Stories of Faculty who Served as Academic Administrators:

Career-Life Experiences and Academic Identities of five Associate Deans

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Educational Administration and Leadership

Department of Educational Policy Studies

University of Alberta

Abstract

Deans, chairs, associate deans, and associate chairs are, as academic administrators, at the nexus of the university organization. Much has been written on educational leadership theory and practice and on organizational theory, management, and behaviour. I have come to wonder, though, what the experience of becoming and being an academic administrator is like for specific people who have taken on the role at specific times. What do we know of them as individuals, of their values and beliefs, and of their formative experiences? Have they changed fundamentally as part of having taken on these roles? How do they view and construe their roles and their social milieus? And how can we understand their values, beliefs, and thoughts in relation to their decisions and actions?

Despite prominent academics, such as Greenfield (1979), Greenfield and Ribbins (1993), Ribbins and Marland (1994), and Gill (2009), calling attention to the need for scholars of educational organization and leadership to engage in interpretive research focusing on the lived experiences and constructed realities of the individual, little of this work has been done with respect to academic administrators – and none with respect to associate deans. The purpose of this research, therefore, was two-fold: First, my intent was to improve my understanding of specific individuals' experiences of becoming and being an associate dean through their narratives (i.e., to learn who they are as individuals and of the nature of change(s) they may have experienced); second, I intended to improve my understanding of how these same individuals construed their surrounding social milieu(s) and approached their various roles. Academic identity theory was used to aid in

the interpretive process for the first purpose whereas higher educational organization and leadership theories were used for the second purpose.

Narrative and interpretive inquiry can foster learning about both individuals and their related social milieus. It was, therefore, ideally suited to the two-pronged nature of this research. I called the particular type of narrative inquiry used for this research a *narrative aggregate inquiry* because my method involved first developing, or co-constructing, individuals' narrative accounts with each one being a narrative analysis in itself. It then involved looking across the individual narratives for common themes and meanings, which is often called an analysis of narratives. Polkinghorne (1995) suggested that more research should involve both types of narrative inquiry (i.e., narrative analysis and analysis of narratives) – so I took on that challenge with this research. Polkinghorne also suggested that one reason this dual method is not employed more often is because of the amount of time involved in carrying it out effectively. From my experience with this research, I concur.

An important component of the construction of individual narratives for this research was the use of pre-interview activities (PIAs), as developed and encouraged by Ellis (2006). Participants were asked to create images prior to the conducting of each interview related to the topic or time period that would be discussed. The PIAs combined with the open and conversational approach to the interviews to produce well-constructed narratives that convey the career-life experiences, values, thoughts, and beliefs of five current or former associate deans. Each narrative analysis is extremely valuable and a significant contribution to the literature in its own right. Scholars of higher education working within the interpretive tradition will, hopefully, find useful insight from, or

affinity or resonance with, the narratives and the *big ideas* each contains. Practitioners of higher educational administration, whether they are academic or professional administrators, will also find the narratives useful as they engage in reflective practice.

Beyond each individual narrative analysis, the analysis of narratives component of the research also makes significant contributions to the field of higher educational organization and leadership theory. More specifically, the examination of associate deans' narratives revealed three thematic areas that revolved around community, relationships, and commitments. These were, respectively: 1) Attending to local organizational and broader cultural environments; 2) Fostering relationships with others; and 3) Commitments to ideals and ideas. In addition, a number of career-life experiences were also found to be shared among the participants. Some of these key common experiences were: Curiosity and a "need for more" during early professional work; a rewarding graduate student experience; international work and travel broadening horizons; attaining balance; a supportive early home life; being "invited in" to academic administration; a significant focus on program development or implementation; extreme busyness, especially as related to administrative tasks; isolation and loneliness; insider versus outsider differences; and happenstance.

Some implications from the findings of the research are that: Academic identity is an important driver of associate deans' perspectives on their organizational social milieu, approaches to their role, and decision-making processes; academic identity appears to be well-established prior to coming into an associate dean appointment; associate deans may tend to privilege the cultural view that universities are institutionalized organizations that rely on a high degree of congruency between

university norms and academics' values and beliefs; associate deans may tend to privilege a cultural approach to leadership focusing on the fostering of relationships; the choice of academic administrators has both long and short term effects on a faculty's cultural environment making the "knowing of" individuals' academic and personal selves and the "matching of" these to situational needs an important consideration; and associate deans need time for structural-functional learnings but, more importantly, they need time and space to maintain their academic identities.

Preface

This dissertation is an original work by Derek Stovin. The associated research received ethics approval from the University of Alberta Ethics Board under the study title "Transitioning to university academic administration: A narrative inquiry into the associate deanship," Pro00054121, June 14, 2016.

Parts of chapter two have been published as Stovin (2016), "Narrative, insight, and effective decision making in education," in P. Newton and D. Burgess (Eds.), *The best available evidence: Decision making for educational improvement*, Boston: Sense Publishers.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my children Aidan Shields, Rowan Stovin, and Elsie Stovin-Shields for their boundless love, patience, and understanding that allowed for its completion.

Acknowledgements

My formal studies, and this dissertation, could not have been completed without the people who agreed to participate in this work. I am grateful for their kindness, forthrightness, generosity, friendship, and commitment they offered me as a doctoral student and nascent academic researcher.

My deep gratitude is also owed to my supervisory committee members. Thank you to Dr. Randolph (Randy) Wimmer, my supervisor, for his unwavering support throughout my doctoral studies and for encouraging me to join the Educational Policy Studies department at the University of Alberta. Thank you to Dr. Julia Ellis for her personal and professional kindness and encouragement, especially as related to learning and using narrative and interpretive methodology. Thank you to Dr. Bonnie Stelmach for helping me to see and understand my work at a higher level and within a broader context. Their wise guidance greatly improved both this particular work and my scholarly work more generally. I am also very appreciative of the contributions that members of my examining committee made that improved the final version of my dissertation. Thank you, therefore, to Dr. Jacqueline Kirk and Dr. Paul Newton for their time, expertise, guidance, and support – and to Dr. Darryl Hunter for chairing the committee.

Throughout my professional career I have been very fortunate to benefit from the friendship and collegiality of numerous wonderful people. Thank you to Evan Dobni, Jim Cates, and Eugene Bucko for the friendship, understanding, and support they offered to me as a beginning teacher and that has extended throughout this journey. Thank you to Drs. Gismondi, Briton, Filax, and Haughey for their moral support and arrangements of my sabbaticals while at Athabasca University. At the Saskatchewan Teachers'

Federation, thank you to Tish Karpa and Michael Gatin for the collegiality, friendship, and teachings they offered me – and to Gwen Dueck for valuing what I offered as a teacher-researcher and arranging my final sabbatical that was necessary for the writing of the narrative accounts contained herein. Thank you, also, to Michelle and Rev. Dr. Jan (John) Oussoren and Linda Jordan for their friendship and expertise, which I drew upon for assistance with certain aspects of producing this document.

I am fortunate to have met other wonderful people in earlier endeavours who have supported me in this and in other pursuits – and I am grateful for their past and current friendship. Among them are Dr. Grant Isaac, Lee Smith, Deanna Howard, Jeff and Mel Tiefenbach, Dr. Scott Dolff, Jennifer Mooney, Greg Morrison, Rev. Dr. Dale Morrison, Kaylea Dunn, Dr. Sinéad Ruane, Jeff Wheeler, Andy Rathbone, Chris Maton, and Dr. James Rude. Also, Drs. Gary Storey, Hartley Furtan, and Richard Gray – my first academic mentors – and Mr. Richard (Dick) Stark, my first role model teacher. Special thanks go to my very good friend, and excellent colleague, Dr. Dustin McNichol, who read multiple versions of this dissertation and discussed it with me at great length.

Finally, thank you to my parents, Ken and Doreen, for their generosity, thoughtfulness, love and support, and valuing of education – and to my brother Darren. Thank you to my extended family in Edmonton, Gary and Bonnie Zubko, Ron and Natalia Zubko, and Curtis, Cindy, and David Zubko. Also, thank you to Diana Shields, who supported me in beginning doctoral studies while parenting three young children.

My greatest thanks are reserved for my three children, Aidan Shields, Rowan Stovin, and Elsie Stovin-Shields. They changed me as a person, grew my perspective, and gave me a richer appreciation for life. Theirs was the best gift of all.

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Chapter One: Finding the Field

Now, thieving Time, take what you must –
Quickness to hear, to move, to see;
When dust is drawing near to dust
Such diminutions needs must be.
Yet leave, O leave exempt from plunder
My curiosity, my wonder! [1]

It has taken me the better part of a lifetime, this finding the field.[2] A lifetime of experiences, both good and bad, many dull, others exciting, and a few that defy explanation – a few which hold the greatest meaning. Most certainly arriving at this place was not planned. I didn't have or follow a map to get here, whenever it was that I set out to find it. And if or when I did create a map, it became obsolete almost as soon as I used it along the way. But even though I clearly didn't know where I was going, or what the field looked like, I can now say that the old saying is true: You'll know it when you see it. With help, I found it.

According to Randy Wimmer (2003), serendipity and the role of others were two crucial aspects found when looking back at the experiences of teacher educators. How I came to study at the University of Alberta (U. of A.) can, I think, be called serendipitous. My partner at the time, Diana Shields, had begun work in its Office of the Registrar and a memorandum was sent by the registrar encouraging staff to consider taking a newly offered course in higher educational administration. It turned out that Randy was the professor and the registrar was a friend and long-time colleague of his. I had finished my M.Ed. a year prior so, having recovered my energy for formal studies, I enquired whether

[1] Mark Antony De Wolfe Howe, circa 1951, as cited in Bartlett (1955).
[2] I am using the term "field" as part of the umbrella term "field research" that "includes the myriad activities that field researchers engage in when they collect data" (Blackstone, 2012). Of course it can

I could take the course as an open studies student. Randy was very encouraging and welcoming, both then and in class, and through this "sneak peek" into the culture of the department I quickly felt it was the place for me. Indeed, so much so that I abandoned my interest in pursuing doctoral studies overseas.

In the fall of 2011, with the formal support of Randy and others, I became a full time Ph.D. student in educational policy studies. I realize now that it marked 20 years since I first began employment in a university, inauspiciously as a dishwasher in the on-campus residence where I first lived away from home. With the exception of 3 years as a teacher in rural Saskatchewan, I spent those 20 years working (and simultaneously studying) in various university environments. The first few years of my career were in other labour capacities, such as driver, server, groundskeeper, shopkeeper, clerk, janitor, and even one shift as a baker (I managed to not burn the cookies the regular baker had put in the oven before leaving early one night). More recently, at the beginning of my doctoral studies, I was working as a professional administrator for a distance-based graduate program in the arts and humanities. At that time, through 6 years in this professional capacity, I had had five different academic administrators for a supervisor. This, not surprisingly, brought personal and professional challenges to my work but it also gave me an excellent vantage point from which to observe formal university leaders and an opportunity to participate in many aspects of the academic administrator's role. It rekindled an earlier interest I had in leadership studies but shifted my attention toward leadership in the university organization rather than in the public school system where I once aspired to an administrative position. Through these personal and professional

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carry other academic and non-academic meanings, including the literal and metaphorical "farmer's field" that makes up a part of my own story.

experiences it became apparent to me what a profound difference academic administrators make – and how different the approaches and perspectives they bring can be. But I wondered: If they are administrators, why are they and their approaches so different? Are the problems they are presented with and the types of decisions they need to make generally not the same? Why, with a change in leadership, is so much change often experienced in the faculty or the department when its apparent structure hasn't changed at all?

I took up this interest in higher educational leadership in my first doctoral course. Luckily, I had the further good fortune to experience an "aha" moment. In my work environment at a distance based university, there were no students on campus. I worked in a large, two storey, L-shaped, brown brick building filled with administrative, clerical, professional, and technical staff. Almost all the academic faculty had formal work from home arrangements – and there were no students! Of course I had known this for years, but I hadn't understood it in any meaningful way until one day, prior to my night class, I was visiting Diana at her workplace and meeting her for lunch. It was the start of a semester and there were students bustling around, young people, older people, faculty, and a variety of other workers. There were tables set up everywhere with displays, promotions, community events, presentations, sporting events, music, and theatre. I loved being on campus! This hadn't occurred to me before. I had appreciated my university-based career opportunities. I had enjoyed, despite (or because of) the challenges inherent in scholarly work, my formal studies. But these were activities that I simply had always done. I hadn't realized the affective dimension of being on campus. What is it about this place that makes it so special to me, so unique? Am I the only one

who feels this tingling when arriving on campus – a mixture of trepidation and excitement perhaps? I had forgotten this feeling, forgotten how when I was a younger student walking to classes at the University of Saskatchewan (U. of S.) I would make a point of entering through the grand (always open) university memorial gates – but never out. I wondered: How do others experience the university? Do professors and deans come to forget too? Or is it ever-present, bubbling beneath the surface, no acknowledgement needed? Is to speak of it to diminish it? Or ought we speak of it more often – to celebrate it? Do alumni remember it? If so, what do they recall and value about their student experiences? How do professors and deans experience the university? Do their beliefs, thoughts, and feelings about the university change as they experience different roles within the university?

Between this aha moment and my subsequent readings in higher educational leadership and organization theory, I became interested not only in others' experiences of the university but particularly in academic administrators' experiences – since they are the formal academic leaders within these academic organizations. That is, I became interested in how individual academic administrators came to be in their roles, who they are as people, how they approach their roles, and how they view the organization around them. Later, I discovered that Thomas Greenfield (a distinguished doctoral graduate of the precursor to my new department), in providing a critique about the state of organizational theory in education, agreed:

> What is needed … is a knowledge of how people in a social situation construe it, what they see as its significant features, and how they act within it. Such knowledge can only come from the interpretation of particular experiences in specific situations. (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p. 21) [3]

In other words, early in my doctoral program I had developed what became the question (or, rather, the touchstone) to guide my research. Initially, of course, I was (and still am) interested in all types of academic administrators' experiences. For the purposes of this initial foray into a broader research agenda, however, I narrowed my focus to faculty members who had taken on an associate deanship, which is something that is "under-researched and not well-understood" (Floyd & Preston, 2019, p. 431).

The Question to Guide my Way

How do individual university faculty members experience becoming and being an associate dean?

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[3] Thesis formatting guidelines at the U. of A. allow for lengthy quotations to be indented and single spaced. I prefer this style for readability, especially with the numerous direct quotations I use in the presentation of participants' stories in chapter four. The citation style I use for the introductory quotations at the beginning of each chapter is the only other intentional departure from the American Psychological Association's style guide (sixth edition).

Chapter Two: Preparing to Explore the Field

The truth about stories is that's all we are. [4]

Part One: Academic Administrators and Associate Deans

Academic Administrators

Academic administrators are a group within the university that are of central and critical importance to both its day to day operations and to its longer term institutional health (Gmelch & Miskin, 2004). As the term implies, individuals are chosen from among the professoriate to play a lead role in the administration of academic departments, schools, colleges, or faculties. I use the term to refer to deans, associate deans, chairs, associate chairs, academic directors, or others in similar positions. It is distinct from professional university administrators who happen to work in an academic environment and may have significant academic credentials but who usually have limited authority related to academic program decision-making. The term is also not intended to include executive university administrators, such as vice-presidents, associate vice-presidents, provosts, and presidents. Executive university administrators are more likely than professional administrators to have doctoral level credentials and many such positions require experience of a professorial nature – but the responsibilities may more often land on the administrative side of the university bicameral governance structure than the academic side.

Why an Interest in Academic Administrators?

Higher educational administration literature related to the deanship and chairship often claims that moving from the field of academic practice to the field of academic administration is a significant change and can be a particularly difficult one. Bright and

Richards (2001), for example, state that it is "clear that a dean inevitably faces real changes in responsibilities, point of view, and professional life in general. Accepting that need to change can be a very difficult mental shift" (p. 51). Hendrickson, Lane, Harris, and Dorman (2013) also claim that individual change is necessary as one changes academic-administrative roles, noting that "decision-making for departmental chairpeople is significantly different from that of a dean or provost, whose decision circumstances in turn are quite unlike the decision-making conditions faced by an institution's president" (p. 49). This role-induced change may, therefore, involve identity crises and pose questions of self-efficacy, career satisfaction, and life enjoyment (Gmelch, Hopkins, & Damico, 2011). Gmelch and Miskin (2004) claim there are "metamorphic changes that occur as one transforms from an academic to an academic leader" (p. 6).

Despite the claims in the literature that movement into an academic administrative position can involve identity change or crises, this is of course not always the case. While taking on an academic administrative position may be a different role and involve different tasks and responsibilities, it is also a way of meeting one's professorial service obligations and, therefore, such a move might not involve matters of shifting identity at all. That is, one does not cease to be a professor when one moves into an academic administrative position. Rather, the shift in role may simply be viewed as a temporary change in focus or emphasis of one's academic practice.

Even if moving into such a role is not experienced by an individual as a metamorphic personal-professional change, it is still likely to be a time of new experiences, growth, and learning. Moreover, whatever the nature of an individual's experiences during this time of transition, they are not "worked through" in seclusion.

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[4] Thomas King, as cited in Stovin (2016).

Rather, because "deans occupy an especially visible place in the academic world" (Bright & Richards, 2001), the new academic administrator is in "full view" of their peers and others. At the same time that they are "learning on the job," they are "under a microscope" and expected to "hit the ground running" – despite in many cases not having a significant amount of directly relevant administrative or managerial experience in the unique university organizational environment (Gmelch et al., 2011). As Tucker and Bryan (1988) emphasize, in an imperfect world often with inadequate budgets and an administration lacking omniscience, "the dean must learn the art of management" (p. 3) – and must do so within an environment that is, at least to some degree, collegial, democratic, and comprised of highly intelligent, critically minded, and institutionally-vested individuals.

This relatively unique environment within which academic administrators work is an important part of what makes studying them so interesting – and so valuable – to me, and to anyone interested in leadership and organization theory and practice. As claimed by Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker, and Riley (1978), "the organizational characteristics of academic institutions are so different from other institutions that traditional management theories do not apply" (p. 9). For example, drawing upon research on the role of the university president, Birnbaum (1988) writes that "leaders in higher education are subject to internal and external constraints that limit their effectiveness and may make their roles highly symbolic rather than instrumental" (p. 29). Do other higher educational leaders, then, such as academic administrators, also experience such constraints? If so, what might the constraints be and how do they work within them – or around them? Might

academic administrative roles be both symbolic and instrumental? If so, which type of act is required when – and how do academic administrators determine this?

Beyond my personal-professional experiences, this higher educational administration literature on the deanship and chairship led me to wonder about the nature of change that academic administrators may experience: Does it tend to be metamorphic and involve identity crises? Further, I wondered how, generally, do academic administrators experience their new roles in relation to their past roles. That is, how do they approach their roles within the unique university organizational context, how do they view their surrounding cultural milieu, how do they go about making decisions, and how do they determine what is "right and proper to do" (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p. 11)?

The Associate Deanship

Associate deans are academic faculty members in universities who formally take on a senior position that has significant administrative responsibilities as part of the professorial service obligation. Associate dean is one position among others that are called academic administrators, which differentiates them from professional administrators and other support staff who participate in, and lead certain aspects of, the administration of a particular faculty or college (and other parts of the university) but who are not part of the academic ranks of the university.

The role of the associate dean can be quite varied and ambiguous. Sometimes it is rather administrative in nature and may involve: Supervision of numerous professional and support staff; policy development, analysis, and implementation; student services; risk assessment; capital investments; contract management; and quasi-legal

investigations, reports, and decisions (among many other responsibilities). Other times it is less administratively oriented and involves other types of leadership duties. For example, it may involve chairing and participating in various faculty and university committees as well as leading academic program development or change. Often times both types of leadership duties are involved in a particular appointment – but the degree of one or the other type of responsibility varies depending upon the particular situation.

Other significant differences exist across particular associate dean appointments and across universities. For example, sometimes associate deans are by appointment and other times they are hired by a committee after an exhaustive search complete with public presentations. Also, sometimes associate deans remain in-scope, sometimes they are out-of-scope, and sometimes they are in-scope but designated in a way that they are not to formally participate in faculty association affairs.

The purpose of the research undertaken here was not to attempt a comprehensive review of the associate deanship to shed light on these institutional norms or to clearly articulate the role of an associate dean. Rather, the associate deanship was chosen as a point of general commonality in institutional location among participants to aid in comparisons across their career-life narrative accounts instead of, say, choosing one chair, one dean, one academic director, and two others as participants.

Why an Interest in Associate Deans?

The roles of dean and associate dean are located in a relatively unique social position as they are caught between the instrumentalism expected in their managerial duties and the symbolism inherent to their formal leadership roles in the academic environment. As Shattock (2010) argues,

> if it is necessary for a dean to be firmly located within the academic fabric of a faculty, to be an academic colleague, fellow teacher and researcher … in order to be effective …, so it is also important that the dean is not isolated from the central decision making of the institution … [and feels] responsible for the central management of the university. (p. 88)

This challenge of the deanship – working within and between faculty circles and senior administrative circles – is shared by the associate deanship as it is also a decanal level position. That is, associate deans must have both a faculty wide and a university wide perspective and be able to work effectively in both academic and administrative realms. Kallenberg (2015) includes associate deans as part of a group of "academic middle managers … [who] are hierarchically positioned between the strategic and operational level … [and] seek synergy to ensure that both levels better understand each other's interests and connect more effectively" (p. 203).

Associate deans are further differentiated from deans because in addition to being caught between the faculty or college and senior university administration they can also be caught between the dean or professional faculty-level administrators and their academic professorial colleagues. This is not to say that administrative and academic interests are always polar opposites. However, when significant differences do exist, the challenge of working in two different interstitial spaces – with little, if any, "command and control" functional authority – and bringing people together in productive ways that respects their colleagues' academic values, commitments, and rights is a complex one indeed.

Given the complexity of the socio-cultural locations that associate deans occupy within the university, how they individually construe their social reality is an important part of determining how they approach their role and how they may or may not change as

a result of taking on the role. In other words, the literature related to academic administrative leadership acknowledges the complex challenges generated by the interstialities associated with decanal level roles but does not consider the numerous ways in which an individual associate dean might construe where she or he is located within that interstial space, where she or he is located in relation to the other social sub-groups that they are a part of or help represent, and what those academic and administrative circles look like to them. A narrative and interpretive research approach allows for and encourages exploring not only who individuals are but also how individuals view and construe the social situation(s) they experience.

Despite the centrality, uniqueness, complexity, and impact of the role of the academic administrator within the university organization, according to Gmelch and Miskin (2004) it "may be the least studied and most misunderstood management position anywhere in the world" (p. 6). Gill (2009) concurred: "For all the interest in reflexivity in recent decades, the experiences of academics have somehow escaped critical attention" (p. 2) and asked: "What would it mean to turn our lens upon our own labour processes, organisational governance and conditions of production? What would we find if, instead of studying others, we focused our gaze upon our own community?" (p. 2). It is, therefore, incumbent upon us as scholars of higher educational administration to better understand university leaders who have responsibility for both academic and administrative leadership of the programs that serve our students and the public good. To begin to learn more about academic administrators – about who they are and how they occupy this interstitial space – I chose to focus on associate deans as their role and social location is particularly complex and there is very little academic research with associate

deans' experiences as a focal point. That is, "associate deans tend to be an overlooked group within the leadership of a university, though they carry out many unique roles" (Sayler, Pederson, Smith, & Cutright, 2017, p. 1119).

Part Two: Choice of Method

Following Greenfield (1979), my research falls within the interpretive tradition. It is not a "fact-finding" mission based on a large sample size where my goal is to make probabilistic based claims of generalizability and predictability. Rather, I am interested in gaining a deeper understanding about the experiences of particular individuals who have taken on the academic administrative role of associate dean. According to Ellis (2006), when exploring individuals' experiences, in general "the researcher's purpose is to learn the thinking and feeling behind people's actions and in so doing to come to see how their thoughts and behavior are reasonable and coherent" (p. 113). Within the interpretive tradition I have chosen a narrative approach to explore five current or former associate deans' experiences and achieve this general purpose. This choice is appropriate because, as stated by Guba and Lincoln (1994), an interest in an individual's "experience and sense-making situates one in the constructivist paradigm with a commitment to hermeneutical and/or narrative approaches to research" (as cited in Ellis, 2006, p. 112). Further, Ribbins and Marland (1994) claim that a research method is needed that lets us get to know who educational leaders are "as people" (p. 1) and demonstrate that a narrative research method employing a conversational interview approach can achieve this goal. Finally, a narrative research method can also help a researcher learn how participants have construed their organizational realities in order to "represent perceived reality more faithfully and fully" (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p. 19).

The specific narrative method I use follows Polkinghorne (1995), who suggests that more research should incorporate both narrative analysis and analysis of narratives methods. My research, therefore, has two parts. The first part involves co-constructing

five narrative analyses, one with each participant. The second part is the analysis of narratives component, in which I look across the various co-constructed narrative accounts for themes and meanings that might provide further insight or inform theory and practice. Polkinghorne (1995) did not name this dual method approach, so I have begun calling it a *narrative aggregate inquiry* because it is a narrative inquiry that aggregates a series of narrative analyses in order to offer a second level of interpretive analysis.

Finally, a rather unique and innovative part of my method is the incorporation of pre-interview activities (PIAs) as developed by Ellis (2006) and is further clarified by Ellis, Hetherington, Lovell, McConaghy, and Viczko (2013).[5] The use of PIAs involves asking participants to take time prior to our conversational interviews to create a visual image based upon their reflection on the topic of interest (the PIAs suggested to participants are provided in Appendix B). This creative and interpretive process serves a number of purposes, one of which is replacing the "grand tour" questions that are often used to begin interviews. Beginning instead with participants discussing their PIAs helps ensure the participant has the freedom to discuss what she or he wants to share. Other benefits include helping to establish connections between the interviewer and participants, facilitating conversational interviews generally, assisting novice interviewers to gain confidence and efficacy, and aiding interpretation and communication of results. PIAs are, therefore, very helpful for increasing the likelihood of success of open-ended interviews, during which the interviewer

> needs to establish rapport with the participant; … must begin in a way that communicates interest in what the participant has to say and encourages him or her to speak expansively; … [and] must succeed in diffusing power differences, supporting negotiation of social roles, and creating a 'new

[5] The contributions of PIAs are also identified by Ellis, Janjic-Watrich, Macris, and Marynowski (2011) and Ellis, Amjad, and Deng (2011).

> kind of interpersonal context,' one that 'violates many of the norms of everyday conversation' (Brenner, 2006, p. 366). (Ellis et al., 2013, p. 489)

In terms of interpretation, the visual images may help the researcher identify patterns in participants' stories or, conversely, may reinforce the patterns that the researcher identified in the prosaic text. With respect to communication, a PIA can be a helpful artifact when presenting a narrative account or a particular narrative element within an account. Selected PIAs from this study can be found in Appendix F.

The Role of the Research Question in Narrative Inquiry

In narrative inquiry, the research question isn't a tightly defined statement of a problem that is aimed to be solved or answered by the researcher in a narrow and definitive way. Instead, the question articulates the researcher's interests or curiosities that are aimed to be explored or followed through a genuine interest in the experiences of others. My main question in chapter one, then, served as a guide or touchstone that I came back to regularly as I asked questions of clarification as participants told their stories and as I worked hermeneutically with their transcripts to co-create the narrative analyses. The intent of the research question for me was to ensure that I always kept the experiences of others foremost in my mind as the main driver of my research activities – rather than a more particular and narrow interest I might otherwise hold. As a touchstone, it was a constant reminder that learning about the experiences of others through their story that they chose to tell would provide a way for me to get to know who these academic leaders are as people. It is from there that interpretation becomes possible.

The use of PIAs and conversational interviews worked well with this research question as touchstone because, ultimately, it is the larger question of each participant that matters most: *Who are you, and what is your story – Your story that you'd like to share with me?* In narrative theory this is referred to as entering the hermeneutical circle in the right way and, as a result, the interests of the participant take primacy rather than those of the researcher. For this reason, the first of each set of interviews that I conducted was a "getting to know you" interview. I trusted that following this narrative process would provide insight into my various leadership and organizational "wonders" – and into unforeseen broader or deeper questions too – but I understood that it would not likely be as fruitful if I held too tightly to my own a priori interests or to one particular problem I might hope to solve.

The study presented here, given the above, is first and foremost about a genuine heart-felt and intellectual interest in each person and their story.

The Role of Theory in Narrative Inquiry

In the same way that the research question plays a different role in narrative inquiry from the role it often plays in research undertaken within the positivist tradition, so too does "theory" play a different role within narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry falls under the umbrella of the interpretive tradition – and it is this related set of theories that must be understood and applied in their own way, separate and distinct from what Clandinin and Connelly (2000) call "a 'grand narrative' of social science inquiry" (p. xxv). Concepts such as the hermeneutical circle, mentioned above, and alternative ways of evaluating narrative inquiries are expanded upon elsewhere in this chapter as the

development of interpretive and narrative theoretical grounding is important for framing, understanding, and carrying out the research that follows.

Without going too far into the ideas further explored below, it is important to understand that when one chooses a narrative approach to research, one is choosing both theory and method. Just like Greenfield's alternative theory of organization and leadership blurs the lines of epistemology and ontology (Riveros, 2009), narrative acts as both the theory and method of the research (Vanstone, 2017). So whereas a researcher using a positivistic approach will, say, choose a theory to answer a predetermined question and to guide the factors and functional form of an explanatory equation that will predict (or fail to predict) aggregate human behaviour in accordance with the chosen theory, a researcher using a narrative approach does not. A narrative researcher is interested in an individual's experiences, thoughts, beliefs, actions, and values – and seeks both to understand their coherency within the individual's social context and to gain new insight through their interaction with the researcher's own experiences, thoughts, beliefs, and values. In other words, a narrative researcher moves from individual experiences toward understanding(s) and insight(s) whereas researchers using a positivistic approach tend to be more interested in the aggregate, in statistical generalizability, and in repeatability that may lead toward predictability. That is, often a positivistic approach will presume understanding by the a priori choice of a theory and move toward the individual by looking for a model that has good explanatory value.

None of the above is to suggest that no theory beyond narrative and interpretive theory is used in narrative inquiry. Rather, disciplinary-type theory is used in a different way. Theory forms part of the researcher's thoughts, beliefs, values, and even

experiences. Although the narrative researcher brings all that she or he is to the narrative task, the narrative researcher also pays particular attention at the outset to the theories that he or she believes will be of most use. Therefore, the narrative researcher brings bodies of literature – or a variety of understandings – to the research task, rather than a predetermined specific theory to be tested or to test the data one has on hand. This concept is referred to as "the researcher as bricoleur" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2), which is a type of intellectual craftsperson who brings to each job the intellectual tools that might be needed. Of course, often the researcher as bricoleur must return to the shop (i.e., to the literature) and acquire or make additional tools in order to complete the job (interpretation) to her or his satisfaction. For the purposes of my research, I brought with me three bodies of literature that are part of higher educational administration and that I believed would be necessary for me to make meaning of participants' stories: 1) Higher educational organization theory; 2) Higher educational leadership theory; and 3) Academic identity theory. These were chosen because taking an interest in the experiences of associate deans means taking an interest in how they view and construe their organizational environment, how they enact and understand their roles, and who they are as individuals. Further, these three bodies of literature also have the advantage of mapping onto Dewey's (1938/1997) three-part educational theory, which was emphasized as foundational to narrative research by Clandinin and Connelly (2000).

Higher educational administration literature related to the above three sets of theory is presented and explored in the next chapter. The remainder of this chapter discusses key ideas in interpretive and narrative inquiry and provides, in brief, some further details of this particular study.

Part Three: Interpretive and Narrative Theory and Practice

Interpretive Inquiry

Interpretive inquiry is a research paradigm that stands opposite to positivist inquiry.[6] Guba and Lincoln (1994) state that "the aim of inquiry is *understanding and reconstruction* of the constructions that people (including the researcher) initially hold, aiming toward consensus but still open to new interpretations as information and sophistication improve" (p. 113). Within interpretive inquiry the research task is, therefore, considered to be the "co-construction" of knowledge and an ongoing, never-ending hermeneutical task as the researcher engages in a back and forth and inward and outward manner with their participants, the transcripts, and their own broadening understandings. Because understandings are co-constructed, the researcher is not a disinterested and purely objective observer of facts from a distance as is normally assumed within the positivist tradition. Rather, "the concept of the aloof researcher has been abandoned" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 11) and the researcher is "in" the research.

According to Ellis (1998a), "any discussion of interpretive inquiry ought to start with a review of three themes present in hermeneutics since Schleiermacher's work in 1819" (p. 15). The three themes identified were: 1) The creative and holistic nature of interpretative research; 2) A continuous "back and forth" movement between "part and whole" visualized as the "hermeneutical circle"; and 3) The important role of language as both a facilitating and limiting factor (Ellis, 1998a, pp. 15 – 16).

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[6] Guba and Lincoln (1994) provide an excellent critique of the "received" positivistic quantitative view (pp. 106-107), which elaborates on the differences between the two traditions. Mishler (1990) provides a way forward by reformulating the concept of validity.

With respect to the first theme, Ellis (2006) explains that interpretive researchers need to bring everything that they know (i.e., their whole selves) to the act of interpreting. This will include personal experience, belief systems, and knowledge of related literature and theory. It is important, too, that the interpretive researcher approaches interpretation holistically. This means that although the researcher is employing their knowledge, skills, and beliefs creatively to construct a holistic understanding of what the participant means, the researcher "refrains from imposing [taxonomies or classification systems] reductively" (Ellis, 2006, p. 115). Further, "such research often necessitates as much attention to the past as to the present" (Ellis, 2006, p. 113). It is often helpful for the researcher to construct a narrative in order to pull everything together in a way that the reader can understand the participant's experiences and deeper beliefs in a meaningful way.

The second theme related to hermeneutics places emphasis on the part-whole relationship. In order to gain some understanding of the whole, one must be knowledgeable about its parts. But in order to understand the significance of the parts, one must have an understanding of the whole. Hermeneutical theory recognizes this back and forth continuous movement that is necessary for interpretation. As one moves back and forth from part to whole to part again, one's understanding increases and new insight is gained. This is conceived of and communicated as the hermeneutical circle. It is important to note that "no interpretation is possible until interpretation has begun" (Scruton, 1982, p. 202). Similarly, Ellis (1998a) notes that one "makes the path by walking it" (p. 16). One of the strengths, then, of this type of research is that it explicitly acknowledges that the interests of researchers are likely to change as they walk the

hermeneutical path and gain sophistication in the area of knowledge that they are co-constructing with participants.

The role of language is the focus of the third theme. Language is a crucial aspect of hermeneutics as it both limits and enables interpretation. Language is present in, and affects the interpretation of, both the researcher's and the participant's experiences. It also differs depending upon one's cultural, social, geographical, and historical location. Different words, phrases, and usage patterns will carry different meanings in different contexts and these differing meanings will not always be obvious. For these reasons, researchers have to become very self-aware about their choice of language – both during the interview process and the writing process. For example, participants may adopt the language or choice of expression that an interviewer is using rather than express their experiences in their own words with the "fuller" meaning that those words carry. It is for this reason that Ellis (2006) recommends using open-ended questions when interviewing. "Open-ended questions identify a topic for discussion, but do not provide any direction for the discussion" (Ellis, 2006, p. 117). Another benefit is that open-ended questions, asked with genuine interest and care, will often generate stories in participants own words that carry even greater meaning for interpretive research.

Evaluating Interpretive Inquiry

Central to the evaluation of the outcomes from an interpretive research project is the understanding that it is an assessment process quite different from an "objective" validation common within the positivistic research tradition. Fundamentally, "to evaluate an [interpretive] account, one should ask whether the concern which motivated the

inquiry has been advanced" (Ellis, 1998a, p. 30). Ellis (1998a) builds on Packer and Addison (1989) to provide six questions useful in evaluating an interpretive inquiry:

1) Is it plausible?
2) Does it fit with other material we know?
3) Does it have the power to change practice?
4) Has the researcher's understanding been transformed?
5) Has a solution been uncovered?
6) Have new possibilities been opened up for the researcher, research participants, and the structure of the context? (pp. 30-31)

Of course, different qualitative methods have developed differing tendencies with respect to evaluation and assessment. Narrative methods, for example, use evaluation criteria related to the six criteria above but sometimes appear in a slightly different form. This is elaborated upon in the sections on narrative inquiry below. At the root, however, one must understand that evaluating an interpretive account is like judging the "goodness" of a hammer – its goodness is related to its suitability for the task at hand (Heidegger, 1927/1962, cited in Packer & Addison, 1989, p. 291). Like a sledgehammer chosen to drive spikes or a ball-peen hammer chosen for metalwork, "a good interpretive account is one that advances the practical concerns with which we undertake an interpretive inquiry, and one that works well with the other activities we are engaged in" (Packer & Addison, 1989, p. 291).

