration: A process in which a group of autonomous stakeholders of an issue or domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures to act or decide on issues related to that domain (Wood and Gray, as cited in Kezar, 2005).

Consortium: A formal voluntary organization of three or more postsecondary educational institutions formed to administer multiple academic cooperative programs directed by at least one full-time professional and requiring an annual contribution or other tangible evidence of long-term commitment of member institutions (Patterson, 1979 as documented in Schmidt (2000)).

Cooperation: Voluntary, shorter-term, informal relationships of nonaligned colleges and universities in which only information is shared. Goals, resources, and structures remain separate among the participating institutions (Ray, 2002).

Coordination: Short-term relationship in which presumed risk can be easily predicted. Some shared leadership and control, but the institutions involved function relatively independent of each other (Ray, 2002).

Tri-College University: The formal educational consortium comprised of Concordia College, Minnesota State University Moorhead, and North Dakota State University

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter presents a review of literature and research documenting the history of higher education consortia in the United States. The chapter will also provide examples of different types of consortia arrangements, as well as common factors of successful consortia.

The review was conducted by using the following: the Texas Tech University library, the Michigan State University library, the NDSU, Concordia, and MSUM libraries, and published Tri-College University documents. The review is organized into the following sections: Collaboration in Higher Education, A Rationale for Inter-Institutional Collaboration, Success and Sustainability of Inter-Institutional Collaboration, Tri-College University History, and Tri-College University Structure.

Collaboration in Higher Education

The Claremont Colleges, founded in 1925, and incorporated in 2000 as Claremont University Consortium is one of the oldest examples of higher education collaboration in the United States. This consortium includes seven private liberal arts institutions; five undergraduate and two graduate institutions, all located in eastern Los Angeles, California. Member institutions include the following: Claremont Graduate University, Claremont McKenna College, Harvey Mudd College, Keck Graduate Institute of Applied Life Sciences, Pitzer College, Pomona College, and Scripps College.

The above institutions share a budget of \$34 million and collaborate in both administrative and academic activities. Administrative collaboration is focused on institutional support services, such as campus safety, a central library, health and

counseling services, ethnic centers, a central bookstore, physical plant and facilities support, payroll and accounting, information technology, human resources, real estate, risk management, and employee benefits. Academic activities include cross-registration for over 2,500 courses annually, as well as joint departments, degrees, and intercollegiate programs.

Collaborative agreements in higher education continued to form throughout the twentieth century, but did not start to boom until the later part of the twentieth century. One example, Five Colleges, Inc., was established in 1965 to “promote the broad educational and cultural objectives of its member institutions” (Affolter-Caine, 2008, p.60). Among the member institutions, Amherst College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst were the four original member institutions. The fifth, Hampshire College, opened in 1970. Membership consists of one public university and four private liberal arts colleges, two of which are women’s colleges. The Five Colleges consortium includes: a joint automated library system, open cross-registration, meal exchange, joint departments and programs, and inter-campus transportation. The members of the Five Colleges consortium are closely tied together geographically and by a common commitment to the liberal arts and undergraduate education.

Inter-institutional collaboration continued to grow throughout the 1960’s and 1970’s. Grupe (1972) suggested the reason for growth in collaborative arrangements was due to dramatic increases in enrollment in colleges and universities. These increases were made possible by the creation of the G.I. Bill after World War II which provided federal government incentives to veterans to pursue post-secondary education. Patterson (1974) concluded and further suggested that the increase in collaboration was in response to social

and educational demands combined with financial constraints. Economic pressures created by the increased need for programs and the need to develop additional resources to support both faculty and students made it difficult for institutions to meet the demands for the efficient administration of programs, as well as the development of new programs.

The U.S. Department of Education responded to the emerging needs of institutions by providing significant financial incentives for the formation of consortia to deal with emerging institutional needs (Baus and Ramsbottom, 1999). Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965 “provided support for ‘developing institutions’ to form collaborative agreements in an effort to improve their positions in the main currents of academic life” (Patterson 1974, p. 12).

The movement toward collaborative agreements began to decline in the 1980s, along with enrollment rates, resulting in the dissolution of many institutional collaborations. Lack of perceived need, support, cooperation, and motivation were all factors contributing to the limited lifespan of these agreements. Kanter (1994), along with Bleeke & Ernst (1995) noted that failure rates are high and the lifespan of consortia are temporary. Both suggested that the median lifespan of a consortium is about seven years, and seven out of ten collaborative ventures fall short of expectations and ultimately disband.

Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) further stated that, “many consortia formed during this time eventually dismantled due to the loss of external motivation and external support; however, a renewed interest in inter-institutional collaboration reoccurred in the 1990s” (p. 3). This renewed interest resulted from the impact of compounding environmental stressors on colleges and universities that continued throughout the 2000s.

External environmental stressors, such as decreases in funding, declining resources and increased competition have made it difficult for colleges and universities to maintain and expand educational programs and services. The results of a study completed by Zhang (2006), which are consistent with results of recent studies by Blose, Porter, & Kokkelenberg (2006), and Ryan (2004) stated that organizational activities are influenced primarily through the actions of external resource providers. As both Zhang (2006) and Hasbrouck (1997) noted, state appropriated funds for colleges and universities have continued to decrease, and if they do not increase, colleges and universities will be forced to change operational practices in order to remain efficient. One of those changes, as concluded by Baus and Ramsbottom (1999) is collaboration ... “the rising consumer cost of higher education (costs are rising faster than the rate of inflation) has led to national studies of the causes and cures for the rise, among which is the use of collaborative strategies to help control costs” (p.3).

Margulus, L., Price, W., & Tracy, J. (2003) reported that “As educational indicators continue to signal tough times ahead, higher education institutions are also likely to continue to face further belt tightening. This means operating more efficiently will also require that institutions look for opportunities to collaborate through inter-institutional partnerships that provide creative ways to address program needs in high demand fields” (p. 14).

Success and Sustainability of Inter-Institutional Collaboration

Grupe (1972), an acknowledged authority on development of academic consortia in the United States, produced several studies in the 1970s, which laid the ground work for

further study of consortia success. In his research he outlined ten significant factors of successful consortia:

- They are creative. To many persons the idea of interinstitutional cooperation itself is a new, creative idea, and so it may be for a new consortium. To be truly creative, however, implies something beyond mere newness and originality. It also connotes an ability to establish a new direction and orientation to a situation.
- They are programmatic. A program has year to year continuity and represents an accepted mode of operation. Successful consortium arrangements are often bolstered by smooth, informal, supportive environments with transient elements that are helpful but not sufficient conditions for continuing productivity. The consortium's activities must tie directly into the disciplines faculty are teaching, or into the techniques researchers are using to stay on the forefront of knowledge in their discipline. The activities should have a comfortable place in the ongoing affairs of the college.
- They are expert. To design an appropriate and coherent system of any type whether it be social or technological requires a persistent effort and a commitment of expertise. Whenever a program necessitates the involvement of specialized talents, absence of talent cannot be offset by cooperation.
- They are academic in orientation. College and university personnel are generally more interested in seeing their primary goals, education and research being dealt with than they are with purely economic goals. Programs which offer new educational experiences to students or that expose good faculty to interested students in creative environments take precedence over purely administrative concerns.
- They are high risk.
- They are of importance to the institutions. There must always be a generic distinction between the goals of a consortium and the goals of member colleges. The purpose can never be to do something that the colleges cannot do. They should be of vital importance to the enhancement of the colleges themselves.
- They are open-ended. In large measure consortia and the programs they institute are most productive when they begin with objectives which are relatively unrestricted. Once the programs have sufficiently specific objectives to warrant implementation, there should be room for expansion and further growth; expansion with implications of significance for the entire effort.

- They have tangible impact. Financial commitments of substance carry with them a demand for noticeable results in some form.
- They permit broad access by faculty and students. The majority of choices a consortium decides to make among the range available should involve as wide a spectrum of participants as possible; not in the planning necessarily, but in the operation.
- They reinforce and strengthen existing programs. A growing consortium must capitalize on both short and long range types of reinforcement. (pp. 17-21)

More recent research conducted on higher education consortia identifies factors such as perceived need, expected benefits, and the resources each participating institution has to offer as contributing factors to the long-term success. Peterson (2002) defined success and sustainability of collaborative efforts by how members benefit and perceive the benefits of other members. Kaganoff (1998) agreed with Peterson (2002), citing that successful collaboration “requires that all parties involved benefit from the relationship and understand how the member institutions also benefit from the relationship; particularly how their individual involvement affects the experience of the others” (p. 9). This supports Imel and Zengler’s (2002) belief that willingness to collaborate must be accompanied with a perceived need for expertise offered by partnering groups.

In addition, collaborations are more likely to succeed when the partner institutions want to be involved, share the same goals and compatible organizational structures and create an atmosphere of trust and commitment (Beder, 1984). Iwanowsky (1996) believed that in addition to commitment to the relationship, partners must have the appropriate people involved in order to accomplish the goals. Partners must also assume responsibility for following through with their commitment and solving problems together.

The RAND report (Kaganoff, 1998) cited two studies, Baker (1993), which found several common factors in successful collaborations:

- A shared vision
- Clearly defined goals
- A focus on real problems
- An institutionalized decision-making structure
- Local decision making
- Continuity among partnership personnel
- Systematic communication with all partners and with the community
- Sufficient time for institutional change to occur
- The provision of resources to those whose roles and relationships will change
- The provision of professional development training

Tri-College University History

Tri-College University developed as a result of a recommendation by the Common Market in Higher Education group. This group, comprised of representatives from state universities from Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Montana met in 1962 to discuss the development of cooperative programs in the upper Midwest. The group concluded that the Fargo-Moorhead area would provide the best opportunity for the exploration of cooperative programs. According to information found in the Tri-College University archives, the presidents and academic deans of Concordia College, Moorhead State College, and North Dakota State University created an informal arrangement called the Fargo-Moorhead Common Market in Education. Jones (1991) stated that the earliest

cooperative effort of the Fargo-Moorhead Common Market centered on course exchange and the library agreement.