With the interpretivist paradigm comes the understanding that there can be no absolute certainty. And without certainty,

> there is no technique, no interpretation–free algorithm or procedure with which we can evaluate an interpretation. As Rosen (1987, p. 143) puts it: 'There are no canons by which one can usefully restrict legitimate from illegitimate readings.' (Packer & Addison, 1989, p. 290)

So we must choose our evaluative strategies carefully to fit the specific interpretive task.

The Role of the Interpretive Researcher

An interpretive researcher must be cognizant of how they "enter" the hermeneutical circle for a specific research project and of their interactions with all participants. It is important to be able to "stand back from one's topic of interest and to begin with a genuine and more global interest" (Ellis, 2006, p. 112) in the participants themselves. This not only encourages the participant to provide a richer historical description leading to a more holistic understanding of the participant and the social context of their experiences, it also allows the participant the freedom to construct their narrative by following their own needs and interests. Invariably, this will both cover the researcher's interests and provoke further thinking in previously unanticipated ways. Ellis, Janjic-Watrich, Macris, and Marynowski (2011) write that "beginning the research, or *entering the hermeneutic circle in the right way* requires: concerned engagement; humility; openness; a capacity for reciprocity and interactive, dialogic interviews; and availability to negotiation of meaning" (p. 12). This openness to, and appreciation of, the *process* of interpretive inquiry is imperative for the researcher because "in interpretive inquiry we begin with an openness to behold or contemplate life in its wholeness and complexity" (Ellis, 1998a, p. 19). In other words, if we are not open to the process, if we lack patience and use "go for the throat" questions, if we do not bring the above intentions to the interview space, then we will fail to gain as deep an understanding of the complexity of the participant's experience as we otherwise might. We risk being left with only a superficial understanding garnered from what the participant would tell us in direct response to our essentially yes/no questions, losing the rich detail associated with narratives that are provided in a comfortable, safe, and caring environment.

There are additional characteristics that one must have or develop if working within the interpretive tradition, which can be summed up by the view of the researcher as "bricoleur" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2). The bricoleur is a "jack-of-all-trades" or a professional "do-it-yourself" person:

> The qualitative researcher-as-bricoleur uses the tools of his or her methodological trade, deploying whatever strategies, methods, or empirical materials as are at hand (Becker, 1989). If new tools have to be invented, or pieced together, then the researcher will do this. (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 2)

Some implications of this view of interpretive researchers are that they must be comfortable with various methods and theoretical approaches and that they must have read widely and critically. The qualitative researcher must also be able to work within and across various theories, frameworks, perspectives, and paradigms. The researcher-as-bricoleur is, therefore, an interdisciplinary scholar – something that I believe is particularly important to emphasize for the study and practice of higher educational administration. For these reasons, I prefer to think of the interpretive researcher as a particular type of bricoleur – as an intellectual craftsperson. Thinking of the research bricoleur as an intellectual craftsperson conjures up the image of a local artist, which has the advantage of unapologetically emphasizing that the research product on display is intimately intertwined with the artist's background and surroundings. In other words, it is clearly acknowledged and understood that "the research is … shaped by his or her personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p. 3). The research product is a work of art that represents the researcher's understandings at a particular juncture in time and place. It is, therefore, not right or wrong and it may please or displease the artist and connoisseur – but it has value all the

same, if the researcher entered the hermeneutical circle in the right way. It is not a product of science but one of art, humanities, and literature.

Interpretive researchers, each as a unique bricoleur or intellectual craftsperson, bring all of their personal-professional understandings, skills, beliefs, and abilities with them as they enter the hermeneutical circle. These are not "left at the door" or even "bracketed." They are, however, carried in a humble and respectful way consistent with the necessary characteristics and intentions emphasized above. If this is accomplished, then the skills of the bricoleur, craftsperson, or artist can be put to work, which entails the back and forth part-whole process discussed above. The bricoleur will move back and forth, from part to whole and back to part, to construct his or her understanding of the experiences and contexts at hand. Often, this is accomplished through interviews, analysis of the transcripts, more interviews, and continuous re-examination of the transcripts and other texts.

The Nature of Interviewing and Observation

As noted above, open-ended questions are a key part of research methods involving interviews. This is particularly the case if one is interested in gaining a deep understanding through narratives rather than simple informational responses to a pre-determined set of direct questions that may be relevant on an a priori basis to the researcher but may, in fact, have little relevance to the participant's experience. It is important to remember that "the object of an interview is not simply to get answers to questions, but to learn what the topic of the research is about for the participant" (Ellis, 2006, p. 113). For this reason, among others (such as increasing trust and comfort), it is often suggested that the researcher begin with "grand tour" questions and then follow up

in appropriate ways (Ellis, 2006, p. 113). Open-ended questions are not, however, necessarily easy to formulate and do not always come naturally. This can make following up in appropriate ways difficult, especially for novice researchers. According to Ellis (2006),

> the approach of beginning with a few grand-tour questions and then following the topics raised by the participant seems more feasible for a seasoned researcher who is comfortable with both the participant and the research topic. Thinking on one's feet and manifesting a relaxed, confident, and inviting manner can otherwise be more difficult. (p. 113)

Ellis (2006) recommends using a pre-interview activity, such as the creation of a timeline by the participant, to help overcome these difficulties. The pre-interview activity creates a comfortable and open starting point for discussion – and it encourages narrative. The researcher may only need to say "so, can you tell me about what you've done here?" and the participant will begin the story related to their pre-interview activity. Ellis (2006, p. 119) provides a number of examples of pre-interview activities and I provide the pre-interview activities I suggested to my participants in Appendix B. In addition to the use of a pre-interview activity, it is helpful to prepare in advance a number of open-ended questions that can be used as prompts if necessary or if time allows (Ellis, 2006, p. 113) and the ones I had on hand are provided in Appendix C.

Interpretive Theory and Method

The term "interpretive" is a common translation of the German term "verstehen," which was employed by Weber and others within the context of social theory. It can also, however, be translated as "understanding" (David, 2010), which may serve to reveal the hermeneutical foundations underlying the interpretive school of thought. Within interpretivism, a primary goal is "to gain some understanding of how … [individual

people] saw the world, and how such an understanding informed their actions and interactions" (David, 2010, p. xxiii). This search for understanding (or the search for "meaning" associated with hermeneutics) differs from the dominant tradition of rational-empiricism, which is more often searching for a single technically generalizable causal "truth," explanation, or model. Interpretivism allows for multiple understandings and meanings to be unearthed, constructed, and articulated. According to David (2010),

> the term 'interpretive sociology' has come to stand for an opposition to causal, positivist and macro sociological explanation. Norman Denzin has gone so far as to locate this interpretive tradition as a 'loyal opposition' to positivism. (p. xxvii)

In standing opposite (or, perhaps, parallel) to positivism, interpretivism is "an alternative view ... [that] sees the subject matter of the social sciences as fundamentally different from the natural sciences and the methods and aims of natural science as inadequate to represent social phenomena" (Moss, 1996, p. 21). Sometimes these two perspectives are referred to as naturalism and anti-naturalism. According to Rhodes (2014),

> naturalism refers to the idea that 'The human sciences should strive to develop predictive and causal explanations akin to those found in the natural sciences' (Bevir & Kedar 2008: 503) … [whereas] anti-naturalism … argues that human life differs from the rest of nature because 'human action … is meaningful and historically contingent' and the task of the human sciences is an interpretive one. (pp. 319-320)

Although interpretivists hold much in common, such as their general stance toward positivism, an interest in individuals' conceptions, experiences, and beliefs, and a commitment to search for (multiple) understandings and meanings, "there is no singular interpretive method, and it is wrong to seek a singular authoritative source" (David, 2010, p. xxv). For Moss (1996), interpretivism includes "traditions as diverse as ethnography,

hermeneutics, phenomenology, critical theory, and postmodernism" (p. 21). Bonner (2001) notes that there are

> various strands of the interpretive tradition in sociology, including the Symbolic Interactionism of Blumer (1969) and followers, the phenomenology of Berger and his associates (e.g., 1963, 1964, 1974), the ethnomethodology of Garfinkel (1967) and his followers (see Turner, 1974), as well as the Analytic Theory of Blum & McHugh and their students. Other traditions like the structuration theory of Giddens, the Neo-Structuralism of Alexander, the critical theory of Habermas (1988), and various streams of feminist thought (Lather, 1991; Scott, 1990; Smith, 1987) in different ways seek to integrate the insights developed in the interpretive tradition into their own frameworks (see Ritzer, 1996, pp. 351-484; Wallace and Wolf, 1991, for a summary). (p. 268)

That there exists such multiplicity in the way interpretive thought has been taken up by scholars both within and across disciplines is, in large part, because

> the way an interpretive method was understood by 19th century German authors, then by Weber, Simmel, Parsons, Schutz, critical theory, symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology and by cultural anthropology, … cannot be boiled down to a singular form. Rather, what exists is *a set of related perspectives* [emphasis added] on the significance of meaningful action in the production of social life. (David, 2010, p. xxvi)

Despite this multiplicity of interpretive theory and method, two main strands of contemporary interpretivism have been identified:

> First, there are the interpretive approaches rooted in the humanities … They draw on hermeneutic and phenomenological philosophies that seek to understand the meanings people attach to social action. Second, new approaches to interpretive theory flourished as disillusionment with the scientific aims of behaviourism and structuralism grew. These approaches draw on post-structuralist and post-modern philosophies. (Bevir & Rhodes, 2002, pp. 3-4)

Within contemporary interpretivism, although the post-structuralist and post-modern strand offers a strong critique of positivism, it has not always been welcomed by proponents of the humanistic strand (Bevir & Rhodes, 2002). The tension between these two strands of interpretivism was called "the new debate in education" by Howe (1998),

which he characterized as a debate between "transformationists" and post-modernists. For Howe (1998), post-modernists "would abandon the emancipatory project of modernity as fatally flawed" (p. 13) and transformationists "would modify this project and endeavor to see it through" (p. 13).[7] Transformationists, therefore, retain at least some hope and have appreciation for such things as truth, beauty, love, and splendour. They "are united in their opposition to postmodernism – or at least to a strong (Benhabib, 1995) version of it that they accuse of being radically relativistic, hyperskeptical, and nihilistic" (Howe, 1998, p. 14).

In *Art as Experience* Dewey (1934/1980) emphasized the importance of the human element, which he called the emotional "glue" that binds (p. 55). I sided with Dewey on this and chose to work within the interpretive stream that is associated with humanism and is informed by, and relies upon, hermeneutical and phenomenological philosophy. Further, narrative was the theory and method of inquiry I chose to use within this interpretive tradition.

Narrative Inquiry and Narrative Aggregate Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is sometimes thought to have a resemblance to, or an identification with, psychology where "therapists who work more holistically with stories, rather than simply imposing interpretations from authorized theories and definitions, seek to understand a person's behavior and ideas from their stories (Sarbin, 1986)" (Ellis, 1998b, p. 34). In sociological research, however, narrative inquiry is used to gain an understanding through stories of a participant's actions and thoughts as they may relate to broader social circumstances (Ellis, 1998b, p. 34). In both psychological

[7] For an excellent and more recent discussion of this debate within the Canadian context see Angus (2009).

and sociological narrative research, though, there is interest in improving understandings holistically through individuals' stories and there is an ethic of care toward the individual.

Narrative inquiry is an interpretive research endeavour that looks to uncover the underlying meanings contained in individuals' experiences expressed as stories. Ellis (2006) cites Mishler (1986), Carr (1986), and Sarbin (1986) to support the claim that "research participants can best reveal their sense-making and experience narratively" (p. 112). Given the interpretive stream within which I am working, it is not imperative that participants recall events and details with perfect accuracy as though they are declaring objective facts. Rather, researchers working in this tradition are interested in gaining insight from learning the deeply held beliefs, thoughts, feelings, assumptions, and values that participants use to guide their actions and decisions, which are embedded within a participant's story in a consistent way even if the details of a story may change somewhat if conveyed in a different time or place.

Narrative inquiry "refers to a subset of qualitative research designs in which stories are used to describe human action" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 5). Further, narrative does not simply refer to any prosaic text but, instead, refers to a discourse that takes the form of a story with a plot:

> In recent years qualitative researchers have attended to a more limited definition of narrative (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). In this definition, narrative refers to a particular type of discourse, the story, not simply to any prosaic discourse … A story is a special type of discourse … [in which] events and actions are drawn together into an organized whole by means of a plot. (Polkinghorne, 1995, pp. 6-7)

Polkinghorne (1995) prefers to use the term "story" rather than the often-used phrase "emplotted narrative," which he finds awkward. Either way, the plot plays a crucial role as it combines various events and characters into a cohesive whole and helps to ensure

the verisimilitude[8] and plausibility of the story for the reader. Stories also contain, for example, a protagonist who is moved by the plot along a timeline with a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Polkinghorne (1995) breaks narrative inquiry into two categories: 1) Analysis of Narratives; and 2) Narrative Analysis. Polkinghorne also suggested that researchers should begin using both types in a narrative research project – but he acknowledged the large amount of extra work and time that requires. The first category, also called a 'paradigmatic-type' analysis after Bruner (1985) (as cited in Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 12), is the most common form of narrative inquiry but Polkinghorne (1995) wishes to draw more scholarly attention to the second category (p. 12). This second type of narrative inquiry is related to what Ellis (1998b) calls the "narrative portrait" (p. 41).

In the analysis of narratives approach, narrative accounts are examined with the intent of discovering common ideas or themes. When using the analysis of narratives approach, either: 1) The themes or concepts are predetermined and the researcher is inspecting the narrative accounts to see if any of the stories fit; or 2) The researcher wishes to derive themes or concepts from the collected stories. These themes or concepts are determined or constructed through "a recursive movement between the data and the emerging categorical definitions" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 10). Note, again, the hermeneutical back and forth, part and whole, process of analysis. In this first category, then, researchers "collect stories as data and analyze them … [to produce] descriptions of themes that hold across the stories" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 12). Regardless of whether

[8] Verisimilitude refers to something having the appearance of being true or real. "Veri" in Latin means truth and "similis" means like or similar.

the themes or concepts are imposed or derived, the researcher is comparing stories or elements of stories across a number of different individual participants.

In Polkinghorne's (1995) second category, the narrative analysis approach, "the researcher's task is to configure the data elements into a story" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 15). In this approach, thought is constrained within each individual case and is focused on one individual's particular experiences. In order to do this, the researcher must:

- have a sense of the boundaries of the story;
- consider, discover, and create the plot;
- make use of basic plot types, such as tragedy or comedy;
- ensure the protagonist is goal-oriented, either moving towards or away from it. (Polkinghorne, 1995, pp. 15-16)

The product of a narrative analysis is a story that "provides a basis for understanding new action episodes by means of analogy" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 11). In other words, narrative analyses offer transferability such that someone can delve into a collection of individual, well-developed stories and look for one that is similar to the new situation they are trying to understand. A story with strong similarities can be drawn upon by way of analogy to provide one possible way of understanding the new situation while, at the same time, recognizing that the two situations are not the same so one should be open to other as-yet-undiscovered explanations (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 11). This is in contrast to the product of the analysis of narratives category, where its strength is the "capacity to develop general knowledge about a collection of stories … [but that] by necessity underplays the unique and particular aspects of each story" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 15). *Seasons of a Dean's Life* by Gmelch et al. (2011) provides an example of this generalized storied approach to the topic area of this dissertation.

Polkinghorne's (1995) suggestion to begin using both types of narrative inquiry in a narrative research project has not been widely taken up by researchers – probably because of its extraordinary demands – and the use of both types of narrative was never named. I decided to take this suggestion to heart, and I am calling the method *Narrative Aggregate Inquir*y because each participant's story, or narrative portrait, is a narrative analysis – and then the narrative analyses are "aggregated up" through an analysis of narratives that is looking for themes that hold across the narrative portraits.

Evaluating Narrative Inquiry

The first type of narrative inquiry, the generalized analysis of narratives, is the one that is more commonly used and with which we tend to be more familiar. As such, its evaluation or assessment is also more familiar and it follows the strategies discussed above. That is, one often asks whether the study has advanced our understanding of the issue or situation. Following Ellis's (1998a) six questions (given on page 26 above) or other similar questions is, then, a useful way to proceed. And, because in this style of research one is concerned with either deriving or imposing themes, much of the focus of the evaluative questions is on these themes and their relation to the stories or to other research and theory.

The second type of narrative inquiry, however, is less familiar. Because the focus of the researcher is on finding and pulling together the elements of a participant's interviews into a coherent story, the evaluation of this type of research must be based upon how well the story is "put together." Polkinghorne (1995) provides seven guidelines[9] for the creation and evaluation of a narrative analysis:

[9] Polkinghorne (1995) cites Dollard (1935) as providing the basis for the seven criteria.

1) The description of the cultural context;
2) The embodied nature of the protagonist;
3) The description and existence of significant others (supporting roles);
4) Ease of grasping the understandings of the protagonist through their actions;
5) A historical continuity through shared social events of protagonist and peers;
6) The existence and quality of a story, including its uniqueness;
7) The story providing a meaningful and credible explanation of the protagonist's behaviour. (pp. 16-18)

My research project is a narrative aggregate inquiry because I am interested in first finding, co-creating, and emphasizing individual stories before moving on to an analysis of narratives. To that end, in chapter four, I work within the narrative analysis category and co-construct five individual stories. Then, in chapter five, I move to the generalized analysis of narratives category to look across the stories for themes. I, therefore, considered both types of evaluation criteria when analyzing my work and others may wish to do the same. That is, I used Ellis's (1998a) criteria for the analysis of narratives in chapter five and Polkinghorne's (1995) criteria for the narrative analyses in chapter four. These two sets of criteria have additional applicability because, as with the humanistic strand of interpretive inquiry I am working within, they avoid the use of terminology that is common within the post-modern stream of interpretive inquiry. That is, rather than employing terms such as trustworthiness and validity, which are thought to be too closely identified with positivism, these criteria employ concepts such as verisimilitude (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), plausibility, genuineness, and growth in understanding (Ellis, 1998a; Packer & Addison, 1989) to adjudicate the hermeneutical work holistically. Patterson, Watson, Williams, and Roggenbuck (1998) explain that "hermeneutics represents an antifoundationalist epistemology that focuses more on

evaluations of the research product itself rather than its adherence to antecedent methodological criteria" (p. 430).[10]

Hermeneutics and Narrative Inquiry

Above I have drawn attention to the hermeneutical influence on interpretive and narrative inquiry. It is important, therefore, to clarify that this is not a classical hermeneutical study. Although hermeneutical research has itself changed over time, its early foundations are in a deep and particular analysis and interpretation of written religious texts. Narrative inquiry is not, however, limited to static, frozen in time texts. The texts being examined result from the co-construction of a narrative of an individual's experience. There is an element of the self in the text that the researcher does not shy away from, whereas in a classical hermeneutical approach the researcher attempts to be outside the text.

The main reason for drawing attention to the hermeneutical foundations of narrative inquiry is that "*philosophical hermeneutics* is a source of key concepts and metaphors for framing or discussing or understanding the interpretive research process" (Ellis, 2014). The influence of philosophical hermeneutics on narrative research is felt in at least two key ways. First, a great deal of attention is given to the way the researcher enters the research field (i.e., the attitude, awareness, and carefulness of the researcher). Second, a focus is placed on the back/forth and inward/outward nature of the research process that occurs during each of (and across) the interviewing, analyzing, reading, and writing stages.

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[10] Patterson (1993) proposes persuasiveness, insightfulness, and practical utility as alternative criteria and discusses in more detail the problems with criteria such as trustworthiness and validity for evaluating hermeneutical research. See also Patterson and Williams (2002, pp. 31-36) and Mishler (1990).

With respect to entering the field, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) draw upon the anthropologist Bateson (1994) and the psychiatrist Coles (1989). For Clandinin and Connelly (2000), "Bateson … offers lessons in how to go about the work … of narrative inquiry. Most important is the attitude of the inquirer toward participants, an attitude that will foster learning" (p. 9). This type of attitude is described eloquently by Coles (1989) who, reflecting upon the "gift" from one of his residency supervisors, writes that he

> was urged to let each patient be a teacher: 'hearing themselves teach you, through their narration, the patients will learn the lessons a good instructor learns only when he becomes a willing student, eager to be taught.' (as cited in Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 12)

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) add to and crystalize this concept, explaining that

> narrative inquiry … is a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place …, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix *in the midst* [emphasis added] and progresses in this same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up people's lives. (p. 20)

The second key element of philosophical hermeneutics, the back/forth and inward/outward research process, has been observed by numerous authors (Boostrom, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1988; Richardson, 1995) who are foundational to narrative inquiry and who Clandinin and Connelly (2000) and Ellis (1998a, 1998b) refer to explicitly. An important theoretical contribution that Clandinin and Connelly (2000) make to narrative inquiry is an expansion of this two dimensional concept into three dimensions and then linking it to the educational philosophy of Dewey (1938/1997). The terms Clandinin and Connelly (2000) use are *personal* and *social* to refer to the hermeneutical inward/outward and *temporality* (i.e., past, present, implied future) to refer to the hermeneutical back/forth, and they cite their earlier work as an

example of the two dimensional model. That is, in their earlier work (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994), "place" is included as part of the social environment whereas in their later work they explicitly consider place to be a third term or dimension. These three dimensions coincide with the terms and ideas that are critical elements of Dewey's (1938/1997) three-part philosophy of education: Continuity[11]; interaction[12]; and situation[13].

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) openly acknowledge – and celebrate – Dewey's foundational theoretical impact by stating that "we begin [our book] with John Dewey, the preeminent influence on our work, who believed that examining experience is the key to education" (p. xiii). Dewey's stature as a philosopher (and his work) helps to theoretically ground narrative and interpretive inquiry. For example, according to Alfred North Whitehead,

> Dewey is to be classed among those who have made philosophic thought relevant … he is to be classed with the ancient stoics, with Augustine, with Aquinas, with Francis Bacon, with Descartes, with Locke, with Auguste Comte. (as cited in Dewey, 1938/1997, p. 1)

It is only fair and appropriate, however, to note that Dewey's three-part philosophy of education has its critics. Dewey (1938/1997) explicitly made note of the criticism and related it, in particular, to his metaphor of growth. His critics believed that his explanation of the continuity of experiences and their interaction with the surrounding environment works equally well for, say, a bank robber being taught the illicit trade as it does for a student learning mathematics. Dewey (1938/1997) responded that there are

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[11] The "social" and how different social situations are connected such that understandings gained in one situation are of use in future situations is emphasized within Dewey's concept of continuity.
[12] The thoughts, beliefs, actions, and decisions taken when individuals interact with their environment are central to Dewey's concept of interaction.

"educative" and "mis-educative" experiences and one must, therefore, consider if the educational growth of the individual in one direction stunts or precludes growth in another more worthwhile direction. The weakness, then, in Dewey's theory is its very strength.[14] Teaching and learning are moral activities, but what are the principles at the root, what are the goals to be reached, and who determines the mixture of the moral "soil" and direction of growth? These questions are not answered, other than tautologically, in *Experience and Education* (Dewey, 1938/1997) though he obviously engages with them in other works, such as in *Moral Principles in Education* (Dewey, 1909/2009) and in *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (Dewey, 1916/2004). For the purposes of the present study, the questions need not be answered here. Only, perhaps, kept in mind as we explore Dewey's (1938/1997) observation that

> as an individual passes from one situation to another, his world, his environment, expands or contracts. He does not find himself living in another world but in a different part or aspect of one and the same world. What he has learned in the way of knowledge and skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with the situations which follow. (p. 44)

This is, of course, relevant to the work at hand because Dewey's (1938/1997) ideas related to the social, interaction, and the personal map well onto the three bodies of literature that I chose to bring along with me on my narrative journey: Higher educational organization theory; higher educational leadership theory; and academic identity theory.

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[13] The "personal" and one's growth, learning, and understanding (i.e., transformation) is emphasized within Dewey's concept of situation.

[14] In chapter seven of *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, Dewey (1920/1957) elaborates that the only moral end or fixity is the process of growth itself and he introduces the idea of meliorism (i.e., a concern with improvement or making situations better) for guiding growth.

Chapter Three: Exploring the Field from the Outside

I do not put my faith in institutions, but in individuals all over the world who think clearly, feel nobly, and act rightly. They are the channels of moral truth.[15]

Higher educational administration is not an academic discipline with a relatively complete theoretical formulation where its dominant theory or set of theories can be readily applied to a given problem in order to arrive at a single data-informed solution. Rather, it is a multi- and inter-disciplinary area of study that is comprised of numerous bodies of literature and contains competing theories and ideologies. This relative openness in disciplinary boundary and definition is well-suited for narrative and interpretive research because the availability of multiple approaches to understanding opens up multiple possibilities for interpretation. In other words, to understand generally how individuals' actions, thoughts, values, beliefs, and decisions are coherent, a researcher can appeal to multiple theories for interpreting individuals' stories – including theories that cross ideological divides.

As was explained in the previous chapter, a narrative researcher may choose a particular theory or literary theme and impose it upon the research process with the intent of assessing the degree to which it is supported or reflected in the stories that are constructed. Alternatively, a narrative researcher may have a primary interest in the individual participants and the stories they choose to tell with the intent of learning from those stories and, if possible, developing themes from what appears within and across those stories. In the latter case, which is the approach taken in this research, narrative researchers must bring a broader and more holistic set of theories and understandings

with them on their research journey to aid them in the narrative and interpretive research processes that they will undertake. For my journey, I chose to bring literature on higher educational organization, higher educational leadership, and academic identity. I chose the first two bodies of literature because when one wonders about a particular individual being an associate dean, one wonders what that person thinks, feels, and believes about the (leadership) role of associate dean and about the surrounding organization that they are to provide leadership within. I chose the third body of literature because when one wonders about a particular individual's "becoming," one wonders about who that person is and about how they came to be that particular person – in this case, who the person is as an academic.

The link between these three higher educational administration theories and participants' experiences of becoming and being associate deans will be discussed further in chapter five near the end of this work.

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[15] Quotation inscribed on a statue, at the entrance to the University of British Columbia gardens, of Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), a Bengali poet, novelist, playwright, painter, and educator. In 1913 he was proclaimed a Nobel Laureate in Literature.

Part One: Higher Educational Organization Theory

Dichotomous Perspectives on University Organization

The complex challenges inherent to providing leadership within universities are grounded in the various assumptions people make about the university as a social institution, which are often inconsistent, incompatible, and value-laden (Levin, 2000, p. 31). For Levin (2000), the values involve "institutional purpose, institutional culture, and organizational practices" (p. 31).

Levin (2000), Chaffee (1984; 1989), and Walker (1979) explain that there are, essentially, two different perspectives related to organization theory and the university. One perspective is that university organizations are the same as any other organization and should, therefore, be managed or administered as such. Implicit in this first perspective is that they should be managed like businesses, which means an application of the bureaucratic theory of organization – or what Walker (1979) calls having a "muscle view" of university administration and Chaffee (1984) calls the "adaptive" model. The second perspective – or what Walker (1979) calls the "democratic political view" and Chaffee (1984) calls the "interpretive" model – is that university organizations are fundamentally different from other organizations because of the uniqueness of their institutional foundations and purpose(s).

The first perspective reflects the belief that

> the academic institution is not what its missions claim it to be ... They are instruments of domination (Morgan 1986) that have become socially acceptable because they fulfill the purposes of dominant classes or economic elites or political power structures. They are not the collegian of scholars who seek knowledge and truth. Academic institutions are tribal (Hazard 1976) political institutions (Baldridge et al. 1978), where a negotiating culture (Bergquist 1992) prevails. They are not unlike other organizations. (Levin, 2000, p. 32)

The second perspective reflects the belief that universities are

> populated by self-governing scholars (Keller 1983) and are relatively stable as a result of … [particular] routines (Birnbaum 1992) [where] collective decision making, the autonomy of professors over teaching and research, and standardization of skills and knowledge in the disciplines (Hardy et al. 1984) ... [lead to academic] control over several domains and … considerable continuity. (Levin, 2000, p. 31)

Meyer and Rowan (1977) and Bolman and Deal (1991) also propose fundamentally dichotomous views of organizations. Meyer and Rowan (1977) articulate this view by placing the two types on either end of a continuum:

> At one end are production organizations under strong output controls (Ouchi & McGuire, 1975) whose success depends on the management of relational networks. At the other end are institutionalized organizations whose success depends on the confidence and stability achieved by isomorphism with institutional rules. (p. 354)

They consider universities, as institutionalized organizations, to be in the latter category at the end of the continuum opposite production (i.e., militaristic-industrial) organizations. Bolman and Deal (1991), on the other hand, articulate the dichotomous view by grouping the literature "into four frames: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic" (cited in Nidiffer, 2000, p.70) where the structural and human resource frames fall within the first perspective and the political and symbolic frames fall within the second perspective.

The idea that fundamental differences exist between different types of organizations is not new and is not restricted to higher educational organization theory. Peter Drucker, for example, is often thought to be one of the founders of management as an academic discipline beginning in the 1940s. Drucker (1974/2008) places universities in his "non-business organization" category with other service institutions such as

hospitals, government agencies, and the military – with each having their own unique histories, purposes, and requirements of leadership. Regardless, however, of whether or not one believes there are differences between some organizational types sufficiently large to demand different approaches to management or administration, it is undeniable that universities have an extraordinarily long history, a particularly complex organizational culture, and multiple purposes that taken together sets them apart from other institutions in Western society. Understanding this history and the multiple purposes that are embedded within the university organizational culture is critical for understanding Levin's (2000) second perspective – and why or how individuals' beliefs might align with that perspective.

The long history of the university as well as the resiliency and universal appeal of its institutional form is attested to by Kerr (2001) who famously wrote:

> About eighty-five institutions in the Western world established by 1520 still exist in recognizable forms, with similar functions and unbroken histories, including the Catholic church, the Parliaments of the Isle of Man, of Iceland, and of Great Britain, several Swiss cantons, and seventy universities. Kings that rule, feudal lords with vassals, and guilds with monopolies are all gone. These seventy universities, however, are still in the same locations with some of the same buildings, with professors and students doing much the same things, and with governance carried on in much the same ways. (p. 115)

The history of universities in Canada, like for other Western universities, points to one of the defining institutional characteristics being self-governance (i.e., organizational decision-making being "arms-length" from government and other benefactors) and, more specifically, to academic governance (Jones, 1997; Keller, 1983; Rait, 1912/2007). A second institutional corner stone, according to Wilshire (1997), is academic freedom in teaching and research. These two fundamental principles can be seen in the histories of

the earliest higher education institutions in Canada. For example, in the early struggles related to the founding of what became the University of Toronto (U. of T.), Bidwell (the chair of a special committee of Parliament in 1828) articulated what could well be regarded as the ideal of the Canadian university:

> An [sic] university adapted to the character and circumstances of the people would be the means of inestimable benefits to the Province. But to be of real service, the principles upon which it is established must be in unison with the general sentiments of the people. It should not be a school of politics or of sectarian views. It should have about it no appearance of partiality or exclusion. *Its portals should be thrown open to all* [emphasis added], and upon none who enter should any influence be exerted to attach them to a particular creed or church. It should be a source of intellectual and moral light and animation, from which the glorious irradiations of literature and science may descend upon all with equal lustre and power. Such an institution would be a blessing to a country, its pride and glory. (as cited in Ross, 1896, p. 21)

In 1906 the Flavelle Commission concluded that "the successful operation of the University required that the institution be separated from 'the direct superintendence of political powers'" (as cited in Jones, 1997, p. 139). Eventually what became known as the U. of T. model emerged, which resolved the struggle over autonomy in two ways: 1) Autonomy from church authority while providing secular and non-secular higher educational opportunities was maintained by following the University of London model, where the university proper was a secular institution but affiliated colleges were attached to serve particular denominational needs; and 2) Autonomy from government was achieved through a bicameral governance structure. Bicameralism typically involves the delegation of governmental powers to a corporate board of governors while authority on academic matters are vested in a senate with representatives from each faculty or college, the administration, the affiliated colleges, and the alumni – but with the majority of votes in the senate held by the professoriate (Jones, 1997, p. 139). The U. of T. model was

influential in the development of other Canadian universities – and especially so for the large research-based universities that were being established as an important part of the founding of new provinces as Canada itself expanded westward.

Beyond the relative complexity in institutional culture that arises from the dual cornerstone principles of academic governance and academic freedom, fundamental differences in institutional purpose(s) also exist between universities and other organizations. Whereas, for example, private or publicly-held business organizations usually can be characterized as having a singular purpose such as maximizing profit, universities have multiple and sometimes competing purposes. Fallis (2005) presents four historical university archetypes that are now amalgamated into today's Western university institution: 1) Cardinal Newman's "Oxford model" of undergraduate liberal arts; 2) The "medieval model" of professional education; 3) The "Berlin model" of basic research and graduate education; and 4) The "Scottish model" of applied science and accessibility. Each of these ideas or purposes of a university is a vitally important aspect of the Canadian public university. Together, they bring the ancient mission of the university forward to today and endow it with the strength and flexibility to serve the public good. With flexibility, however, also comes tension. Tension exists, for example, between: Elite and accessible education; teaching and research; liberal education and professional training; undergraduate and postgraduate education; knowledge for its own sake and knowledge for the economy's sake; and withdrawal from the everyday world and active engagement within it (Fallis, 2007, p. 34). These multiple purposes, then, differentiate the university from the more usual single-purpose organization but also exacerbate the complexity of (or further enrich) its organizational culture. University

leaders and other organizational members cannot use, say, profit as the main decision-making criterion as can leaders within a single-purpose organization. Instead, trade-offs between the various purposes of the university need to be considered – and, with academic decision-making not being wholly vested in a particular individual leader, the processes needed for working toward consensus or implementing shared decision-making add to the complexity of the institutional culture. As a result, university organizational practices have developed that often look quite different from those in single-purpose organizations but that assist decision-making within this complex environment while aiming to preserve an institution's founding principles.

Scholars of higher educational administration and leadership have put forward various theories related to university organizations, their characteristics, and how they operate. These theories usually stand in contrast to bureaucratic theory, which is often applied to single-purpose organizations. Given the above, I cannot subscribe to Levin's (2000) first perspective that universities are fundamentally the same as other organizations. For me, in order to hold this perspective one would need to dismiss or ignore the historical and socio-cultural realities upon which the university was founded, reject the existence or importance of professional and intellectual expertise, and absurdly place non-academic administrators and managers in a hegemonic organizational position over those who have the specialized intellectual capital that can be acquired only by a lifetime of study and professional-academic practice and that is an essence of the university itself. Nonetheless it is important to have an understanding of bureaucratic theory, as those who do subscribe to the first perspective implicitly also subscribe to a bureaucratic theory of university organization. And, if the idea that some scholars

proposed is correct – that moving into an academic administrative role requires a fundamental shift in thinking and identity – then that idea is attached to the belief that the academic administrative role is located primarily within the administrative-managerial parts of the university where bureaucratic theory and the first perspective may better apply (Thompson, 1967; Weick, 1976). Consequently, the assumption or claim that moving into an academic administrative role requires a fundamental shift in thinking and identity incorporates the assumption that the required shift is toward Walker's (1979) muscle view of university administration and away from his democratic political view.

Bureaucratic and Cultural Theories of University Organization

Levin's (2000) first perspective and Walker's (1979) muscle view of universities align with bureaucratic theory. According to Meyer and Rowan (1977),

> the essence of a modern bureaucratic organization lies in the rationalized and impersonal character of … structural elements and of the goals that link them … [This particular] structure is assumed to be the most effective way to coordinate and control … complex relational networks. (p. 342)

The bureaucratic organizational structure makes

> individuals dependent upon, passive, and subordinate to the leader … [and allows individuals] little control over their working environment … [with] the result … that the employee is paid for … dissatisfaction while at work … to gain satisfactions outside … work. (Argyris, 1957, p. 13)

Henderson and Parsons (1947) describe the six elements of an "ideal" bureaucracy as:

1) A continuous organization of official functions bound by rules;
2) A specified sphere of competence, for example,
    a. systematic division of labour,
    b. necessary authority to carry out functions,
    c. definition of the necessary means of compulsion;
3) The principle of hierarchy of offices;
4) Rules regulating the conduct of offices;
5) Decisions, rules, and administrative acts recorded in written form;
6) Impersonal orientation. (pp. 330-332, as cited in Clark, Astuto, Foster, Gaynor, and Hart, 1994, p. 29)

Despite some of these elements appearing on the surface to apply to universities, higher educational and other organizational scholars consistently found substantial problems in attempting to apply bureaucratic theory to the university. For example, Argyris's (1957) description bears little resemblance to that of university faculty members' organizational and life circumstances, which are better characterized as a calling:

> A practical ideal of activity and character that makes a person's work morally inseparable from his or her life. It subsumes the self into a community of disciplined practice and sound judgment whose activity has meaning and value in itself, not just in the output or profit that results from it. (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985, as cited in Clark, 1997, p. 36)

Similar applicability problems arise with respect to authority and hierarchy of office:

> In the leading universities faculty influence is relatively strong. Many individuals have personal bargaining power; departments and professional schools are semiautonomous units; and all-campus faculty bodies such as senates have primacy in personnel and curricular decisions. University presidents … walk gently around entrenched faculty prerogatives. (Clark, 1997, pp. 29-30)

Because of these and other problems of applicability, mainstream sociologists and organizational scholars abandoned bureaucratic rational-structural theories and turned instead to an anthropological view of culture as an alternative way of understanding organizations (Bates, 2006; Meyer, 2002; Orton & Weick, 1990).