Legislation formalizing the cooperative relationship among the three institutions was passed in 1965 in Minnesota and 1969 in North Dakota. During this time, a Tri-College Committee was formed with the purpose of identifying additional areas of cooperation. The committee was comprised of the three college presidents, the three academic vice presidents, a student government representative from each school, members of the North Dakota State Legislature and Board of Higher Education, the Concordia College Board of Regents, the Minnesota State College Board, and the Fargo Moorhead chamber of commerce. The position of Tri-College University provost was initially funded by a grant from the Hill Family Foundation in 1969. The first formal agreement detailing the nature of the cooperative agreement was authorized by the governing boards of all three schools in 1976. Bylaws were drafted and amended in 1979, and additional agreements regarding course exchange, the educational administration program, and the nursing program were drafted and accepted in 1974, 1976, and 1985. In 1977 the TCU Commission, comprised of academic administrators from each school, was formed with the charge of advising the provost on policy and implementation.

As previously stated, one of the earliest formal cooperative efforts of TCU was the course exchange agreement. Course exchange began with only a few specific courses with NDSU's ROTC being the most popular. By 1970, the course exchange agreement expanded to allow any full-time student to take one course offered at either of the other institutions, while registering and paying tuition at their home institution. Grades earned via TCU courses are recorded on the student's home institution transcript. This agreement

eventually expanded further to allow NDSU and MSUM students unlimited exchange privileges between the two schools while Concordia continued with the original one course limit. The agreement evolved even further to allow students from NDSU or MSUM to minor in an area offered by the other institution, if their home institution does not offer the program.

Transportation to each of the campuses, according to Jones (1991) was first provided by busses donated by local merchants, and contracts with local taxi companies to each institution. TCU now contracts with the local transit authority, Metro Area Transit (MAT). Rides on the MAT busses are provided free of charge to students.

The TCU library agreement was another early TCU endeavor. Formally established in 1970 this agreement allowed accessibility of library facilities of each institution to all students and faculty (Jones, 1991). This agreement also included shared book purchasing, shuttle service and interlibrary loan. According to the TCU archives, in order to avoid duplication in content and offer both breadth and depth of material in the areas of specialization of each institution, each of the three libraries assumed the responsibility for developing an in-depth collection in certain subject areas. Broadly stated these are:

- NDSU—the sciences and technology, and architecture
- MSU—education, business, music, and law
- Concordia—religion, philosophy, classics, Jewish studies, and East African studies

The TCU Film Library, housed at Minnesota State University Moorhead, provides films and videos for classroom use to Tri-College faculty members. This instructional service is free of charge. The TCU Film Library purchases only those video materials that have been

requested by Tri-College faculty members for their classes. The film library closed in late 2009.

Grant support funded many additional TCU programs. The Humanities Forum was funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1972. This collaborative program between the philosophy departments at the three institutions resulted in the development of three courses taught in common, and established a lecture series which brought 15 prominent philosophers to TCU.

Another early Hill Foundation grant funded the establishment of the Center for Environmental Studies. The Center for Environmental Studies was incorporated with TCU in the early 1970's. According to the Tri-College University archives, the group, comprised of faculty members from the sciences and social sciences from the three institutions, focused on the following types of activities:

- Teaching of undergraduate courses in environmental studies
- Research in environmental matters
- Community education programs

With the growth in collaborative programs, the need for developing a consistent means of communication among the three campuses and with the Fargo-Moorhead community became apparent. A monthly publication called TRICE was launched in 1971. TRICE eventually became a quarterly publication and became an important means for communicating outside of the TCU community, as it was circulated to high school counselors throughout Minnesota and North Dakota.

TCU has administered two joint curricular ventures since its inception, a baccalaureate program in nursing, and a master's program in Educational Administration.

Planning for the nursing program began with the establishment of the TCU Nursing Council in 1978. This council was charged with the task of coordinating a nursing education program in the Fargo-Moorhead area. After considerable discussion, the TCU four-year baccalaureate degree program was approved by the Minnesota and North Dakota nursing boards. The new program between NDSU and Concordia College began in 1985. The 13 full-time faculty and program directors became faculty members at both institutions, an unprecedented situation for both institutions (Jones, 1991).

TCU functioned as the fiscal agent for the Nursing program's operating budget. The first students were admitted to the program in the fall of 1986. All of the students had junior standing and met the necessary prerequisites. Once admitted to the program, students spent their junior year studying at Concordia College and their senior year at NDSU. The students graduated from the institution to which they had initially been admitted. The program continued to operate until 2007, when Concordia College developed its own baccalaureate level nursing program.

The second TCU joint curricular venture was developed between Moorhead State College and NDSU. After being approved at both institutions, a proposal for the Educational Administration program was submitted to the North Dakota Board of Higher Education in 1969, citing the need to provide training to educational administrators to meet new requirements for certification in each state. The proposal also cited the need for a joint program due to insufficient resources of each institution. According to Jones (1991), Roland Dille, the President of Moorhead State College, wrote the following in support of the proposal:

The need for cooperation is clear. Neither of our departments is sufficiently well-balanced to offer on its own the best available program. But with the practical melding of existing personnel and library holdings, few single institutions in the region could match our combined efforts. Accordingly, Moorhead State College is anxious to explore the possibilities of the joint program. (p.7)

The North Dakota Board of Higher Education declined the proposal and the idea of a joint specialist program was not revisited again until 1973. By the end of the 1975-76 academic year, approval had been gained from all necessary campus governance bodies and institutional boards to begin offering two graduate programs in educational administration: the master's degree and the education specialist degree, with the understanding that TCU itself would be the degree-granting institution (Jones 1991). The first program chair was appointed in early summer 1976, and the program officially began admitting students for the 1976-77 school year.

Tri-College University was accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools in the spring of 1979. In the spring of 1989, the Tri-College University Educational Administration Program received initial accreditation from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). In the spring of 1994, the TCU Board of Directors determined that the Tri-College University Educational Administration Program degrees would be assumed by each of the participating institutions beginning July 1, 1996. According to TCU archives, the Educational Administration Program was renamed Educational Leadership in 1995 to reflect the changing needs of the geographical region it serves.

The following are the newest collaborative endeavors administered by TCU, as stated on the TCU website:

- NEW (National Education for Women's) Leadership Institute - a non-partisan leadership education program designed to empower college women to get involved in the political process. The mission of the institute is to encourage civic and political participation and to provide public leadership training to women who do not already have extensive leadership experience.
- Intercampus art agreement - allows Concordia art students to use MSUM Art Department's foundry to cast in bronze objects they have sculpted in wax.
- Mathematics Colloquia – series of events sponsored by the three mathematics departments. The events are open to all students and faculty, and rotate among the schools.
- History Lectureship - awarded to one faculty member each year, rotating among the three schools. The History Lectureship originated more than 20 years ago. The first lecture was at NDSU in 1977.

Tri-College University Structure

The chief executive officer of the Tri-College consortium is the provost. A Board of Directors comprised of the three institutional presidents and five community members makes overall policy decisions for the consortium. On a rotating basis, the student body president of one of the three campuses is also included in board meetings. The principal representatives for TCU affairs at each member institution are the vice presidents for Academic Affairs, serving as the TCU Commissioners.

The current mission of Tri-College University is to assist Concordia College, Minnesota State University Moorhead, and North Dakota State University by promoting cooperative efforts that will enrich the academic environment for the benefit of students, faculty, and the community. The current objectives of TCU are:

- Assist in the establishment and the maintenance of coordinated programs among and between Concordia College, Minnesota State University Moorhead, and North Dakota State University (or their successors), together with affiliated institutions and supporting agencies and organizations, as a means of maximizing higher educational services for the people of the region.
- Serve as an agency through which existing and potential educational programs and courses of instruction at the above enumerated institutions can be promoted and strengthened.
- Promote Fargo-Moorhead as a regional center of higher education.
- Serve as an agency through which voluntary and governmental resources, financial and otherwise, may be received and dispensed to supplement the educational endeavors by Concordia College, Minnesota State University Moorhead, and North Dakota State University (or their successors), and affiliated and supporting agencies and institutions.

The review of literature provided a rationale for the development of consortia among institutions of higher education, as well as a framework for the identification of factors that contribute to the success of consortia. The review also provided a history of the

Tri-College University consortia. The next chapter provides an overview of the research methodology used for this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to document the history of the Tri-College University (TCU) consortium from 1969 to the present. The two research objectives are to:

1. Identify the factors which played an important role in the success and sustainability of the Tri-College University Consortium.
2. Conduct an evaluation of the needs, satisfaction, and concerns of current and past faculty and administration involved with the Tri-College University Consortium.

Participants

The sample in this study was comprised of current and past college and university presidents, TCU provosts, program directors, as well as faculty involved in the development and current administration of TCU. Sampling is defined by Merriam (1998) as the “selection of a research site, time, people and events in a field research” (p. 60). “The number of participants in a sample depend on questions being asked, data being gathered, the analysis in progress, the resources available to support the study, and so on” (Merriam, 1998, p. 62). A full list of participants is located in appendix A.

Data Collection

Sources of historical significance documenting the development of the Tri-College University included: surveys, organizational meeting minutes, mission statements of the consortium and member institutions, university histories, institutional catalogues/bulletins, and the insight of current and past administrations and faculty.