> If organizations were not, in fact, rational [bureaucratic] systems, maybe they were cultures and … perhaps it [was] through culture, rather than formal structure, that large firms [could] be bent to the will of their masters and rendered predictable, 'rational.' (Bates, 2006, p. 159)

An important part of taking a cultural view of organizations is the use of symbolism (Dandridge, Mitroff, & Joyce, 1980).

Cultural organization theory aligns with Levin's (2000) second perspective and Walker's (1979) democratic political view of university organizations. Two well-known cultural organization theories used for understanding universities or explaining their organizational practices are: 1) Loose coupling; and 2) Organized anarchy. Both of these theories are rife with symbolism. In order to convey the idea of loose coupling, Weick (1976) used a now famous image[16] of an "odd" soccer game that he attributed to a personal communication with James March:

> Imagine that you're either the referee, coach, player or spectator at an unconventional soccer match: the field for the game is round; there are several goals scattered haphazardly around the circular field; people can enter and leave the game whenever they want to; they can throw balls in whenever they want; they can say 'that's my goal' whenever they want to, as many times as they want to, and for as many goals as they want to; the entire game takes place on a sloped field; and the game is played as if it makes sense …
>
> If you now substitute in that example principals for referees, teachers for coaches, students for players, parents for spectators and schooling for soccer, you have an equally unconventional depiction of school organizations. (p. 1)

The image, of course, can be applied to universities by substituting, say, professors for teachers, deans for principals, and perhaps politicians for parents. More formally, Weick (1976) wrote that with loose coupling:

> 1) Each retains some identity and separateness and their attachment may be circumscribed, infrequent, weak in its mutual effects, unimportant, and/or slow to respond;
> 2) The degree of looseness is the extent to which independence exists; i.e. that there are few variables in common and/or the common variables are weak;
> 3) Involves subunits as building blocks that can be grafted onto an organization or severed with relatively little disturbance to either the blocks or the organization. These blocks are stable subassemblies and are the crucial organizational elements. (p. 3)

[16] The image is also used by March (1982) in an invited address to the Association for the Study of Higher Education annual meeting.

Organized anarchy sits along Meyer and Rowan's (1977) continuum even further away from bureaucratic theory. Whereas loose coupling continues to rely upon "rationality" for explaining actions and decision-making within each subunit organizational building block, organized anarchy places greater emphasis on the indeterminacy of the individual. According to Cohen and March (1986),

> in a university anarchy each individual in the university is seen as making autonomous decisions. Teachers decide if, when, and what to teach. Students decide if, when, and what to learn. Legislators and donors decide if, when, and what to support. Neither coordination … nor control are practiced. Resources are allocated by whatever process emerges but without … explicit reference to some superordinate goal. The 'decisions' of the system are a consequence produced by the system but intended by no one and decisively controlled by no one. (p. 33)

As with loose coupling, there are three characteristics that more formally define organized anarchy:

1) Problematic preferences [i.e., preferences are constantly shifting];
2) Unclear technologies [i.e., "outputs" are not one to one functions of "inputs"];
3) Fluidity of participation. (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972, p. 1)

Fluidity of participation means that

> participants vary in the amount of time and effort they devote to different domains; involvement varies from one time to another. As a result, the boundaries of the organization are uncertain and changing; the audiences and decision makers for any particular kind of choice change capriciously. (Cohen et al., 1972, p. 1)

This is particularly relevant for university organizations because participants (i.e., faculty members) make their decisions on what they will devote their attention to in a relatively independent, autonomous, and *poorly understood* fashion. The third characteristic of organized anarchy, then, is one of the historically-based fundamental corner stones of the university as an institution (i.e., academic freedom). March (1982) declared that "we

need better understanding of how *individuals* [emphasis added] and organizations process preferences … [That is,] how we can imagine decision-making in situations in which preferences are changing, inconsistent, and endogenous to choice" (p. 16).

Part Two: Higher Educational Leadership Theory

In addition to bringing literature with me to the narrative and interpretive task that I thought could help with understanding how individual participants construed their organizational surroundings, I brought literature to aid my understanding of how participants might have thought about and enacted their leadership roles. That is, I attempted to develop a holistic view of higher educational leadership theory. Although precursors to this literature obviously exist, such as within the classical management theory of Drucker (1974/2008) and Mintzberg (1989) or even within the larger tradition of the Western canon such as Machiavelli's [ca. 1513] *The Prince* and Plato's [ca. 375 BC] *Republic*, Bensimon, Neumann, and Birnbaum (1989) divide the higher educational leadership literature into six categories of theories, which I found to be an excellent place to begin:

1) Trait Theories;
2) Power and Influence Theories;
3) Behavioural Theories;
4) Contingency Theories;
5) Cognitive Theories;
6) Cultural and Symbolic Theories.

As Schein (2010) famously claimed, leadership and organizational culture are two sides of the same coin. For example, trait theories and power theories are readily identifiable with a bureaucratic theory of organization. Trait theories refer to the personal attributes of leaders that are thought to be primarily responsible for their success and achievement in their leadership roles such as "humour, courage, judgment, integrity, intelligence, persistence, hard work, vision, and being opportunity conscious" (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989, p. 215). Power theories are usually unidirectional in nature and refer to a leader's acquisition, maintenance, and use of power. Often the two

theories are interrelated, such as when the power of leaders is thought to arise out of their possession and application of their leadership traits. Behavioural theories and contingency theories brought some nuance to the trait theories and power theories that were developed earlier. One categorization of behavioural theories "suggests five styles of academic administration (Blake, Mouton, and Williams, 1981): caretaker, authority-obedience, comfortable-pleasant, constituency-centered, and team" (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989, p. 218). This type of conceptualization began to align some views of leadership with a more cultural view of organization. That is, the caretaker and authority-obedience styles may be seen to align with a bureaucratic view of organization whereas the constituency-centred and team styles may be seen to move toward the cultural view. Similarly, trait theorists began to place more emphasis on interpersonal abilities that "include being open, building teams, and being compassionate" (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989, p. 215) and power theorists began to place more emphasis on bidirectional or reflexive influence theories that "consider leadership in terms of mutual influence and reciprocal relationships between leaders and followers" (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989, p. 215).

Unsurprisingly, given the strong ties between leadership and organization theories that Schein (2010) articulated, higher educational leadership theory continued its development with an increasing focus on theories that aligned well with a cultural view of university organizations – and entrenched a dichotomy similar to the one found in the higher educational organization literature. Clark's (1970; 1972) "now-classic case study of Reed, Swarthmore, and Antioch ... [was when] colleges and universities … [were first understood] as cultures" (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989, p. 220). According

to Richardson and Wolverton (1994), with culture being based conceptually on social construction, cultural and symbolic theorists began to take the view that "participants constantly interpret and create organizational reality" (p. 43). Under a cultural-symbolic theory of leadership, then, "leaders may be required to act as anthropologists uncovering the organizational culture" (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989, p. 221) rather than being required, for example, to act like commanders by taking charge, making decisions quickly, and imposing decisions via systems of punishment and reward. Accordingly, "the focus shifts from controlling behaviour to providing new frames of reference for interpreting experiences in the organization" (Bess & Dee, 2008, p. 867). Scholars of higher educational leadership saw a need for culturally-based models of leadership to continue to be developed that would be sophisticated enough to allow for a multiplicity of leaders' viewpoints and not rely upon an assumption of a single broadly-shared organizational reality (Bensimon, 1994; Dill, 1982; Kezar, 2000, 2002; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Neumann, 1989, 1995; Pettigrew, 1979; Tierney, 1987, 1988, 1989; Trice & Beyer, 1984; Weick, 1976, 1979, 1995). As summed up by Levin (1995),

> the conception of leadership in postsecondary education has been surrounded by mythology [related to heroicism and near superhuman attributes] ... The challenge ... is to abandon the old conception of leadership ... and embrace a more vital and nourishing concept of leadership for the decades ahead. (p. 122)

Cultural-symbolic theory subsequently expanded or was extended to take on this challenge. For example, Levin (1995) expanded cultural-symbolic theory by placing it into a group of theories taking

> a critical perspective [that] describes and analyzes organizational behaviours within their historical, social, and cultural context … [This group of theories] encompasses recent [i.e., emergent] critically-oriented scholarship on higher education, including postmodern criticism, neo-

> Marxism, and feminist scholarship. It questions assumptions, traditions, and accepted authority. (p. 125)

Similarly, Nidiffer (2001) included "emergent" literature (e.g., Wallace & Wallin, 2015) within the cultural theory category – in particular the critical social and feminist approaches. Bess and Dee (2008) continued this development and emphasis by arguing that earlier theories of leadership were positivistic in nature whereas social constructionist theories view the organizational culture as much more complex with individuals and sub-groups having varied interpretations of experiences and holding differing beliefs about the organization and its culture(s). They divide the literature into three groups (positivist, social constructionist, and postmodernist) and consider cultural-symbolic theory to fall within their social constructionist category. For me, of course, postmodernism and social constructionism can be combined into a single interpretivist category, which then makes the underlying positivist and interpretivist dichotomy within the higher educational leadership literature easier to see.

As the higher educational leadership literature continued to develop alongside the higher educational organization literature with an increasing focus on cultural perspectives, the tight relationship between the two bodies of literature became even tighter or, rather, the two started to join together – but in a way that retained the fundamental underlying dichotomies found in both. For example, Bess and Dee (2008) asserted that leadership behaviour is "a function of *both* person and environment" (p. 831). More foundational is Thomas Greenfield's alternative view of organizations and leadership, which is of greater significance because in the early years of educational administration as a discipline in North America his was almost the lone voice questioning the seemingly unquestionable: The dominance of "American pragmatic empiricism" for

explaining and changing educational organizations (Hodgkinson, 1993, p. xi). American pragmatic empiricism is, of course, a short hand term for positivistic leadership theory and bureaucratic organization theory. Greenfield rejected this "scientistic" model because it relied upon the commonly held view in organizational studies

> that people occupy organizations in somewhat the same way as they inhabit houses. The tenants may change but, apart from wear and tear, the basic structure remains and in some way shapes the behaviour of people within. (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p. 1)

He believed that this fundamentally

> mistaken belief in the reality of organizations … diverted our attention from human action and intention as the stuff from which organizations are made … [and allowed] us to separate the study of organizations from the study of people and their particular *values, habits and beliefs* [emphasis added]. (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p. 1)

This belief maps very well onto my particular research study because, by choosing a narrative and interpretive approach, I am interested in studying people (i.e., associate deans) and their particular habits (i.e., how they enact their leadership roles), beliefs (i.e., how they think about their roles and their organizational surroundings), and values (i.e., who they are as individuals). Greenfield (1980) demonstrates how the scientific method is limited in its ability to explain the "moral" world[17] and that this limitation demands that we make a choice:

> The choice we face is whether to interpret reality and all that we recognize as an empirical world by rational methods alone or whether to seek elements of truth also from insight, image, art, and all the ways of knowing that rely upon intuitive, self-oriented, and nonrational perception. (p. 37)

[17] This terminology refers to an earlier conception of the world that is reflected in how universities used to be organized. That is, subjects that we tend to think of today as falling within the science category used to be called "natural philosophy" whereas those that we tend to think of as the humanities and arts used to be called "moral philosophy." The social sciences, as the application to varying degrees of scientific (or scientistic) approaches to studying moral philosophy, muddy the waters – so to speak – and both subsume and obfuscate the limitations of these approaches for understanding the subject matter of moral philosophy.

In place of the commonly accepted empirical model, Greenfield's alternative theory proposed that organizations ought not to be seen as

> structures subject to universal laws but as cultural artefacts dependent upon the specific meaning and intention of people within them … [An alternative view] of organizations must … rest upon the views of people in particular times and places. (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, pp. 4-5)

This alternative view, then, lands on the cultural side of the organizational literature and the leadership literature. It also, however, brings the two bodies of literature together because individuals and organizations are "inextricably intertwined" (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p. 1). That is, individuals both construe their organizational surroundings and are subject to their organizational realities. Organizations are viewed as invented social reality and individuals, "having invented such reality, … [are] perfectly capable of responding to it as though it were not of … [their] own invention (Silverman, 1970, p. 133)" (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p. 9).

Greenfield's alternative theory not only brings together higher educational leadership and organization theory, it has a consequence of blurring "the traditional distinction between ontology and epistemology" (Riveros, 2009, p. 53). Thus, "if we are to understand organizations, we must understand what people within them think of as right and proper to do" (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p. 11) and we must also recognize that because "organizations are definitions of social reality, … some people may make these definitions by virtue of their access to power while others must pay attention to them" (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p. 17). For Greenfield, the place for researchers and scholars to begin to gain understanding about organizations and leadership is with their own experiences with their own organizations (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p. 18).

Part Three: Academic Identity Theory

I'Me?

That infernal cursor
Blinking at Me
Mocking Me.
I must write.

But I am not finished reading, I protest
I have more to learn – more to see!
But where am I?
I must take stock of my thoughts.

I must write. [18]

The reading-writing-reading, learning-sharing-learning, and theorizing-experiencing-theorizing cycles are part of the process of academic identity formation and part of academic identity itself. According to Henkel (2005), Jenkins (1996) builds on Mead (1934) "to define the construction of identity (individual and collective) as a continuous and reflexive process, a synthesis of (internal) self definition and the (external) definitions of oneself offered by others" (Henkel, 2005, p. 157). Identity is, then, constructed through a back and forth, inward and outward, hermeneutical process of interaction between the self and others who are members of a defining community (Taylor, 1989).

Accordingly, individuals' values and ways of thinking and being are developed both internally and externally and are heavily influenced by the shared deeply held beliefs of significant others within what Henkel (2005) calls a community of importance. One's values are crucial, providing a foundation upon which one constructs their identity. For example, Taylor (1989) writes that to know your own identity "is to be oriented in moral space, a space in which questions arise about what is good or bad … what has

meaning and importance to you and what is trivial and secondary" (as cited in Henkel, 2005, p. 157). In other words, values enable one to make moral judgements and decisions among competing priorities. Henkel (2005) writes that "individual and collective values, sense of meaning and self-esteem in the academic profession … are key constructs in a definition of [academic] identity" (p. 156). The exploration of and use of academic identity in higher educational research can offer insight on the defining communities within which and between which faculty (both individuals and groups) continuously construct their identities (Valimaa, 1998).

Much of the higher education literature considers academic identity primarily in terms of two defining communities: Disciplinary differences; local institutional backgrounds (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Clark, 1987, 1997; Hakala, 2009). Near the beginning of the 21st century, however, the two-pronged approach for understanding academic culture was seen to be insufficient (Henkel, 2005; Valimaa, 1998). A need was identified to "take into consideration not only disciplinary or [local] institutional but many [other] cultural dimensions of academic communities by thinking *who the significant others are in each case*" (Valimaa, 1998, p. 133). While recognizing that such cultural dimensions are, by definition, numerous and varied, a three-pronged approach was created as a base from which to begin to accommodate the need for a more robust theory by adding the culture of the academic profession at large (Dill, 1982; Valimaa, 1998). As articulated by Dill (1982), "Ideologies, or systems of belief, permeate academic institutions at at least three different levels: the culture of the enterprise, the culture of the academic profession at large, and the culture of academic discipline" (p. 308).

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[18] Original poem. No further citation or reference needed.

At the first level, important cultural aspects are embodied in the local university organization.

> Because the foundings of many European and American universities were supported by various religious groups, the search for truth and the transmission of knowledge have been historically associated with the sacred, and the reverence still awarded these centers of learning cannot fully be explained by their contemporary secular importance. (Dill, 1982, p. 309)

Often, an intense localized version of this "sacred" enterprise is created through a saga. A saga is

> a collective understanding of current institutional character that refers to an historical struggle and is embellished emotionally and loaded with meaning to the point where the organization becomes very much an end-in-itself. (Clark, 1981, cited in Dill, 1982, p. 309)

The local saga is one important part of the unique organizational language that new members come to adopt and internalize. Carried through language, "the common institutional tradition and shared symbols provide meaning and reward to organizational members, engendering commitment, loyalty, and uncommon effort" (Dill, 1982, p. 309). Of course, some faculty members may have more or less affinity to the local university and may draw more or less personal meaning from their organization's history.

Dill's (1982) second level, the collective academic profession, revolves around the institution of a formal guild. Guild-like aspects of the profession were deeply embedded through the creation and actions of the American Association of University Professors beginning in the 1920's, which was "in response to the strong and suppressive administrative groups at various institutions which were antagonistic to the emerging scholarly and scientific ideology in support of free inquiry" (Dill, 1982, p. 309). This

ideology, through the actions of the professional body, took the form of a strongly held shared belief in "the symbol of academic freedom and the ritual of tenure" (Dill, 1982, p. 309). Of course, again, some faculty may draw more or less personal meaning from becoming or being a member of the academy than do others.

Dill's (1982) third level, the disciplines, "clearly evoke the greatest meaning, commitment, and loyalty from contemporary academics" (p. 309). Each discipline

> is a culture with its own symbols of status and authority in the forms of professional awards, research grants, and publications, its ritualistic behaviour at professional meetings, and its distinguishing articles of faith. (Dill, 1982, pp. 309-310)

He explains that new members are intensely socialized into these "articles of faith" through the normative pressures (and tests, or rites of passage) experienced in graduate school. The values underlying the dominant articles of faith within the specific discipline tend to be so deeply held, first through the process of graduate school and subsequently through the process of tenure, that they tend to not operate consciously on a day to day basis. However, they come to light at critical times, such as during a paradigmatic shift within the discipline, generating clashes that "would do justice to any conflict between religious sects over basic faith" (Dill, 1982, p. 310).[19] A complicating feature of this third level, which Dill (1982) unfortunately did not address, is that although the disciplines are differentiated and have their own languages and ways of thinking, the disciplines generally share a hierarchical system of status. The complicating factor here is that it is interrelated and partially reflexive with respect to the other two levels of culture. In other words, the status one acquires within one's own discipline will often

[19] For an excellent illustration of some of the differences in deeply held beliefs and values emanating from differing disciplinary traditions, see Valimaa (1998) who provides a discussion of the "two cultures problem" in academia through a critical summary of the discourse around Snow (1959).

carry privilege over into the other two cultural realms (never more the case than at present with the current emphasis on the attraction of external research funds) – but status acquired within the institution or through attachment and service to the profession at large may be less likely to translate into status within the discipline.

One consequence of the uneven relationship between the three academic cultures of importance identified by Dill (1982) is the potential for erosion of academic identity associated with a diminishing attachment to the profession at large (Clark, 1987, 1997; Dill, 1982; Hakala, 2009; Henkel, 2005; Weber, 1919/1958). This perceived erosion is thought to be due to fragmentation occurring within the other two defining cultures. Fragmentation at the level of the institution is thought to be happening due to the rapid expansion of the higher education system whereas fragmentation at the level of the discipline is thought to be a result of increasing specialization and the consequent growth in the number of disciplines. According to Clark (1997), the creation of new disciplines is "self-amplifying" (p. 25) because research is the top priority of leading universities and the reward system of promotions, salaries, and perquisites supports the ever increasing specialization of academics. "As subjects fragment, so does the academic profession, turning it evermore into a profession of professions" (Clark, 1997, p. 21), which weakens attachment to the academic profession at large. At the level of the institution, Clark (1997) explains that the leading research universities and leading private liberal-arts colleges are "favoured sites" (p. 28) where academic identities are, and can be, attached more closely to traditional academic values but that "lesser" (p. 29) public universities and colleges have environments that afford less opportunity for faculty members to attach to traditional values. Academic autonomy in community colleges, for example, does not

tend to extend to the principle of academic governance as it normally does in leading research universities.

Despite the concerns expressed in the higher educational administration literature about a disintegrating academic profession, scholars have found evidence to the contrary. For example, Hakala (2009) found that a strong attachment still existed among junior researchers to the traditional conception of academic identity:

> Interviewees … described the cultivation of self-discipline and persistence, virtues that are deeply embedded in the traditional understandings of academic work. They expressed … the passion they have for knowledge and research work, and the enjoyment it gives to them. They also told … [of] long hours and endur[ing] periods during which the hard work seemed to produce no gains … [but expressed] few regrets, because the work itself was experienced as rewarding. (p. 187)

Similarly, Henkel (2005) investigated the impact of "neo-liberal" policy changes on academic identities and found that although the dynamics of cultural interactions changed, attachments to traditional values such as academic autonomy remained strong (pp. 172-173). Findings such as these are important because, as Clark (1997) pointed out, the characteristics found in leading institutions are ones that are worthwhile for other institutions to still aspire toward. For Dill (1982), these institutions celebrate "academic values such as honesty, sustained curiosity, the communication of knowledge, and continued intellectual growth [that are] necessary conditions for any vital academic culture" (p. 315). That is, in leading research universities,

> disciplinary and institutional cultures converge, creating a happy state indeed … [And] leading private liberal-arts colleges … retain the capacity to appear as academic communities, not bureaucracies, in their overall integration and symbolic unity. (Clark, 1997, p. 28)

Part Four: Use of Higher Educational Administration Theory

Within higher educational administration literature, organization, leadership, and academic identity theories provide tools for use in the narrative and interpretive research processes related to exploring how individuals experience becoming and being an academic administrator. The review in this chapter contained several theories of organization and leadership and, perhaps more importantly, identified a dichotomous thread running through the higher education organization and leadership literature that sets positivistic or bureaucratic views or tendencies against interpretivist or cultural views or tendencies. An awareness of this deep theoretical divide is important for interpretation of participants' narratives because it directs attention to where an individual is located with respect to the divide or to how the divide is navigated. Similarly, academic identity theory is helpful for better understanding participants' experiences and for interpretation related to their stories as it directs attention to who participants are, how they became who they are, who their communities of importance are, and the nature of personal change that occurred throughout their career-life experiences.

Part Five: Details of the Study

Participants in the Study

There were five participants in this study and they were chosen using purposive sampling. Participants had to currently hold an associate deanship in a Canadian university or to have held one within the previous 15 years. The group of participants was to have a mixture of men and women, have a mixture of retired and active faculty, and to represent multiple Canadian universities.

To choose individual participants I mostly relied on introductions and assistance in finding potentially interested participants from my supervisor, Dr. Randy Wimmer, and we decided together who I would approach and in what order. It was a quasi-snowball sampling approach in that after the interview and transcription process was complete with the first participant, we chose two participants for the following interviews and, when those were complete, we chose the final two participants. The individuals I approached were very receptive, despite a significant time commitment, with only one individual declining to participate because she had recently disposed of her related records that would have served as a personal resource. It may be worth mentioning that, when shared during collegial conversations, my topic seemed to generate a lot of interest and on more than one occasion I had personal acquaintances from other faculties volunteer to participate (with one person volunteering more than once). However, in an effort to resist further expanding the scope of a research project with an already large scope, the participants chosen held their associate dean appointments in faculties of education and their collective experience in academia spanned at least 14 different universities. I did not know any of the participants in a personal way but had a

professional connection to all of them. The U. of A. Research Ethics Board approved formal invitation letters and consent forms following standard formats were used to recruit participants and samples are included in Appendix D and Appendix E respectively.

A minor matter that should be commented upon with respect to the sample choice is the sometimes proffered opinion that retired people, or others recollecting the distant past, are unlikely to remember details accurately. Whether or not this is generally true, it was not relevant for my study given that it was not the accuracy of the recall of facts that I was interested in but the meaning that the co-constructed stories convey. The use of retired participants turned out to be a good choice because of the depth of the stories that they provided and the distance from the events that they described.[20] Narrative inquiry was also a good choice because it is used when researchers want to gain insight into perceptions, thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and decision-making processes of a specific individual in a particular situation at a certain point in time. Narrative theory holds that while some details of a recollected story may change when told at a different time and in a different place, the meaning conveyed remains consistent. Another minor difficulty considered with respect to the sample choice was the possibility that recollected memories and stories chosen for narration may tend toward the positive rather than the negative affective dimension. Wimmer (2003) draws attention to this possibility and called for future studies to be directed toward individuals who are at particular career stages prior to retirement. To this end, my study included both individuals who were currently appointed as associate deans and individuals who were formally retired but had

[20] The use of pre-interview activities involving drawing or other visual representations can, nonetheless, help participants to overcome challenges related to long-term recall. See Ellis, Amjad, and Deng (2011).

previously held an appointment as an associate dean. Again, the inclusion of retired participants proved to be a good choice because, for example, two of them explicitly brought up negative events or perceptions of personal failure without prompting but which were insightful.

Given the above considerations, through purposive sampling I tried to balance participants who were retired and actively employed, who were male and female, and who had been employed as faculty and as associate deans across universities and provinces. Participants were all from faculties of education, leaving future research to explore whether the experiences, beliefs, values, and perspectives of associate deans in other faculties might differ from those in education. One reason for this choice, other than the scope of the study, was that education faculty were thought to be more likely to be familiar with and accepting of narrative research. The focus on education faculty for this initial research may have also had an additional benefit of increasing the likelihood of potential participants agreeing to work with me as a graduate student within their own broad discipline.

The Interviews

I had three in-depth conversational interviews of approximately 1 to 1 ½ hour duration with each participant. Because I did not know the participants personally, it was particularly important that the interviews be conducted in an environment that was comfortable for the participants. I asked each person to suggest somewhere they would like to meet but indicated I would find somewhere if they preferred. We met variously in coffee shop/restaurants, participants' homes, participants' offices, or in my office according to participants' wishes.

The interviews were clustered such that the first interview was for getting to know each participant and the remaining two interviews were for following up with what the participant wanted to share further related to their experiences and various aspects of the research topic. Pre-interview activities (PIAs) were used, which was an important way to ensure that I, as the researcher, entered the research field in the right way and to increase the likelihood of generating authentic stories rather than simple answers to a predetermined list of narrower questions (Ellis, Amjad, & Deng, 2011; Ellis, Hetherington, Lovell, McConaghy, & Viczko, 2013).

PIAs were part of each of the three interviews and open-ended questions revolving around the resulting artifact were used. The expectation and hope was that the interviews would be conversational in nature and that, therefore, a script would not be required. I had prepared a list of possible questions for each interview cluster, which were approved as part of the research ethics process, that could be useful as a prompt if necessary. As expected, the prepared questions were not needed. Indeed, I only needed to ask the participant to tell me about their PIA – and off we went! Many times I didn't even need to ask, they just started on their own to explain their visual representation.

The interviews were audio recorded using two standard digital voice recorders, with one serving as a back-up. The digital recorders were subsequently stored locked in a safe environment when not in use for transcription.

Research Ethics and the Interviews

No harm to the participants was expected from conducting the interviews or any other aspect of this research and none was experienced. Participants in narrative research often benefit from the opportunity to reflect on their experiences and this was the case

with this study. Part of the reason for this beneficial result is that, in addition to the genuine caring ethic of the researcher and the freedom of the participant to direct the interview through his or her own narrative, extra attention is given to the historical biographic formative experiences of the participant. The narrative can be, if the participant wishes, a quasi-life history and it can be a positive and affirming experience to have someone genuinely interested in the details of one's life.

A copy of the research ethics approval letter is contained in Appendix A.

The Transcriptions and Participant Checks

I personally transcribed verbatim all but two interviews, each of which was the last interview with my last two participants. I made this choice to ensure that I had all of the transcriptions complete prior to a short six month sabbatical from my professional research position so that I could focus on writing the stories and producing a complete draft of my dissertation. The verbatim transcripts were edited lightly to make them read a little easier for the participant, leaving "ums" and "uhs" only in some places that might indicate pauses for deeper reflection. Participants had the opportunity to read and revise the transcripts as they wished after each interview and prior to the next scheduled interview, but most often there were only a few minor changes (e.g., redactions of third-party names) requested or none at all. There was ample time for participants to review their transcripts between interviews because instead of starting and finishing a complete interview, transcription, and storying process with one participant before beginning the process anew with the next participant, I interviewed two participants at a time and alternated interviews between them. It took approximately a year and a half to complete

the process with all five participants using this alternating strategy, so it would have been impractical and time-prohibitive to use a single participant at a time strategy.

I adopted some conventions during the transcription process that ended up carrying over into the stories themselves. For example, one convention I adopted related to the use of quotations from participant interviews. As is usual in academic writing, I used italics when emphasis was made within a participant quotation and I noted if the emphasis was mine. When greater than usual emphasis was made by a participant, however, I used capitals. I also noted context, in particular I used the now colloquially common "lol" to refer to laughter. Finally, of course, I used pseudonyms for the participants to help preserve anonymity. I used these pseudonyms as part of the in-text citations for participant quotations that refer to the participant, the interview, and the page number of the transcript so that the stories could more easily be reviewed and cross-referenced if desired but, of course, the transcripts are not available to others so these citations are of little use to most readers.

The transcripts from the interviews were used, along with the pre-interview artifacts and field notes I took, to co-create a narrative account for each individual participant.[21] Once written, each story was shared with the appropriate participant for review, any further desired editing, and permission to forward to my dissertation committee members. Participant checks were, therefore, also carried out after the writing of each story. Similar to the transcription process, participant checks during the storying process resulted in only minimal changes (e.g., clarification of a referenced work of literature; change of a term from "open" to "experimental"). Nonetheless, they were a valuable part of the process because participants confirmed that the stories were well put

together, accurate, and faithful to the conversations we had had. Gwen, the last participant, gave the following feedback after receiving and reviewing the narrative account:

> Back from the conference and I've now had the pleasure of reading your summary. Thank you for the opportunity to read it, and also for making the text so reflective of what I feel is 'my story' – you did an excellent job! It is a rather strange and humbling experience to read something like that – I've not had the experience before – but I'm delighted to be a part of your study and I very much look forward to the final product when that happens ... As far as the information you sent – there are a couple of typos that I noted but didn't save (sorry!) – but honestly I wouldn't suggest any changes at all. (Gwen, May 12, 2017)

Jennifer, the first participant, likewise provided the following feedback after reflection:

> Hi Derek,
>
> It must be wonderful to have uninterrupted time to think and write and to spend more time with your family.
>
> I have to confess that it was an odd experience reading my story. You did a very good job of bringing together the many ideas and issues that were introduced in our interviews and developed themes that initially surprised me and yet, on reflection, are so obvious. That was enlightening! Thank you for that! The last section was so heartwarming. It was such a pleasure to be a part of this research so reading your thoughtful words was the cherry on top of a wonderful experience. (Jennifer, January 25, 2017)

Creation of the Stories and Interpretation

Like Greenfield blurs epistemological and ontological boundaries, narrative inquiry blurs theory and method. In other words, the creation of a narrative is the analysis (this, as noted above, is called narrative analysis) because the narrative account (i.e., the story) created carries meaning. Further, the meaning derived from the story will vary for each reader. This should not be surprising, as a story speaks to each person reading it in different ways.

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[21] Selected PIA artifacts, when relevant to a participant's story, are included in Appendix F.

My analysis of each individual's interview transcripts was, therefore, carried out in accordance with the methods described above as informed by hermeneutics and by interpretive and narrative thought. For example, with respect to the interviews (that generated the stories), I endeavoured to enter the hermeneutical circle "in the right way" by, among other things, trying to set aside my own topical concerns and being genuinely interested in the person who generously agreed to share their stories with me. After the interviews, in co-constructing each person's story, I engaged in a continuous back-and-forth and in-and-out pattern of examining and exploring their transcripts as described by the concept of the hermeneutical circle. For example, I would move "in" by spending significant time doing a close reading and re-reading of each transcript for a particular participant, highlighting recurring concepts, circling key words or phrases, making marginalia, and otherwise taking notes. Then I would move "out" and take a higher level view of the transcripts, placing all three sets together, puzzling the pieces together, and working on "re-storying" the story (Creswell, 2013, p. 74). Finally, I would set the transcripts aside to let them rest – and to let the ideas percolate and coalesce in the back of my mind – before returning after a while and beginning the hermeneutical task again. Boostrom (1994) uses the analogy of a videographer shooting a documentary, alternating between a close-up focused shot and a further-out panoramic shot. This iterative process was necessary to ensure key elements of a coherent story, such as the protagonist's progression along a time line, were present and to ensure that the interests and concerns participants' conveyed remained intact. The PIA requests were also helpful in the writing of each story as they were designed to encourage participants to reflect upon different time periods of their career-life history in a broadly linear fashion. Beyond serving as a

useful interviewing device, then, the structure of the PIA requests also served to increase the likelihood that a complete story would be present in the transcripts. In this way, the continuous search for part-whole relationships and patterns that come together in the writing of each story was a creative process – but the process was one of refinement rather than one of embellishment (or of "filling in the blanks") because the elements of the story were already present from each participant's narration.

The creative process involved in writing a narrative account cannot likely be usefully described further within the constraints of this paper. It is individual – and it is inseparable from the individual. It is like art and the artist or poetry and the poet. There is usually a tangible "product" (in various stages of "becoming"), and the artist can describe the media, but how can the artist's inspirations and understandings be explained? Just like art and the artist, a different narrative must necessarily result if a different narrative researcher took up the topic – even if the same participants were available! What can be said about the creative process, however, is that I found it to be very difficult – extremely difficult. Some of this is no doubt due to the fact that I had no experience in this style of writing. Indeed, though I have a great appreciation for art and artists, I consider myself to be severely lacking in such artistic gifts. But the greater part of the difficulty, I have come to understand, emanated from sensitivity toward working with someone else's text – someone else's life. While of course many different valid representations could have been developed from the interviews, I did not want mine to misrepresent – and I most certainly did not want it to be unintentionally hurtful in any way. I had anticipated the difficulty I would have with developing a narrative style of writing, and I wanted to challenge myself in this way, but I had underestimated the

greater difficulty related to caring for others and their stories. I was fortunate to be writing the narrative accounts while on sabbatical and able to make good use of my graduate student office. I am indebted and thankful to Dr. Kristopher Wells, another esteemed graduate of my program, who from his own experiences with narrative research immediately understood the greater difficulty I was encountering and encouraged me in hallway conversations throughout this time.

Included within my narrative accounts are descriptions of the particularly meaningful *big ideas* carried within the participants' stories. These, too, were generated by the hermeneutical back-and-forth, in-and-out reading and re-reading of each story and its associated transcripts. This search for meaning involved looking for patterns in the various stories, images, and particular choices of words that participants used and that together make up the whole story. I am using the terminology of big ideas to differentiate between the larger meaning(s) contained within a particular story from the themes that are found across the five participants' stories. It is important to remember, however, that "the goal of interpretive work is not to pass on objective information to readers, but to evoke in readers a new way of understanding themselves and the lives they are living" (Jardine, 1998, p. 50). The big ideas are, then, my attempt to present and discuss some of the ideas I found within participants' stories that spoke to my passions and that I believed to have the greatest meaning to me (and that also well-represented and had meaning for my participants). This is in keeping with Peshkin's (1988) ideas about subjectivities, which built upon Cheater (1987): "We cannot rid ourselves of this subjectivity, nor should we wish to; but we ought, perhaps, to pay it very much more attention" (p. 172). Peshkin (1988) articulates and elaborates upon two key ideas:

> First, … subjectivity can be seen as virtuous, for it is the basis of researchers' making a distinctive contribution, one that results from the unique configuration of their personal qualities joined to the data they have collected … Second, … [researchers should] actively seek out … [their] subjectivity ... while the data … [is] still coming in. (p. 18)

I have included exemplar tables in Appendix G that provide some of the texts and images that are indicators of the big ideas that the first participant conveyed.

Evaluation of the Results

As discussed above, I used two narrative inquiry methods: Analysis of narratives; and narrative analysis. I now call the use of both methods together in one project a Narrative Aggregate Inquiry. As the call for more use of both methods together was made by Polkinghorne (1995), I use Polkinghorne's seven narrative analysis criteria for my own evaluation of each of the five narrative analyses and I hope that readers of my research results will do the same. For the overall results of my study – including the analysis across all the narrative analyses – I use the six questions suggested by Ellis (1998a) to judge my work and, again, I hope readers will do the same.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

As with any qualitative interpretive study, the results are not generalizable in the sense that quantitative statistical studies hope or purport to be. A narrative inquiry of this sort makes scholarly contributions in other ways, such as its potential for transferability and its usefulness for personal-professional reflection. The limitations of this study, then, ought not to be thought of in terms of emanating from its constructivist, qualitative, and interpretive foundations. The limitations, as with any study, are a result of the specific boundaries, or delimitations, chosen for this particular study.[22] For example, one

[22] Limitations can also be considered within the boundaries of the study. Wimmer (2003) suggests asking the question of what remains outside the control of the researcher. However, in narrative inquiry, the

delimitation is the choice to use only education faculty members as participants. Faculty members and academic administrators of other university colleges, schools, or faculties might (or might not) have very different deep beliefs, values, perspectives, and commitments – and the social milieu within which they live and work might also differ – from those in education. Future research involving associate deans in engineering, business, arts, or other faculties would extend this research.