A structured survey, based on a model developed by Schmidt (2000) was formulated to generate perspectives and observations from a number of current and past Tri College University (TCU) participants. This model was developed and tested to identify the conditions, common values, attitudes, themes, and patterns of behaviors that contribute to consortia or collaborative longevity. The structural equation modeling process used by Schmidt expressed those principles in the form of constructs within a systems context. The two main systems included: organizational structures and the adaptive process. The following constructs associated with organizational structures, specifically with organizational support, (Executive Function: Commitment and Organizational Control Structure), along with and the associated constructs for the adaptive process (Archival, Status Monitoring Function, and Action) were supported in Schmidt's data as significant indicators of consortium success and sustainability. This study focused on those four constructs:

Executive Function: interaction among member institutions, disparity, evaluations, consensus, consistency, and priorities (based on Archival and Status Monitoring functions)

Archival: goal consensus and consistency with policies and procedures

Status Monitoring Function: disparity between goals and activities, formal evaluations, consortium potential, and challenges

Action: status of the organization, satisfaction among members, and support of the organization by all members

Forty-four faculty and administrators from North Dakota State University (NDSU), Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM), and Concordia College currently

or previously involved with TCU, as well as past and present TCU administrators were surveyed. Verbal permission to survey faculty and staff from the three member institutions was received from the Vice President/Provost of Academic Affairs of each institution. Permission to survey current members of the TCU Provost office was received from the current TCU Provost.

The respondents were asked to provide experiential knowledge concerning their involvement in TCU, as well as provide recommendations for the future, allowing for greater clarity and more depth into the subject matter. An initial notification of the study was emailed to forty-four participants. A second email with a link and instructions to the online survey was sent out one week later.

Research Design

A case study approach was used in this study. Merriam (1998) defines a case study as "an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group" (p. 9). According to Patton (1990), "a qualitative case study seeks to describe that unit (program, event, person, process, institution, or social group) in depth and detail, in context, and holistically" (p. 54). Gall, M., Borg, W.R., & Gall, J.P. (1996) divided the elements of a case study into four parts: a phenomenon, the case, the focus, and the unit of analysis. "A case is a particular instance of a phenomenon; the focus is the aspect of the case that the research will concentrate upon; and the unit of analysis is an aspect of the phenomenon that can be sampled" (p. 545). Here the phenomenon is higher education consortia; the case is the Tri-College University, the focus is on the success of the consortia, and the unit of analysis is key players involved in the current administration of the Tri-College University.

As case studies explain a phenomenon through the participants who experienced it, the researcher attempted to document the history of the Tri-College University Consortium by examining documents and surveying people who were instrumental in the development and current administration of the consortium and sponsored programs. According to Merriam (1998), case studies allow the reader vicarious experiences detailed by descriptions and presentation of information.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study was constructed from a survey developed by Schmidt (2000). A draft of the survey was pre-tested by several administrators and faculty from NDSU, as well professional staff members and graduate students in the Center for Writers at NDSU in order to test for clarity of instruction and reliability. The revision suggestions from the reviewers were used to modify the instrument before it was sent to participants.

The survey contained questions concerning participant demographics, interaction among member institutions, goal consensus, consistency with policies and procedures, consortium potential, challenges, satisfaction among members, and support of the organization by all members. The survey consisted of both Likert scale and open-ended questions. The Group Decision Center at North Dakota State University was utilized to convert the survey from a paper format into the web-based format used for this study. A copy of the paper format of the survey instrument is included as Appendix C.

Approval for the study was obtained from the North Dakota State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Documents submitted to the IRB for permission to administer the study included: the instrument, cover letter, and waiver of informed consent.

Data Analysis

This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative approaches to analyze the data collected. The quantitative data was analyzed utilizing percentages and theme-coding of the following constructs in the structural equation modeling process developed by Schmidt (2000): Executive Function: Commitment, Executive Function: Organizational Control Structure, Archival, Status Monitoring Function, and Action. The qualitative data was analyzed using theme-coding. Participant responses were used to support conclusions to open-ended questions, where applicable. The next chapter provides an overview of the results of the data collected in this study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the data collected in this study. The first section, Participant Demographics provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents. The second section, Research Objective 1, provides an overview of the quantitative data pertaining to the identification of factors related to the success and sustainability of TCU. The second section is divided into the following four subsections: Executive Function: Commitment, Executive Function: Organizational Control Structure, Archival, Status Monitoring Function, and Action. The third section contains the results of a series of qualitative questions related to research objective 2, conduct an evaluation of the needs, satisfaction, and concerns of current and past members of TCU.

Participant Demographics

Thirty two participants responded by completing the online survey, for a response rate of 72.7%. Of the thirty-two respondents 34.4% are currently involved in TCU, and 65.6% were previously involved with TCU. Of those currently involved in TCU 18.2% are members of the TCU Provost Office, 36.4% are members of the TCU Board of Directors, 18.2% are college or university Vice Presidents/Provosts, and 27.3% are college or university faculty or program directors. Of those previously involved with TCU 19.1% were TCU Provosts, 4.8% were members of the TCU Board of Directors, 19.1% were college or university Presidents, 19.1% were college or university Vice Presidents/Provosts, and 38.1% were college or university faculty or program directors. Figure 1 illustrates the participant composition for both current and past TCU members.

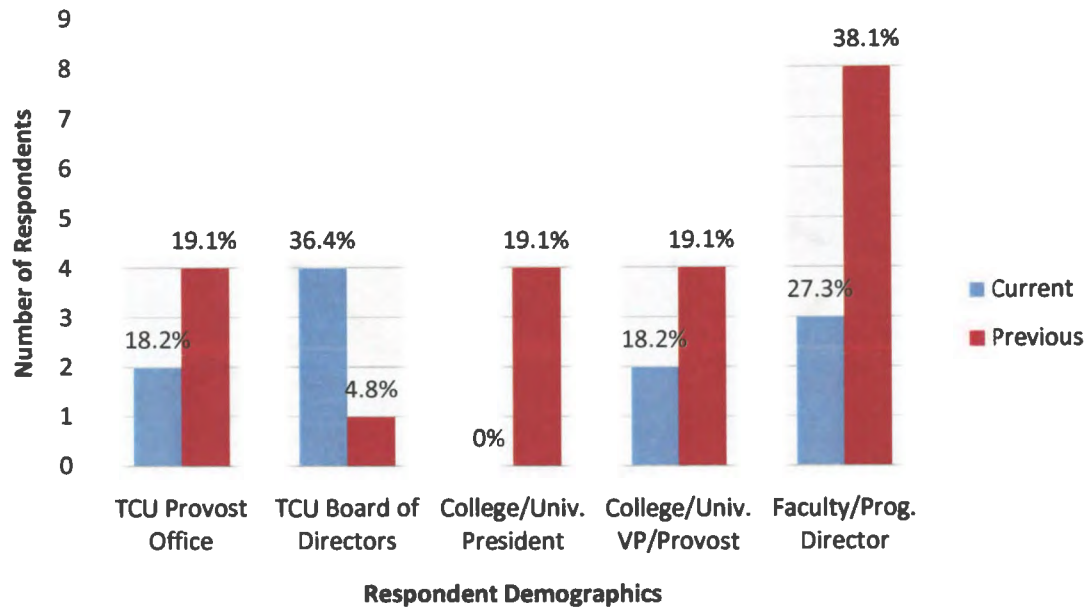


Figure 1. Participant Demographics.

Research Objective 1

The survey questions discussed in this section focused on the principles associated with the organizational development and adaptation theories identified in Schmidt's (2000) research. The structural equation modeling process used in Schmidt's study expressed those principles in the form of constructs within a systems context. The two main systems included: organizational structures and the adaptive process. Two constructs associated with the organizational structures system, Executive Function: Commitment and Executive Function: Organizational Control Structure, were supported in Schmidt's data as significant indicators of consortium success and sustainability. Three constructs associated with the adaptive process were also supported in Schmidt's data as significant indicators of consortium success and sustainability. These constructs included: Archival, Status Monitoring Function, and Action.

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement to seven quantitative questions on a 5 point Likert scale. Questions 2, 3, 4, addressed the Executive Function construct concerning commitment, and question 5 addressed the Executive Function construct concerning organizational control structure. Question 6 addressed the Archival construct. Question 7 addressed the Status Monitoring Function construct, and question 8 addressed the Action construct.

Executive Function: Commitment

Question 2 asked respondents to identify their level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements concerning commitment. Respondents included members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, and College/University Presidents and Vice-Presidents.

- a) A strong commitment toward cooperation exists among the faculty associated with the consortium. 90% of the respondents currently involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. One respondent indicated “don’t know.” 66.6% previously involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.
- b) A strong commitment toward cooperation exists among the administration associated with the consortium. 80% of the respondents currently involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. One respondent indicated “don’t know.” 76.2% previously involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

The frequencies and percentages of participant agreement responses for current and past TCU members to question 2 are summarized in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning Commitment from Current Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, and College/University Presidents and Vice-Presidents.

	Level of Agreement							
	SD		D		A		SA	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Q2a: A strong commitment toward cooperation exists among the faculty associated with the consortium.	0	0	1	10	6	60	3	30
Q2b: A strong commitment toward cooperation exists among the administration associated with the consortium.	0	0	2	20	2	20	6	60

Table 2. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning Commitment from Past Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, and College/University Presidents and Vice-Presidents.

	Level of Agreement							
	SD		D		A		SA	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Q2a: A strong commitment toward cooperation existed among the faculty associated with the consortium.	1	4.8	6	28.6	11	52.4	3	14.2
Q2b: A strong commitment toward cooperation existed among the administration associated with the consortium.	1	4.8	4	19	4	19	12	57.2

Question 3 asked respondents to identify their level of agreement with the following three statements concerning benefits. Respondents included members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, and College/University Presidents and Vice-Presidents.

- a) Members receive services that would not otherwise exist. 100% of the respondents both currently involved and previously involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.
- b) Members receive grants and other funds otherwise not available. 100% of the respondents currently involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. 81.9% of the respondents previously involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. One respondent indicated “don’t know.”
- c) The chief administrative body (trustees or board of directors) of the member institutions are aware of the benefits received through the consortium. 100% of the respondents both currently and previously involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

The frequencies and percentages of participant agreement responses for current and past TCU members to question 3 are summarized in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning Institutional Benefits from Current Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, and College/University Presidents and Vice-Presidents.

	Level of Agreement							
	SD		D		A		SA	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Q3a: Members receive services that would not otherwise exist.	0	0	0	0	2	28.6	5	71.4
Q3b: Members receive grants and other funds otherwise not available.	0	0	0	0	5	71.4	2	28.6
Q3c: The chief administrative body (trustees or board of directors) of the member institutions are aware of the benefits received through the consortium.	0	0	0	0	3	42.9	4	57.1

Table 4. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning Institutional Benefits from Past Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, and College/University Presidents and Vice-Presidents.

	Level of Agreement							
	SD		D		A		SA	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Q3a: Members received services that would not have otherwise existed.	0	0	0	0	2	16.7	10	83.3
Q3b: Members received grants and other funds otherwise not available.	0	0	1	9.1	4	36.4	5	45.5
Q3c: The chief administrative body (trustees or board of directors) of the member institutions were aware of the benefits received through the consortium.	0	0	0	0	8	66.7	4	33.3

Question 4 asked respondents to identify their level of agreement with the following statements concerning personal benefits. Respondents included College/University Presidents and Vice-Presidents.

- a) The time spent on consortium matters validates the benefits received by your institution. 100% of the respondents both currently and previously involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.
- b) The interpersonal relationships among peer leaders are one of the benefits of involvement in the consortium. 100% of the respondents both currently and previously involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

The frequencies and percentages of participant agreement responses for current and past TCU members to question 4 are summarized in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning Personal Benefits from Current College/University Presidents and Vice-Presidents.

	Level of Agreement							
	SD		D		A		SA	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Q4a: The time spent on consortium matters validates the benefits received by your institution.	0	0	0	0	1	50	1	50
Q4b: The interpersonal relationships among peer leaders are one of the benefits of involvement in the consortium.	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	100

Table 6. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning Personal Benefits from Past College/University Presidents and Vice-Presidents.

	Level of Agreement							
	SD		D		A		SA	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Q4a: The time spent on consortium matters validated the benefits received by your institution.	0	0	0	0	4	57.1	3	42.9
Q4b: The interpersonal relationships among peer leaders were one of the benefits of involvement in the consortium.	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	100

Executive Function: Organizational Control Structure

Question 5 asked respondents to identify their level of agreement with the following statements concerning consortium characteristics. Respondents included members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, College/University Faculty, and Program Directors

- a) Faculty from the member institutions are involved in the governance of the consortium. 37.5% of the respondents currently involved with TCU agreed

or strongly agreed with the statement, with one respondent who indicated “don’t know.” 77.8% of the respondents previously involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Two respondents indicated “don’t know.”

- b) A high level of interaction exists between the faculty of the member institutions. 42.9% of the respondents currently involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, with three respondents who indicated “don’t know.” 45.5% of the respondents previously involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.
- c) A high level of interaction exists between the administrators of the member institutions. 75% of the respondents currently involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, with one respondent who indicated “don’t know.” 63.7% of the respondents previously involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.
- d) A high level of interaction exists between faculty and the administrative body of the consortium. 62.5% of the respondents currently involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, with one respondent who indicated “don’t know.” 45.5% of the respondents previously involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

The frequencies and percentages of participant agreement responses for current and past TCU members to question 5 are summarized in Tables 7 and 8.

Table 7. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning Consortia Characteristics from Current Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, College/University Faculty, and Program Directors.

	Level of Agreement							
	SD		D		A		SA	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Q5a: Faculty from the member institutions are involved in the governance of the consortium.	0	0	5	62.5	3	37.5	0	0
Q5b: A high level of interaction exists between the faculty of the member institutions.	0	0	4	57.1	3	42.9	0	0
Q5c: A high level of interaction exists between the administrators of the member institutions.	0	0	2	25	3	37.5	3	37.5
Q5d: A high level of interaction exists between faculty and the administrative body of the consortium.	0	0	3	37.5	3	37.5	2	25

Table 8. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning Consortia Characteristics from Past Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, College/University Faculty, and Program Directors.

	Level of Agreement							
	SD		D		A		SA	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Q5a: Faculty from the member institutions were involved in the governance of the consortium.	0	0	2	22.2	6	66.7	1	11.1
Q5b: A high level of interaction existed between the faculty of the member institutions.	0	0	6	54.5	4	36.4	1	9.1
Q5c: A high level of interaction existed between the administrators of the member institutions.	0	0	4	36.4	5	45.5	2	18.2
Q5d: A high level of interaction existed between faculty and the administrative body of the consortium.	1	9.1	5	45.5	4	36.4	1	9.1

Archival

Question 6 asked respondents to identify their level of agreement with the following statements concerning the goals, policies, and priorities of the consortium. Respondents included members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, and College/University Presidents and Vice-Presidents.

- a) Consensus exists among the member institutions concerning the goals of the consortium. 100% of the respondents currently involved with TCU agreed with the statement. 70% of the respondents previously involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.
- b) The priorities established by the consortium are consistent with the priorities of the member institutions. 100% of the respondents currently involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. 90% of the respondents previously involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. One respondent previously involved with TCU indicated “don’t know.”
- c) The policies established by the consortium are consistent with the goals of the member institutions. 100% of the respondents both currently and previously involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. One respondent previously involved with TCU indicated “don’t know.”
- d) The policies established by the consortium are consistent with the priorities of the member institutions. 100% of the respondents currently involved

with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. 90% of the respondents previously involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. One respondent previously involved with TCU indicated “don’t know.”

The frequencies and percentages of participant agreement responses for current and past TCU members to question 6 are summarized in Tables 9 and 10.

Table 9. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning Consortia Goals, Policies and Priorities from Current Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, and College/University Presidents and Vice-Presidents.

	Level of Agreement							
	SD		D		A		SA	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Q6a: Consensus exists among the member institutions concerning the goals of the consortium.	0	0	0	0	3	37.5	5	62.5
Q6b: The priorities established by the consortium are consistent with the priorities of the member institutions.	0	0	0	0	4	50	4	50
Q6c: The policies established by the consortium are consistent with the goals of the member institutions.	0	0	0	0	3	42.9	4	57.1
Q6d: The policies established by the consortium are consistent with the priorities of the member institutions.	0	0	0	0	4	57.1	3	42.9

Table 10. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning Consortia Goals, Policies and Priorities from Past Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, and College/University Presidents and Vice-Presidents.

	Level of Agreement							
	SD		D		A		SA	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Q6a: Consensus existed among the member institutions concerning the goals of the consortium.	1	10	2	20	5	50	2	20
Q6b: The priorities established by the consortium were consistent with the priorities of the member institutions.	0	0	1	10	7	70	2	20
Q6c: The policies established by the consortium were consistent with the goals of the member institutions.	0	0	0	0	9	90	1	10
Q6d: The policies established by the consortium were consistent with the priorities of the member institutions.	0	0	1	10	8	80	1	10

Status Monitoring Function

Question 7 asked respondents to identify their level of agreement with the following statements concerning the status monitoring function of the consortium. Respondents included members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, College/University Faculty, and Program Directors.

- a) Disparity exists between the goals and the activities of the consortium. 16.7% of the respondents currently involved with TCU strongly agreed with the

statement. 25% of the respondents previously involved with TCU agreed with the statement.

- b) Formal evaluations of consortium programs are conducted on a regular basis. 83.4% of the respondents currently involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. 75% of the respondents previously involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.
- c) Informal evaluations of consortium programs are conducted on a regular basis. 100% of the respondents currently involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. 75% of the respondents previously involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.
- d) The potential of this consortium has been fully realized in the area of entrepreneurship. 40% of the respondents currently involved with TCU agreed with the statement, with one respondent who indicated “don’t know.” 25% previously involved with TCU agreed with the statement.
- e) The potential of this consortium has been fully realized in the areas of expanded student opportunities. 50% of the respondents currently involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. 50% of the respondents previously involved with TCU agreed with the statement.
- f) The potential of this consortium has been fully realized in the areas of expanded faculty opportunities. 33.3% of the respondents currently involved with TCU agreed with the statement. 50% of the respondents previously involved with TCU agreed with the statement.

The frequencies and percentages of participant agreement responses for current and past TCU members to question 7 are summarized in Tables 11 and 12.

Table 11. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning the Status Monitoring Function of the Consortia from Current Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, College/University Faculty, and Program Directors.

	Level of Agreement							
	SD		D		A		SA	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Q7a: Disparity exists between the goals and the activities of the consortium.	1	16.7	4	66.7	0	0	1	16.7
Q7b: Formal evaluations of consortium programs are conducted on a regular basis.	0	0	1	16.7	4	66.7	1	16.7
Q7c: Informal evaluations of consortium programs are conducted on a regular basis.	0	0	0	0	6	100	0	0
Q7d: The potential of this consortium has been fully realized in the area of entrepreneurship.	1	20	2	40	2	40	0	0
Q7e: The potential of this consortium has been fully realized in the areas of expanded student opportunities.	0	0	3	50	2	33.3	1	16.7
Q7f: The potential of this consortium has been fully realized in the areas of expanded faculty opportunities.	0	0	4	66.7	2	33.3	0	0

Table 12. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning the Status Monitoring Function of the Consortia from Past Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, College/University Faculty, and Program Directors.