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researcher must attempt to cede control to the participant – to be genuinely interested in the story the participant wants to tell – and to not be concerned with what the researcher thinks she/he wants to hear. There is risk at the outset, then, that a story might not address the researcher's desired topic at all. But it is highly unlikely and Ellis (2011a) refers to this as trusting the narrative process.

Chapter Four: Exploring and Experiencing the Field from the Inside

You can't help nobody if you can't tell them the right story. [23]

Narrative Research: My First Tentative Steps

When I began my field research it had been many years since I first stepped back on a university campus and wondered … At that time it felt as though I was being urged to stay and to start studying again; to study it. I have experienced a myriad of career and life changes since then, and I am no longer working professionally on a university campus. My doctoral studies enabled me to teach fourth year B.Ed. students, which was very enjoyable and rewarding, but nonetheless led to me returning to work in the K-12 public education system. This time, however, instead of contributing directly as a teacher, I was able to contribute as a research and policy analyst at the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF). Having been away from Saskatchewan for a decade, I was initially surprised that despite lacking site-specific recent and historical knowledge I was still able to offer much to the organization and, equally surprising, my perspective was often quite different from what it was when I was a classroom teacher.

What was not so much of a surprise, though, was that at this time of the year I still "perked-up." I noticed the coffee shops and pubs were decidedly more energetic – more alive. Something was in the air, something more than excitement. Vigour? Trepidation? Spirit? Hope? People, young people, seemed to be at once living in the present and the future. Perhaps it is imagination. Or, maybe … maybe it is wonder.

It was September, 2015. I love the cool breeze in the evening air and the turning of the leaves. It is fresh. Celebration and renewal is everywhere – at least here, in this

[23] Attributed to Jack, older brother of Johnny Cash, in childhood while Jack was preparing for the priesthood (*Walk the Line*, 2005, Scene two).

"university town." I realized that this is my favourite time of the year. I suppose I had actually been aware of this for some time, so I think the realization was more specific: That this feeling is different from the societal norm. For me, this is the time of new beginnings, new promise, and new growth. For others, a Fall celebration is preparation for the long and dark winter ahead. The reaping of what was sown. For me, the sowing is just beginning. So, as I was being drawn back into the world that I study, I was also finding myself out of step with much of the rest of it. Fall is Spring and Spring is Fall.

As I began writing this chapter at this time of year, it occurred to me that it was also a significant new "chapter" in my doctoral program. There had already been the usual milestones, such as doctoral level course work, proposal writing, research ethics application, scholarship applications, university level teaching, graduate research assistantships, academic presentations, writing for publication, and candidacy. These steps had been enjoyable and challenging – and had caused me to stretch my boundaries of comfort. Some, like presentations and university teaching, had induced some nervousness but were not "nerve wracking." Landing in the field was nerve wracking. It was not that I had not done field research previously. I had, a little, but not like this. I did not know, really, what to expect. This was the first potential or, more accurately, near Ph.D. stumbling block.

I found myself, in the days leading up to my first field interview, doing what I do now when I am not sure what to do or do not know what to think. I turned to the literature and I looked for narrative interview techniques, pitfalls, and, most of all, stories of how others experienced it. Naturally, I found some good advice on interviewing – but

not stories of novice researchers' early field experiences. Nonetheless, the advice helped: Listen; mirror; nod; give verbal cues; and, most of all, do not interrupt or interject.

I also heard Randy's voice, telling me to remember "the research beside the research." I have never been one to keep a journal. I made a point, though, of taking some personal-professional notes from time to time, mostly before and after each conversational interview. As I reviewed and reflected while trying to craft this first story from the field, I saw some notations (dated June 22nd, 2015):

- My first interview, a "Pilot," is scheduled for tomorrow. I've been quite nervous but also excited – and relieved – to begin.

- Anxious to get moving and get finished. I know being finished isn't the best way to approach, would be better to have no agenda created by time limitation. But these short visits with my children hit the point home that they have suffered while I indulge (or invest?) in my doctoral studies. I need to be, and I think they need me to be, here with them.

- I was anxious, and stressed, while communicating by email with [my first participant].

- I was going to review my [interview] questions. I did. But not satisfied. Started reading articles on narrative interview techniques. This is what I do. When I'm nervous, don't understand, want clarity … I start reading journals. Maybe procrastination too. It makes me kind of jealous and awed at people … who just DO.

- Readings: BNIM – biographical narrative interview method. Open ended. Listen. Don't interrupt. Interviewee's pace. Naturalist v. Constructivist is What v. How. Focus on interview as collecting information or on interview itself as object of analysis. Can be both.

- Empowering the interviewee is important. Even with my senior colleagues, or perhaps especially. [Jennifer] wanted to pick me up from my place, take me to her place. This is important. I'm glad I didn't resist, as I usually would want to not impose.

- POST INTERVIEW small talk. Important for interpretation. Take notes after. Can use why questions here, if appropriate. Helps with trust.

I gathered myself, breathed deeply, placed my trust in the process, and took my first step.

Part One: The Pilot Process of Narrative Research with Jennifer

As agreed upon during my doctoral candidacy process, Randy and I were to carefully find someone who we thought would work well as my first participant. The intent was that this first set of interviews would serve as a pilot, to see how the process was working and to determine if any changes were needed with respect to the research protocol, the number of interviews, the suggested pre-interview activities, or any other part of the experience for me or the participants.

The first person that came to mind for both of us was Jennifer, a recently formally retired professor of education who was still active in teaching university courses and in research. Jennifer was someone who I already had a personal connection with, so I knew that she had been an associate dean at a large research-intensive university. Her career began, however, as an elementary school teacher and she also spoke about September being a special time of year – but I'll get to that part of the story later.

Jennifer began her story by sharing her first PIA with me (Appendix F, Figure 1). Her story was grounded by place, in this case a specific long and winding water-front road.

> I know that I live here now, and that it is important to me now, but I used to teach [near here] in the summers, when I was doing my doctoral work, and then even after I became a professor, I would come here in the summer … I LOVED [this] road.[24]
>
> I found it was a place that was so peaceful and so energizing at the same time. So every time … I would envision walking along [this] road, to kind

[24] I have adopted some conventions for using quotations from participant interviews. Italics are used when emphasis is made within a quotation and I note if the emphasis was mine. When greater than usual emphasis is made by the speaker, I use capitals. I also note context, in particular laughter, usually with the now colloquially common "lol." Finally, the in-text citations refer to the participant, the interview, and the page number of the transcript, which is primarily a resource for me but was also adopted to assist participants in reviewing their story.

> of keep myself calm and in the moment. For some reason, it is the place that I return to as well. (Jennifer, #1, p. 1)

Jennifer spoke about how, beyond these feelings, it always brings her a sense of connection, especially to people.

> I feel very still there, it kind of brings me close to nature … and, um, to people. So, there is this other side, when you are walking along, there is lots of people, there's dogs, kids, whatever … skateboarders, you name it, and we are all kind of just enjoying this place together, even though we don't know each other … we are kind of connected and we are not connected … you can just enjoy being with people. (Jennifer, #1, p. 2)

This sense of natural connection with other people, and the unpredictable enjoyable experiences they bring, is a recurrent theme throughout Jennifer's story.

Early Career-Life Experiences

The earliest part of Jennifer's story began with her noting that "when I became a teacher you didn't have to go to university … I WANTED to go to university" (Jennifer, #1, p. 6). Jennifer was, however, discouraged from pursuing university at the time but became a teacher and taught for quite a while prior to having children. Later, when she returned home as a single mother, there were no teaching jobs available. Jennifer worked in whatever jobs she could find, from bookstore to insurance salesperson, until finding work as a teacher again - this time in a First Nation's community.

> I sold life insurance … honestly, I've had this very mottled career … HATED it, absolutely hated it, but, I mean, it was something to do, and it was decent money, but oh my gosh, what a life … So, I decided that was not for me …
>
> Then I got the job teaching at the First Nation's school.
>
> Then my life began again. (Jennifer, #1, pp. 8-9)

It was not easy to transition back to teaching.

> At first, I hated it. Then I grew to absolutely love it. And I hated it because, what had worked in teaching prior to that, did not work in this setting. I had to rethink just about everything. (Jennifer, #1, p. 9)

The transition was more difficult due to personal circumstances and experiencing the loss of family members.

> But through that period, I was able to absolutely focus on my work … and my work consumed me. Actually, my kids used to get mad at me because I'd talk about my kids … meaning my school kids … and they'd say, 'mom, we're your kids' … I'd say 'I know, I know' but they enjoyed it, too, and they'd come to the PowWows too, so it was great.
>
> And I really enjoyed the community. I became quite well accepted by the community. (Jennifer, #1, p. 9)

At a moment of unexpected crisis related to the sudden removal of an in-school administrator, Jennifer said that

> I had to take these calls … so my kids, fortunately, we were in the middle of a unit and they just took over that day, it was FABULOUS, and I thought, 'this works.' (Jennifer, #1, p. 9)

The crisis grew. Jennifer stayed and helped her school kids through a significant time of community and school struggles.

> During that time, [what] their kids went through, … I had a lot of those kids for 3 years, so they were like my kids by the end of it, you know, it probably wasn't a good thing, but I knew them, and they knew me, really, really well … and the parents knew that they could come and talk to me. (Jennifer, #1, p. 12)

All of these school and community experiences, upon returning to teaching, were

> a very important part of my life … in a whole lot of ways … in opening up my eyes [to] … what social injustice looks like … [to] begin to see it, to understand it in a whole different way. (Jennifer, #1, p. 9)
>
> You also learn the complexities, that it's not all terrible, there's a lot of joy, there's a lot of laughter, a lot of close connection, and there's a lot of really awful things too. (Jennifer, #1, p. 10)

During this time of mottled work, and returning to teaching, Jennifer began to pursue a B.Ed. at university. Her studies took on even greater meaning as a result of these more recent teaching experiences

> because it was the most fascinating place for thinking about power, and organizational structures, and how … I didn't have these words at the time … but now … how hegemony works … And so I just did as much thinking and reading about it as I could and took as many courses … as I could that would help me understand. (Jennifer, #1, p. 7)

Graduate Studies

Jennifer applied for, and received, a teaching sabbatical for post-graduate studies. These natural, unpredictable, enjoyable connections continued.

> The first day I was there, I walked into the cafeteria, and [someone], who has become a very dear friend of mine, a very powerful woman, and a very strong scholar, historian, she was standing in the line behind me … she introduced herself. I said, 'I'm Jennifer.' She said 'I read your application, you were in a First Nation's school … Such an interesting application … You know, Jennifer, you might be like me … I came to do my graduate work, and I just never left.'
>
> I've often thought of that moment, because that's exactly what happened … I just kind of kept rolling ... kept rolling with the opportunities as they presented themselves and just hoped for the best … I REALLY wanted to keep going. (Jennifer, #1, p. 7)

Master's level studies turned into Ph.D. studies, where Jennifer was able to work at multiple universities while continuing her doctoral work and picking up summer teaching at a university near her water-front road.

The powerful natural connections, almost happenstance, continued to play key roles in Jennifer's early career – although there was no way to know it at the time. A professor/mentor from her Master's studies encouraged her to attend a conference based around the work of a scholar she was particularly interested in, where "I actually met the person who would end up being my [Ph.D.] supervisor" (Jennifer, #1, p. 3).

Jennifer also met another established scholar there who turned out to be very important throughout her career-life "and has become a dear friend" (Jennifer, #1, p. 3). "I just loved the paper that she gave, so I went up to her afterwards and we got talking, and so … you know, we just really enjoyed talking to one another" (Jennifer, #1, p. 3). The initial connection deepened because

> we had this assignment where we had to get in touch with someone who we didn't particularly know, but we liked their work … I happened to be going out [to where she worked] … you know, all these connections, … so we had lunch at the Faculty Club. Well, that's when we really got to talk, and as a result of that, … she invited me to teach that first [summer] course. (Jennifer, #1, p. 3)

And, again, the teaching experience was absolutely pivotal.

> I stayed in residence and we would have these fantastic conversations at dinner time. We'd all, because we were all staying in residence, we'd all get together and we'd just almost have a second class. We'd just get going on all sorts of things … it was FANTASTIC. (Jennifer, #1, p. 3)

As Jennifer put it, "it was this convergence of scholarship and friendship and location that has been really important in my life, and in my thinking about my life, too" (Jennifer, #1, p. 4).

Jennifer felt fortunate that she developed a great network of friends and colleagues in at least three different universities throughout her graduate studies. When it came time, everyone was rooting for her and participating in the professorial job search along with her. In fact, towards the end of her doctoral studies, Jennifer had joined one of the universities as a faculty member and "the Dean used to come by my door, literally every day, and say 'Jennifer, are you done yet? [laughter] … Everything kind of fell into place because I got a tenure-track position right away … so I was LUCKY" (Jennifer, #1, p. 8).

The Professorship

Place, or location, and natural connections were important parts of Jennifer's professorial experience. She spoke about, and created a PIA about, the location and design of her second office space (Appendix F, Figure 2).

> For this [PIA] … I did it in reverse order, so the positive first … In the summer you are always doing different things, going to conferences, you are kind of in and out, it is not the same as it is during the year. I always love in September, getting back into my office, students going by the door, dropping in, chatting, chatting with your colleagues, since everybody has kind of come back … and I loved my office …
>
> I had a [unique] view [out the window], … which always sort of reminded me of what this was all about, why we were doing the kind of stuff that we were doing, … and most important to me was my little meeting area table, and that's kind of where all the conversations took place, with students that dropped in, with colleagues that dropped in, it was just kind of a neat space to have … it was just a very inviting … space … And I liked getting back, maybe it was all the years of teaching prior, but September always felt like the beginning of the year. (Jennifer, #2, pp. 1-2)

Jennifer then spoke about the negative side of the experience, which she showed on the other side of her visual image.

> But on this other side, … what I hated was we'd start getting our reminders [laughter] about mid-August, sometimes even the beginning of August, that we were going to have to put together our annual report, and that we were going to have to meet with the Chair at such and such a time.
>
> And that whole, you know, THIS [first side] was so positive, and so exciting, and so [pause] – That opportunity to think with other people, to share ideas with other people, that was soooo exciting, and why I was there, really, [pause] – that was what drew me to the academy.
>
> But THIS [second] part, this mechanistic, cyphering of the work that we did, I ALWAYS resented it tremendously … I had no reason to, it wasn't like I got bad reports or anything, I just hated the process and I hated what it did to relationships with other faculty members, and the kinds of worries they had … It just kind of sucked the air out of all of what was so positive and rich about THIS [first] kind of experience. (Jennifer, #2, p. 2)

The annual reports and merit process was more than simply a negative experience to go along with the positive ones, or an "accountability" price to pay for the positive aspects of a job as a professor.

> This kind of centralized repository, … where they use algorithms to kind of congregate information so that you can make decisions about which faculty is doing what … based on what are really narrative bits of information. That whole thing really offended me, not because I didn't benefit from it, actually, but because it just flew in the face of what I really believed to be important in academic work.
>
> A lot of the things that I think that really do count are not countable, and you can't kind of fit them into one of those boxes … It was all about finding out what we were doing. (Jennifer, #2, p. 6)
>
> The whole MERIT process was so repugnant to me, because in many ways it pushes you right back to constructing the work that you do in very particular ways – and someone else, outside, judging whether it is o.k. or it's not, and all these kinds of mechanical markers about whether it is or it isn't – so it really inserts itself into the kind of freedom of scholarship that was available to us prior to that. (Jennifer, #2, p. 5)
>
> I think it undermines what is at the heart of why we do what we do. (Jennifer, #2, p. 8)

The space, both literal and figurative, that invited and led to natural connections with other people was crucial to Jennifer's positive experiences as a professor.

> Really, it was a space for interaction with people, and outside in the halls, and downstairs in the cafeteria, everywhere you went, you were bumping into people, and chatting about what happened in the summer, and what courses you're taking, and why … That kind of stuff, it was just sooo stimulating. THIS [second side] I felt was just such a negative part of that experience. (Jennifer, #2, p. 3)

For Jennifer, the opportunity for connections, interactions, and conversations with students was a particularly meaningful part of academia.

> I remember saying to a friend, 'you know, honestly, I feel like I have interesting conversations all day long, either in my classes or people popping by or even in meetings, … it is just like we are always talking about things of interest' – to me, anyway, and hopefully to them, and it is

> such a privilege, such a privilege to have that opportunity, all day long. (Jennifer, #2, pp. 3-4)

It is abundantly clear that teaching, through sharing experiences and thinking together with students, is tremendously important to Jennifer. In fact, as mentioned above, she continues to teach and mentor students, even after formal retirement. Ironically, though, teaching was something Jennifer had to give up during her term as Associate Dean.

> So, that opportunity to teach students was always kind of key to my enjoyment level … I liked the other parts of it, too, but that was what really motivated me most, … in so many ways, and that was the part I had to give up, too, for administration. (Jennifer, #2, p. 3)

Becoming Associate Dean

Jennifer had experience teaching in at least three different universities prior to taking up her appointment as Associate Dean. She hadn't taken on a formal academic administrative position before, like a chair or associate chair, but had been very involved in committee work at every level.

> We had all kinds of committees that made all kinds of decisions. I was on hiring committees, … on the publishing committee, because there was a press, … I was on the undergrad committee, … we were all a part of the faculty committee … I was on the board of governors … academic council … So I had experience at all levels …
>
> But I always seem to end up in administration one way or another … I don't know why … It's never something I [seek] … I just end up there. I don't know why. (Jennifer, #2, p. 22)

Jennifer offered a story about one woman she knew who went into administration at the school level, who said "I felt like being an administrator was kind of like pushing the walls of my classroom out and I was able, then, to have a voice in everything that happened for children in the school" (Jennifer, #2, p. 23).

> And that's … a big reason why I went into the associate dean's role … Because in a million years, it's not something that I'd ever thought about,

> but when I saw what was possible, I thought 'well, this could be interesting' and it's kind of pushing the walls out of my classroom and of the department and saying 'o.k., what could we do, if we really put our minds to it, and our hearts, what could we really do?'
>
> You have an opportunity to do something that's going to have a positive effect, hopefully, for all the students in that faculty … and by implication, then, the students that they teach, and the school systems that they become a part of. (Jennifer, #2, p. 23)

Despite Jennifer's substantial and variety of experience, she felt that there wasn't much that helped prepare her for the role of associate dean. "[Nothing], I mean, other than getting to know the internal workings of how a faculty runs to some degree but, even then, I don't think we really know until we get into the middle of it" (Jennifer, #2, p. 25). She explained further that

> having a bird's eye view of the university and how it's parts interact with one another [is important but] I remember that first day … some person called me up and asked me a question … [that] was out of the blue. I had no clue what they were talking about … It is really like deputy ministers and ministers, I had to go and ask the deputy minister 'what the heck are they talking about?' so that I could go back and talk to them about it …
>
> Just that one little exchange, you learned so much, I mean, gosh, when you leave, you know an awful lot about the university and about the faculty and about the various aspects of the faculty, where the sticking points are and the openings are, and you walk out with that knowledge and it is almost impossible to share it with somebody. (Jennifer, #2, p. 25)

Jennifer worked closely with another associate dean and their responsibilities were split in slightly different ways. Jennifer's primary role was somewhat less of the day-to-day administration and, instead, based more around a large faculty-wide project.

> We had to know what each other was doing … so we always were good about sharing but primarily, if there was a student issue, … then almost always [the other associate dean] did it. I did probably a quarter of them, the same with the university committees … [The project] was so heavy and there was so many meetings, and so many things in between meetings, that there was no way that I could consistently be available for that … We

> shared the HR stuff, and there was a lot of HR stuff, … it was just that big of an office. (Jennifer, #2, p. 26)

For some time prior to Jennifer's appointment, a significant faculty-wide process had been underway to "re-do the undergraduate program" (Jennifer, #1, p. 14). Her primary role as Associate Dean was to lead the committee's review and implementation of a significant redesign of the undergraduate program and curriculum.

> [It] badly needed to be done … [but] I didn't really understand [how much needed to be re-done] because you are kind of in your department, doing your thing, and you teach the undergraduate course that you are assigned, and I enjoyed teaching it, but I had no idea, really, of how it fit in because the program was so complicated that nobody really understood it. Except for the [non-academic] advisors, nobody … understood the program.
>
> So, I went in thinking this is a faculty of reasonable people, everybody understands … [it] needs to be revised, we are educators, and we understand processes, this is going to be exciting, this is going to be creative, this is going to be unusual, fun … I'll leave my mark … you know, all that crazy stuff. (Jennifer, #1, p. 14)

The previous work of the committee had, in addition to laying out the process, included the development and faculty-wide acceptance of a philosophy and guiding principles for the re-development of the curriculum and program. Referring to her PIA,

> the first thing we did was the blue sky, so we are on this side of the diagram … [and] they decided that … based on the work that had been done for 3 years prior … we didn't need a redecorating, we needed a renovation.
>
> So, we were really excited and convinced … [and] we came into this with our hearts and our souls. (Jennifer, #1, p. 15)

Jennifer explained that

> we spent HUGE amounts of time on the whole process … HUGE amounts of time. We consulted, we worked together, we felt creative, … we really spent a lot of time thinking about what this might look like in light of the principles and in light of the philosophy.

> We worked EXTREMELY, extremely hard, but it all felt good because we just felt like this could go somewhere. (Jennifer, #1, p. 15)

After two years, however, when the committee was ready and presented its renovated program to the faculty, the process ran into difficulty.

> Close to the end of the second year we had an all-faculty meeting, and by this time things were starting to really [come to fruition]. Before, we were talking kind of – we weren't, but they thought – kind of nebulously. You know, 'that sounds really great for THEM to do.' But when they started to realize that their own practices were going to have to change …there was a LOT of backlash, especially from some of the chairs. (Jennifer, #1, pp. 16-17)

This was, of course, extremely disappointing – and surprising.

> It wasn't like people didn't know what was going on, they knew that our modus operandi was that this was a renovation, that this was practically tearing the house down and starting again, but that it needed to be done if we were going to live true to the principles and true to the philosophy … [that] all the faculty had agreed on, and voted on. (Jennifer, #1, p. 15)

> We gave up tons of time, and tons of personal life, and tons of all kinds of stuff, because we really, REALLY, believed in this process. We REALLY believed in what we had put together. (Jennifer, #1, p. 16)

> Honestly, I think it would have been the most exciting … program in all of Canada, and we could have done it with the resources we had, or less, [and] it offered the opportunity to be very CREATIVE. (Jennifer, #1, p. 17)

What was essentially a halt in the process was not disappointing only for Jennifer, but also for others. Another faculty leader, for example, was disappointed and upset

> that people who had been at those meetings, every single week, who could have raised a lot of these issues with us, so we could have responded, so they could understand better and so they could provide leadership, because we were depending upon them to provide leadership across the faculty. (Jennifer, #1, p. 17)

Jennifer explained that, basically, they had to start looking at it all over again, not as the cohesive whole program that had been collectively developed with a lot of hard work, but

in bits and parts. Referring to her PIA (Appendix F, Figure 3), "we have the 360 degrees, the atom bomb, we have broken hearts, we have behind closed doors" (Jennifer, #1, p. 18).

For Jennifer, there was some important change in the curriculum and program as a result of the committee's efforts, but it wasn't enough.

> So it felt a bit like 3 years of lost time, in a way. I mean, there were other things going on, too, that I was very much a part of, but I felt like a lot of effort had been for naught. And that was pretty frustrating. And even though I probably sound pretty fiery as I'm talking about it, I have made peace with it. (Jennifer, #1, p. 21)

> I [returned] here, [my water-front road] was my best friend, and just kind of wiped it away – I had to wipe it away. (Jennifer, #1, p. 19).

Jennifer didn't believe that she could have done anything differently in terms of communication and in terms of process or getting "buy-in."

> I was trying to operate based on what the faculty had said is what should happen. And that was that we do this collaboratively, collectively, [that the faculty] were advised [of the progress]. (Jennifer, #1, p. 23)

She did say that

> it is interesting dynamics, and it taught me a lot, like if I could do it again, which I never would in a million years, but if I could, there are things I'd do differently … I'd consult on an individual level, much more than I did.
>
> I felt really strongly at the time that the fairer thing to do was to consult collectively, because it was seen as a collective process, and that if you are doing it with individuals, that it kind of suggests a preference for particular voices in the community, in the faculty.
>
> I see now that I should have been talking to people much more individually, that were strong, and had strong voices … but to me that seemed to go against the process [and the principles] that the faculty had set in place. (Jennifer, #1, pp. 24-25)

It is important to note, however, that although Jennifer recognized this approach as a strategic option, she indicated that she was conflicted over whether she would actually

take that option or not if she were to do it again. Jennifer was committed to the principles and the collective-collaborative process that faculty decided upon through their formal academic governance mechanisms.

After the Associate Deanship

Although Jennifer, as written above, has made peace with her experience as Associate Dean, and is enjoying semi-retirement that includes ongoing research, writing, and university teaching, it is important to end with some of her reflections – to simply let people know about or, hopefully, to enable discussion about something that is often thought to be non-discussable.

> It was the best of times and the worst of times – like every high and every low you could imagine – for those … years. And I would not have imagined it that way when I started … I would not have imagined … I would never have imagined that there would be people in the faculty that would not talk to me because of my role on this committee. That they were so personally incensed by what had happened that they would see me and would literally turn around and walk the other way – or that they would just walk by and not acknowledge that I was there. So I learned to wait for people to say hello, and that then it was o.k.
>
> It made it, in a way, kind of uncomfortable … I mean, I have lots of good friends there, … but it is still, when I … start walking down the halls, it is just – a little bit – just a little bit [uncomfortable]. (Jennifer, #1, p. 31)

The last word, as has become obvious, is related to the importance of teaching in Jennifer's life.

> I spent a lot of time just recuperating, to be honest. [Then] I went back for … teaching … and I enjoyed it thoroughly. One of the things that came out of that was teaching online. I REALLY enjoyed it, and I didn't think I would at all, but I learned all kinds of new skills … [and] it just turned out SO well … Those students were just fantastic. (Jennifer, #1, p. 32)

Big Ideas in Jennifer's Story

In narrative analysis, whether the narrative artifact is a story or an incident, one must ask "What does this mean to him or her?" Big ideas contained within a story convey some of that meaning. For Jennifer, the first big idea weaved throughout her story is the natural connections with others. The connections are not simply pure luck, accidental, or happenstance. Rather, Jennifer had put a sustained, concerted, and passionate effort into her studies and her work. She was, and is, an extremely well-respected academic and, clearly, was widely known to be an outstanding graduate student scholar. Additionally, Jennifer made conscious choices to take opportunities (come what may), to open up opportunities, and to be open to opportunities – at great personal cost and risk – that furthered these natural connections. Nonetheless there is, indeed, an element of happenstance (or maybe fortune) that Jennifer focuses on in her story when it comes to developing relationships and networks. What this brings to mind for me, and I think the best way to explain it, is what Weber (1958) offers in one of my favourite articles:

> The idea is not a substitute for work; and work, in turn, cannot substitute for or compel an idea, just as little as enthusiasm can. Both, enthusiasm and work, and above all both of them *jointly*, can entice the idea.
>
> Ideas occur to us when they please, not when it pleases us. The best ideas do indeed occur to one's mind … when smoking a cigar on the sofa … [or] when taking a walk … Ideas come when we do not expect them, and not when we are brooding and searching at our desks. Yet ideas would certainly not come to mind had we not brooded at our desks and searched for answers with passionate devotion. (pp. 113-114)

In simpler (and less accurate) terms, one can affect the odds of opportunities and deep connections happening – but even so, they happen in unexpected, wonderful, and unpredictable ways. Jennifer places a high value on the quality of these resulting

relationships. She derives pleasure and satisfaction when working and living in ways that deepen and strengthen positive relationships. In contrast, it is particularly disappointing for Jennifer when something or someone contributes to a diminishment of the quality of these relationships.

A second big idea is, in Jennifer's words, location or place. The nature of the literal physical space is extremely important for fostering the above-mentioned connections. For example, she spoke about the way the arrangement of her office as a professor invited conversations with students and colleagues and about how the location of her graduate student office facilitated regular visits from her supervisor. The nature and location of the busy walking trails and parks beside her favourite roadway is also an important facilitator of these connections – acting in a regenerative capacity but also as a touchstone that reminds of what is important and what holds these connections together. Undercurrents relating the importance of figurative space, however, are also evident in Jennifer's story. Her extreme distaste for a mechanistic and depersonalized merit process can, for example, be understood as an opposition to a system that limits or constricts the figurative space for academic and student scholars to converge in ways that invite or entice ideas. For Jennifer, both literal and figurative space are crucial for the bringing together of people and ideas that generates joy, excitement, and new opportunities to start the cycle all over again. Again, it invokes Weber's (1958) understanding that

> inspiration plays no less a role in science than it does in the realm of art. It is a childish notion to think that a mathematician attains any scientifically valuable results by sitting at his desk with a ruler, calculating machines or other mechanical means. The mathematical imagination of a Weierstrass is naturally quite differently oriented in meaning and result than is the imagination of an artist, and differs basically in quality. But the psychological processes do not differ. Both are frenzy (in the sense of Plato's 'mania') and 'inspiration.' (p. 114)

For Jennifer, the openness of literal and physical space allows for more egalitarian access – access to these natural relationships, ideas, and the processes that generate meaning from them.

The third and final big idea to make note of is the deep commitment that Jennifer has to academic freedom and to academic governance. Her commitment to these ideals of the academy was evident in the way in which she approached her associate dean roles and responsibilities. It was evident in both the processes that she undertook and encouraged for decision-making and in the part of the end product that was intended to allow for greater creativity for academics within the curricular structure. It was also evident, of course, by the ways in which Jennifer experienced and thought about how research was evaluated and incentivized. These two fundamental institutional characteristics of the Canadian university were highlighted in chapter two, so it is not surprising (but still interesting) to see them manifested in this way in Jennifer's story.

Tying the Big Ideas in Jennifer's Story Together

At least three big ideas are evident in the narrative analysis that is Jennifer's story:

1) Quality of relationships through natural connections, risk-taking, and happenstance;
2) Openness of literal and figurative space providing more egalitarian access to ideas;
3) Commitment to the ideals of the academy (i.e., academic freedom and academic governance).

These big ideas are often brought together through Jennifer's identity as a teacher. For Jennifer, her "life began again" when she began teaching again. Most certainly her

attachment to her academic discipline, commitment to her particular area of research, and enthusiasm for new ideas were evident throughout our scheduled time together. Indeed, the joy of discovering and working with new ideas played a huge part in bringing Jennifer to the academy. But in this story, Jennifer draws often on the part of her academic identity that is teaching, mentoring, and thinking about new ideas together with students. It is for the benefit of students, current and future, in her university and faculty that Jennifer takes on the associate dean role - and it is from those "fantastic" students that she garners much of the joy in her academic work.

The palpable disappointment related to Jennifer not feeling like she accomplished what she had hoped to accomplish in her associate dean role and the very visceral communication of the feelings associated with the unexpected social shunning that she experienced take nothing away from her academic identity. Indeed, it underscores the full career-life dedication that Jennifer made, and still makes, to her students. Admittedly, I was surprised and a bit taken aback to hear this part of Jennifer's story. Perhaps I've been somewhat naïve in my own career-life experiences. But this part of the story is extremely important to share and to be available to those entering or contemplating an academic administrative path (and to those experiencing a new academic administrator). It, therefore, speaks to one of the purposes of my dissertation: To aid practice by offering a meaningful insider perspective through narrative that one might not have access to otherwise. Hopefully it also aids others who are not necessarily practicing administrators but who live and work in the same cultural space.

Addendum

I need to wholeheartedly thank Jennifer, my first participant. She spent many hours with me and significant time outside of our meetings giving thought to the topic areas and PIAs that I proposed. It is clear that this was largely, if not entirely, out of her dedication to teaching and most certainly a selfless act of caring. It is also an example of a significant (and important) academic activity that counts but that is not countable.

Prior to beginning this first set of interviews with Jennifer, I attended the funeral service for my grandmother Stovin (age 99). As part of the service a poem was read out that my father remembered from the days when people gathered in his childhood farmhouse to listen to the radio:

> A Bag of Tools
>
> Isn't it strange how princes and kings
> and clowns that caper in sawdust rings
> and common people like you and me
> are builders for eternity.
>
> Each is given a book of rules
> a shapeless mass; a bag of tools
> and each must fashion, ere life is flown
> a stumbling block, or a stepping stone. (Sharpe, c. 1890)

Sharpe is correct – but I think a stumbling block is more likely created if it is done on one's own. Together we are more able to see the stepping stone that we and others may need. Thank you, Jennifer, for giving me a boost up on top of what might have been my stumbling block. From that vantage point, the way forward is much easier to see – and it provided me with a reminder: Do not forget to look through that lens of academic identity, which was with me but that happened to lay placed away, out of sight, and almost forgotten.

Part Two: Learning to Listen through Narrative Research with Scott

Having had a successful and enjoyable experience with the narrative research pilot, and after debriefing with Randy, I continued with the field work. My initial intent was to interview one person at a time but the need to intersperse the engagements quickly became apparent. After the pilot, therefore, I always had two people I was in the process of interviewing and this alternating cycle proved to work well. Scott was one of the first two educational leaders I interviewed after the pilot and I present his story first because he, like Jennifer, is a formally retired Associate Dean – whereas the next two that follow (Part Three and Four) were active associate deans "in the midst."

Early Career-Life Experiences

I had not met Scott prior to our first conversational interview, but there was a personal connection through a good mutual friend and colleague. Other than some introductions and informal "chit chat," mostly about the setting we were in, Scott moved right into the PIAs he had brought with him. There was some palpable nervousness in the room, probably mostly from me, but also possibly from Scott as we were getting to know each other. With the initial conversation, however, and with Scott relatively quickly walking me through his PIA career timeline (of almost 50 years!), we soon established a nice comfort level.

Scott's PIA began with attending teachers' college and then approximately 15 years of various teaching positions interspersed with points of returning to, or beginning, new academic programs of study. His PIA then moved, notably with no break in the image, into appointments as a university professor followed by appointments in various academic administrative positions. These appointments included assistant and associate

deanships and many department headships with both acting and regular appointments throughout.[25]

In contrast to the somewhat rapid recounting of his career timeline "markers," Scott took significant time to focus intentionally on one particular powerful and formative experience he had as a teacher. Pointing to his PIA, Scott said "And that's serendipity" (Scott, #1, p. 2).

This serendipitous experience came about at the end of Scott's teaching career, although he didn't know or expect that would be the case at the time. After studying for his B.A., B.Ed., and M.A. while teaching in a variety of mostly high school positions, Scott moved to attend a Ph.D. program full time. After the initial two years of doctoral study, he felt compelled to return to teaching work to support his young family while completing his dissertation. It was a difficult time to land a teaching job, even with many years of experience. However, late in the local school district's hiring process, there was a death and a promotion.

> So they, with trepidation, put me into the … grade five opening at a school … [where] they wanted somebody who had teaching experience … [It was] an experimental school … open area – and grade five. So, it was quite a change going from a closed, senior high school classroom. (Scott, #1, p. 3)

Scott enjoyed this experience but noted that at this point in time he had to apply even more rigorous time management skills than in the past.

> That was the year I was doing my dissertation, writing it up, working full time. And we had four small kids then, too. So my routine, the whole year, was to be at school until five o'clock, doing school things. And then to have a quick supper and stay at school … to work on my dissertation. I would take Friday nights off, and Saturday was reserved for [going to] the university, working there …, and Sunday [afternoon] I'd take one child

[25] Assistant deanships at that time would be similar to associate deanships now and associate deanships then might be more comparable to vice-deanships now.

> and go back to school and plan the week, and be with one child for the afternoon. It was probably … a routine that I didn't vary more than half a dozen times. (Scott, #1, p. 5)

Open versus Closed Experiences

Scott enjoyed this unexpected experience tremendously because of its professional implications. "Compared to my first 2 years of teaching, which were more rote following a curriculum, I was able to do a lot more applying theory to what I was doing and understanding what I was doing, so that was a real bonus for me that year" (Scott, #1, p. 4). They could experiment with various readings and with different activities in smaller and more flexible student groupings. Scott noted that "just working with other teachers in close contact … was interesting" (Scott, #1, p. 4) in part because of the ability to compare teachers with differing styles and approaches.