	Level of Agreement							
	SD		D		A		SA	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Q7a: Disparity existed between the goals and the activities of the consortium.	2	50	1	25	1	25	0	0
Q7b: Formal evaluations of consortium programs were conducted on a regular basis.	0	0	1	25	2	50	1	25
Q7c: Informal evaluations of consortium programs were conducted on a regular basis.	0	0	1	25	2	50	1	25
Q7d: The potential of this consortium was fully realized in the area of entrepreneurship.	0	0	3	75	1	25	0	0
Q7e: The potential of this consortium was fully realized in the areas of expanded student opportunities.	0	0	2	50	2	50	0	0
Q7f: The potential of this consortium was fully realized in the areas of expanded faculty opportunities.	0	0	2	50	2	50	0	0

Action

Question 8 asked respondents to identify their level of agreement with the following statements concerning programs and activities of the consortium. Respondents included College/University Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Faculty, and Program Directors.

- a) I am satisfied with the choices the consortium has made regarding its programs. 75% of the respondents currently involved with TCU agreed or

strongly agreed with the statement, with one respondent who indicated “don’t know.” 100% of the respondents previously involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

b) The programs of the consortium are supported by the member institutions.

100% of the respondents both currently and previously involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

c) I am satisfied with the future direction of the programs sponsored by the

consortium. 60% of the respondents currently involved with TCU agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. This question was only asked on current members.

The frequencies and percentages of participant agreement responses for current and past TCU members to question 8 are summarized in Tables 13 and 14.

Table 13. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning the Programs and Activities of the Consortia from Current College/University Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Faculty, and Program Directors.

	SD		Level of Agreement				SA	
			D		A			
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Q8a: I am satisfied with the choices the consortium has made regarding its programs.	0	0	1	25	2	50	1	25
Q8b: The programs of the consortium are supported by the member institutions.	0	0	0	0	4	80	1	20
Q8c: I am satisfied with the future direction of the programs sponsored by the consortium.	0	0	2	40	1	20	2	40

Table 14. Frequencies of Participant Agreement with Statements Concerning the Programs and Activities of the Consortia from Past College/University Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Faculty, and Program Directors.

	Level of Agreement							
	SD		D		A		SA	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Q8a: I was satisfied with the choices the consortium has made regarding its programs.	0	0	0	0	4	28.6	10	71.4
Q8b: The programs of the consortium were supported by the member institutions.	0	0	0	0	11	78.6	3	21.4

Research Objective 2

The remainder of this chapter contains the qualitative data collected from the survey relating to research objective 2, conduct an evaluation of the needs, satisfaction, and concerns of TCU from current and past faculty and administration. This section is divided into the following subsections: Challenges of Collaboration, Institutional Impact, Factors of Success and Sustainability, and The Future of TCU. Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, College/University Presidents, Vice-Presidents, and Faculty and Program Directors currently involved with TCU were asked to respond to twelve questions concerning consortia challenges, successes, and future vision of TCU. Members of the TCU Board of Directors, TCU Provost Office, College/University Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Faculty, and Program Directors previously involved with TCU were only asked to respond to eleven questions concerning consortia challenges and successes. (A comprehensive list of questions can be found in appendix C).

Challenges of Collaboration

In this section, respondents were asked to comment on the challenges of consortium collaboration. Three predominant themes: commitment, finances, and vision emerged when

respondents were asked to identify challenges that threatened the success of TCU. In regard to commitment, 55.56% of participants currently involved in TCU and 46.15% of participants previously involved with TCU and who answered this question identified institutional and individual commitment as a threat to the success of TCU. Current members of TCU identified past administrative turnover, self interest, competition, and the tendency to withdraw from providing resources in tough economic times as factors that have or may threaten the success of TCU. Past TCU members identified institutional and individual workload, time, provincialism, and philosophy as factors that had threatened the success of TCU.

The second theme, finances, was identified by 33.3% of participants currently involved in TCU members and 23.1% of previous TCU members, as a threat to the success of TCU. Changes in state funding, tuition rates, student fees, and institutional budget cuts were all identified as threats to the success of TCU.

The third theme, vision, was only a major theme with the respondents previously involved with TCU. 30.8% of the respondents who answered this question identified the ability to find the “right” priorities, integrate the priorities of TCU into the daily operations or priorities of the three member institutions, and clarify a strategic direction as threats to the success of TCU.

Participants were also asked to identify how they and their colleagues had responded to challenges. The role of the TCU Provost as a facilitator among the three institutions was identified as key among current TCU members. In addition, respondents from all three member institutions noted that the commitment toward decision making by consensus was also a key factor in response to challenges. Commitments to proceed with

programs, and provide institutional funding and resources were decided based on consensus by all three member institutions. If all three institutions did not support an effort, the Provost and the Board of Directors would not pursue the issue. The rapport of the Board of Directors and their commitment to thoroughly discuss issues to find solutions that would benefit all members was also noted. Responses from previous TCU members were similar. TCU members stressed the importance of the roles of the TCU Provost and Board of Directors as facilitators. Discussion, compromise, and a “make it work” attitude were identified as methods of managing challenges.

Institutional Impact

This section focuses on the four areas of institutional impact upon which the respondents were asked to comment: institutional mission, students, faculty, and finances. Respondents, both currently and previously involved with TCU, noted that providing access to educational opportunities for students was the most significant way that collaboration served their institutional missions. The course exchange agreement, and the leveraging of resources of the member institutions to develop joint programs, and provide access to a greater number of research and library materials were all noted as significant factors in enhancing educational opportunities for students.

Annual professional development opportunities for library staff, the Humanities Forum, and informal seminars were mentioned as opportunities for professional development that were made possible by collaboration. The development of joint research projects was one area that respondents stated as a “potential resource that is not being tapped.”

Several respondents noted increased visibility, institutional distinction, and student recruitment as additional ways in which collaboration in TCU positively impacted their institutions. Cost efficiencies were also reported through the sharing of resources such as faculty and facilities, as well as increased program offerings and peer support. While most responses were positive in regard to institutional impact, several respondents also listed the amount of time and effort needed to communicate, coordinate, and resolve issues as challenges to collaboration.

Factors of Success and Sustainability

In this section respondents were able to comment on the perceived success of TCU and the factors that have sustained that success. Although all respondents answered yes, when asked if they thought that TCU was a successful consortium, the degree to which that success was perceived varied. The most successful aspects of collaboration in TCU were voiced as: the positive public image created in the Fargo-Moorhead community and throughout the region, the creation of programs made possible through the leveraging of resources and the educational opportunities provided to students.

When asked what factors played a role in the success of TCU, respondents identified vision, commitment, and communication as the most significant. The strong vision of the founders, and consistent leadership throughout the past forty years provided a solid foundation and shared commitment to the mission of TCU. The high level of commitment from the Presidents, Vice Presidents, and faculty from each member institution was well documented in the responses of both current and previous TCU members. Communication and interaction among the administrators of each institution and

with the Board of Directors and TCU Provost was also noted by the majority of the respondents.

The Future of Tri-College University

The final section of this chapter includes responses from members currently involved in TCU regarding their thoughts on the future of the consortium. Responses varied when respondents were asked where they thought TCU will go in terms of continued collaboration, integration among partners, and program support. One response stated, “I am fearful that we are seeing a withdrawal of collaboration.” Another thought that TCU was stronger when joint curricular ventures and programming were shared by the three institutions. Other respondents believed that collaboration would continue to grow due to resource limitations in higher education. In addition, several respondents suggested that actively searching for new opportunities or areas to collaborate, and increasing program collaborations, such as course offerings, minors, certificates, and degrees that compliment the emerging industries in the Fargo-Moorhead area are ways in which growth of TCU would be fostered.

The responses of current TCU members regarding the future direction of the consortium indicate that there is both a desire for and perceived need for growth, especially in the area of joint academic programs. Responses also indicate a feeling that collaborative support was strongest with the inclusion of joint academic programs, such as the Educational Leadership Program, and the former Nursing program. Although the need for shared programming ebbs and flows, one respondent previously involved with TCU, stated that the second major benefit to their institution was the collaborative nursing program, “especially as the master's degree was added.” A current member shared, “I think we were

stronger when we had some shared programming. These don't have to live forever, but it involves faculty and students and that is critical.” In addition to joint academic programs, respondents also indicated that there is the possibility of research collaboration that might be enhanced via TCU. One respondent indicated, “There is a great deal of potential here that is not being tapped.”

The next chapter provides a discussion of the conclusions and implications of the results of this research, as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the early twentieth century, consortia have been a means for shared opportunity and collaboration among institutions of higher education. Financial, political and social constraints can make consortia an effective means to deal with expectations for higher education institutions to become efficient, productive, and cost-effective. The literature review provided several examples of factors that contribute to the success and sustainability of consortia, such as perceived need, shared goals, and an atmosphere of trust and commitment between member institutions.

This study examined factors related to the success and sustainability of TCU using Schmidt's (2000) adaptive process model. The two objectives of this study were 1) identify factors that played an important role in the success and sustainability of TCU and 2) conduct an evaluation of the needs satisfaction, and concerns of TCU from current and past faculty and administration.

This chapter will present a summary of the study findings related to the two research objectives, as well as a discussion of the conclusions based on the findings. The summary is divided into four parts: commitment, benefits of participation, consortia goals and priorities, and the future of TCU. Following the summary, recommendations for further areas of research will be discussed.