Scott expanded on his experience in an open area experimental school by talking about his earlier educational experiences. Scott explained that he had had an "open" childhood, growing up on an acreage just outside of a large town or small city. His father brought home many pets and animals, and his days were relatively free, non-structured, and non-regimented. His schooling, in the 1940s and 50s was, if anything, opposite. It was closed, very regimented, and restrictive. As Scott said, "that was the beginning of my Yin and Yang waltz that I've had with – 'What is education?'" (Scott, #2, p. 1).

The waltz continued into his teaching and academic career. Scott contrasted the first two principals he had: One had a regimented, central command, removed approach where he remained mostly in his office; the other was out with the children, popping in and out of classrooms, and more personally involved. The second, more open principal

> was, I suppose, perceived generally as being a 'weaker' principal, but from my perspective now, I think he was much stronger. He was a kind of

> guy who knew what was going on … So there, I think, began my questioning or understanding of administrators as being managers, and people who *didn't [necessarily] know a great deal about what education really was* [emphasis added]. (Scott, #2, p. 2)

Throughout his teaching career, Scott sought opportunities to collaborate. For him, "working with colleagues was always something I enjoyed and valued" (Scott, #1, p. 8). For example, later in his career while teaching high school, "there were five of us … who got together in a very collaborative way and redesigned the … program, and we had a really good time" (Scott, #2, p. 2). Scott also mentioned having a teacher/vice-principal next door to him with whom he could pop by and ask questions and two teachers early in his career "who were wonderfully supportive" (Scott, #2, p. 2). Although this collaboration among faculty was helpful and mutually supportive,

> we were struggling, … in a fairly convivial way, but it wasn't particularly deep as I came to understand it later … When I think of the support, none of it was particularly solid in terms of *to know what education and teaching were all about* [emphasis added]. (Scott, #2, p. 2)

On to the University

The waltz between open versus closed and collaborative versus individual approaches to education continued when Scott moved to employment as a professor following his open area teaching experience. Interestingly, this move too was serendipitous. Scott had always planned to go back to teaching after his Ph.D. studies, with an eye on a particular role related to coordinating programs of study for students across the region within which he had worked. He had no image of himself as a university professor.

> I was completely green, naïve about the whole area … The thing is, I think I mentioned to you last time, I still consider myself a high school drop-out. I was fully preparing myself for a career in secondary … education. It didn't happen quite like that [lol]. (Scott, #2, p. 20)

With his Ph.D. studies winding down, however, and having applied to extend his open area teaching appointment but not having heard, he responded to an advertisement for a professor of education (on the other side of the country). Feeling the pressure again to find employment he told himself he would take whatever employment offer came in first – and the professorship offer arrived two days before the teaching offer. So they packed up their family and off he went to work at a university.

This first university at which Scott worked had a small faculty of education and there he found what he called an "odd" situation. The faculty, he believed, could have been a great faculty if its members could have worked together. Unfortunately, Scott found a faculty split, physically and philosophically, where each member did their own thing, and he was in the middle! "It never would, I think, have gelled into a group of people who were concerned about making the ed. program stronger" (Scott, #2, p. 21). Again, for Scott, this "didn't support the idea that there's *an in depth understanding among faculty about what education is* [emphasis added] … even though it was a faculty of education in a university" (Scott, #2, p. 3).

After a while, Scott moved to a different university where he would go on to have a long and distinguished career as a professor and as an academic administrator. He was attracted to the new university because it was implementing cutting edge programming for students, in part related to ensuring engaging and practical pre-service experiences.

Into the Associate Deanship Role

Soon after receiving tenure, Scott took on many academic administrative appointments. Following this, after a decade, Scott was appointed to the position of

Acting Associate Dean and then as Associate Dean. He had never, however, imagined himself moving into an administrative position.

> It just sort of all happened – it was never part of a plan at all … I suppose I'd must admit [lol] a lot of my career up until getting into the Faculty of Education was to NOT become involved in administration … [But] the reason *I was invited in* to the associate dean's position was to bring the curriculum perspective into the college administration. (Scott, #1, pp. 12-13)

By curriculum perspective, Scott meant a broad perspective on curriculum and instruction, one in some ways not entirely indistinguishable from educational philosophy and that attends purposefully and meaningfully to received biases such as is often the case related to gender, sexuality, racism, identity, and other matters affecting social justice.

Once in the role, Scott enjoyed the opportunities he had to work with other people in constructive and creative ways. He gave several examples of building programs and partnerships with members both internal and external to the university, and ones that often served marginalized or at-risk groups.

> The experience I had … was one of working with these interested people to help them achieve what they wanted to achieve. I could bring to it some … ideas about curriculum … [or] help them understand the realities of working within a university … But it was going along with these individuals to have them discover, work out, what they thought was needed. (Scott, #2, p. 9)

Scott's attitude, even in situations that at first appeared to be unlikely as fruitful avenues to explore, was "well, why can't we do this?" (Scott, #2, p. 8).

Besides working with, and helping to remove barriers for many groups of people, Scott valued working with individuals in a collegial and supportive capacity. He spoke of working with individuals to help them prepare for tenure and promotion. In one

situation where a young professor was in great demand and having trouble getting enough research done, he "very much took over her life" (Scott, #3, p. 6) and, in part, acted as a gate keeper until she completed the tenure process. Interestingly, after being Associate Dean, and after formal retirement, his last administrative appointment was as acting department head in a situation where a small department had a number of tenure-seeking professors and only one (recently) tenured professor. "My role there was to [help] these folks to get their tenure and promotion files ready" (Scott, #3, p. 6), which he did.

Scott, despite his many accomplishments, is a rather humble person. I did not ask, as I've tried conscientiously to avoid what Julia Ellis calls "go for the throat" questions in my research, but he offered: "I can tell you a failure that I had" (Scott, #2, p. 11). The example Scott gave was related to two individuals seeking tenure and/or promotion who weren't successful in their bid. One of them

> was very much a teacher, a doer, and he couldn't understand how he would meet the academic requirements needed for promotion … I could never get him to understand what that was, and he would end up our discussions in anger, at me, but probably at the system too. (Scott, #2, p. 12)

The other individual

> was an Aboriginal man … and I helped put his case forward … [Part of] his argument was that his world was oral, and it was the oral part of working with his culture that was valued … [Ultimately] he didn't get accepted … [but] by gum if I could've got him to appeal, the thinking of that appeals committee would have turned the original decision around. (Scott, #2, p. 12)

Scott noted a related "failure or limitation … of not being forceful enough in our administrative group to push the idea of Aboriginal education" (Scott, #2, p. 12). He had worked to improve the experiences for students, especially marginalized and at-risk

students, and had removed some unnecessary obstacles or systemic expectations to support students' success in pragmatic ways. He felt, however, that

> in hindsight, … years later, I probably could have or should have helped our administration [better] understand where Aboriginal education was going. Really, the [general] understanding of what Aboriginal educational programming was, was to make them 'like us' so that when they graduated they would be 'equal' to the [other] student teachers … The idea that there were, and possibly needed to be, differences wasn't shouted loud enough. (Scott, #2, p. 13)

Program Renewal and Reconstruction

Much of Scott's time in academic administrative roles was during a lengthy period of cutbacks, where a fairly large faculty of education in which he worked had experienced a reduction in professorial staff of about 50 per cent over approximately two decades. This was "a drastic cut" and so a significant part of his associate dean role towards the end of this appointment was to lead "a very intensive committee … to revamp the teacher education program" (Scott, #3, p. 4). This committee worked well together.

> It was a group of individuals who came in recognizing that we had to change, given the economic reality that we were in … So there were six of us and we came with a pact, almost, that we would rethink teacher education as opposed to [focusing] on departmental offerings. (Scott, #3, pp. 8-9)

Through this committee wide-ranging and substantial changes were enacted. They engaged in "interesting and strenuous debates over what was the core, of what we really need" (Scott, #3, p. 8). These debates happened both with individuals close to Scott, to hash out details and work out various ways to think about the issues, and also within the group. He enjoyed the collegial aspect of "rethinking the whole concept, collectively, of when students leave with a B.Ed., what should they be able to do? What should they be

able to think?" (Scott, #3, p. 7). Importantly, the committee began with the question: "What should a teacher education program be?" (Scott, #3, p. 8).

In the end, the program was strengthened and they could accomplish what they set out to do. Scott noted that, because of the particularly heavy cuts his faculty had received, the wider university was inclined to accept the proposed changes that they came up with more readily than in more usual circumstances. The cooperative, collegial, and collective approach that the committee and most of the education faculty adopted meant that "we came to a teacher education conception of what we were about as opposed to a discrete department awareness of what we were about … Certainly [we] made great steps in that direction compared to where the old program was" (Scott, #3, p. 8). And, notably, in contrast to the experience Scott had in his first professorial appointment.

Learning and Teaching

Throughout his teaching and university careers, Scott was always driven by ideas and the need to learn more – in particular to bring that which is new or otherwise needed by students into his teaching.

> The reason I went back and did my honour's [degree] and Master's, … I was teaching … a really, you know, brilliant grade eleven class, and a young fellow … asked me a question about what was the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam ... I didn't know. And I can remember deciding that if I will be in this profession for another 30 years, I'd better find out. So that propelled me to make the very difficult decision of leaving a really very nice teaching position … and going into the academic program. (Scott, #1, p. 13)

To enter doctoral studies, Scott was motivated by aspirations of moving into a new regional senior teaching position being contemplated by his school division. Nonetheless,

> I had a feeling that I wanted to *know more about what education was about* [emphasis added] … There were two books that I was reading, … one was psychology and the other one was on open education, [and] in my personal work, and then my personal reading, I had the feeling that I needed to know more. (Scott, #2, p. 19)

This drive continued into Scott's university teaching, where he was an early adopter of using computing technology with his pre-service students in unique ways and exploring its potential pedagogical uses in the classroom. He also did research in three, and later four areas, which he said made greater demands on his time and his work-life balancing act than if he had been more focused in just one area. However, he had the strong feeling

> that as a university professor in education, you had to know the most up to date thinking that was going on, [which] prompted a lot of reading and [literary] searching … So the research and teaching, for me, dove tail … I was just searching for the latest information I could get, because I felt I needed to get that component into my teaching. (Scott, #2, p. 18)

Being driven by the search for new ideas, the relationship between research and practice, and working collegially with others, Scott continued this work while taking on academic administrative positions. He wrote and edited three school text book series and was the editor of a prominent academic journal for many years. Scott received particular enjoyment where he could facilitate the publication process for others and assist in improving the quality of the submitted work.

In retirement Scott continues to teach and reach others. He volunteers regularly for a social services organization that assists people with challenges that result often in their marginalization in society – and this volunteer work began many years ago, serendipitously, while still working at the university. Scott also volunteers in a classroom, working often with students who need academic support, and still

experimenting with new ideas and new technology. After talking excitedly about what he had been doing in the classroom, Scott said that he "hadn't thought of it before – you are connecting my experience in [the experimental school], which has a continuation all the way through to what I did this morning!" (Scott, #1, p. 10).

Department versus Faculty Administrative Experiences

Toward the end of our planned time together, Scott reflected on how he had experienced his various academic administrative appointments differently. He said that

> as a department head, you have a solid body of people who are with you ... [with whom] you've got a similar calling … When you get into the associate dean role, you're on your own. You have no troop behind you, necessarily, to run with you. So, it's quite a lonely or unattached feeling. (Scott, #3, p. 2)

Scott found, once he assumed the Associate Deanship, that he had to readjust his thinking to understand the different role he had to play. "It's almost, in many respects, a 'we-they' situation. And in the associate dean's role, you're trying to minimize the 'we' and spread out the 'they' [lol]" (Scott, #3, p. 3).

What was helpful in changing or growing his thinking about academic administration was when, early on, his dean gave him

> an article by a gentleman, Thomas Greenfield, from OISE … This article … made me think that administration was more than management, that it was dealing with policy issues that dealt with the lives of kids and what it was that teachers were doing with the lives of kids … Greenfield, and [some] other experiences, changed my awareness … of what it is that an administrator can do. It's difficult – and it is breaking from tradition and real expectation. (Scott, #2, pp. 6-7)

This is where Scott had his "eyes turned around in a different direction" (Scott, #2, p. 4). Clearly he connected with others in meaningful ways. He brought people together and helped establish both common purpose and shared understandings. But what is also

clear, as Greenfield urges, is that Scott saw individuals for who they were and who they were trying to be – and he used his position where he could to remove barriers and support individuals in reaching their goals. Scott made this focus explicit in recounting his own children's experiences at university, where he realized "just how much a professor was important in their learning. Not necessarily what they were saying, but who they were" (Scott, #3, p. 22).

Big Ideas in Scott's Story

For Scott, at least four big ideas are evident in his story. These are:

1) An open/experiential educational approach valuing individual autonomy and freedom (i.e., academic freedom);
2) Risk-taking and serendipity;
3) A thirst for knowledge requiring rigorous time management and life compartmentalization (i.e., disciplinary attachment);
4) Collegiality and collaboration with others (i.e., academic governance).

These big ideas run from Scott's early life experiences through to the present. His early recoil when confronted with a restrictive and closed educational environment as a child was solidified when encountering the same as a teacher with his first principal. The resulting tension was released by Scott's serendipitous experience teaching in an open area environment, which related to experimentation, application of theory to teaching practice, collaboration, and disciplined time management. This formative academic and professional experience, at just the right time, proved to be foundational for the remainder of Scott's career. He carried the open/experiential approach into his university

teaching, into his support of many unique programs and partnerships, into the redesign of pre-service programming, and into his volunteer work.

How the open/experiential approach was carried into different areas of Scott's work meant taking significant professional and academic risks. But the risk-taking was not confined to career. At numerous junctures Scott took life risks and made personal sacrifices, such as leaving his secure teaching employment for university studies or moving his family across the country to take on a job as a professor he had never imagined. The eagerness to try new things and take on new challenges propelled Scott forward. As he put it, "it was hard to say good bye, and interesting to say hello" (Scott, #1, p. 15).

Also propelling Scott forward was a search for knowledge or information, most often that which he thought needed to be brought into his teaching. This was evident from a repeated desire to generate a better understanding of what education is all about – for himself, for his students, and for his colleagues. And at the points in his career with less direct involvement with students, this desire continued through the collaborative and supportive ways in which he worked with colleagues and, eventually, mentored faculty.

Tying the Big Ideas in Scott's Story Together

From at least as early as his return to university motivated by a question from a high school student, to Ph.D. studies, open area teaching, university teaching, and right through to volunteer teaching in retirement, there has been a strong link between research and teaching for Scott. Similarly, a strong link between research and administrative practice was evident by the way he "had his eyes turned around" by Greenfield's research. As an academic administrator, Scott aimed to support both faculty and students

in being who they were and becoming who they wanted to be. With them and others, both inside and outside the university, he worked to determine directions and desired outcomes collegially and sought to remove or mitigate barriers to whatever degree possible.

Scott never gave up, or even diminished his attention to, his identity as a teacher. As he said more than once, "I still consider myself a high school drop-out" (Scott, #2, p. 20), meaning he never planned on leaving, or wanted to leave, teaching. His strong attachment to research - and the ubiquitous appearance of the question: What is education all about, really? – runs throughout his teaching, professorial, academic administrative, and volunteer career-life experiences.

It's become clear that Scott, in the ways described above and more, has had a life-long dedication to institution-building. He brought faculty members together (both teachers and professors) by collegially developing a common purpose – and facilitated individuals' growth and successes. Ultimately, I think not only did numerous faculty and students come to better understand who they were and wanted to be, his faculty and his university did too. Further, this institution-building was carried out during what was, for most of Scott's administrative career, a period of severe budget cuts.

Finally, it is important to note that, like Jennifer in part one of this chapter, despite the successes and enjoyment that Scott had in the role of associate dean, a part of his story could be a cautionary tale provided from an insider's perspective. Along these lines, Scott noted that it can be a lonely or isolating experience in the dean's office compared to when one is located more fully within a department. He also brought some attention to experiences that he considered failures, where he personally received the

brunt of others' anger and frustration or where he felt the faculty could have moved further, sooner.

Addendum

Referring to the title of this section, there are at least two parts of listening that are notable here regarding the narrative research process. First, I soon learned and understood consciously that Scott spoke with a markedly different cadence and style than did the previous people with whom I had conversational interviews. He spoke in a contemplative manner, quite deliberatively, and used pauses to a greater extent. Fortunately I recognized, or remembered, the importance of not interrupting (i.e., learning when to contribute and when to wait), and was mostly successful.

The second part of listening has more to do with hearing. I realized fairly early on that there were key words, phrases, or ideas that Scott was likely using intentionally, both in any particular meeting and across meetings. These sometimes were repeated, in a kind but purposeful way, so I might be more likely to really hear them.

I need to thank Scott again for his kindness and thoughtfulness in providing great discussions, collegial friendship, and many lessons to be learned (not all of which are contained herein). His wisdom and continuing passion is inspiring.

Part Three: Learning to Walk as a Narrative Researcher with Deanna

About half way through alternating engagements with Scott and Deanna I was beginning to feel like I knew what I was doing. Well, actually, I had long felt I "knew" what I was doing. More accurately, I was beginning to feel like I was able to do what I knew. I'm reminded of what Julia Ellis, my narrative research methods instructor, said in class often: "There's no way to begin to walk the path but by beginning" (Ellis, 2011b).

Striking a little further along that same chord, early in our conversations Deanna asked "Do you think, because of your eclectic career, a part of the reason you're doing this work is related to a search for your own identity?" (Journal entry, March 9, 2016). I didn't have an answer.

Getting to Know Deanna

Getting to know Deanna began in a way that was a little different from the two previous narratives, where both people began our time together by sharing an early teaching experience. Although Deanna certainly, later, included such experiences in her story, she began by talking about her community – or variety of communities.

Community and Self

Deanna discussed her first PIA, which was about where her sources of support come from, and she noted that, often, different supports come from the different communities of which she is a part (Appendix F, Figure 4). For example, Deanna talked about having current "go to" people, such as her administrative team, that she "can count on … at a moment's notice to be supportive, to support each other, and to support me and the work that we do" (Deanna, #1, p. 2). There are also others who are "stable, long term life supports [such as family and very close friends] … that I could go to, count on all the

time" (Deanna, #1, p. 2). And, of course, Deanna mentioned that there are also social supports that might be either professional or personal or both depending upon context and circumstance – so the lines between these communities are certainly not static or rigid but, rather, fluid and blurred. For Deanna, the different types of supports that come from her different communities at different times and in different places are all very important – both to her and for her – but important in different ways. And, they're "not all immediacy" (Deanna, #1, p. 3).

Nature and Self

By immediacy Deanna meant, first, that not all of her different communities were always geographically or physically close and, second, that the support they provide are not always the type where a need or desire is expressed and met with a quick response. Some supports have deeper roots – they are embedded – they are part of who she is. And nature is one of those big parts of who Deanna is.

> I can't live for long without getting outside and being in the natural world … Going for a walk on a sidewalk is not my thing, right, I need to feel and touch and be … I need to be outside … I need to be on the grass, barefooted, kind of thing [lol] … I need *to be*. I find solace, in just sitting, calmly, alone, somewhere, outside, with trees and flowers. (Deanna, #1, p. 5)

For Deanna it can be a wheat field or flowers or water or land, but being out in nature is "a real support, because it grounds me … it grouuuunds me" (Deanna, #1, p. 5).

Another key embedded or internal support is spirituality.

> The other piece, … I'm not going to call it like straight faith, it's not religion, … but there is spirit …I'm firmly committed that something's out there, helping guide this path … and I see these signs, often, in the natural world, or with people, or something [happens], where I just am firmly believing that things are not just completely chaotically random. (Deanna, #1, p. 5)

For Deanna, there's a need for people to take responsibility because we have free will and make choices and there are consequences, "but it's not completely random" (Deanna, #1, p. 5).

Developing Self-Awareness and Self-Efficacy

It is from these areas (community, nature, and spirituality) that Deanna draws her sense of who she is and how she works and how she feels about it (Deanna, #1, p. 5). And this strong sense of self, of self-efficacy and self-awareness, allowed Deanna to get to a place where "I'm my own support" (Deanna, #1, p. 4). As she said, "over time, and life experiences, and travelling around, … you learn to kind of trust your hunches, to say 'I'm o.k. with this, and I'm o.k. with who I am' … So you just come to the place and space in your life where you go … 'I don't need to rely on everybody [else]'" (Deanna, #1, p. 4).

The development of this clear sense of self, and the independence or ability or empowerment that comes with it, "is not just a consequence of time and experience, but it's also that you've actually drawn a sense of personal awareness of relevance, that you've actually thought about these things, and it's not just happenstance" (Deanna, #1, p. 4).

As an example, "I've always been one to just jump in, let's try it, … see what happens – rather than being worried about how it's all going to unfold" (Deanna, #1, p. 6). One of the reasons, Deanna said, that she has been able to develop this risk-taking characteristic or habit is that she's not had to deal with "levels of poverty or of discrimination that others have had" (Deanna, #1, p. 6) in their lives. "I've come to

realize that I've been very privileged in my life … and I've had to acknowledge [that] fact" (Deanna, #1, p. 6).

This eagerness to jump into and take on new challenges has on occasion taken Deanna "into some pretty precarious positions … personally [and] professionally" (Deanna, #1, p. 6). Having the ability to work through and "deal with adversity and just move on" (Deanna, #1, p. 6) is another part of her self-efficacy.

Much of this ability or jump-right-in attitude is attributed by Deanna to her upbringing. Deanna grew up in a rural, small town setting. From this early home environment, "certainly … [I] had a grounding in, you know, 'be good to people and they'll be good to you,' and discipline" (Deanna, #1, p. 6), which was very formative in terms of the values, beliefs, and perspectives she carried forward in her life. It was also experienced as being safe. "There's a sense of security there, there's a grounding there, it's like solid and safe and place means something there" (Deanna, #1, p. 7). In such an environment, Deanna was able to watch and learn from family and others in the community when they were going through adversity and they provided strong role models.

Another aspect of Deanna's upbringing that served her well was strong family support for education and having had "a very positive school experience" (Deanna, #1, p. 7). But early learning from Deanna's environment was not restricted to school experiences.

> Maybe I wasn't able to articulate it before, when I was younger, but … learning from the natural world, … there was something about those life lessons, that you learn about cycles, you learn about how life works, … how death works, … and so you took those, and I guess you applied that kind of thinking to the situations that you come in that are sort of foreign … but it still works. (Deanna, #1, pp. 7-8)

So although these were the ways in which, and the grounds upon which, Deanna started to come to her sense of self, she became far more cognizant of them – and her privilege – when she took the opportunity to travel and work internationally. In this new situation, Deanna said, "I represented the other – but I was still privileged" (Deanna, #1, p. 6). Deanna was surrounded by people who were experiencing very real poverty and discrimination, yet she was accepted well – even adopted – by the community. "By the time I left they used to giggle and call me their affirmative action project, because I was their resident, alien, international, woman" (Deanna, #1, p. 6).

For Deanna this early professional experience that involved travel and immersion in a very different community (far from home) was enjoyable and valuable – but it was also challenging. "I [looked] at it as a challenge and an opportunity, and not being fearful of that, … and then finding ways to deal with the real hurts that come around, but in good ways – and work it through" (Deanna, #1, pp. 6-7). It is here, Deanna said, where she "learned an awful lot about white privilege" (Deanna, #1, p. 6) – and was able to reflect deeply on her self and on the education system in new ways.

From Self-Awareness, Bringing Together the Parts

Some time later, having moved a fair distance into a professorial role, Deanna came to the realization that "I had completely compartmentalized my personal and professional lives" (Deanna, #1, p. 11). This was evident in her descriptions of work and of home. Early on "there was nothing to do but work" (Deanna, #1, p. 11) and then, once extended periods of time away from work could be found, "I was either on, professionally, 24-7, … or I would almost be totally disconnected" (Deanna, #1, p. 11) when at home. Home is "my little safe haven … I have good memories … it's this

unconditional space … [where] there's an acceptance of who you really are" (Deanna, #1, pp. 9-10). It's not that home for Deanna isn't busy, but it's a different type of busy. It's a different pace that allows her time to putter, to think, to contemplate, and to connect with and give back to her communities that are more personal and less work related.

After this realization, or, perhaps, the realization pressing with more urgency to the forefront, and having been in academia for a number of years, Deanna was able to start "to blur those boundaries a little more again" (Deanna, #1, p. 12). This blurring flowed in both directions. It required consciously placing some restrictions on work demands and being more available for – also seeking out – personal community connections and opportunities to be more involved. But in the other direction, "I'm noticing that I'm bringing [the personal] into my [professional] stuff a little bit more … personalizing the writing [in a way] that I didn't do before" (Deanna, #1, p. 13).

By bringing the parts of her self and her personal-professional experiences, demands, and interests closer together, in ways that are much more natural and mutually supportive, Deanna reached a place where she now asks: "How could I possibly do my professional work, if I wasn't acknowledging all of this … that made me who I am … so bridging the personal and the professional is really important" (Deanna, #1, p. 13). And Deanna has reached a place where she can fulfill in more conscious and purposeful ways the responsibility she has always felt: The giving back to her personal and professional communities. Deanna named this, with emphasis, "*reciprocity*."

Reciprocity is a key concept for Deanna because, although self-awareness and self-efficacy are important components of her success as an academic, an academic administrator, a friend, a colleague, a family member, and a community member, her self is not just drawn from her communities - it is made within her communities.

Reciprocity enables Deanna *to be her self*.

Deanna's Career-Life Experiences

After Deanna shared some stories about her self – that is, about who she is and where she's coming from – she reflected and shared some memories and stories beginning with her early childhood.

Early Education and Life Experiences

As mentioned above, Deanna had strong family support for education and a positive school experience. She recounted a powerful memory from as early as grade three or four:

> We did not get to the city very often, … and if we did it was a big deal, an all day affair … We got to go to A&W for root beer, [lol], you know, that kind of stuff – it was a big deal for kids.
>
> So, every time we finally came to the city, which wasn't very often, [my dad] would drive us through campus. And he would say … 'So, WHEN you are here …' That was a strong memory … sitting in an old car, in the rain, an ugly old big car, he liked those … [lol], and we were cruising through campus [lol] … And it was
>
> '*when* you are here – *when* you are here.' (Deanna, #2, p. 2)

Deanna's father had worked at the university and her mother had attended but not finished, notably because of a disagreement with one of her professors. Both her mother and father shared their passion and hopes related to higher education and gave strong,

consistent messaging about education "that really did shape where I ultimately went – all the way through it" (Deanna, #2, p. 2).

With respect to school, Deanna had small classes that were multi-graded. She had a small peer group and worked with younger and older students – and "all the teachers knew everybody, I mean, we just had a great … academic upbringing. Simple as that" (Deanna, #2, p. 3). For Deanna, her early K-12 school experiences also carried through and had an impact on her approaches to teaching, administration, and in particular her topics of research in education.

Deanna's self-reliance did not come alive only once she was well into her academic career, however, even if she did become more fully cognizant of her self as she progressed through higher education. It was, in fact, incubated in her early family, community, and school experiences and evident in another memory she offered. Deanna explained that when she finished high school one of her best friends had already moved to the city, so she decided to join her because "I wanted to try and make it on my own" (Deanna, #2, p. 3). They shared a little apartment, "which was just the most terrible thing ever, and I would beat the pavement, walking, [looking for a job]" (Deanna, #2, p. 3).

Deanna was, of course, successful in finding a job, but it was

> in this terrible, awful, awful … restaurant-y kinda thing, where … you were supposed to smile graciously … [despite the] very irate ornery … customers …
>
> And I worked with a woman who had been there for 45 years, and I saw her life, and I saw how unhappy she was, … and her disgruntlement with the world …
>
> There was also a manager who would go around and tug on all the little apron strings of all the women at the counter who were twenty-five or lower … (Deanna, #2, p. 4).

Upon finishing school and moving to the city, Deanna had begun thinking about options other than attending university. These early work/life experiences, however, got her "thinking pretty quick that there was no way in hell that I wasn't applying to university, because I saw these people's lives, and I thought … I'm not staying here … This was never going to be me" (Deanna, #2, p. 4).

Deanna decided to become a teacher, worked (better) summer jobs at home, finished up her B.Ed. quickly, and got a teaching job right away.

Moving into Teaching and Graduate Studies

Deanna was "very fortunate to get a term position" (Deanna, #2, p. 5), in a small rural community, because there were not many jobs available at the time. The division was able to keep her on and soon she took on a vice-principalship in a "little school where I'd been working previously … I'd loved it so much there, and I'd made so many friends" (Deanna, #2, p. 5).

Deanna took her Master's degree program while teaching. With lots of hard work, summer studies, and much driving back and forth between her new home and the city, she again finished quickly. Unsurprisingly now to me, but catching Deanna off guard, she said "the day I handed my M.Ed. [thesis] in I was talking to my advisor, and he said 'where's the Ph.D. application?' [LOL]" (Deanna, #2, p. 6).

Deanna didn't want to leave her teaching and VP position nor her new home and community. "I loved every minute of [being in my] community, I didn't want to leave it, I loved the kids there. In fact, that place [and] my home town … are the two places I've missed the most throughout my whole career" (Deanna, #2, p. 7). For Deanna, "that first kind of foray [into] career … all by myself, that was really important … that really

shaped who I was … A huge, huge maker of who I am" (Deanna, #2, p. 7). And another expression and growth of Deanna's self-awareness, self-efficacy, and self-reliance.

Despite the pull of community, enjoyment of teaching, and passion for her students and school, Deanna decided to take a leave of absence and pursue doctoral studies.

> I still loved teaching, but the curriculum did not interest me. After you've taught something new a couple of times, right? I need constant change … I love to learn, I love change. I love to learn but I also love to be challenged in that learning … It was in graduate studies work that I found that environment where you could really challenge and be challenged. (Deanna, #2, p. 7)

Becoming an Academic

Deanna's enjoyment of the academic environment was reinforced and it grew during doctoral studies. Beyond simply learning, exchanging, and challenging ideas, she got to experience the actual doing of research and see its potential impacts. Deanna was able to do

> research projects in schools, and [was] able to see how those governance and leadership structures were working but … [as] an outsider coming in ... That was really helpful for training me and getting me thinking about what research was - and [I began] liking the notion of working with people to influence schools but not necessarily having to be the one that was there every single day living it. (Deanna, #2, p. 8)

In addition to becoming involved in research projects, Deanna also began to enjoy writing in a new way. On her own, independently, she began submitting proposals to conferences. One year, as a doctoral student, she unexpectedly had multiple proposals accepted at the same conference – which was both invigorating and challenging. But, loving challenges, Deanna got them all done – and she explained that this "was an important milestone, too, to sort of engage in that milieu, feeling a little overrun by it …

but sort of getting that confidence that this is some place where I'd like to be" (Deanna, #2, p. 12). She noted that when the good, but daunting, news came in about her presentations, the faculty was supportive of her not only with encouragement but financially, too, by funding her trip to the conference.

There was one crucial "make or break" point during Deanna's doctoral studies, where she came close to not continuing along the academic path. After course work, and prior to completion of her dissertation, the lack of guaranteed employment was beginning to weigh on her and she was feeling a strong pull back into the K-12 system – and back working closer to home. "I thought it would be kind of nice to be … a little bit closer to home, … so I applied into [the K-12 system] for an admin. position" (Deanna, #2, p. 9). Deanna received a very good job offer but luckily, however,

> the faculty members that I was working with at the time … saw that I was serious and waffling, and probably going back into the system, [so] they gave me a GRAD class to teach … And that one experience, it just was 'now I can teach at a level of the discourse that I am engaged in' ... And I was, wow, I was totally – I was suckered right into it, hey? … And I'd made a decision there, that this is what I want. (Deanna, #2, pp. 9-10)

For Deanna this direct support of faculty was certainly crucial, as "clearly they kept me in the program" (Deanna, #2, p. 13) and clearly they saw her as someone who would be an excellent addition to the academy.

Less direct faculty support was also significant, however, in the form of the academic culture she experienced. For example, office space for graduate students was provided, and used, and the professors were always around and available. "The grad students were immediately surrounded by people that had conversations" (Deanna, #2, p. 14) and the department head would go around deliberately rounding up people for coffee discussions. This type of culture not only facilitated graduate students getting to know

faculty members better, but it also had the effect of the faculty getting to know individual students better.

Becoming an Academic Administrator

Deanna, as discussed earlier, became increasingly more cognizant of self, community, privilege, and the functioning of public education during her early professorial years. These understandings influenced her research, and vice versa. "I was quickly going up in the ranks. I got tenure early … and then I wound up in full pretty quickly … I was doing really well at getting SSHRCs and research grants, and I had tons and tons of graduate students" (Deanna, #3, p. 7). In addition, Deanna had developed relationships with individuals in school divisions and in government that facilitated her research, which she was enjoying tremendously.

Also relatively quickly, like with her experience in teaching, Deanna started to move into administration. When academic administrators in the building "went on a sabbatical or something, I had opportunities to go into those acting positions for a year, to sort of try them and test them out" (Deanna, #3, p. 4). There were a variety of opportunities such as administrative/academic coordination, department headships, and assistant and associate deanships. Importantly,

> I usually did [these roles] when I was asked … I wasn't doing it as a career ladder or stepping stone. I enjoyed administration, but I could do it or not do it, and it was not a raging ambition of mine to climb ladders and ranks …So, I did it when I was asked to do it, but I wasn't chasing it … I wasn't invested in it in the same way, and I wasn't playing power games. (Deanna, #3, p. 8)

From these initial administrative experiences,

> I learned quite quickly that I preferred the senior administrative positions to the department head … where you're, like, continually putting out fires,

> doing the immediate PR, and staffing issues, and dealing with student discipline ... (Deanna, #3, p. 6)

Deanna noted, though, that this preference might have been different if she had been in a department headship role for longer periods of time because "there's things you could do … in a [longer] stint" (Deanna, #3, p. 6).

Deanna held two different regular full time associate dean positions. In both regular and shorter term appointments, in the first few months there could be "some kind of weird things that would happen, that you would know really wasn't [directed] at you personally, but it was coming at you! [lol]" (Deanna, #3, p. 13). However,

> leadership needs new visions, you have to breathe life into these things. You've got to separate, it's like water off a duck's back … we can't all do that entirely - but you've got to try to separate the personal from the professional. (Deanna, #3, p. 13)

There were some differences between the two regular associate dean appointments that Deanna held. Notably, she considered herself an "insider" for one and an "outsider" for the other, with different challenges associated with each. As a relative outsider, "the first three months people are shouting acronyms at you all over the place, and it's 'I need to get up to speed on the baby steps before I can try to vision'" (Deanna, #3, p. 18). As a relative insider, one doesn't have those practical difficulties to the same extent but there can be challenges of a more political nature. For example, as an outsider

> I was able to build relationships that I think an insider would already have just been too politically factioned to do … So it was good that I hadn't had the history, but it was bad in the sense that I didn't have enough context … I mean, in some sense I guess that helped me build some of the relationships … You have all these different people coming to your door right away, … [you] have meetings, … [they are all] persuasive, very smart [people], they have ideological premises that they truly believe in, but you really didn't know then [at the start] 'what's the … data saying?' (Deanna, #3, p. 19)

Deanna enjoyed building those relationships and learning, but it adds to the complexity and the time demands in the initial stages of the role.

In the first year of the regular appointments "there was just so much to be done … I look back now, and I go 'man [did] we ever [get to] a good place' but … 'I don't know how we all survived it'" (Deanna, #3, p. 20). For Deanna, building the administrative team was crucial.

> So, building the team is – that's what I've done with the staff in the office, and boy I'll tell ya, I'll trust this team to the bitter ends of the earth … What I love is that this group of people … are truly committed to the program. Not to their own little turfs. And they want what's best for the students. (Deanna, #3, p. 20)

The positive culture that was cultivated can be seen, for example, in the good humour and laughter shared – even during trying times.

> It was the end of the term … at the end of [a staff meeting] … we'd been so burnt out from doing something … I don't even remember what it was anymore … everybody was just laughing … I said 'I am just SO happy that at the end of the day we're all laughing' – and one of the women goes 'there's just nothing left to do' [LOL] … There's nothing left to do because they're all dragged out, and exhausted … This group of people are unbelievable. (Deanna, #3, p. 20)

A caring and positive culture can also be seen in the sharing of food. Sometimes, "I'll just stop [everything]. I'll walk down a hallway and say 'Ok, it's time for cake!' [LOL]. We have cake often [LOL] … but now everybody's bringing stuff, so it becomes – a really good culture" (Deanna, #3, p. 21). The team has "been really open … [because there's] somebody who's going to hear them … and who's going to say 'ok, what do we need to do to make this better?'" (Deanna, #3, p. 20). Deanna said that she wants "to make this the best that we can make it, so that whomever comes in after me is going to know that he or she is *living with* [emphasis added] a dream crew" (Deanna, #3, p. 21).

The goal or hope at the start of the associate deanship appointments, to make this the best that they could make it, was so it would be "in good enough shape where I can leave it and somebody can walk in and go 'Oh, this is what it's all about, o.k.' and just move it differently and shape it how it needs to be shaped" (Deanna, #3, p. 14) depending on the needs at that time. This type of major change implementation meant a big challenge was a workload that was incredibly high, where Deanna was "just doing it all the time … never disconnecting" (Deanna, #3, p. 14).