Summary

Commitment

Based on the data, commitment to the welfare of the consortia is strong. Knoke & Wood (as cited in Schmidt, 2000) identified commitment to the welfare of the collective as:

equivalent to the strength of the normative social control system. An organization with a weak normative control system would have many members who are not greatly concerned with the organization's performance and would readily abandon it when it got into trouble. (p.173)

Both currently involved and previously involved TCU members believed that the consortium was built on a foundation of trust, commitment, and a strong shared vision. The data indicated a high level of commitment toward cooperation among both current and previous TCU and College/University administration in regard to participation in TCU. The data also indicated a much higher level of commitment among faculty currently involved with TCU than previously involved.

It is not uncommon for the level of commitment to be lower among members during the earlier years of consortium growth, especially at faculty level, as major decisions regarding the commitment of time, resources, and funds tend to be made at the administrative level. The increase in the level of commitment regarding consortium participation among faculty, and the high level of commitment sustained among the administrative leadership of each institution, and administrative leadership of TCU certainly indicates that TCU is a strong, viable consortium with dedicated members, committed to the collective purpose.

Benefits of Participation

Abrams (1991) asserted that the actions of the collaborative organization must provide benefits for all of the organizational participants. Benefits are both institutional and personal. The data presented in this study showed a high level of agreement among both current and previous TCU members that members received benefits that would not

otherwise be available without participation in TCU. These benefits, specifically in regard to educational opportunities created for students and the positive public perception that accompanies the development of those opportunities, are strong indicators that collaboration in the consortia will continue.

There was also consensus that the chief administrative body (trustees or board of directors) of the member institutions were aware of the benefits received through the consortium. The responses regarding personal benefits indicated a very high level of agreement with the statement, "The interpersonal relationships among peer leaders are one of the benefits of my involvement in the consortium." In addition, responses to "The time spent on consortium matters validates the benefits received by my institution" were also at a very high level of agreement. The data, therefore, support the idea that the perceived need, and awareness of benefits of participation in the consortia contributes to each institution in positive ways. The positive benefits affect the students, faculty, and staff at each member institution, and contribute to the continued commitment that each institution has toward future collaboration.

Consortia Goals and Priorities

Schmidt (2000) concluded that a strong internal social control system was an indicator of consortium success, and was characterized by the following factors:

- The goals of the consortium reflect the needs of member institutions and of all members are clearly stated and congruent with the activities.
- A high level of consistency and consensus between the policies and priorities of the members and the consortium (p. 370).

The data presented in this survey indicated a high level of consensus for both current and previous members regarding the consistency of the priorities and goals of the consortium in alignment with the priorities and goals of the member institutions.

The respondents were also in agreement regarding issues concerning the current status of programs and activities and the consortium's goals, policies, and priorities. The first issue concerned the relationship between the goals and the activities of the consortium. Based on the responses of both current and previous TCU members, little disparity existed between the goals and the activities of the consortium. Overall, the participants believed that the activities of the consortium were in line with the expected goals. A strong sense among both current and past members that the goals of the consortium align with the activities of the consortium supports the idea that continued success of the consortium is viable.

Participants also documented that formal and informal evaluations of consortium programs and activities were reportedly conducted on a regular basis, allowing members the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of consortia programs. Lastly, both current and previous members moderately agreed that the potential of the consortium has been fully realized in the areas of expanded student opportunities. Although consensus existed regarding the realization of potential for student opportunities, opportunities for faculty and entrepreneurship were not believed to be realized. This provides potential for the consortia to explore areas in which this potential can be expanded.

Future Direction of Tri-College University

In regard to the future of TCU, current members indicated a strong commitment toward future collaboration. Financial constraints, academic resource limitations, and

changes in the TCU Provost's Office were also documented as reasons for continued collaboration in TCU.

Two participants, however, believed that collaboration among members will decline. One participant stated, "I am fearful that we are seeing a withdrawal of collaboration," and the other believed that collaboration was stronger when a greater number of joint academic programming was part of the consortium. Of those who believed that collaboration will continue to expand, the strengthening of academic programs and creation of new programs were the two main themes. One participant stated "TCU has the potential to continue to strengthen the academic programs of the three institutions." Another recommended the creation of academic programs that meet the needs of future students and emerging industries in the region.

At present, there is a positive perception of TCU present among the three member institutions. Members are aware of the benefits of collaboration, and perceive a need to collaborate in light of present financial and political constraints. The data also indicated a high level of interaction among the administration of the member institutions and a high level of support for TCU programs. Finally, the data supported the role of the TCU Provost. This could be a significant factor in ensuring the future success of the consortium. Serving as both the facilitator of ideas and relationships among the Board of Directors and the administrative body of each institution, the TCU provost has an incredible capacity to influence the future direction of the consortium.

Conclusions

Based on the data presented in this study, the indicators for consortium success are present in TCU. The high level of support among member institution for the collective

success of the consortia, including a high level of agreement regarding the overall satisfaction of current and past the consortium programs puts TCU in a positive position for continued growth. With the documentation that TCU is a strong, viable vehicle for educational enhancement of each member institutions, and the current opinion that the potential of the consortium has not yet been fully realized in all areas, TCU is in a position to enhance the collaborative endeavors of the member institutions.

Recommendations

A major limitation of this study was a small sample size. It might be of interest for future research to include a greater sampling of consortia. Consortia of different membership compositions might also be included to compare whether there is a difference in success factors. The members of TCU are very diverse in nature. Studying consortia that include more “like” institutions where competition may be greater might shed additional light on the factors that contribute to collaborative success.

In addition, replication of the study to determine if the same factors exist in the future could be of interest for future research or institutional assessment. Each institution could also complete an in-depth case study on their participation in TCU, and further explore the attitudes, perceptions, and benefits of participation in TCU.

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APPENDIX A

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Tri-College University

Tim Flakoll, Provost, 2006-present

Dr. Nathan Davis, Provost, 2000-2005

Dr. Jean Strandness, Provost, 1994-2000

Dr. William Nelson, Provost, 1991-1994

Dr. William M. Jones, Interim Provost, 1991 and 1994

Dr. Marcia Kierscht, Provost, 1986-1990

Brian Walters, Board of Directors, 2007-present

Paul Marquart, Board of Directors, 2006-present

Mary Davies, Board of Directors, 2004-2006

Ryn Pitts, Board of Directors 2004-2007

Bruce Furness, Board of Directors, 2001-present

Shirley Montgomery, Board of Directors, 2001-present

Dr. Doris Hertsgaard, Board of Directors 1999–2004

Doug Sillers, Board of Directors, 1968-present

Governor George Sinner, Board of Directors 1968-2003

Concordia College

Dr. Pamela Jolicoeur, President 2004-2010

Dr. Paul Dovre, President 1975-1999, 2003-2004

Dr. Mark J. Krejci, Provost and Dean of the College, TCU Commissioner, 2004-present

Robert Homann, Vice President for Academic Affairs, TCU Commissioner, 1992-2002

Loren Anderson, Executive Vice President, TCU Commissioner, 1989-1992

David Gring, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College, TCU
Commissioner, 1979-1989

Dr. Gerald Van Amburg, Faculty Biology, Center for Environmental Studies

Dr. Duane A. Dahlberg, Professor, Center for Environmental Studies

Dr. Marilyn Guy, Faculty, Education

Polly Kloster, Nursing Department Chair

Sharon Hoverson, Librarian

Minnesota State University Moorhead

Dr. Edna Szymanski, President, 2008-present

Dr. Roland Barden, President, 1994-2008

Dr. Roland Dille, President, 1968-1994

Dr. Bette Midgarden, Vice President for Academic Affairs, TCU Commissioner, 1994-
present

Dr. F.C. Richardson, Vice President for Academic Affairs, TCU Commissioner, 1985-1989

Dr. Dennis Van Berkum, Faculty, Educational Leadership

Dr. Boyd Bradbury, Faculty, Educational Leadership

Dr. Dorothy Suomala, Faculty, Educational Leadership

Dr. Jane Giedt, Faculty, Nursing

Dr. Deb White, Faculty, Sociology & Criminal Justice; Coordinator of NEW Leadership
program

Brittany Goodman, Library Director

North Dakota State University

Dr. Joseph A. Chapman, President 1999-2009

Dr. J.L. Ozbun, President, 1988-1995

Dr. Craig Schnell, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, TCU Commissioner,
1995-present

Dr. Sharon Wallace, TCU Commissioner, 1990-1995

Dr. Ron Stammen, Faculty, Educational Leadership

Dr. David Haney, Faculty Emeritus, Educational Leadership

Polly Olson, Faculty, Nursing

Michelle Reed, Dean of Library

Pamela Drayson, Library Director

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE NOTIFICATION LETTER

3/20/2010

Dear (Participant);

I would like to take this opportunity to announce planned research on the Tri-College University Consortium. My research is being conducted as part of the requirements for the Masters of Science degree in Educational Leadership at North Dakota State University. The purpose of this research is to document the history of the Tri-College University Consortium (TCU) from 1969 to the present. The two research objectives are to:

3. Identify the factors which play an important role in the success and sustainability of the Tri-College University Consortium.
4. Conduct an evaluation of the needs, satisfaction, and concerns of current and former faculty and administration involved in the administration of the Tri-College University Consortium.

My research plan is to collect data for this study using an online survey and archival data. Data sources for the survey portion of the study will include current and former TCU Provosts and board members, as well as administration and faculty from the three member institutions involved with the Tri-College University Consortium.

In addition to announcing the nature of this study, I ask that you regard this notification as an invitation to participate in the survey portion of the study. You will receive an email with a web link and login information for the online survey, which should take about 20 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary; however, your assistance would be greatly appreciated in making this a meaningful study. If you do wish to participate, please contact me via phone or email to supply an email address to which the survey can be sent.