Beyond the workload, time, and other practical challenges associated with initial stages of taking on an associate deanship, Deanna spoke of other aspects – more political – to be aware of.

> You are working with the entire faculty who are in different departments, whose turf wars are playing in your sandbox, in a way … so the disparate discipline or turf issues are popping themselves up in committee structures in weird ways that don't happen … when you have a small number of people who are all kind of invested in the same general direction … You're constantly trying to figure out where are the resistances going to come from … because ultimately you're trying to move in a direction that you know is going to be contentious for somebody. (Deanna, #3, p. 15)

Importantly, "you're trying to make [things] equitable for everybody, so everybody can see themselves in it, knowing that ideologically there's a bunch of people [inevitably] at cross purposes" (Deanna, #3, p. 15).

This inevitability of cross-faculty issues cropping up makes the cultivation of positive relationships and culture that much more important. For Deanna, the question becomes whether she "can put together enough data and rationale … [that demonstrates] the principled decision-making … and even if you can't agree with me now, I don't hold it against you" (Deanna, #3, p. 16). So trust and respect, in both directions, is crucial to a positive culture and for making things work the best that they can for as many people as

possible. "Building the relationships with people is so key … to create at least a level of trust and authenticity with people … so a lot of it is: Are her ideas valuable? Does she have a rationale about them? Does she have some data … [to indicate] this is something worthy?" (Deanna, #3, p. 17).

One of the ways in which Deanna builds relationships, in addition to being open and transparent with her ideas and thinking, is by genuinely welcoming and valuing debate and deliberation. "Some of my most fun times are when you are kinda having fights on committees, or whatever, when everybody's thinking and pushing … I actually like that. Not many administrators tend to like that, but I actually like that" (Deanna, #2, p. 7). Deanna seeks out debate, critique, and contributions in order to test and improve her initial ideas.

> [Often], I come up with a prototype, a protocol, a white paper, a whatever – and I will take it to the committee … and say 'this is where I'm at. This is my initial idea … [please] kick it around, and if I'm on the moon, tell me so, then let's start again, but here's what I'm thinking and why. (Deanna, #3, p. 28)

This demonstrates her openness and respect for others, which earns trust, especially when real changes do result from such collaboration.

Deanna also spoke of the unique challenges associated with formal decision-making in a university environment. "I really actually believe in the collegial – in the academy, but on any given day it can be a really frustrating moment" (Deanna, #3, p. 16). The frustration here is that decisions on academic matters need to go through many levels of committees, and at any stage or step, even the last one, unexpected things can happen or issues can again crop up. For example,

> you can have faculty members who really [haven't] engaged … so faculty council comes … and in that day they ask you to retell the whole story, so

> you try to do that, and they pick a point that's over here somewhere – but they've got the political will to sway a vote. (Deanna, #3, p. 17)

Or, for example, sometimes in universities "the debates aren't happening about the practical, … they're happening in faculty councils at the ideological level, so things can be swayed ideologically that make NO sense from the practical level" (Deanna, #3, p. 17). For Deanna, she's "responsible for trying to make it work" (Deanna, #3, p. 18) but has to do so without much explicit authority. In order to make it work, she relies on having "a relationship developed where even if they don't like my idea right now, they'll trust me because I usually pull through and I usually have the best interests at heart" (Deanna, #3, p. 18).

Having the best interests at heart, for faculty, staff, students, the program, and the institution, is key. "You cannot do this role without recognizing that you can't take anything too personally and without recognizing that a lot of [this] is caretaking" (Deanna, #3, p. 21). This means being visible, available, and present. This has been noticeable to Deanna when she has had to travel for work. "That disconnect from just being there, even if I'm running to meetings every day, them just knowing that I'm there. [When I'm away, even though] they can do most work with me over email, there is something about knowing that the person is there" (Deanna, #3, p. 21).

A final challenge that Deanna experienced when moving into academic administration is related to her research and writing. "What I am missing is my discipline. My research is taking a hit – big time. I still was writing and was still trying to do a little bit of research, but comparatively speaking, I'm behind … so that's pretty hard" (Deanna, #3, p. 22). Deanna enjoys and is thankful for all the wonderful

administrative projects and activities she gets to be a part of and that help the college. She said that, at the end of the day,

> I'm really a program oriented person. My trajectory isn't to be Vice-Provost, all this kind of stuff. I want to have good programs for our students, whether they're graduate, undergraduate, middle level, whatever, so that our students come out being the best that they can be at whatever they want to be … And in the meantime, I want to be able to do my research to foster that. (Deanna, #3, p. 23)

So although Deanna has been able to bring her home and work communities closer together, to meld the personal and professional better in the more recent stages of her work/life experiences, as an associate dean it

> really [starts] to get hard to have all those balances … you can't balance everything … [and the] institutional stuff then gets privileged … What it does is it is actually taking away from what your actual primary responsibility is. And I don't EVER want to lose my research, right? (Deanna, #3, p. 24)

The "institutional stuff" gets privileged, because "there's a small group of really committed people" who take on these institutionally dedicated roles.

> We tend to be institutional type of people … we believe in programs. We believe in the institution, even though we might critique it and think it is horrible at times, there's something about committing yourself to it, *to make it better* [emphasis added]. (Deanna, #3, p. 24)

Big Ideas in Deanna's Story

For Deanna, it is all about making the world around her a better place. She wants to make a contribution to, and improve, her academic institution, her academic programs, and her personal surroundings and relationships. Though she never used the term, Deanna is "in service" to her community – or, more accurately, communities. She calls this commitment to community "reciprocity."

Personal agency is what makes it possible for Deanna to make positive change in her communities. Self-awareness and self-efficacy are necessary for personal agency, and for Deanna they are rooted in community – especially her sense of home. She has become who she is through the support of her family – and the values instilled in her at an early age – but also through the direct and indirect support of others as she's experienced moving from community to community.

It is not just good fortune, the intervention of others, or the having of interesting and valuable experiences in and of themselves that have resulted in Deanna's sense of personal agency. Hard work, stepping up when asked or needed, and serious reflection on her self and her experiences both helped shape who she is and helped create more opportunities for personal-professional growth and for her to give back.

Deanna's sense of home, tied together with her love of nature and open space, is crucial to her sense of self and important for understanding how she contributes to the communities she is a part of. For Deanna, home is safe, free, open, fun, and caring. In the professional spaces where she has worked, they are made better by making them more like home – and things work better in them, too, when relationships are built that are respectful, open, trusting, and understanding, similar to what might be found ideally among family. In the role of associate dean, Deanna seeks to build relationships authentically both consciously and conscientiously. She does so in at least two ways. First, she makes her thinking explicit and transparent – complete with rationale and data – and isn't "playing power games." Second, she creates an environment that is welcoming of debate and deliberation. Deanna routinely will put her ideas on the table,

but then invite and enjoy hearty debate that sometimes leads to further research and broader engagement of others.

The demands on her time and energy when in the role of associate dean are ceaseless – which makes the intentional finding of balance even more important and also more difficult. Being in nature, barefoot, touching and feeling the grass, the leaves, the wheat – just "being" – is where Deanna is at home. It is where she can find rest, where she can meditate or think differently, and where she can find solace. It is where no contribution or improvement is needed: The natural world doesn't make immediate demands upon her. Nature is where Deanna can find her self again, whenever needed. Returning to nature or, when that is not possible, bringing nature to her more immediate surroundings helps her in finding balance.

Deanna recognizes that although she is "all in" when she takes on a cause, for example administration as an associate dean, she can't lose her self in the process. Her research is an example of a part of her identity that she "never EVER wants to lose" and that requires attention in order to maintain the balance she needs. So, while Deanna feels she wasn't able to keep up her research in the role of associate dean in the way she is accustomed to, or wanted to, she still managed to write and to contribute to research projects with colleagues. Deanna also now sets aside administrative demands if necessary to tend to family, or works these projects around family needs instead of the other way around as she found herself doing earlier in her career. So, although a desire to contribute to community and to give back – reciprocity – is what drives Deanna toward "service," she is cognizant that there are limits to what she can give and is aware of the

need to tend to her self, too, in order to give as much of her self to others and to her institution as she possibly can.

Addendum.

Deanna shared with me a story from her travels. While exploring a busy, bustling place, Deanna's friend and colleague pointed out – with good humour, laughing – that it was easy to know she was coming from a mile away: She had that "prairie stride" (Deanna, #1, p. 14). I need and want to thank Deanna for helping me to "hit my stride" as a narrative researcher – for helping me learn to walk comfortably along, or to fully "be in," that path. I still don't have a complete answer to her very good question about whether my choosing narrative research is motivated by a search for my own identity – but I am now a narrative researcher, which is a part of my identity that I did not have before.

I also need to thank Deanna for her generosity and camaraderie. She not only worked our meetings and emails into her extremely busy schedule, but she did so with good humour and enjoyment. She brought me into her circles, her communities, and even her home for our last formal meeting – where she had a lovely garden setting and a scrumptious buffet of food and drinks that no one can enjoy as much as a grad student! Our conversations were much like the hallway and coffee room discussions we both remembered. So she helped me not only by participating and sharing her stories, but by *being with me along the way*. A huge time commitment and gift – one that I truly hope I can, in some way, reciprocate in future.

Part Four: Getting into the Groove of Narrative Research with Greg

"*Walk* this way … *Talk* this way … [וו]" [26]

By the start of my meetings with Greg, I was feeling like I knew and I could do narrative research. I didn't recognize it at the time, but I had become a narrative researcher. Not to the exclusion of other forms of research, of course, but I was glad I had chosen this method. What I did recognize, however, was that I felt comfortable in having conversations with Greg. This may have been in part because we were already acquaintances, and most assuredly it was partly because of Greg's "good nature," but it was also certainly because I had become comfortable with what I was doing. This was a good thing, too, because with Greg being a very busy current academic administrator, he had blocked off the latter part of the afternoon for us but had not noticed the PIA request. Not to worry, we had lots of time set aside, and Greg kindly offered to create some illustrations before we proceeded.

Support Systems

Greg, like Deanna (my other participant who was active as an academic administrator), began by reflecting upon the sources of support in his life through his first PIA (Appendix F, Figure 5).

> I'm not a religious man, although I think that I'm probably spiritual in a different sort of way, so I don't have those kinds of strengths, supports – and the distance to family is represented here [PIA]. I still get support from my family, … from my children, … and my wife … I get support certainly from this place [university/department/college], my friends and colleagues who are virtually one and the same, … fortunately there's some fabulous people [here], … and I think the focus of this faculty and the university more generally … has been supportive in some really crucial ways. (Greg, #1, p. 2)

[26] Tyler and Perry (1976).

In addition to drawing support from the people in his life, Greg noted that exercise and music are important supports for him.

> Although I'm no longer the athlete I once was, … when I can get [exercise] into the schedule, it's really supportive in terms of dealing with the stress … And then music … there's something therapeutic or supportive for me in turning on some good music, or hacking away a little bit at the guitar. Again, … the opportunities … are few and far between. But they are supportive in the sense of balance. (Greg, #1, p. 2)

Having ways to ensure balance and to handle stress are key for Greg because, in addition to drawing support, he also of course provides support. "So the little drawing I've done, the circle in the centre is me – and I often feel that I have to find a way to, to drum up support from inside" (Greg, #1, p. 1).

Greg's Early Life

Greg grew up in a small town and enjoyed the closeness of the people there with all the opportunities it provided.

> I really remember growing up with a degree of freedom that, as a parent now, alarms me – but it worked really nicely in [a] small town, … in that era. We just went out, anywhere we wanted … on our bikes, so it was a pretty solid upbringing … You grow up in a small town, you get to know everybody, you get to be the captain of all kinds of teams, … all sorts of opportunities. (Greg, #1, p. 7)

Greg's childhood experiences provided a strong foundation, which either gave him or helped him develop what he needed to head off on his own and find his way.

> We weren't wealthy, but were privileged in all sorts of important ways … [with] loving parents … [who] weren't pushing any of us in any particular direction, you know, just encouraging us to follow the path, and make it ourselves.
>
> So, I think I've done that, even though I'd hate to try to retrace the path [lol]. You know, both physically and metaphorically, it's been all over the place. But I think it's led me to a very good place in my life.
>
> I'm even going to say I like being the administrator.

> And I never imagined, first of all, that I would do a Master's, or a thesis, or become an academic – and even then, I never really imagined I would enter into administration, all sort of accidentally …
>
> So it took me a long time to find my own path … I got to see a bit of the world first, and try out a few different things, and then I did find something that I think suits me quite well. (Greg, #1, pp. 7-8)

An important part of Greg's early experience, that's been a constant throughout his life, is the family cottage. The cottage is a place that gives him a deep sense of home and a place to which he has returned almost every year (PIA, Appendix F, Figure 6).

> My great grandfather … built this old cottage, some of his peers did it, and so all of these little cottages have been handed down to the same family over the years. So I grew up every summer at this cottage. And my daughters have been there, every summer. My cottage is right there, overlooking, this is all water [PIA]. My mom grew up there every summer, and her mom … The moment I get there, the blood pressure goes way down, I stop shaving, I take off my shoes. I don't put them on unless I'm absolutely forced to go to [town] to get food [lol]. I just hang out, and watch the kids run around free, and know that if we're not feeding them, one of the neighbours is, and it'll be our turn to feed all the kids tomorrow. (Greg, #1, p. 21)

Early Academic Experiences: Finding the Path

The expectation, from community, parents, friends, and himself, was that Greg would go to university – maybe to "med" school - and he did, in fact, go to university right away.

> I actually turned down a number of scholarships, including a full ride, … because I wanted to go to [a university] … I thought … was more prestigious. They didn't offer me a penny. But my mom and dad, they didn't bat an eye. So, they said 'yeah, off you go, man.'
>
> So, I went … and I was really sick before I got there … So I came late, … and was supposed to take it easy, and … I had *missed my opportunity* [emphasis added]. I thought I was going to play [on a] university [team], but I *missed my opportunity* [emphasis added] …

> I didn't fare particularly well academically, … it wasn't right for me, the fit, so I stayed home for a while after that … worked odd jobs. (Greg, #1, pp. 8-9)

Greg was resilient and persisted with university. After a while back home, he "just wanted to do something altogether different" (Greg, #1, p. 9) and decided to go to a university half way across the country.

> That proved to be a very good decision … I did well … and I had a good time. I had much better balance …
>
> And just the experience of being out there on my own, and living in a big city, … access to [outdoor adventure] … I was out there all the time. (Greg, #1, p. 9)

Greg finished his degree. At that time he had, internally, developed resistance to the idea of becoming a teacher. "I kept saying 'I'm not going to be a … teacher, that's my dad, my dad was a … teacher, I'm not going to be a teacher" (Greg, #1, p. 9). But, enjoying life, and not sure what else to do, "I went back and did a B.Ed. [lol], and I was the first person in that class hired … that year" (Greg, #1, p. 9).

Becoming a Professional: Finding the Path

Greg's first teaching position was back in a small town. He worked hard and did well, so well that "they offered me a permanent contract, … which was quite rare, to get that opportunity" (Greg, #1, p. 10). He had, however, been commuting back and forth to the city. Missing his life there, Greg decided to turn down the job offer.

> Then, of course, I couldn't land a job. Gosh, you know, I'd totally forgotten this part of my life. I couldn't, actually, land anything … [I ended up] working on this really – hard labour job … Gosh. Putting in concrete floors in large warehouses. It was hard work. And I did that … long enough to know that my life was going to be different, because I was going back to school [lol]. (Greg, #1, p. 10)

Thinking of medical school, he did some substitute teaching and some longer term teaching while taking some classes in the evenings. "And only by chance did everything change dramatically, yet again" (Greg, #1, p. 10).

Toward the end of one school year, Greg hopped in a car with others who were attending a special event that was recruiting people for international career opportunities.

> I just [went] … to hang out … They were taking interviews, just randomly, I walked into a room, got interviewed, never thought anything of it.
>
> But [some time later] … there was a moment where the house we rented was virtually empty … and the phone rang, and it was the embassy calling … [asking] if I could accept to go [overseas].
>
> [Greg]: 'Well, when?' [lol]
>
> [Embassy]: 'Well, next week' [lol]. (Greg, #1, pp. 10-11)

Greg had just wrapped up a term teaching position and wasn't sure what he was going to do next. He decided to ask for a couple extra weeks, went home for a visit with his parents, and headed off for another adventure.

Greg worked professionally for a number of years internationally. He "had a great experience … [and] met some great people" (Greg, #1, p. 11). In addition to working Greg was able to participate actively in recreational sports such as basketball, soccer, and tennis.

> I even played hockey … It took a couple of years, but … word got around in a community about an hour [away] … that there was this community guy that played hockey … so 'let's send him an invite.' So, I went down and I started playing with these guys, and I did for a few years, every week, and it was great. (Greg, #1, p. 18)

Greg also began to take his interest in music more earnestly while working internationally – and it happened rather accidentally.

> One day I was just walking by [a recycling area], … saw a guitar, and picked it up … So I ended up walking into [a] … music store … and the guy happened to speak a little bit of English … he said 'I'll make you a deal. You come here once a week, and teach me a little bit of English, and I'll teach you a few things on the guitar. (Greg, #1, p. 22)

Playing the guitar, even a little bit here and there, now helps Greg maintain balance in his life (PIA, Appendix F, Figure 7).

> Music is … just a meditation kind of thing. I pick away … [This] abstract drawing [PIA] – that's supposed to be a guitar. These are something like clouds. And this is something like water … water has always held a special place for me …really peaceful, and reminiscent … of growing up … So, there's something that transports me … this is supposed to be movement, I feel like I'm moving and staying still at the same time … it kind of releases me from the stagnancy of the everyday, to sort of escape into a few chords. (Greg, #1, pp. 21-22)

Eventually, it was time for him to return to Canada. He planned to get a teaching position but didn't have a Canadian destination in mind. Greg applied to grad school at a few universities and, fortunately, he was accepted at one of them – so off he went again.

Greg's Grad. School Experience: The Path is Found

Greg took the opportunity to attend graduate school and began with a course-based route because he had intended to return to full time teaching in relatively short order.

> I got through most of that degree, and I needed another elective. [So] I took this course, because it was the only one that would fit into my schedule, called 'Values Education' … [With] the first assignment … [I was] faced with this totally contradictory picture, and I was really frustrated: 'Why didn't I know this? Why wasn't I taught this?' … And then one other [reading] in the same course … this one blew my mind …
>
> So, those two readings were … that particular moment … it totally changed the course of my entire life.
>
> And so did that guy. That prof. (Greg, #1, p. 12)

By the end of that class the professor asked Greg if he would switch into the thesis route, and he did, despite the significant extra and unplanned time it would take.

> By the time I finished that thesis I thought I had an awful lot more to learn … and I had been accepted … for Ph.D. studies … and that is sort of how the academic route came, you know, so it was really quite accidental … I assumed that … [I'd] be living the life of a teacher, which was something I knew, … in some small town … in some small school.
>
> The Ph.D. changed everything … The process of graduate school is, as you know, incredibly stressful, and can take a toll in all kinds of ways. I think many people enter it and then come out a changed person … I came out a very different person, living a very different life. (Greg, #1, pp. 12-13)

The grad school experience also changed for Greg once he moved into the thesis-based route after his experience in that particular professor's class (PIA, Appendix F, Figure 8). He was no longer attending because he thought it was a good thing to do for returning to teaching.

> I think I'd realized something important about academia in that moment, and I wanted all of it … I flipped out of the course route … and I just kept going from there. I've drawn an [upwards direction] arrow [in my PIA] and that was a very, very clear moment for me … once I got into the … thesis I had an inkling that I would continue on to do the Ph.D. Once *I was asked* [emphasis added], there was never … any doubt. I needed all of that. (Greg, #2, p. 2)

From that point on, Greg was an academic and was driven by something internally – something other than the day to day pragmatic tasks associated with earning a living. "I'm not sure how to describe it, a thirst for thinking or for knowledge – or for something – that drove me from that point on" (Greg, #2, p. 2). At the time, Greg was saying to himself "gosh, … this could be a really fascinating intellectual journey, and I see now that academia can be about … asking some really profound questions and getting some really fascinating, complicated responses" (Greg, #2, p. 3). For Greg, "those two

readings, and the entire course they were situated in, really turned a piece of my world upside down. And I loved it! [lol]" (Greg, #2, p. 3).

As Greg was embracing academia in and after this critical moment, another graduate student experience solidified his understanding and attachment.

> I was convinced to go present my, as a conference presentation, my Master's thesis. And I did … And it was packed with eminent [scholars] … a big room of who's who, and I gave this presentation, and it was really well received. And I remember thinking afterwards 'o.k., I might be able to do this, this is really exciting. These people ask tough questions, and we're talking about things that really matter' … I was hooked. (Greg, #2, p. 3)

And reflecting back now, Greg recalled that

> the questions were about theory and its application to injustices in the world … there was something almost spiritual about it for me. I'm not a religious man, but I … maybe to say that it seemed like it might be a bit of a calling – but that might be going too far – but sort of that feeling to it. Like 'oh, this is not only what I want to do, I really need to do this.' (Greg, #2, p. 4)

Becoming a Professor

After finishing the Ph.D. Greg had opportunities for various types of academic work that was typically sessional, by the course, and sometimes longer term but temporary in nature.

> [I was] an aspiring academic, I guess, at that point … [a] full time sessional lecturer … eight courses over two semesters, no union, no benefits, sessional pay, per course, … 40, 50 students in each class … it was busy. And trying to do that, trying to publish, and participate in this, this academic rat race, getting the publications, getting the teaching, going to the conferences, networking, uh, applying for every single job that came out, even if it were … way off [lol], … applying for grants, and totally, um, either ignoring the problems in my own life at the time, or amplifying and just contributing to them. (Greg, #1, p. 3)

Greg had a solid network of friends and colleagues at the time who were "a different set of supports in that era of my life" (Greg, #1, p. 4).

> There was a bunch of us … A bunch of us commuted together. So, I drove a little [car], and I'd drive around, … pick everybody up, and drive … to the university, and we'd all do our thing for the day, and then we'd meet up and come back … all of us sort of going through at the same stage of our career. So, that was good, you know, understanding how difficult it was, empathizing with one another, uh, critiquing the system together, … you watch people move through … Some folks would be the sign of hope for us. 'Oh, they got a tenure track. Away they go!' … 'Roads Scholars' was what we called ourselves [lol]. (Greg, #1, p. 4)

But family played a particularly important role at that point in Greg's life.

> You know, I'm talking to you, and then I'm remembering something that I think about almost every day … [I was] working absolutely crazy hours, just constantly, working, working, to the point where it wasn't doing good things for me, physically and mentally, and dad said … I remember almost verbatim …
>
> 'You've got to fit work into your life, not the other way around.'
>
> That's what he said, in fact. And … you know, my dad is not … he doesn't stand and lecture and give advice. He hardly says 'boo,' actually, so … if he said it, he must have felt he really needed to say it.[27] (Greg, #1, p. 2, p. 6)

This event was a turning point for Greg, both personally and professionally.

> I think I had it backwards for the longest time, and so each day I, I'm just realizing now, probably every day, I think of what he said as a good reminder, that no matter how important my work is, and I think it's quite important, because there's a big social justice dimension to my own work and to the work of my colleagues in this space, and my role as Associate Dean is to help facilitate that work – it's still work, and it's supposed to make life better, and it's supposed to take a piece of life …
>
> So it was around that stage that I think things began to shift a bit. And this calm, healthiness came into my life, even though I was still looking for a tenure track position. It was still a couple years before I got one … I mean, I think everyone who saw me teach … would say that I was more than competent …

[27] In Greg's review of the transcripts, he noted that "I'm now guided by this notion, even if I don't always remember it verbatim. I've just printed this quotation out and pinned it to my desk" (Greg, #1, p. 6).

> But I think there was something important about my dad's intervention at that moment … It kind of took a little, took a little chat from my dad … I wasn't a young boy, I wasn't even a young man, at that stage, but still gaining some wisdom from [him]. (Greg, #1, p. 3, p. 5)

Becoming a professor wasn't, for Greg, what initially brought him to academia. He had been "hooked" as he described above.

> I don't think I really thought that much about becoming a university prof. I don't think that was what really drove me initially. That's what got me through in the end, probably, because, you know, half way through the Ph.D., 'gosh, I'm going to have to make a living again' [lol]. So, 'o.k., I'll hold out some hope that I'll actually land a position.' (Greg, #2, p. 2)

Even though becoming a professor wasn't what drove Greg to continue his studies, and he was realistic about the chances for long term academic employment, he did begin to hope for such an opportunity. "I guess I really never knew for sure that I would end up as a university prof. I mean, many of my pals weren't so fortunate … But I sure hoped that I would get to a stage where, you know, I could, perhaps, contribute to those kinds of moments for others" (Greg, #2, p. 5).

After a couple more years, the next opportunity arrived. However, the tenure track job offer that came Greg's way required another move. At this stage in his life he wasn't overly eager to do so. "I didn't know much about the place. The job looked really interesting … I thought there was no chance, but I put my name in anyway. Sure enough, they invited me out" (Greg, #1, p. 13). And when he, unexpectedly, received the job offer, he ended up taking the opportunity. "I had a tough decision … [but decided] 'I'll go do it for a year'" (Greg, #1, p. 14).

Becoming an Academic Administrator

Greg's one year commitment turned longer, and he was enjoying the opportunity and the place tremendously.

> I'd established myself as a pretty decent colleague. Really loved the position. Had it been anywhere else, I don't know if I would've stuck it out. But I really liked my colleagues, and I liked what the faculty was standing for, and standing up against, and they gave me room to be a part of that. (Greg, #1, p. 15)

Greg found that other opportunities were coming up too. His first formal experience as an academic administrator happened quite quickly.

Despite enjoying the university, the faculty, and his colleagues, "right from the get go I was kind of critical of some of the programmatic changes" (Greg, #3, p. 1) that were happening.

> I became a vocal critic … I felt that [some of] it was contravening academic freedom … and so then the request came: 'Would you be the chair of … [the program]?' … I think that's actually why I ended up as an administrator, now that I'm thinking about it, … I thought 'I guess … you've got to put your money where your mouth is now' … I certainly never had aspirations. (Greg, #2, pp. 16-17)

For Greg, programs need to ensure there is room for whoever is delivering courses to bring their self to the course – their personal and academic self.

> Not everybody subscribes to that notion, but I am a BIG proponent of that. I think that's why we have academic freedom, … that's what makes things like this [PIA] possible … that turned me into an academic. I think it's the strength of any given individual instructor - there needs to be room for that. (Greg, #2, p. 19)

Soon thereafter "I had an opportunity to move into my first full time administrative position as [a] director of [a research centre] … *I was asked* [emphasis added]" (Greg, #1, p. 15).

> Essentially the experience as chair led some of my colleagues to think that I could do this. And when they were having difficulty finding someone to step up and apply for the director position they came and tapped me on the shoulder and *asked me to apply* [emphasis added]. So I did … Fascinating experience. Working with some really high profile people. (Greg, #3, p. 1)

Greg wasn't initially sure about taking on the directorship. "Well, I don't know if I really want to do it … but I'll give it a try, just because it seems like you folks need someone to do it" (Greg, #1, p. 15). He did this for a while, had accomplished what was needed at the time and what he had set out to do, and then the opportunity to take on the associate deanship came up.

> There was … a retirement … going on here, so *I was asked* [emphasis added] if I might consider … coming back to the faculty, and taking that on … [The directorship] made me marketable, I think, as a potential associate dean … And I think what I wanted most was to come back to the faculty and to be much more involved [there] … and so when it was presented I thought 'I'd like to do that.' (Greg, #1, p. 15)

The timing worked out very well because "I had done well [with the directorship] to that point. But I was seeing that some big changes were going to be happening and that it was going to end up going off in a direction that I would not be comfortable with" (Greg, #3, p. 1). So Greg returned to the faculty as Associate Dean, and has thrived.

> I have a fantastic group of colleagues here. Our faculty .. is second to none … in terms of the things that are important to me. By that I mean a courageous challenging of dominant neo-liberal type trends and audit culture and research matrix … Our faculty has [also] made really important commitments to anti-oppressive education, … equity and education, and anti-racist education … and those are the things that drew me into academia in the first place. (Greg, #3, p. 2)

Being a Professor

Not surprisingly, given Greg's experiences in becoming an academic, as a professor he enjoyed the reading, the thinking, and the discussion among colleagues – but he also makes a clear link between that part of the role and teaching.

> My favourite thing to do in this place, really, if I'm really being honest about it, is to think, to think about complex readings. So, the research, the writing, going to academic conferences, getting some feedback, being in a small environment with like-minded critical thinkers … I absolutely love that!
>
> But … I also really get a high off of teaching … I said here [PIA], the reason I'm connecting these is because that was such a life changing moment for me … And I think I've been able to replicate, in small [lol] bits and pieces of that for other students. (Greg, #2, pp. 5-6)

For Greg, this important part of the role is reflected in the experiences he and his students have had being engaged in the teaching-learning dynamic – not in the "evidence" that might initially be thought of such as "teaching evaluations, or the online rate your professor things, or [even] what my other colleagues would say … [It is] those occasions where I've seen it" (Greg, #2, p. 6).

One example Greg offered of a rewarding and moving teaching-learning experience, for both him and for his students, was one particular lecture with impromptu subject matter emerging (PIA, Appendix F, Figure 9).

> I remember this one occasion after a really tough emotional class with teacher undergraduate students and, you know, some of them in the class thought that in the previous class I'd kind of trampled on their positionality as, uh, well, I'll be frank about it, as Christians, and they thought that I'd sort of run roughshod over them.
>
> And so I began the next lecture recognizing that as a possibility, and kind of apologizing for it, and then trying to explain without dismissing my own complicity, and trying to explain where it was I was coming from, and why it is necessary to critique even, uh, the positions that we love and hold dearly – the people, the institutions, the faiths.

> And, uh, it was probably the highlight of my lecturing career thus far.
>
> And so I'm a total wreck afterwards, and more or less held it together, and got back to my office, and kind of collapsed, and went home … And the next day I go to my office, and there's all these notes attached to my door, and letters under the door, and, uh, they're all talking about what a powerful educative experience that was for them, and geez, I'm getting kind of emotional even now, thinking about it, and you know, I'm sitting there in my office, looking at all of these notes - I've [still] got them in a box somewhere - and these letters, and I thought 'gosh, what a powerful position one's in … and we lead not only through the knowledge that we are trying to help foster, but also the way we model it.'
>
> That was a big lesson for me, and by all accounts it was a big lesson for everybody else [lol]. (Greg, #2, pp. 6-7)

Greg thinks of those moments, recognizing that they don't and can't happen all the time, and he appreciates them as validation of the important work he and his colleagues do as professors. He also holds onto those memorable teaching-learning experiences as an academic administrator because "you're trying to replicate, in a way, or foster the conditions so that students and teachers can engage in ways that make for those moments, or something that inspires them to think differently, be differently, act differently" (Greg, #2, p. 7).

Being an Academic Administrator

Fostering the conditions for those deeply important teaching-learning moments, for Greg, means supporting and encouraging the academic individual and collective professionalism of faculty and students.

> I think that's why we are very critical of neo-liberal audit culture, uh, hyper surveillance, top down approaches where, you know, I was going to say creativity, but I think I really mean [where] the whole humanity of ourselves and our educative possibilities gets reduced to really quick and easy accountability measures.

> So I see an administrator's role as trying to make for educative moments, the little ones, the big ones, the humbling ones, you know, the troublesome ones. All of them. It's about on one hand, resisting those forces quite publicly and vocally, and I think there's a critical justice dimension to that, and [on the other hand] communicating about the strengths of my colleagues and the students, their engagement, that's where you go. (Greg, #2, p. 8)

Greg notes, however, that there is no sure-fire one single way to achieve this administrative goal.

> The task is not to imagine that there is a blueprint for this … on a day to day basis … it's more mundane … so I think we are just looking for little possibilities … If you begin to, as an administrator, think that there's an easy formula, … then that's when we get ourselves into trouble. (Greg, #2, p. 8)

Despite the impossibility of a single blueprint for academic administration, fostering good relations with colleagues is crucial to one's success and to developing a positive culture.

> If you foster relations. If you get out into the hallways, you go for lunch, coffee, you chat to colleagues, you're more inclined to hear about what they're up against and you're more inclined to be able to sometimes simply offer a reminder that I'm not actually surveilling you in that way [lol], right? [That] maybe we're getting some of that from the very top, but that doesn't mean that we have to do it that way. (Greg, #2, p. 8)

In addition to developing solid collegial relationships, it's also important to have close critical friends. Greg gave an example where conversation with one such friend helped him to clarify his thinking while reflecting on another aspect of the associate deanship.

> I had said to him 'you know, I really think that there is something structural here, that no matter how collegial, how transparent, how friendly, how faculty-oriented a faculty member might be … once they move into an administrative position lots of things change, including simply who they hang out with on a daily basis, who they begin to socialize with.' (Greg, #2, p. 9)

He notes that once in such a position there are opportunities and obligations to meet with other administrators across campus and at other universities, whether they are directors, associate deans, deans, or VPs.

> They all have different sorts of administrative agendas, you're becoming friendly with them … and so you begin to develop, just through the structure, an allegiance or a loyalty to them as people but also to their larger administrative agendas. And sometimes those are in direct opposition to those of faculty members. (Greg, #2, p. 10)

Close critical friends are important for helping one to identify and resist when one is in these situations – but also

> it is about [maintaining] a constant engagement with the interests of [one's] faculty and expressing those in the larger administrative moments so that you're perceived, in effect, as a faculty associate dean as opposed to an administrative associate dean. Um, in both camps, so to speak.
>
> [However], there's also an important bridging that has to happen, because the messages go both ways …
>
> If I had to say, or choose, I'd say that I'm a faculty associate dean first … but in order to be that, you still have to create the conditions in the other administrative areas where people will listen to you. And that you can express [those interests] in a way that is collegial and respectful, even if it is highly critical, and that they might hear you, might then accommodate the peculiarities of your individual faculty. (Greg, #2, p. 10)

The Busyness and Business of Professing and Administering

Greg reflected on his experiences of teaching as a professor, and spoke of the "syllabus" versus the "syllabus in action" (Greg, #2, p. 13). He put his heart and soul, his whole academic self, into the creation of his syllabi (PIA, Appendix F, Figure 10).

> I was so committed … [to] developing the course syllabi. I had colleagues who would just whip those things off [snap!] … I would work on those things, like they were a novel. And they were, for me they were always an argument. This is how I'd lead students into this conversation …

> I'd put it together after all sorts of research on the articles that would support these things best – and so I've written in here [PIA] 'man, this will never be right' … and that's supposed to be me pulling my hair out [lol]. I'm known for sitting at my desk doing this [leaning on hands, pushing hair up] [lol], and stacks of books … and I would get readings … and I would just have them all over the place … that's my kitchen ... and it would just never feel right, never feel right, never feel right …
>
> [I'm] trying to make sense of the madness, and feeling mad in the process, in both senses of the word. You know, angry, because it's taking me so long, but also going crazy because 'there's no way I can do this, it's impossible' …
>
> And then I'd put it together, and go into class, and from the very first moment, it's working … You go into class, and immediately the great conversations start to happen … Everything's great. I'm really happy with the syllabus … when somebody works so hard at something, invariably [lol], it's in pretty good shape … So the syllabus in action is what I *really* enjoyed. Reaping the fruits of one's labour, the labour wasn't all that enjoyable. (Greg, #2, pp. 12-13)

Greg spoke of other aspects of his professorial work (PIA, Appendix F, Figure 11), such as research, reading, writing, being part of some reading circles, going to conferences, and preparing for conferences. He noted, however, that

> I've left out … committees. I would go. But they were always optional, from my point of view, even if not from the administrative point of view. So, I would go, and if I went, I would make a contribution … but that was always a little bit on the side, and certainly the way I was thinking about my week, my month, was this [PIA]. (Greg, #2, p. 14)

With respect to work as an administrator, however, "I'm just inundated with meeting after meeting after meeting, and always faculty, administrative, student problems to solve – and one after the other …" (Greg, #2, p. 16).

In addition to meetings, as an administrator "there's a ridiculous amount of paperwork. Trivial, not so trivial, it's always there, so it doesn't matter from a good day to a not so good day, there's stacks of it [PIA]" (Greg, #3, p. 7). Greg's illustration

shows the stacks of paper equally high on a good day and a not so good day (PIA, Appendix F, Figure 12).

> This is supposed to be … me in motion … with the documents either in or out. But I wouldn't have much time to be in motion … on a not so good day [because] the entire day is booked solid … If I've got five minutes I'm scrambling to get one piece of paper from the in pile to the out pile … On the good days, maybe I've got only thing scheduled … the chair of a defense or something. That would be a particularly good day … those things are … enjoyable … And … because it's a good day … there will be three or four pleasant interruptions from my colleagues … or students … There is something great about having an open door policy and having people come in and then leaving more or less satisfied. (Greg, #3, pp. 7-8)

As an administrator, especially, Greg spoke about and illustrated the importance of developing a habit of intentionally getting into the hallways and away from his piles of papers (PIA, Appendix F, Figure 13).