All of the information provided through your participation in this study will be kept confidential, and you will not be personally identified in the paper or in any report or publication based on this research. You will have the opportunity to provide contact information after the survey is completed if you wish to receive a copy of the completed study.

If after receiving this notification, you have any questions about this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participating, please feel free to contact me at 701-219-4121 or candice.allar@ndsu.edu. You may also contact my advisor, Tom Hall at 701-231-8589 or Thomas.E.Hall@ndsu.edu. For more information about the rights of research participants, or to report a problem you may contact the IRB at 701-231-8908 or ndsu.ird@ndsu.edu.

Thank you in advance for your interest and co-operation with my research.

Sincerely,
Candice Allar

APPENDIX C
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Dear Participant:

The purpose of this research is to document the history of the Tri-College University Consortium (TCU). The two research objectives are to:

1. To identify the factors which play an important role in the success and sustainability of the Tri-College University Consortium.
2. To conduct an evaluation of the needs, satisfaction, and concerns of current and past faculty and administration involved with the Tri-College University Consortium.

You have been identified as a key player in the administration of TCU, and are invited to participate in this research study. Your participation is voluntary; however, your assistance would be greatly appreciated in making this a meaningful study.

Please answer each question in regard to the time period in which you involved with TCU.

It should take about 20 minutes to complete the following survey about the structure and function of TCU.

All information that you provide through your participation in this study will be kept confidential, and you will not be identified in the paper or in any report or publication based on this research.

You will have the opportunity to provide contact information after the survey is completed if you wish to receive a copy of the completed study.

Thank you very much for your participation.

Survey Questions for the Current TCU Provost/Board of Directors

Please respond to the following questions regarding the Tri College University Consortium.

Executive Function: Commitment: Organizational Support

In this section, identify your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements concerning commitment.

In this institution:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. A strong commitment toward cooperation exists among the faculty associated with the consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. A strong commitment toward cooperation exists among the administration associated with the consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Executive Function: Commitment: Benefits to Organization

In this section, identify your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements concerning benefits.

As a result of membership In this consortium:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
3. Members receive services that would not otherwise exist	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Members receive grants and other funds otherwise not available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The chief administrative body (trustees or Board of directors) of the member institutions are aware of the benefits received through the consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Executive Function: Commitment: Personal Benefits

In this section, identify your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements concerning personal benefits.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
6. The time spent on consortium matters validates the benefits received by your institution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The interpersonal relationships among peer leaders is one of the benefits of involvement in the consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Executive Function: Organizational Control Structure

In this section, identify your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements concerning consortium characteristics.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
8. Faculty from the member institutions are involved in the governance of the consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. A high level of interaction exists between faculty of the member institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. A high level of interaction exists between the administrators of the member institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. A high level of interaction exists between faculty and the administrative body of the consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Archival Function

In this section, identify your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements concerning the goals, policies and priorities of the consortium.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
12. Consensus exists among the member institutions concerning the goals of the consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. The priorities established by the consortium are consistent with the priorities of the member institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. The policies established by the consortium are consistent with the goals of the member institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. The policies established by the consortium are consistent with the priorities of the member institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Status Monitoring Function

In this section, identify your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements concerning the status monitoring function of the consortium.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
16. Disparity exists between the goals and the activities of the consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Formal evaluations of consortium programs are conducted on a regular basis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Informal evaluations of consortium programs are conducted on a regular basis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. The potential of this consortium has been fully realized in the area of entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20. The potential of this consortium has been fully realized in the areas of expanded student opportunities
21. The potential of this consortium has been fully realized in the areas of expanded faculty opportunities

Action

In this section, identify your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements concerning programs and activities of the consortium.

- | | Strongly
Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly
Agree | Don't
Know |
|--|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 22. I am satisfied with the choices the consortium has made regarding its programs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. I am satisfied with the future direction of the programs sponsored by the consortium | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24. The programs of the consortium are supported by the member institutions | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Open-ended interview questions for Current TCU Members

In this section, please respond to the following questions regarding your role in the Tri-College University (TCU) Consortium and the current and future goals of the consortium.

25. What is your current role with TCU?
26. How long have you served in this capacity?
27. What challenges threaten the success of TCU?
28. How have you and your TCU colleagues managed previous challenges?
29. How does collaboration in TCU meet your institutional mission? (Presidents/Vice Presidents/Faculty)
30. How does collaboration in TCU impact your institution in terms of providing or enhancing educational opportunities for students? (Presidents/Vice Presidents/Faculty)
31. How does collaboration in TCU impact your institution in terms of providing or enhancing professional development opportunities for faculty? (Presidents/Vice Presidents/Faculty)
32. How does collaboration in TCU impact your institution economically? (Presidents)
33. Does collaboration in TCU impact your institution in any other ways?
(Presidents/Vice Presidents/Faculty)
34. Do you feel TCU has been a successful consortium? In what ways?
35. What factors have played a role in that success?
36. What are some elements that have sustained TCU?
37. Where do you think TCU will go in terms of continued collaboration?
38. Where do you think TCU will go in terms of level of integration among partners?

39. Where do you think TCU will go in terms of educational programs that are supported?

40. Would you like to receive a copy of the completed study?

Yes

No

Thank you very much for your participation and cooperation.

Survey Questions for Past TCU Members

Please respond to the following questions regarding the Tri College University Consortium.

Executive Function: Commitment: Organizational Support

In this section, identify your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements concerning commitment.

In this institution:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. A strong commitment toward cooperation existed among the faculty associated with the consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. A strong commitment toward cooperation existed among the administration associated with the consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Executive Function: Commitment: Benefits to Organization

In this section, identify your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements concerning benefits.

As a result of membership In this consortium:	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
3. Members received services that would have otherwise existed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Members receive grants and other funds otherwise not available	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The chief administrative body (trustees or Board of directors) of the member institutions were aware of the benefits received through the consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Executive Function: Commitment: Personal Benefits

In this section, identify your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements concerning personal benefits.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
6. The time spent on consortium matters validated the benefits received by your institution	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The interpersonal relationships among peer leaders was one of the benefits of involvement in the consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Executive Function: Organizational Control Structure

In this section, identify your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements concerning consortium characteristics.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
8. Faculty from the member institutions were involved in the governance of the consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. A high level of interaction existed between the faculty of the member institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. A high level of interaction existed between the administrators of the member institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. A high level of interaction existed between faculty and the administrative body of the consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Archival Function

In this section, identify your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements concerning the goals, policies and priorities of the consortium.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
12. Consensus existed among the member institutions concerning the goals of the consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. The priorities established by the consortium were consistent with the priorities of the member institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. The policies established by the consortium were consistent with the goals of the member institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. The policies established by the consortium were consistent with the priorities of the member institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Status Monitoring Function

In this section, identify your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements concerning the status monitoring function of the consortium.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
16. Disparity existed between the goals and the activities of the consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Formal evaluations of consortium programs were conducted on a regular basis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Informal evaluations of consortium programs were conducted on a regular basis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. The potential of this consortium was fully realized in the area of entrepreneurship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

20. The potential of this consortium was fully realized in the areas of expanded student opportunities
21. The potential of this consortium was fully realized in the areas of expanded faculty opportunities

Action

In this section, identify your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements concerning programs and activities of the consortium.

- | | Strongly
Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly
Agree | Don't
Know |
|---|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 22. I was satisfied with the choices the consortium has made regarding its programs | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. The programs of the consortium are supported by the member institutions | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

APPENDIX D

A TIMELINE OF TRI-COLLEGE UNIVERSITY

1962

The informal F-M Common Market in education is created.

1965 & 1969

Legislation authorizing formal cooperative relationships across state lines passes in Minnesota (Dosland/Sillers) and North Dakota.

1968-1970

The TCU committee meets regularly - chaired by George Sinner, then member of the North Dakota Board of Higher Education who led the effort in North Dakota.

1969

The Hill Family Foundation (now the Northwest Area Foundation) provides a \$70,000 grant for initial support of the provost position.

1970

Articles of incorporation establishing TCU as a North Dakota non-profit educational corporation are filed.

1971

The first edition of TRICE, the official newsprint publication of Tri-College University is produced.

1971

The Bush Foundation grants \$94,000 to enhance the TCU library cooperation.

1972

The National Endowment for the Humanities grants \$400,000 to establish the TCU Humanities Forum.

1972-1994

The TCU Center for Environmental Studies is founded and operates for 22 years. It brings in more than \$500,000 in grant funds.

1972

The TCU Women's Bureau is formed (becoming Tri-College Women United in 1986).

1974

Agreements covering the course exchange and covered programs are negotiated.

1974

The TCU film library is established.

1976

The TCU History Lectureship is established.

1976

TCU by-laws are drafted and amended.

1977

North Central Association (NCA) accreditation is granted to the Tri-College Consortium in 1977; National Council for Accreditation for Teacher Education (NCATE) accreditation is subsequently granted in 1989.

1978

The first TCU *Catalog* is published.

1978-85

The Prairie Writing Project is established and operated.

1983

An economic impact study is completed showing that the institutions have a combined impact of \$330,252,513.

1985

A joint (CC and NDSU) nursing program is established.

1987

The first annual Rotary/TCU Welcome Picnic is held for International students.

1987

The first TCU Graduate School Information Day is held.

1988

An economic impact study is completed showing that the institutions have a combined impact of \$610,935,083.

1988

The first Tri-College Career Fair is held.

1988

The first Tri-College Pow Wow is held.