> Sometimes, even if I don't want a coffee, it's just important to get up and go for a walk. Physically and mentally important to do that … I will do it on my own [or] I will sometimes … [contact] somebody and … [invite] them along … So that works nicely to connect with issues, the buzz of the faculty, or sometimes … just a nice collegial friendly chat and a walk.
>
> Invariably I'll see somebody along the way …your students or [colleagues] … just seeing you as a daily presence … and [they] speak to you differently than they would in a classroom or a boardroom … it is a nice way to remove the façade of titles and just connect with people … on a more egalitarian basis …
>
> The worst thing that an administrator could do is cloister themselves into that office. (Greg, #3, pp. 10-12)

Lunch meetings are another way that Greg navigates the administrative busyness and stays connected to colleagues.

> I value those lunch meetings … but I imagined that would be my break in the day, and that I might actually use it to balance my life up a bit by going to the gym quickly … I spend a good chunk of them reading … and many others … at the faculty club, talking to somebody … It might be just to touch base … keeping in touch with hallway talk and being responsive to our faculty members. (Greg, #3, p. 8)

With respect to leadership within the office, Greg was respectfully hands on. He "bided" his time and wanted to learn in detail the processes and the roles of staff. He paid attention to their needs and perspectives and together they improved the office's efficiency. Most importantly, however, he paid attention to the culture.

> People have seen a change … in terms of the climate of that office … A general change to the culture, which was 'we're here in a supportive capacity. Which means people come in, we are going to help them out … [It] takes time … [and] it depended on the trust relationship with the support staff … Them trusting that I wasn't out to get them but rather wanted to tap into their expertise … [and] that they'd be supported. (Greg, #3, pp. 5-6)

Part of the culture for Greg is derived from leaders' modeling, but it works in both directions, and a positive or a negative self-perpetuating force can develop.

> I'm not an unfriendly guy. I think that the minute I walked in … people recognized that right away … I think [demonstrating] 'this is how I'm going to be in this space' … probably says something to [others] … Of course, the other direction woks too. We have … the kindest, most pleasant … assistant … So I learned a fair bit too from the way she models interactions with students and [others] … People begin to feed on one another … and if there's a positive vibe, I think that amplifies itself too. (Greg, #3, p. 7)

Those positive vibrations, the chords Greg likes to "pick away at," have a profound importance and impact in his work life – on his students, colleagues, and coworkers – in addition to his home life.

Big Ideas in Greg's Story

For Greg, providing support to others by being central to the establishment of environments that facilitate the achievement of mutual goals – especially deep or emancipatory learning - is what it's all about. Such an environment has a high degree of freedom and openness, has people with shared interests who are close and care about

each other, and allows for appropriate balance enabling healthy and peaceful engagement. Greg is purposefully attentive to his self – it is necessary for him to live a healthy, calm, kind, and welcoming life – and his father as well as some past experiences were instrumental in him learning the need for appropriate boundaries and balance. This attention and care for self is necessary in order for Greg to support others through modeling desirable community values and otherwise cultivating a desirable environment.

Greg has a life-long history of taking opportunities that present themselves and working hard and being highly committed once taking those roles or activities on. Often opportunities have appeared by chance, but his openness to others and to uncharted paths is a critical part of opportunities arising. Additionally, especially once Greg was engaged in higher education, *the role of others in asking* him to consider various opportunities was crucial to his path that developed – especially when combined with his propensity to "step up" when needed. In the role of professor and as an academic administrator, a central goal of Greg's is to create an environment within which students are more likely to encounter teaching-learning experiences that are true life altering awakenings – perhaps in ways small or large – like the experience he had during his Master's program.

An environment such as this requires support for, and defense of, academic freedom that helps individual professors create and respond to opportunities that might light an enlightenment spark in their students. In addition to the needs of individual professors, Greg is acutely cognizant of being responsive to the needs of the faculty as a whole and the corresponding obligation for him to speak out clearly on behalf of his faculty when both larger and smaller, more personal, administrative moments present themselves. Greg is, therefore, intentional about building relationships and listening to

colleagues. He aims to be, and to be seen to be, a "faculty" associate dean first – and an "administrative" associate dean second – so Greg finds it very important to get out into the hallways and stay connected to the faculty "buzz."

Greg's family, his family cottage, his music, and his enjoyment of physical activity all play a role in ensuring that he maintains life balance and can therefore sustain a high level of commitment to his work. And although they play that role, it's important to note that in actuality it is flipped. Greg's work, though immensely impactful and crucially important for individuals within the university and for society at large, is now a piece of his life that enables and supports the other parts of his life too.

Addendum

I need to thank Greg for helping me to really "get into the swing" of narrative research – for enabling me to hear and feel the "music" and enjoy the collegial conversations inherent to my research in new ways. Greg, at the conclusion of our formal time together, expressed gratitude.

> I find it very helpful … to have had these conversations with you, and sort of think through [matters] a bit … I don't have a sense that we've neglected much. Actually, I have a sense that you've helped bring out a bit that I might have neglected if I was just sitting here talking to myself. (Greg, #3, p. 15)

This exemplifies Greg's positive attitude and graciousness that is both contagious and noteworthy – an important lesson for me with regard to leadership, collegiality, and teaching. Finally, I cannot adequately find the words to thank Greg for his generosity with his time during a period that was extraordinarily busy for him and for his openness with a wide range of experiences, not all of which are reflected here but are most certainly carried forward with me personally and professionally.

Part Five: Exiting the Field through Narrative Research with Gwen

Gwen was the final participant in my study. After about a year and a half of being in the field I was having mixed emotions. I was excited to move to the next stage of research - to write about and make sense of all the wonderful experiences I had had and stories I had heard. I also, however, did not want those experiences to end. So I savoured our conversations and dreamed a bit about what research I would like to work on next, such as the experiences of: Deans across faculties; faculty members during chair transitions; mature graduate students who have families and jobs; immigrant, first generation, and Indigenous undergraduate students; and even senior executives of multi-national corporations. For now, though, I had much to learn from Gwen.

Getting to Know Gwen

Gwen began her story not with sources of support but, rather, with what things were like before and after an important event in her life, which was having children. Gwen drew a cornucopia for her PIA and was thinking in terms of the blessings in her life (Appendix F, Figure 14).

> Prior to [having children] I think there were blessings, that life was full, that I had focus. It was largely on friends, family, achievement, and academics. After, it was not replacement of those things, but extension to them. Having children added perspective, a lens that really added a lot of joy, a lot of humility [lol], and possibilities. And perhaps, well it sounds trite, but just a sense of what's really important in life. (Gwen, #1, p. 2)

She connected this important event to something else that is important in her life, which is home. For Gwen, home has changed over time from her childhood home to "university residence, living in houses with friends, … then marriage and children, being a single parent, … [and] for the last [few] years it is actually back to the things that I

really value, and think should be part of what home means" (Gwen, #1, p. 2). Gwen's early and current experiences of home come closest to her ideal, which includes

> security, a sense of warmth and acceptance, … a place that you can be informal. Because a lot of the work life, … there's a lot of formality, … so that can fall away. Loving accountability, where you are accountable to and for other people. And a place for planning. That's where you have foundational values … you PLAN life things … It is just acceptance. It's a place where trial and error works. You can have bad days and good days. A whole lot is o.k. in that place. (Gwen, #1, p. 11; PIA)

Gwen contrasted this ideal home life with the reality of work as a dean or associate dean, where one isn't allowed bad days in the same way.

> I think you're not [allowed bad days]. I think you shouldn't be. Although I would refine that to say that there is a responsibility to be positive - to present the best, see the best, in people, in possibilities, and to learn how to manage your own bad days. Being human, you're going to have them. Bad things happen. We can be disappointed in ourselves sometimes, but also in some [other] people [who] … do things that are difficult to understand. But that kind of disappointment can't be reflected because it will just spread.
>
> So … [you] shouldn't really have the option, apart from a VERY small number of trusted colleagues, to let the negative stuff show. I wouldn't suggest an administrator should out and out fib, but [one should] really portray possibilities and optimism and deal with the other stuff. (Gwen, #1, pp. 11-12)

Despite the different realities and responsibilities between work and home environments, the relationships developed through work can nonetheless be very deep and meaningful.

> In many cases I think the [work] relationships are very powerful, very reciprocal, very positive … [and you] can become a group of very dear friends … But I think the accountabilities truly are such that the processes have to be different … [because] there are boundaries that should be there when it is a big responsibility for a lot of people that you hold. (Gwen, #1, p. 12)

Gwen's Early Life

For Gwen, home is a place where values are instilled. Growing up, there was a focus on "work ethic, achievement in setting goals and reaching them, … a sense of the value of education, which … maybe has more sway than one realizes at the time" (Gwen, #1, p. 3). She recalled, even at a very early age,

> wanting to bring forward success stories to my parents. So, if there were good grades, or learning to read even, way back, it was important that they know about that … They weren't very, um, gushy people, so it wasn't that a big fuss was made or that rewards were given, but just the fact that they appreciated it. (Gwen, #1, p. 3)

Gwen's early home environment was situated in a small town, which she looks back on fondly. "We had the lake all summer, everyone had opportunities for sports, for extra-curricular things, there was always room for people who wanted to do things there … I think it was a very rich way to grow up" (Gwen, #1, p. 5).

The small town didn't, however, have "a lot of opportunity for diverse experiences" (Gwen, #2, p. 2). Gwen was motivated to take whatever opportunities there were "to do different things, to push the boundaries" (Gwen, #2, p. 2). A chance to travel and attend a youth leadership camp "was one of the first times I remember new doors opening, new thoughts opening, because it ended up being really interesting – meeting new people – and [I remember] thinking 'well, that worked out alright!'" (Gwen, #2, p. 2). For Gwen, even though there were expectations to go to university, "it wasn't familiar in the immediate context" (Gwen, #2, p. 2). So pushing boundaries and having success when trying new things were "confidence builders … that start to frame how you think about moving on, academically and otherwise" (Gwen, #2, p. 2).

Moving on – To University

At university Gwen was diligent in her studies, having earned a scholarship and needing to maintain high grades for it to continue. She also worked in various jobs during the summer months, throughout the school year, and after finishing her first degree. In addition to the serious commitment and responsibility she attached to her studies, for Gwen, going to university also meant taking risks. This risk-taking resulted in new experiences and insights that would play a formative role in who she would become and what her priorities would be.

> I did go to [a small university] for undergrad, and that was the next level [of risk] … A new friend base, a new set of experiences, a real risk in terms of being more or less on my own … So I did things like volunteer for Big Brothers and Sisters, which was, I mean, … a lot of the children were Aboriginal children who had tough stories. That whole world was pretty new to me … I had really, the first that I was aware of, a sense of insights to minority groups …
>
> [It was also] the first time I had really had friendships with men [and with] fellow students who were gay, and kind of started to see what their lives were like. So those were doors opening, diversity doors, … I guess that's a prerequisite to taking risks meaningfully. (Gwen, #2, p. 3)

One opportunity, and risk, that Gwen took while at university was traveling more extensively one summer, internationally, by backpacking with a friend.

> That [experience] was VERY important too, seeing diversity of politics and wealth and culture. Everything that you would expect … We hitch hiked, we camped, it was not five star by any means … And we were in situations at times where we possibly were in danger, you know, sleeping on a beach is never a good idea [lol] … We met relatives … so a little bit of a sense of … your history. (Gwen, #2, p. 4)

A less positive part of this travel experience, though, was an incident that Gwen recounted where she gained insight into the discriminatory treatment that some people endure.

> We were traveling … and met a couple of fellows that were just really charming and good looking … [However], early on, we suddenly realized they were very racist, and didn't continue the friendship. But it was almost a – stunning realization. (Gwen, #2, p. 5)

First Work Experiences

Gwen often worked with children and as a lifeguard in the summers. But one summer she attained employment in her first professional setting. She worked closely with one of the senior employees, who had a university degree. It turned out, however, that he

> was someone that I actually didn't end up having respect for. He wasn't a very nice person – but he also didn't do his job well, at all … There was a moment of reckoning, where you realize that education itself gets you certain places but it doesn't make you either intelligent or even competent. (Gwen, #2, pp. 3-4)

Fortunately, Gwen had a much better work experience when she was full time elsewhere after finishing her degree. One of the most senior employees in this new environment was someone Gwen admired. He, for example, consulted genuinely with others and paid attention to each person's individual well-being. He was able to make beneficial changes in how things were done. "He was not my direct supervisor, [but I remember] thinking at the time that 'if you want to be able to make change, you have to do it from the inside – and to be in a position such as his, you needed a Master's degree'" (Gwen, #2, p. 7).

Another key work experience for Gwen was gained during the latter years of studying for her first degree. As an undergrad student, she had an opportunity to work for a new professor on a research project.

> She was lovely and smart and – warm. And I really wanted to be like her [lol]. I remember that. And she was very kind. I remember graduating, and she wrote me a little card. It's funny. You do remember those things … And there weren't too many women who were professors …

> She was doing work on early childhood play, and I did work fairly closely with her, although I was in a data gathering position and she was obviously the lead in the research. She was very positive in terms of being a mentor. She wasn't critical. She … took time to explain why certain things were important. She would give me certain things to read … It was … encouraging. Very, very positive. I loved the way she dealt with children. I loved the way she dealt with parents …
>
> She also said 'you should go back to school.' (Gwen, #2, pp. 8-9)

This rich early experience with research, working side by side with a new and encouraging professor, was a big help for Gwen to decide to take a rather big risk and return to university.

Back to University

Gwen was nervous about going back to university. She had to continue in undergraduate studies before being eligible to apply for a Master's program, so she had to move to another city "on spec. [It] was uncomfortable but necessary" (Gwen, #2, p. 9). Once there, Gwen found a good cohort of five other women she lived with in residence "who were in law school, nursing, all in different areas, and that was grand. I learned a lot more. In other ways, they were all taking a risk too" (Gwen, #2, p. 9).

Gwen continued to work hard and do well in her studies and, luckily, "a couple of profs were incredible" (Gwen, #2, p. 9).

> One in particular … he was young … and he was just good with everyone … [We had] a small class, and we all – bonded. We all really appreciated him, he was such a good teacher, he was just smart but easy to be with … In fact, when that year ended, … with his wife we arranged for a surprise, the whole class, at his home [lol] …
>
> And then one of the others ended up being my Master's thesis supervisor … He was a soft spoken, thoughtful kind of guy … a role model too. (Gwen, #2, pp. 10-11)

With the support of her professors Gwen was accepted for graduate studies. Her intent was to go back to work after getting a Master's degree, hopefully in a higher level position where she could contribute to positive change. Instead, "the Ph.D. came about, not accidentally, but in a rolling way. Finishing the Master's, wanting to keep the momentum going … I had certainly never thought about doing a Ph.D. when entering the Master's program" (Gwen, #2, pp. 11-12).

For Ph.D. studies Gwen moved to another university that was known for having a good program in her area of interest. There she had funding and worked as a research assistant.

> I worked for a professor … as an R.A., just assigned, I think somewhat luck of the draw. And I [became] really interested in his research and what he was doing [with children] … I found out that I really enjoyed the research part – more than I thought I would … so I decided to switch [programs] ... because I wanted to work with children and that seemed to have the best combination of circumstances. (Gwen, #2, pp. 12-13)

Gwen had to take an extra year of graduate classes to switch programs but it led to her R.A. supervisor becoming her dissertation supervisor. "Being part of his team was the tipping point in this [academic] lifestyle as well as [in determining my] area [of research]" (Gwen, #2, p. 13).

The Professorship

Gwen took another risk when beginning her professorial career. Having always intended to go back to professional work and make a difference in the community outside of the university environment, "the academic life, … until probably the very last year prior [to graduation], had never been on the wish list or expectation list – at all" (Gwen, #2, p. 13). Nearing graduation, Gwen received a very good full time job offer. She also, however, received an offer to teach as a sessional lecturer. "That was very difficult, …

the sessional was certainly less secure, but … I loved the teaching … I had taught a course before this, and I liked the contact with research, I liked the people and the context" (Gwen, #2, p. 13). Not too long after taking the sessional appointment a position in her area opened up and, although the search was broad, Gwen ended up being the successful candidate.

> It was a time when there was a lot of movement toward bringing in people from other places. They had really tried to find someone else … from afar … [lol] but luckily that didn't work out … So really every step of the way is happenstance, in some ways … Yes, definitely hard work. Definitely good luck, at times. (Gwen, #1, p. 8)

This was also the time when children came into Gwen's life. "[It was] my very first year … and this then becomes a new world in terms of responsibilities – and just orientation" (Gwen, #1, p. 8). Although Gwen felt blessed and fortunate to have a job that was more flexible than many others, it was certainly also a professional risk.

> I can remember going to my department chair thinking 'Oh, man, I'm just new and I have to tell him.' Times weren't quite the way they are now, either, so there weren't as many women in these positions. I was probably legitimately concerned in the big picture, but certainly was never made to feel guilty or anything … The chair was great [and colleagues too] … I had no reason to be concerned, in the end. (Gwen, #1, p. 9)

There were other women on faculty in Gwen's area, but they hadn't had children, "so this was kind of an anomaly. I was kind of an anomaly … My students had a baby shower! [lol]" (Gwen, #1, p. 9). After having children, Gwen continued to bring them into her academic life as much as possible.

> If I could do ANYTHING and have [my children] with me, that would be the preference … I can certainly remember, when my first was born, coming in for meetings … in a boardroom, … having one of those little sheepskin [snuggies], … and she'd be sleeping and we'd be having a meeting. I know [my children] came and spoke to [my classes] … They would come in with me to my office … it probably was a little outside the

> lines. The students loved it, and remembered a lot of things. [They] talked about it years after [when] I would meet them. (Gwen, #1, p. 16)

Well into her professorial career, Gwen was enjoying it very much. "Very simply, the part that I loved the most – the research came second – was teaching … I loved it. I loved walking in. I loved planning. And, typically, there was a very good reciprocity with the students" (Gwen, #2, p. 13). Whether the classes were large or small, lecture or seminar, she enjoyed them all. One part of the job that Gwen didn't enjoy, however, was when situations would arise from time to time in some meetings where individual agendas could compete for prominence.

> The kind of situation I liked least would be around a table where you had people that brought a lot of self-interest and the discussions that became competitive and not very inspiring … Many meetings were good. But these were the circumstances where … [maybe it wasn't about] the good of the program. (Gwen, #2, p. 15)

As a professor Gwen also had the opportunity, prior to becoming an associate dean, for formal leadership in coordinating academic areas and, of course, research groups. She also enjoyed organizing social events "because it was usually to do with something celebratory" (Gwen, #2, p. 16).

Becoming an Academic Administrator

As an associate dean, Gwen found that support came from a lot of different places – but students were a particularly important source.

> Without question the student body provides a whole lot of support and incentive for just about everything, if you think of it as foundational. The kinds of programs that are needed, the kinds of advisors that are needed. There are so many of the academic responsibilities that are just core … but what the students give back is immeasurable, really, undergrads as well. (Gwen, #3, p. 6)

Having a variety of sources for support was important because the move into an associate dean's role was initially very challenging. "I came into the position really quite terrified because it was a large and important unit and I felt very unprepared … It was [also] at the time somewhat dysfunctional, which made it harder and harder to predict what each day might bring" (Gwen, #3, pp. 6-7).

Though difficult, Gwen took time to watch and learn and to get "to know personalities and histories of the individuals in that office, each of whom did very different kinds of work" (Gwen, #3, p. 7). She also developed a strong team for implementing the changes that were being made.

> One of the fellows … still refers to that as 'the Camelot' experience of his career because there was a core group of us who made some changes, including personnel changes, and had a very, very solid professional relationship at the time … [We accomplished] positive change beyond what was expected … It was a story of people and of a collective energy that could do more than had been done [before]. (Gwen, #3, p. 7)

The team consisted of both faculty, as assistant deans at the time, and professional staff. One of the biggest changes they had to implement was a revised B.Ed. program.

> Change hit squarely on our office … [and] the new B.Ed. program … was a dramatic change … We had to change [a large number] of [individual student] programs in three or four months and everyone said it couldn't be done. And we did it. Of course, it was a big 'we' … While the decisions may have been made somewhere else, often we were on the committees, … but the actual work, the translation work and the meeting with students, … happened on our deck. (Gwen, pp. 7-8)

The program changes were broad and complex - and successful. The success became increasingly noticeable over time. "It was [a few] years … it wasn't a long time … but [among] the successes would have been building a team across everyone in the office that became more and more cohesive … [and] happier. Happier coming to work every day" (Gwen, #3, pp. 8-9). She noted, however, that there were failures, too.

> The failures, … probably at the outset, there were all kinds of missteps – missteps involving trust – because it was not a healthy environment and people didn't keep secrets. So I had to learn the hard way to be careful what was said or implied. But some changes had to happen and they were painful and necessary, so you kind of get through those. (Gwen, p. 8)

Following the associate dean position, Gwen moved into another role working closely with the dean.

> [It] was my dream job … [He was] an absolute prince. I hadn't known him very well at all before but we became very good – well, very good friends … We had the same values and the same notions [yet] we operationalized our processes quite differently … He was just stellar. Just an excellent person – and he was fun! About once a week he would fire me [lol] or he would leave and say 'I've lost interest, you're the dean.' He was just a great teacher. And I did not ever want his job. (Gwen, p. 9)

Fundamentally important to their excellent working relationship were the values and beliefs they shared. For example,

> most important to me, and I know to him, is/was that people are treated well. And that hadn't always happened [previously]. People in the dean's support group were uplifted when he started because they were respected, and considered, and treated so well. As were faculty members …
>
> Then, I would say the importance of the profession … We valued professions and the impact, really, in society that they could have … That broad view coloured the way decisions were made and what decisions were taken and taken up.
>
> We both valued humour, or at least not taking ourselves too seriously … He was very humble. I hope I am. He never wanted, or needed, the glory. It was making other people look good. I love that. I think that's what leadership should encompass. Making other people the best they can be. (Gwen, #3, p. 10)

Being Dean

After a few years, Gwen moved into the role of dean. "[The Dean] asked me to go for coffee one day … and he said that he had been recruited to [another position] and assumed and hoped I would take the … acting dean position" (Gwen, #3, p. 9). Initially she said no, but she was asked to take a couple of days to think about it. Though the roles were very different, it was "logical" and natural for the person in Gwen's position to take over, so she agreed. When it came time to apply, Gwen did so, and with the support of internal and external relationships she had built, was the successful candidate.

Gwen felt fortunate for a great deal of support she received as Dean. In particular, the president and provost were key.

> I had come to the deanship very close to the time of the new presidential appointment, which was very exciting. Lots of hope … there was inspiration there … [The president] really appreciated the research successes in our faculty and it was a higher level recognition type of support. Where the main support came was from our provost ... who really noticed what our faculty was doing. (Gwen, #3, p. 1)

This support didn't come from nowhere, however. Gwen had "put effort into showing what we were doing" (Gwen, #3, p. 1). She had been able to bring her faculty's success stories forward effectively – and this

> translated into pragmatic support … We had research success, we had lots of community impacts of the kind that the university values, …and those translated into, frankly, opportunities and funding. We had national research funding coming in. We ended up accessing university funding. So it was a very, very catalytic time for the faculty and I think the top leadership contributed to that in very, very important ways. (Gwen, #3, pp. 1-2)

Gwen found support also among her fellow deans with whom she worked collaboratively and collegially. For example, when one of her faculty's specialized programs that supports minority and at-risk students was initiating an important high

profile campus event, Gwen was able to secure funding from each of the other colleges. She also appreciated her faculty colleagues, both faculty members in general as well as those who were part of the leadership team.

> I think I was very fortunate because I'd been [at the university] quite some time [and] had many pre-existing relationships. Fortunately most were positive. Knowing everyone coming into the position can go either way. So there's a period of time where you negotiate and navigate. But it did work well and allowed efficiencies – allowed things to happen because I knew people and could speak with department chairs and cajole, reason, move things along perhaps more quickly than otherwise. (Gwen, #3, p. 2)

Beyond the university, Gwen received or, more accurately, earned support in a variety of places. She noted a variety of professional associations, government ministries, deans at other universities, research organizations, and community groups that contributed in a number of ways. Gwen highlighted, however, the support of Indigenous communities that she received from even before her very first day as Dean. Gwen knew community members and Elders from being a part of the initiation of academically and culturally supportive programming within her faculty.

> So by the time I came to apply to be Dean there were friends to call for advice and friends to provide support … In fact, … [some] Elders … and a few others came the day of my public talk. Essentially it was to wish me luck, but [we had] an honour song and a smudge and I literally walked from that room in to do the public talk …So it was one of those moments where you think 'Okay, if I'm going to do this job, what are my priorities?' … It was a huge honour … [Also] a recognition that what you do all along the journey is part of both who you are as a leader [and] what doors can open for you to do better as a leader. (Gwen, #3, pp. 3-4)

Alumni and donors are the final groups discussed that provided support to Gwen as the Dean. This "advancement" area was one that was experienced much more in the position of dean than when in other positions – and was a responsibility that could be full time just by itself. "Thanks to some fantastic staff members in alumni relations, and

really working closely with them, we changed the format – we changed a whole lot of things – and we did a whole lot of personal invitations" (Gwen, #3, p. 4). The events expanded in size quickly and even had to change venues. For Gwen this was an important responsibility for many reasons, not only for raising donations, but also for

> building those opportunities as a way for the faculty as an entity to welcome people back. Then, all that that can do as far as PR, certainly as far as support in terms of donors. I mean, that happens, but it's not why you do it. It really isn't … It just brings good people together and keeps the profession and the faculty bridged. (Gwen, #3, p. 4)

In addition to large alumni events, Gwen talked about the deep relationships she developed with numerous individual donors. "The people that you meet along the way with intentionality or completely by accident can become true friends of the faculty through relationship with a leader" (Gwen, #3, p. 5). One example she gave was where she met a man who was a graduate of a different faculty but whose wife had had a connection to Gwen's faculty.

> He was still very much in mourning and was really sad because she had a collection of … books and she had asked him to donate them … He had called two or three places and no one wanted them. He was … a fun person and we just started talking and I said … 'maybe we could get together.' Anyway, we were happy to take the donation in the library …
>
> So we met, he came over a few times, and I [continued to] meet with him regularly. As he got ill, I think I was the last person to see him [at the hospital] - to see him alive. But it was a relationship … There is a discomfort in putting the two parts together but, in fact, that is the way things go. And as he used to say 'This is what I want to do … You're making me happy' … So he became, in the end, our largest single donor to the faculty, ever … And he would [ask] 'What is important to you?' (Gwen, #3, p. 5)

For Gwen, this area of "advancement or development can be just framed as bringing really good people together, and appreciating who they are, and just letting stuff happen … [where a relationship with] one beautiful person … just leads to another" (Gwen, #3,

p. 6). And, of course, it underscores why it is fundamental to have someone who is an academic in these types of leadership positions – someone who can answer those questions meaningfully on behalf of their faculty.

To sum up, Gwen said that

> there were new friendships in every arm of the job. And that was a gift. [It was] an incremental process of being with the people you know. Testing ideas. Learning when you are Dean what you don't share with anyone but then having someone you know … as part of a group … who would be a coffee partner to talk through things. So [although] I think relationship building sounds simple, it is really the joy of the work … [It] helps you with the content of the work immeasurably … (Gwen, #3, p. 12)

> With this kind of position, where it is so broad, the opportunities are more that you could possibly handle in their entirety. But the opportunities are spectacular! (Gwen, #3, p. 5)

Big Ideas in Gwen's Story

For Gwen, maintaining a focus on the positives and possibilities in both people and situations is crucial. From a young age Gwen wanted to, and did, work with children. Having her own children extended the blessings in her life – but also deepened and reinforced this commitment to being consciously attentive to positives and possibilities. Taking meaningful risks, strategically, as opportunities arose was important for furthering a sense of self-efficacy beyond her initial home and local community. Some risks, for example, related to travel, work, and university experiences, which resulted in a broadening of her interests beyond the well-being of children to other at-risk and, often, socially marginalized groups.

Gwen recognized early in her career, from observations of professional role models, that both cultural and systemic functional change was often needed in order for individuals to routinely be treated well and respected within her work environments. She

also realized that one could only make the types of positive changes necessary if one was in a position to make such changes. This meant, at the time, pursuing a Master's degree, which eventually led – with the encouragement and support of other academic role models - to doctoral studies. It also meant that Gwen, once in the academy, was open to senior academic administrative opportunities when they arose. In these positions, Gwen carried forward values and lessons from her earlier career-life experiences. For example, as Associate Dean, with the support of a small group of other leaders, she changed the culture and the functioning of the office to the benefit of students and staff alike. As Dean, for example, again with the support of other organizational leaders, Gwen established leading edge programs and services for at-risk students and other community members.

Gwen's focus on positives and possibilities does not, however, mean a neglect of responsibilities or an absence of accountability. It is, in fact, quite the opposite. It is fundamentally important for her that people are treated well, respected, encouraged, and supported. This type of treatment creates an environment that is more enjoyable, within which people can regularly interact collegially, do their jobs well, and rise to the occasion when necessary. However, being human, failures will happen from time to time – and when they do, handling them fairly and sensitively is important in order to avoid the unnecessary spread of negativity. Intrinsic hard work, in academic, professional, and personal matters, is a hallmark of Gwen's career-life experiences and is, for her, a part of one's professionalism that supports individual and organizational accountability. Celebration of individual, group, and organizational success is also a part of maintaining a supportive and accountable cultural environment.

Addendum

I need to thank Gwen whole heartedly for agreeing to share with me her personal and professional stories, perspectives, and wisdom. Gwen went to great lengths to ensure we could meet at appropriate intervals so that I could complete my field work on schedule and she spent significant time preparing for, and reflecting upon, our interviews. It was invaluable to be able to include someone whose career experience included a deanship. More than that, however, Gwen's conscious focus on positivity and possibilities could not have been a more perfect way for me to leave my first foray into the field. While Gwen provided many examples of mentors and role models she had at different points in her life, it is obvious that Gwen has been a mentor to many as well. I know she has become one of mine. Thank you!

Part Six: Concluding the Narrative Analyses

My trust in the hermeneutical process of narrative and interpretive inquiry was well placed. Although narrative analysis never truly "ends," by the conclusion of the interviews with participants I was no longer the nervous novice narrative researcher that I was when I took my first tentative step for my initial interview with Jennifer. It was not that no nerves were involved prior to or during interviews toward the end. Rather, the nerves began to come from a more positive place – that of excitement and anticipation instead of fear and doubt. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my participants, who helped me become a better scholar and helped me learn how to be a narrative and interpretive researcher.

The narrative accounts that resulted from participant interviews, as hopefully the reader will agree, are "well put together." Each one stands alone as a narrative analysis, inclusive of the big ideas found within and the interpretation I have offered but open to the reader's interpretation and affectation. The first part of my narrative aggregate inquiry method was this narrative analysis through the co-creation of each narrative account, so in the chapter that follows I move to the second part of my method. That is, I engage in the analysis of narratives by looking across the stories and, in particular, the big ideas that were found.

Chapter Five: Reflecting on Experiences in the Field

Oh, it's such a perfect day / I'm glad I spent it with you /
Oh, such a perfect day / You just keep me hanging on [וו]...[28]

It was a great privilege to engage in narrative research with these five individuals and a great honour to have their trust placed in me that I would tend to their stories carefully and faithfully. There was also, as I found while writing during my sabbatical, a great deal of trepidation on my part – especially with respect to creating stories that were reflective of the wonderful and deep conversations we had within the confines of a dissertation. I was enmeshed within the complexities of, and an almost desperate desire for, doing justice to participants' stories and the days we had spent together. Though confident in my writing, I found myself hesitant to send out each draft story (even after re-reading and editing numerous times) and anxious to hear feedback from each participant. Having patience at this step was a challenge, as self-doubt and a little fear would sometimes knock at my door. As the story writing process progressed, positive feedback from my supervisory committee members and participants was encouraging and helped to quiet such unwelcome (but necessary) intrusions a bit.

None of this was, truthfully, a great surprise. Challenges were expected and, actually, desired. One of the reasons I originally pursued narrative inquiry, other than its fit for my topic of interest, was that I recognized it would be a way to stretch myself personally, professionally, and academically given my earlier advanced studies in a predominantly positivist discipline. And, though the encouraging feedback from my supervisory committee members was much appreciated, helpful, and stress-reducing,

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[28] Lou Reed (1972) *Perfect Day*, Verse three. As "tweeted" following Reed's death by Cardinal Ravasi, the Vatican's culture minister. Reported by Philip Pullella in *The Globe and Mail*, Tuesday, October 29, 2013.

their support had always been there. What was a surprise for me, however, is reflected (embarrassingly) in the following exchange during one of the sessions with Gwen:

DS: Who knew research could be so much fun?

Gwen: Who knew indeed? (Gwen, #2, pp. 18-19)

Gwen spoke those words with a not-quite-suppressed smile. Throughout all the conversational interviews with all the participants there was much humour and laughter. It struck me, first, that I did not have that kind of fun with the substance or processes of research in economics and, importantly (or thankfully or finally), my long-ago decision to switch academic fields was confirmed as the proper thing to have done. Second, it struck me that my every day professional work was not typically peppered with laughter and enjoyment the way my educational field research had been. I therefore hope to continue, and build upon, this academic work. Regardless, I plan to pay more concerted attention to this relational aspect of organizational culture. As Greg put it,

> I am serious about the [work] I do and about the impact that I have on students and colleagues and support staff – [but my past] has helped me maintain [balance] and a sense of who I want to be, who is most of the time a friendly, smiley fellow. (Greg, #3, p. 13)

During this time, when visiting two of my oldest and dearest friends from my first go-around at university (Greg Morrison and Kaylea Dunn), Kaylea said: "Derek, you were forty-something when you were twenty!" I have always been very serious. I can certainly try to add a little more of the happy, friendly, smiley part – for me and for others.

Beyond such personal learnings, as I moved "out" along the in/out hermeneutical path and reflected further, I found there were two areas demanding attention in order to bring my study "full circle." First, I needed to look across the co-constructed stories in

chapter four (i.e., perform an analysis of the narratives) to seek additional meaning from aggregating the various stories into an analytical whole. This is found in part one below. Next, I needed to reflect on the findings of this analysis of narratives in relation to higher educational administration theory I brought to the study. In other words, were there any implications from the analysis of narratives for higher educational organization theory, higher educational leadership theory, or academic identity theory? A discussion of this is presented in part two below. Finally, in part three, I evaluate the research conducted for this dissertation based upon the criteria set out in narrative and interpretive theory as articulated in chapter two.

Part One: Looking Across the Stories

Earlier I named my particular narrative research method an aggregate narrative inquiry and explained that it involves both narrative analysis (the co-creation of individual narrative accounts) and an analysis of narratives (looking across those stories to gain further insight and understanding). This section attends to the analysis of narratives part of my methodology. That is, I report and elaborate here on the themes that were found by engaging in a hermeneutical process of considering what was common among the big ideas contained within each individual narrative. In addition, some commonalities among the career-life experiences of participants became apparent when looking across the stories more generally, so these are also reported here.

Commonalities among the Big Ideas

The big ideas expressed in the five career-life stories in chapter four can be generally expressed as three themes: Attending to local organizational and broader cultural environments; fostering relationships with others; commitments to foundational ideas and ideals. A discussion of each of these three themes is included below.

Attending to cultural environments. Greg, Deanna, and Gwen all spoke about the need to improve the administrative culture upon taking on their associate dean's role. In all cases this involved earning the trust of office staff and faculty. Greg bided his time at first, becoming hands-on and learning details about received processes. He modelled how he wanted people to engage in this environment, which was about being open, friendly, and helpful for anyone coming to the office and about being supportive of one another. Greg believes that cultural environments can spiral in either a negative or positive way, so he worked toward creating a positive momentum – but he emphasized

that the learnings were bi-directional and spoke very highly about how one of the assistants in his office interacts with students as an example. Deanna wasn't able to bide her time due to constraints imposed by an already approved program implementation schedule. Nonetheless she had a "fantastic" group of people that bonded tightly together, would "go to the ends of the earth" for each other, went above and beyond normal work expectations, and united behind a common cause. They often bonded over shared food – a tradition that Deanna began and others took up readily. Gwen noted the importance of ensuring that "people are treated well" – that they are respected, genuinely listened to, and empowered. Upon assuming the associate deanship, her team also had a formidable program implementation task that others said "couldn't be done" on time. Gwen had to make some difficult personnel decisions initially, but they "worked through" those and developed a close cohesive team that got the job done on time.