1990

The Third World Studies Committee is established (becoming the World Studies Committee in 1994).

1991

William M. Jones authors A Brief History of Tri-College University. The 46 page booklet documents many events of significance during our first 21 years.

1992

The TCU Technology Committee is formed.

1992

As per the North Dakota University System, NDSU shifts to semesters (which impacts TCU cross registration).

1993

The TCU Chapter of the Fulbright Association is established.

1995

MSU (now MSUM) shifts to semesters, restoring the Tri-College common calendar.

1995

The Nursing program is re-accredited by the National League for Nursing (NLN) for a 10-year period.

1995

TCU celebrates its 25th anniversary, with almost 30,000 students having taken more than 90,000 courses through the TCU course exchange since its inception; the commemorative poster created for the event is widely distributed on the campuses and in the community.

1995

Poet Laureate Gwendolyn Brooks appears on all three campuses, the project being supported by a \$6,000 grant from the North Dakota Humanities Council.

1995

In a joint session with the TCU Commissioners, the TCU Board develops strategic goals for Tri-College University.

1996

Education Administration title changed to Educational Leadership with degree granting authority at MSUM and NDSU.

1996-97

"Plains: Take One, Two and Three" exhibits are held at MSUM, NDSU and Concordia College respectively.

1996

Formal NCA accreditation of TCU ceases (effective June 30th), with the TCU Education Administration program degrees to be conferred by MSUM and NDSU.

1997

The Education Leadership program completes and satisfies NCA, NCATE and state reviews on the MSUM and NDSU campuses.

1997

TCU assessments are standardized on the basis of a 50/50 basic/supplemental (based on enrollment) split.

1997

A TCU dedicated T-1 fiber optic line is established.

1998

TCU hosts the Small College Computing Conference.

1998

A Fargo-Moorhead/Tri-College University brochure targeting the recruitment of Twin Cities students is produced, to be used by the three Admissions Offices as a compliment to their own recruiting materials.

1999

The first TCU/Hedmark summer course on Norwegian culture, language, natural resources and society is held at Evenstad, Norway.

1999

Best Practices in Higher Education Consortia: How Institutions Can Work Together is co-edited by TCU Provost Jean Strandness. She also authored a chapter on Tri-College University cross registration and joint programs.

2002

Lech Walesa, former Polish president, Nobel Laureate for peace and holder of thirty honorary degrees from various American universities was the featured speaker at the Tri-College Human Rights Conference held at MSUM.

2003-2004

Total head count of students enrolled in the course exchange exceeds 40,000 students.

2004

The Governor George Sinner Public Policy Symposium is initiated (three year program) in honor of founding TCU Board member George Sinner and his 35 years of service on the board.

2006

Students from each campus compete for scholarships based on their speech on the topic of substance abuse for the Third Annual Governor George Sinner Public Policy Symposium.

2006

A flood forecasting tool is launched by the International Water Institute, NOAA and other partners to help mitigate flooding in the Red River Valley.

2007

An economic impact study completed with a grant from the Greater Fargo-Moorhead Economic Development shows that the three institutions have a combined economic impact of \$1.22 billion (using data from 2005-2006).

2007

During their final year of operation, the Tri-College University Graduate Nursing Program receives the STAR Award from the Dakota Medical Foundation. After 2007 each campus will be responsible to support their campus nursing program as they deem appropriate and will continue to use the course exchange program to deliver classes.

2007

Tri-College University held a student art competition at each campus with winning pieces displayed in the TCU office. Winning students from each campus were presented with a cash award. Pieces are also used for promotional and marketing materials for Tri-College.

2007

Through the 36-year history of Tri-College, the approximate total student head count involved in the course exchange exceeds 32,000 students and those students have taken more than 108,500 courses.

2007

TCU people, programs and educational efforts appeared on the front page of the Forum of Fargo-Moorhead nine times and on the cover of regional papers six times. Stories about our people, programs and educational efforts appeared in 20 print stories during the year, including USA Today and the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Awareness of TCU programs was enhanced with a one year Program Outreach Series. Collaborative recruitment efforts were undertaken. Data shows that approximately 5% of the undergraduate students at each campus use the course exchange program.

2008

Funding for the \$5 million LiDAR surface mapping project was announced by Tri-College's International Water. The project is the largest financial project in the history of

Tri-College University and will cover more than 40,000 square miles in North Dakota and Minnesota.

2008

The NEW Leadership program receives the YWCA "Business or Organization that Empowers Women" award.

2008

TCU Collaborative grants are awarded to encourage greater collaboration between campuses and to increase efficiency and enhance progress. The Forum of Fargo Moorhead give a "Prairie Rose" to Tri-College and related supporters for their collaborative recruitment efforts.

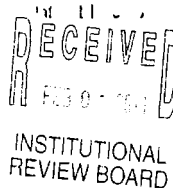
The TCU International Water Institute receives \$5 million in grants and appropriations from 14 funding partners for a LiDAR mapping project. This is the largest project in Tri-College University history.

APPENDIX E
IRB APPROVAL

Institutional Review Board

to the procedure of human participants research

North Dakota State University
Sponsored Programs Administration
1735 NDSU Research Park Drive
NDSU Dept #4000
PO Box 6050
Fargo, ND 58108-6050 231-8995(ph) 231-8098(fax)



Protocol Amendment Request Form

Changes to approved research may not be initiated without prior IRB review and approval except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants Reference SOP 7.5 Protocol Amendments

Examples of changes requiring IRB review include but are not limited to changes in investigators or research team members purpose/scope of research recruitment procedures compensation scheme participant population research setting interventions involving participants data collection procedures or surveys measures or other data forms

Protocol Information

Protocol # **HE08131** Title **The History of the Great Plains IDEA Family Financial Planning Program**
(old title see #2 below)
Review category Exempt Expedited Full board

Principal investigator **Thomas Hall** Email address **Thomas E Hall@ndsu.edu**
Dept **School of Education**

Co-investigator **Candice Allar** Email address **candice.allar@ndsu.edu**
Dept **Educational Leadership**

Principal investigator signature, Date Thomas Hall 2 8 10

Description of proposed changes

1 Date of proposed implementation of change(s)* **2/15/2010**
* *Cannot be implemented prior to IRB approval unless the IRB Chair has determined that the change is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants*

2 Describe proposed change(s) including justification
The changes for this proposal include: a change in the principal investigator, a change in the organization being studied, the title of the study, as well as a slight change of the survey tool.

The principal investigator of my study has changed because my previous academic advisor/principal investigator, Mark Schmidt, passed away last semester.

The study will continue to investigate concordia in higher education, but will now focus specifically on the Tri-College University Consortium of Fargo-Moorhead. This change is a result of the refusal of the board of directors of the Great Plains IDEA consortia to participate in my previous study.

The new title is "The History of the Tri-College University Consortium."

The revised study purpose and objectives are as follows:

The purpose of this research is to document the history of the Tri-College University Consortium from 1969 to the present. The two research objectives are to:

1. To identify the factors which play an important role in the success and sustainability of the Tri-College University consortium.
2. To conduct an evaluation of the needs, satisfaction, and concerns of current and past faculty and administration involved with the Tri-College University Consortium.

The study participants will still consist of faculty and administrators, as in the previous study. The new list, with the updated letter of consent is included in this document as Appendix A. The survey tool has changed from a 5-point Lickert scale with a neutral option to a 4-point Lickert scale, with a zero point option. After being reviewed by members of my committee it was suggested that it would best to remove the neutral option in the scale and add an option for respondents to state "I don't know." This will make it easier to quantify the data during the analysis phase of the study. The survey will be web-based and will be designed and administered by the Group Decision Center at NDSU (see Appendix B).

3. Will the change involve a change in principal or co- investigator?
- No
 Yes: *Include an Investigator's Assurance (last page of protocol form), signed by the new PI or co-investigator.*

Note: If the change is limited to addition/change in research team members, skip the rest of this form.

4. Will the change(s) increase any risks, or present new risks (*physical, economic, psychological, or sociological*) to participants?

No
 Yes: *In the appropriate section of the protocol form, describe new or altered risks and how they will be minimized.*

5. Does the proposed change involve the addition of a vulnerable group of participants?

Children: no yes – include the *Children in Research* attachment form

Prisoners: no yes – include the *Prisoners in Research* attachment form

Cognitively impaired individuals: no yes*

Economically or educationally disadvantaged individuals: no yes*

**Provide additional information where applicable in the revised protocol form.*

6. Does the proposed change involve a request to waive some or all the elements of informed consent

or documentation of consent?

- no
 yes - include the *Informed Consent Waiver or Alteration Request* attachment form

7. Does the proposed change involve a new research site?

- no
 yes - include a letter of permission/cooperation, IRB approval, or grant application or contract



Attach a copy of the approved protocol, with highlighted change(s) incorporated within the relevant section(s).

Impact for Participants (future, current, or prior)

1. Will the change(s) alter information on previously approved versions of the recruitment materials, informed consent, or other documents, or require new documents?

- No
 Yes - attach revised/new document(s)

2. Could the change(s) affect the willingness of *currently* enrolled participants to continue in the research? No

- Yes - describe procedures that will be used to inform current participants, and re-consent, if necessary:

3. Will the change(s) have any impact to *previously* enrolled participants?

- No
 Yes - describe impact, and any procedures that will be taken to protect the rights and welfare of participants:

-----FOR IRB OFFICE USE ONLY-----

Request is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Not Approved	
Review: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exempt, category#: <u>2</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Expedited method, category # <u> </u> <input type="checkbox"/> Convened meeting, date: <u> </u>	
IRB Signature: <u>Kristy Shuley</u>	Date: <u>2/11/2010</u>
Comments:	