The academic environment was another culture that participants consciously tended to as associate deans. Scott referred to this as "removing barriers" so that individuals could more readily pursue and achieve their goals. He was "invited in" to the associate dean's role in large part because of the expectation that he would bring a "curriculum" (or educational philosophy) perspective to the dean's office and one of his major projects was to chair a committee tasked with strengthening the academic program in the face of drastic budget cuts. He noted that this was a time of transition as his university was moving to a more research-intensive focus and his practice-based education faculty colleagues were needing to adapt to the new reality and expectations. In part, this is why Scott's role in helping faculty achieve tenure was so meaningful for him. He also was able to begin a cultural change that led to an improved environment for

Indigenous students. Although Scott's biggest disappointments are related to this cultural change not moving far enough or fast enough during his career, the fact that he was so clearly an early ally in his administrative, teaching, and research activities while occupying formal academic leadership positions has undoubtedly had a significant longer term positive impact and was prescient at the time.

Others, of course, also attended purposefully to their surrounding academic culture. For Greg it is important to be seen in both academic and administrative arenas as "a faculty associate dean first." He is also intentional about being present and available in the building and about being in tune with the faculty's "buzz." One of the main reasons Greg entered academic administration was because of his vocal support for academic autonomy on matters related to university teaching – and, notably, Greg took this stance prominently before having been granted tenure himself. Gwen, beyond her consistent approach that focused on positives and possibilities, led some important and courageous initiatives related to the social and academic environment of her faculty. These initiatives provided academic and personal support for marginalized and at-risk students and facilitated research support for professors – resulting in positive impacts within the faculty, across the university, into the local community, and far beyond. Jennifer, while leading a large academic program renewal, intentionally focused on ensuring all faculty voices would be heard and equally valued – rather than only the loudest or most powerful ones that often tend to be most easily heard. Her committee's process was open, transparent, and followed the direction and principles established by faculty members' formal vote. Jennifer also, as Associate Dean, revised high enrolment core courses to better serve students' needs. As a professor, Jennifer purposely created a

welcoming environment in and around her office to encourage impromptu collegial conversations with both students and faculty – and vehemently disliked any systemic barriers to open, collegial, cooperative, and autonomous academic spaces, such as certain more recent aspects of academic evaluation processes. Deanna entered academic administration in large part because she was always willing "to step up" when needed, to give back to her academic community. Though she enjoyed the administrative work, she didn't have a burning desire or aspiration to climb that ladder – she could "take it or leave it" and "never, ever" wanted to lose her research. As a professor, Deanna was very active in her local academic community taking on, for example, more graduate students than anyone had before. Perhaps this is one reason why, as Associate Dean, Deanna sought out as many opinions as possible, encouraged strenuous debate, assured people that if they disagreed it wasn't something that she'd hold against them, and focused on accommodating as many people's interests as possible.

In addition to their surrounding administrative and academic cultures, participants also impacted external cultural environments. Scott, for example, was among the leadership group in a government initiative, partnered with the teaching profession, that made substantive and holistic changes influencing teachers and teaching for dozens of years – an impact that was initially local but subsequently had regional, national, and international effects. He also worked with local community groups to help them establish programs that the community identified as particular needs. Deanna had, as a prolific writer and researcher, established strong connections with government and school divisions – and she continued to strengthen these connections as Associate Dean, helping out wherever needed, and developing grant-supported research programs when possible

and appropriate. Deanna also spoke in great detail about intentionally becoming more available for her personal and home communities – about giving back – both because it is a part of who she is and because it is the right (socially responsible) thing to do. Jennifer, both as an academic colleague and as an associate dean, participated actively in networks that developed new avenues of publication for female scholars and supported one another in achieving their personal-professional goals. Greg took on administrative responsibilities for the establishment of a research centre based out of his university and through which he worked closely with many prominent members of the local and broader community. He also maintains a strong connection to his home community, which underscores his appreciation for the community within which he works and is a constant reminder of why he is motivated to enact and reinvigorate the values he shares with his faculty colleagues.

Fostering relationships with others. All five participants benefited from positive interventions of others at various points in their career-life experiences and, in turn, make concerted efforts to develop positive relationships with others. Gwen, for example, while acknowledging that sometimes others can disappoint you or their actions can be difficult to understand, maintains a constant focus on the positives and possibilities that others offer. She celebrates their successes in public and works with them on any negative issues in private. Gwen developed a small close-knit group to work on necessary changes as Associate Dean and benefited from an excellent relationship with her Dean as she took on progressively responsible academic administrative roles. She also spoke about the strong relationships she developed with individuals external to her university. Earlier, while Gwen was growing as a student scholar, she benefited from

strong academic role models and mentors that encouraged and enticed her to further pursue her research interests and academia more generally.

Similarly, Scott and Jennifer spoke a great deal about developing strong relationships with committee members for their heavy program renewal efforts – while Deanna spoke about developing open, trusting relationships with colleagues as fundamental to program implementation and Greg developed relationships with board and community members while establishing a research centre. Scott, in addition to the relationships that supported his associate dean role, felt supported by the professional relationships he had with his colleagues throughout his teaching career. In particular, the short time he spent with colleagues in an open teaching environment was instrumental in developing his approach to university leadership, teaching, and scholarship. At the other end of his career, Scott's role in helping others achieve tenure was particularly impactful and rewarding.

For all five people mentors or senior academics intervened at various stages of their student careers, which encouraged and supported their aspirations and helped develop their professional networks. These interventions, of course, happened in different ways. For example, whereas Greg experienced an intellectually transformative enlightenment moment in one of his last master's degree classes, Deanna was at a crossroads considering a return to professional life when she was offered a chance to teach students in a graduate level class. For Jennifer, the kind words in a lunch line from a senior scholar turned into a lifelong deep personal and professional friendship. Scott spoke less about his graduate student experiences but did emphasize the contribution one

of his Ph.D. committee members made to his dissertation research, which had a significant influence on his subsequent career.

Finally, it must be mentioned that not all of the interventions from others were made by academics or were, in isolation, positive. A key moment in Greg's life, for example, was when his normally unassuming father volunteered challenging advice about how to live his life differently. Gwen had a supervisor during her early work period that encouraged her to return to university for graduate studies. She also spoke about the growth in her thinking she experienced when first getting to know diverse groups of fellow students and through travel. Most significant for Gwen was when her own children came into her life, which "extended her blessings" and heightened her sense of what was important in life, and with whom she pushed social boundaries by bringing them with her – including to work – whenever at all possible. All five participants grew up in supportive family environments with parents who valued education, perhaps exemplified best by Deanna's father who would regularly drive his children through campus on trips to the city saying "when you are here … when you are here."

With respect to negative experiences, both Gwen and Deanna had (male) bosses during their early work experiences who were poor role models and had a damaging impact on the work environment (if not also on numerous individuals as well). Gwen and Deanna understood immediately that they didn't want to find themselves stuck in this type of situation permanently – and that this was not the type of leader to be. In both cases this played a role in the decision to continue their education. Similarly, but a little further along her career path, Jennifer also had a male boss that was a poor role model and she ended up feeling responsible for bringing back some stability after his time in the

leadership role ended. Shortly after this experience, having helped others return to a better educational space, she took a leave from work and entered graduate studies. It should also be noted that although Gwen and Jennifer had supportive families, at least one influential family member was skeptical at some point during each person's studies about the need for a woman to pursue formal education to such an extent. In Jennifer's case, it played a role in her initially attending normal school rather than university – but also in her decision at a later stage in her life to return to post-secondary studies for a degree.

Commitments to ideals and ideas. The ways in which these five individuals fostered relationships and attended to various cultural environments in their associate dean roles is a reflection of their academic identities and the parts of their academic identities that each tended to draw upon most often. That is, themes one and two are a reflection of who these individuals are.

Jennifer, for example, was driven by a desire to make the soon-to-be renewed program the best in the country and right on the cutting edge of innovation for her students. This can be understood as a manifestation of her academic identity that tends toward teaching and engaging with students. This tendency, or leaning, was expressed emphatically by Jennifer, "that her life began again" when she was able to take up her teaching role after her administrative appointment. This is not to say that other aspects of her academic identity did not influence her approach to the associate deanship. For example, exposure to and deep engagement with new ideas was, for Jennifer, thrilling – and it was what enticed her to keep progressing through graduate school. Deliberating on these new ideas with other scholars (both students and faculty) – and learning from each

other – in an egalitarian way was what Jennifer enjoyed most about academia. She had an extreme aversion to anything that took away from this as a priority, such as some systemic aspects of academic evaluation processes. This collegial research aspect of Jennifer's academic identity was manifested in her approach to deliberation on program renewal – where she tried to create a space where softer yet thoughtful voices could be heard and equally valued. Academic governance, freedom in teaching and research, and egalitarianism are, therefore, crucial ideals and ideas to which Jennifer was heavily committed and which influenced her approach to the associate deanship.

Scott's academic identity was similarly manifested in his role as Associate Dean. Throughout his professional teaching career, Scott was repeatedly driven back to university studies by a desire or a need "to know more." This carried on in his professorial role where he developed expertise in five different academic areas, edited a number of textbook series, and for many years was a highly respected editor of a top scholarly journal. Scott's academic identity tended towards research – although he strongly identified with teaching as well, which he emphasized on more than one occasion when he said that he never stopped being a teacher. As Associate Dean, Scott was an academic leader at a time when his colleagues, many of whom were professionals and leaned towards field or extension work first, had to make a shift in their academic practice to prioritizing research first. He also brought a "curriculum" (or educational philosophy) perspective into the dean's office and used that lens in his associate deanship role. With respect to the large program renewal effort, a key debate was whether students should have "theory" first and then apply it through practical experiences or have experiential learning first and then explore theory to deepen, challenge, and make explicit

their acquired understandings (Scott was in favour of experience first, which was in line with his commitment to an open educational perspective). One outcome of the program renewal was, despite significant budget challenges, a reduction of one course to faculty members' normal teaching load to acknowledge and allow for the heavier expectations in terms of research related activities. Scott, as a teacher, a professor, and an academic administrator, was collaborative and collegial – always genuinely seeking out others' contributions and thoughts and trying to remove barriers that others were experiencing. It is clear that, for Scott, research is linked tightly to teaching – but it also informed his academic administrative approach. In these ways, academic governance, freedom in teaching and research, and open education were ideals and ideas central to Scott's approach to the associate deanship.

For Deanna, the associate deanship was a call to service. She was fully committed and engaged with teaching and research activities as a professor and continued with those interests even after becoming an associate dean, although obviously not to the same degree as before. Deanna was also, however, interested in institution building by serving her university community through academic administration whenever needed. This interest and obligation comes from her commitment to what she called "reciprocity." Central to her "giving back" to her university community was the idea of "making things better" – that whoever might follow her could tweak things as necessary but would not have to build everything anew. I do not know if for Deanna there is or was a conscious connection but, for me, this idea is akin to Dewey's concept of meliorism – only in this case it applies to the growth of the academic program rather than the growth of a particular student. Deanna believed strongly in collegial, open, transparent debate and

worked diligently to develop strong and respectful relationships with others in the context of academic governance of academic programming. Deanna's unique manifestation of her academic identity as Associate Dean was, therefore, based on the ideals and ideas of academic governance, freedom in teaching and research, reciprocity, and meliorism.

Greg's academic identity tended to be manifested toward an emancipatory perspective of higher education (see Angus, 2009). The enlightenment type experience he had in one of his master's classes "changed his whole life," which was an experience he wanted others to have as well. This heavily influenced his approach to academic administration – but also his teaching and research. He wanted to facilitate an open, respectful, and safe academic environment – in particular with respect to freedom in teaching – so that students might be more likely to share in a similar educational experience, even if it were often in smaller ways. One of the things Greg enjoyed most about academia was engaging with complex readings, especially as related to the construction of a course he would teach but also in preparing for conference presentations and publications. As an associate dean he tried to be, and wanted to be, perceived in both administrative and academic arenas as a "faculty" associate dean first. Emancipatory purposes of higher education, academic governance, and freedom in teaching and research are key ideals and ideas underpinning Greg's academic identity as Associate Dean.

The big ideas expressed through Gwen's story convey a deep humanistic belief system. The term humanism is used here in the classical sense, meaning a belief in individual human agency and a generally benevolent stance toward others. Gwen, and her Dean/administrative mentor, strove to ensure that people were "treated well" and she

consistently used a lens for seeing the "positives and possibilities" in situations and in others. While she made many significant contributions to her faculty and communities, one particularly impactful contribution was the courageous establishment of a centre (and an environment) in the service of at-risk and often marginalized individuals. In other words, Gwen was committed to social justice initiatives and goals and achieved these aspirations through the principles of academic governance. Certainly Gwen was also committed to her research and, like Deanna, the enjoyment of teaching her first university course was a turning point for bringing Gwen into the academy. University teaching and research served as vectors that brought Gwen into academic administration, through which she was able to make a meaningful difference in the lives of students, faculty, and people in the broader community. Gwen's academic identity, then, manifested itself through ideas and ideals related to classical humanism and social justice perspectives.

Summary of commonalities among the big ideas. The high level touchstone question I asked for this study was: How do individual university faculty members experience becoming and being an associate dean? The purpose of such a question is to better understand how individuals' actions and decisions are coherent with respect to their thoughts, beliefs, values and perspectives. Consequently, throughout this study I have expressed a desire to better understand individual participants' perspectives on their social milieus, approaches to their roles, and values (i.e., who they are as people). The three themes found from the analysis of narratives respond to these interests and wonders that I carried with me. That is, the five participants in my study:

1) Primarily used a cultural organizational theoretical perspective with respect to their surrounding higher educational social milieus;
2) Primarily used a cultural leadership theoretical perspective in their approach to their higher educational roles with a focus on the development of respectful and collegial relationships;
3) Held values, expressed as academic identity, that were both shared and individualistic in nature. The strongly held shared values found were academic governance and freedom in teaching and research. The individually held values found, which were developed over time through particular career-life experiences, included egalitarianism, open education principles, reciprocity, meliorism, emancipation, social justice, and classical humanism.

Further, each individual's academic identity informed their perspective on their surrounding organizational social milieu and their approach to their roles.

Commonalities among Career-Life Experiences

In addition to the three themes found across participants' stories, there were some key shared career-life experiences that also became apparent upon review of the narratives. These shared experiences are reported below and organized in terms of those that were: Prior to participants' time as an academic administrator; during participants' time as an academic administrator; throughout participants' career-life experiences. It is important to communicate these findings because, in addition to articulating aspects of becoming an associate dean that were shared among these participants, they highlight some of the rich and thick details that may aid in reflective practice for others and in transferability.

Shared experiences prior to academic administration. From an early age participants had a need or desire "for more," especially in relation to pursuing new ideas and further study. For example, Scott kept returning to formal studies because he believed he needed to learn more and know more in his role as a teacher. Jennifer lamented that she wasn't able to attend university initially whereas, instead, her family supported her college studies. When she was able to pursue university studies as an adult, she never wanted it to end – she just kept on going! For others, like Greg and Deanna, early work experiences that were less than fulfilling played a large role in them heading down the higher education path – then they really took off down that path during graduate studies.

Related to this need or desire for something more was a sense of adventure, often manifested through travel. Participants traveled, and sometimes worked, internationally for personal and/or professional reasons, which resulted in a broadening of their horizons and thinking. For Gwen, group travel with other youth prior to leaving home set the stage for a career and life in which working toward social justice goals was a very important part. Travel was also a part of most participants' lives either while in university or while working professionally or both. Scott was the only participant who spoke of his first significant travel as happening upon assumption of his first associate dean appointment at the urging of the Dean. He viewed this experience as very important to his subsequent role – although he, too, had certainly traveled and moved his family multiple times as part of the demands of his earlier career and as a result of his desire to pursue increasingly higher education.

Participants' early professional experiences, while often enjoyable, were not fully satisfying. For Gwen, Deanna and Greg, these were first jobs such as summer jobs and jobs during and immediately after first degrees. Jennifer also had many different jobs to make a living, often while pursuing further study. Even where the jobs themselves were more enjoyable, and career oriented, participants' interests just weren't sustained or peaked like they were with the ideas and community encountered in university. For example, both Deanna and Jennifer were clear that they loved their kids (i.e., students) and the community where they worked but, even though it was difficult to leave, they simply needed to pursue their passions through graduate school.

Once in graduate school, participants got a taste of academia during their master's degree programs and, like above, wanted more. As Greg said, they were "hooked." Some, like Jennifer, Deanna, and Gwen, were hooked as soon as they started graduate studies. For others, it happened later, like for Greg who switched into the master's thesis route just as he was about to finish the course-based program. Scott, on the contrary, enjoyed graduate studies and it fed his need for more but he didn't see himself having a career in academia. This came after his doctoral studies were completed and he was offered a professorship before he was offered a position back in the public education system. Scott repeatedly stated that he didn't choose to leave the public system – that it was just circumstance – and he never stopped being a teacher. For all participants, regardless of when they were hooked, their graduate student experiences were meaningful and contributed toward personal and professional fulfillment. Participants had and took opportunities to engage in joint research, present at conferences, publish

papers, and teach university classes. Importantly, mentors provided encouragement and support at key potential turning points in participants' lives and studies.

Participants also spoke about finding balance in their lives – prior to moving into academic administration – both among professional responsibilities and demands and between their professional and personal realms. The latter was often a particular challenge for participants because the professional and the personal are highly merged. Participants had developed strategies for maintaining balance such as regular exercise, separating and prioritizing their home life as much as possible, enjoying or returning to nature, listening to or playing music, regular use of a cabin or place of retreat, compartmentalizing tasks, blocking time, and having meetings or impromptu discussions over lunch or coffee with colleagues. Finding balance enabled participants to maintain a high level of productivity in, and engagement across, the different and overlapping parts of their personal-professional lives. It also served them well upon taking on the increased responsibilities and significant duties of the associate deanship, even as the strategies often needed to be adapted once the new patterns became evident.

Shared experiences during the associate deanship. All participants were asked or "invited in" to academic administrative positions, though it was only Scott who specifically used that term. Like Greenfield's lesson from the story of Arjuna, participants did not seek out these leadership roles for the spoils that they might provide. Rather, participants were open to the possibilities and committed to the idea of service if called upon. Each participant had a variety of shorter term acting appointments in academic administrative positions that served as a way to try out the different roles prior to taking on the responsibility of a longer term position. Invitations and appointments

were also the norm for movement into the associate deanship positions – rather than the broader and more open competitive processes that are usually followed for a deanship. All participants demonstrated a willingness to take on academic administrative roles and an appreciation for the organizational need to do so – but they did not have an over-eagerness or unbridled ambition for moving into academic administration or "moving up the ranks."

Once in the role of associate dean, participants found it to be extremely busy with unrelenting administrative tasks. This was perhaps best exemplified by Greg's PIA (Appendix F, Figure 12), which depicted him in constant motion between high "in" and "out" piles of paper that never shrunk in size. All spoke of this, and of strategies to handle it, except the one participant who moved into the dean's role. Perhaps this was because it is taken to another level of busyness as Dean or perhaps it was because of the time demands she experienced as a new mother when first becoming a professor – or maybe both. Either way, the time demands associated with a vast variety of new tasks and duties was something participants found that they needed to adjust to after taking on the associate dean position – though they were well prepared to do so.

Associate dean appointments were significantly program focused, with most taking on major program renewal or program implementation projects. Scott and Jennifer, for example, took on substantial program restructuring or renewal projects, and Scott's was done during a period of significant fiscal restraint. Deanna and Gwen inherited large program implementation projects and, typically, these were on very aggressive time schedules. Often, regardless of whether program implementation or renewal was the main agenda, difficult staff or cultural changes in the office were

required concurrently. This was not always the case, however, as Deanna spoke glowingly about the administrative team she had and how they rose to the very big challenge.

A somewhat surprising finding, given the highly social role associate deans play in building relationships, trust, and communication with faculty colleagues and administrative leaders, was that isolation and loneliness were experienced by all participants to varying degrees – although only Scott articulated this directly. More indirectly, Jennifer spoke of experiencing isolation intensely after her appointment ended and Greg spoke often of not wanting to lose touch with faculty colleagues and the faculty "buzz" but how it could easily happen given the structural realities of the university. Along a similar vein, Gwen and Deanna spoke about developing a very small circle of close friends, confidants, and advisors, which implies a necessarily greater distance, in some ways, to others. It strikes me that this may have been one new experience that participants were relatively unprepared for – and that the awareness and strategies they had for achieving balance among the parts of their life may not have been as useful for mitigating the effects on their personal-professional relationships that their change in organizational location imposed. This is, as Greg articulated, an ongoing challenge that he makes consistent efforts to overcome, but it is not easily done and the ways of resolving the difficulties are not readily apparent.

Shared experiences throughout personal-professional lives. Home, both the ideal past and constructed present, was a touchstone for participants. The past home was, in all but one case, located in a rural or small town environment. Participants were privileged, but not excessively so, and had supportive families that provided a modest

upbringing. Home provided a strong initial foundation in terms of values and ways of thinking for participants and most made special mention of the freedom and opportunities that their early home and community offered (Gwen, Deanna, Greg, and Scott). The present home was a place for retreat, regeneration, reflection, self, and family. For some participants, this extended to a second physical place such as a cabin or cottage. Time spent in these spaces, and in these communities, was highly valued personally. Notably, however, it also positively affected such things as professional writing. That is, the time spent here might be compared to putting ideas, writing, and administrative problems or tasks on the back burner – and then when one returns to them they are ready to be made into something much more satisfying than would otherwise have been the case.

All participants spoke of happenstance or good fortune at key moments that brought others or opportunities into their lives. And, often, participants experienced more than one such moment. Greg spoke of picking up the phone and unexpectedly making a big career-life change. He also spoke admiringly, and appreciatively, of a crucial moment with his father that changed the way he chose to live his life. Jennifer, among other key events, spoke about the lifelong personal-professional relationship that developed from a meeting in a lunch line. Scott took a professorship and moved across the country because the job offer came to him prior to an offer from the local school division. Deanna was offered an opportunity to teach a graduate level course just as she was about to return to public school administration – she took the opportunity, and was hooked. Participants also, however, acknowledged that factors were involved in this happenstance beyond simply "luck." These factors included spirituality, hard work, openness to opportunities, valuing change, and seeking new challenges.

There was remarkably little discussion about experiences related to gender, especially in direct relationship to academic administration. Two participants expressed their belief that academic administration has been moving toward "women's work" – in the stereotypical sense of "keeping the house in order" – whereas in the now distant past appointments were more of an honour or a recognition for a lifetime of renowned scholarship. Male participants didn't bring up gender, other than one side note that only relatively recently have many of the pictures on the walls of academic leaders been of women. Female participants, in contrast, spoke a little about gender, but usually in the context of support – or the lack thereof – related to their endeavours in their youth. Instead, more directly related to their experiences as academic administrators, female participants placed much greater emphasis on their perceived status as organizational "insider" or "outsider."

Part Two: Implications for Higher Educational Administration

The themes and shared career-life experiences from the narratives of these five current or former associate deans are related to, and have implications for, higher educational administration theory in a number of ways. A discussion is organized below under each of the main theories reviewed.

Findings related to Higher Educational Organization Theory

Meyer and Rowan's (1977) claim that universities are institutionalized organizations was borne out by my participants' stories. As academic leaders at the nexus of their organizations, these five associate deans' values and beliefs were tightly aligned with the formal and informal institutional norms. For example, all participants worked collegially and valued deliberation, honest discussion, and debate in their roles as associate deans. They respected the outcomes of academic governance processes and worked within those parameters to implement the wishes of their academic colleagues. Participants also worked hard to establish trusted relationships with their faculty colleagues and to generate consensus among faculty to the greatest extent possible.

This, of course, is not to say that there is no bureaucratic characteristic associated with universities or that participants, as associate deans, were ignorant of bureaucratic or managerialist pressures. Rather, it was quite to the contrary. As associate deans, participants also worked to establish relationships with their fellow academic administrators across the university and with non-academic administrative leaders. Greg, for example, spoke of these relationships being necessary so that one will be listened to within the bureaucratic environment. Importantly, though, he spoke about wanting and hoping that he was seen in both bureaucratic and faculty circles as being a "faculty dean"

first. Scott, too, was keenly aware of bureaucratic pressure as he was the one primarily tasked with redesigning the academic program within the context of severe budget cuts, including cuts to faculty positions. However, he and his colleagues sought to, and were able to, make the best of a bad situation. That is, the redesign of the educational program was in keeping with faculty members' academic beliefs and it strengthened supports for faculty members' academic pursuits. This is in keeping with Kallenberg's (2015) statement that academic administrators are positioned "at the interface of the academic and the administrative zones, … [which] try to influence each other both formally and informally (Hanson, 2001)" (p. 203).

The five associate deans in this study, then, privileged the view of their organizations as institutions – institutions with governing characteristics that are different from the tradition within which a managerialist approach and perspective originates. They purposively chose to primarily take a cultural perspective rather than, say, a bureaucratic perspective for both understanding the organizations within which they were situated and for guiding their actions or decision-making within their associate dean roles.

According to Greenfield (1979), "experience is mysterious, for it is not entirely clear how we come to understand what we do and what is happening to us …" (p. 97). He argues

> that the placing of meaning upon experience is an act of enormous importance … [and] recognizes the interpretation of human experience as the bedrock upon which human life is built and upon which organization theory should stand. Organization theory, however, usually ignores such mysteries in human life, and it does so at the cost of impoverishing its own insight into people's lives and social reality. (1979, p. 97)

The research conducted here, for this dissertation, has attempted to heed Greenfield's warning and avoid an impoverished view of university organizations. I have tried to articulate, understand, and make meaning of five associate deans' career-life experiences and, from there, to better understand university organization in general.

Given Greenfield's alternative perspective, and participants' ontological and epistemological positioning, a cultural approach does, and should, occupy a preeminent and privileged place for understanding university organization. Organized anarchy as a theoretical concept remains relevant. That is, for example, individuals and groups within the university (especially faculty and faculty groups) experience a high degree of autonomy – and decision-making does often happen in ways as described by Cohen and March (1986). In particular, related to their description of decision-making processes, faculty members (including associate deans) do, indeed, have a high degree of autonomy in how they choose to allocate their decision-making attention. They can, to a great degree, decide autonomously which matters or issues are of most interest to them and how much time and focus to dedicate to each. A problem with the idea of organized anarchy as a theory, however, is that it may lead one to conclude that decisions within the university context are arbitrary. According to the results of this research, they are not. Important decisions are arrived at through the actions and commitments of academic administrators and others as described by the big ideas articulated in the stories above, and elaborated upon in the analysis of those narratives. In this way, decisions within the university are more organized than anarchy – and they revolve around foundational organizing principles and ideals to which faculty members are deeply committed (i.e., academic identities).

Findings related to Higher Educational Leadership Theory

It has become obvious that a cultural rather than a structural-functionalist theory of higher educational leadership is important for both understanding associate deans' experiences within their roles and for carrying out the role of associate dean. As summarized in the analysis of narratives above, the five participants in my study primarily employed a cultural theory of leadership focusing on the development of respectful collegial relationships and were most comfortable when applying a cultural lens.

It is fair to say that participants, through the fostering of respectful and collegial relationships, sought to bring some order to the organized anarchy that is the university – but to do so in a way that honoured the goals and interests determined by their colleagues in loosely coupled sub-groups. How exactly significant relationships were formed, who was a part of higher educational leaders' "inner circle," and how individual relationships and inner circles may have changed over time are matters that were not deeply explored in my research. An implication, however, of the theme related to fostering relationships is that future interpretive and narrative research should explore these wonders to add to the higher educational leadership literature. In other words, how do academic administrators experience their significant personal-professional relationships throughout their various career roles and stages? Similarly, because relationships are bi- and multi-directional, how do various faculty members experience their relationships with their academic administrators?

Findings related to Academic Identity

Academic identity played a crucial role in associate deans' approaches to academic administration. Each associate dean's academic identity was, of course, manifested differently – with differing tendencies, leanings, priorities, and preferences. Based on the theoretical understanding of academic identity being largely comprised from relationships and attachments within one's academic discipline, the academic profession at large, and one's local academic organization, each associate dean made decisions, acted, and thought about matters in ways that slightly privileged one theoretical part of academic identity over others. For example, Scott leaned toward disciplinary research while Deanna privileged reciprocity manifested as service to her local academic community. Gwen, similar to Deanna, felt a calling to serve her university organization, which emerged as a humanistic responsibility to take action on matters of social justice based on her academic positionality. Jennifer leaned toward teaching and egalitarian discussion and sharing of ideas as the components of the academic profession around which the university institution ought to revolve. For Greg, academic freedom was a key component of being a member of the academic profession, because the responsible exercising of that freedom is necessary for enabling the possibility of enlightenment or emancipatory moments in teaching and in research.

In addition to having developed academic identities in relation to the three components identified in the higher educational literature, participants had also committed themselves to particular values that played a role in their decision-making, actions, and ways of thinking. For example, one of Jennifer's personal-professional commitments was to egalitarianism. Similarly, Scott had a commitment to the idea of

open education, Deanna to reciprocity and meliorism, Greg to the emancipatory purpose of higher education, and Gwen to classical humanism and social justice. Early career-life experiences played a formative role in the development of these values or commitments that composed another part of each participant's academic identity. So, while all five participants shared a strong belief in academic governance and freedom in teaching and research, it was each participant's unique combination of leanings among traditional academic values merged with other deep personal-professional values that allows for a better understanding of these particular associate deans' decisions and actions in their particular circumstances.

The academic identities of these five individuals didn't change significantly after assuming academic administrative roles. There were differences from their professorial roles in the tasks they carried out and the ways their days were spent – but there was not a shift in identity. This is one finding that surprised me. Despite entering the research with an earnest attempt to not develop a priori expectations of what I might discover, I had thought that I might find that some individuals' identities shifted after becoming more situated within the academic administrative field. This thinking, or perhaps a feeling, was based upon my own past personal-professional experiences from which it seemed that some academic administrators changed to some degree upon assuming the role. These early observations may, indeed, have been incorrect and I may not have known these people well enough or as well as I thought. However, if my early observations were correct, then it may be that those roles were substantially different from the role of associate dean. It is also, of course, possible that a shift in academic identity might be more likely to occur when moving into a role other than associate dean – such as the role

of dean or vice-president. This is an area that I believe warrants further research within the narrative and interpretive tradition.

Both Greenfield (1980) and Mintzberg (1989; 2003) wrote about the importance of would-be-leaders having had broad and varied life experiences. Whereas Mintzberg (1989) placed emphasis on experience, intuition, "street sense," and demonstrated leadership abilities, Greenfield (1980) believed that educational leaders need to have experienced and worked through the shock and disorientation that comes when one's positionality or social location is shifted. In other words, not only do leaders need to have a good sense of their identity, they need to have had experiences that test, develop, and expand their identity (or create new identities and understandings of those identities).

I believe that Greenfield mostly had K-12 leaders in mind when he was thinking and writing about how we should think about training such leaders. When considering the common experiences that I found among the participants in my research at the level of the university, however, it is clear that they all had had such experiences – and that those experiences had been prior to taking on their associate deanship roles. All of the associate deans in my study had multiple moments of significance that were highlighted in their stories and were key in the formation of their identities. Some, for example, were: Scott's unexpected teaching of elementary students in an open and experimental setting; Greg's emancipatory discovery in graduate studies of truths that differed from the generally accepted Canadian narratives; Gwen's early professional experiences that contrasted self-interested versus selfless leaders' behaviours and decisions; Deanna's professional work abroad; and Jennifer's relationships within a community developed upon her return to teaching.

This finding implies that – in contrast, perhaps, to other organizational types – those who become associate deans are typically already "trained" or ready to become associate deans. There were, of course, adjustments to be made to the administrative tasks experienced in academic administration, such as the busyness associated with moving papers from one pile to the other, the filling of one's calendar with numerous meetings, and the learning of administrative skills, human resources skills, managerial software, and the competencies associated with such tasks. Morris and Laipple (2015) had a similar finding, and conclude that higher education organizations would benefit from providing academic administrators with "ongoing training and professional development" (p. 249). Nonetheless, the most important elements of higher educational leadership were already possessed in great measure by the participants in my study before moving into the associate deanship. That is, they had already experienced the ontological and epistemological shifts that Greenfield wrote and spoke about. Of even greater importance, they had made sense of these shifts and had embodied their learnings from those experiences with a readiness to apply them to new situations. Because of this, it can be said that they knew who they were and who they wanted to be prior to moving into the associate deanship. They knew what they were bringing to the role and what they wanted to bring to the role. Further, others knew who they were or would be able to come to know who they were without pretense – or without the same type of mask or shroud of secrecy that might be more usually adopted within other organizational contexts.

There are other implications of this finding. One such implication is that, despite one's academic identity having been well-formed and well-understood, identity formation isn't static. According to Weinberger and Shefi (2012), for example,

> professional identity is part of a personal identity which develops as an ongoing process … [of] individuals' interrelations with their environment, at a certain time and in a specific context … Identity is not a stable, unchanging entity: it evolves through one's entire life … and is formed by what a person knows and by the way he or she describes him or herself both as a human being and as a professional … Identities are the result of the inescapable and ongoing process of discussion, explanation, negotiation, argumentation and justification that partly comprises teachers' lives and practices. (p. 262)

Jan (John) Oussoren (1992), in an excellent dissertation written at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, found a similar result when he explored the issue of identity change and formation among adults. Using adult developmental psychology theory, and applying it through a "psychohistorical" approach to the career and life of Tommy Douglas, he found that learning and identity formation continues throughout one's life. In the case of Tommy Douglas, Oussoren (1992) found that "Douglas' related views and his change in vocation evolved in a gradual and logical process building on his early life" (p. 2). However, "a sudden change also occurred in Douglas' 'perceptual threshold' in the summer of 1931 during his preliminary Ph.D. research in the Chicago 'hobo jungle'" (Oussoren, 1992, p. 2). As discussed, associate deans are likely to have already established strong and well-understood identities – and the type of sudden or substantive identity change experienced by Tommy Douglas is likely, for them, to have already occurred. It is unlikely to be controversial, though, to suggest that adults (even associate deans and other faculty members) will continue to learn and experience identity change as they continue to have unique and varied experiences in their roles. Regardless, then,

of the type of continued identity change experienced by associate deans, given the further understanding about the importance of faculty members' identities being aligned (in individual ways) with the university institution's values and purposes, I have found that it would be valuable to ensure systemically that associate deans have sufficient time and space to maintain their identities.

Here, too, there was substantial similarity with the findings of Morris and Laipple (2015), which indicate that "more support and attention to quality of life is needed all around [and] ... suggest that this … [would] lead to higher job satisfaction, better retention, enhanced productivity, and a better working climate for all those involved" (p. 250). I agree with their conclusion that

> it is time educational organisations … learn to protect their [leadership] assets … [which] will require a cultural shift in many organisations. Attention to quality of life and wellness behaviours … will generate a return on investment through increased productivity and unit morale. (Morris & Laipple, 2015, pp. 242-243)

Action in this area is made all the more necessary due to the increasing neo-liberal forces experienced in universities in recent decades. According to Roberts (2007),

> it is consistent with the logic of neoliberal reform that academics, like teachers, will be regarded – explicitly or implicitly – as *untrustworthy* beings [who] … must have their 'performance' monitored and assessed regularly to avoid 'slacking off'. (p. 27)

This pattern of "de-professionalisation and proletarianisation of academic work (Radice, 2008) … [and] the effect of constant scrutiny and surveillance (as Foucault demonstrated) profoundly influences an academic's sense of self" (Shore, 2010, p. 27). Given this, together with the central importance of academic identity found in my research and the experiences my participants conveyed with respect to the idea of home, ensuring substantial time is available for associate deans to retreat and reflect upon situations and

experiences that may have tested their identities or that reveal tension within their multiple identities is paramount.

At least one other implication arises from the finding that the academic identities of the associate deans in my study were well-known, well-established, and already subject to a change in perceptual threshold prior to them assuming the role of associate dean. The choice of a particular academic administrator is a consequential one that significantly impacts the organizational culture – potentially for many years and multiple subsequent generations of scholars and students. In each case, the choice of these associate deans appears to have, at least in part, been made in relation to particular organizational needs at the time. In order to make these choices it is necessary to know who potential academic administrators are as people and as scholars. Temporary and acting administrative positions played a role not only as a learning ground for those who took on the appointments but also as a way for colleagues to come to know these higher educational leaders better. Where associate deans are more located or identified with faculty and with academic tasks or projects than with administration per sé, having their academic and personal selves become better known among colleagues is crucial as it facilitates trust, shared understandings, and effective decision-making. This "becoming better known" takes on even greater importance given that individuals often come to the associate deanship through an appointment by a dean, rather than an election or open external competition, or are otherwise "invited in" to the role. Other researchers have noticed this too, such as Mason and de la Harpe (2020) and Sayler, Pederson, Smith, and Cutright (2017) who in a national survey of associate deans in the U.S. "found that most … were appointed internally, with the majority being asked by their Dean to take on the

role" (as cited by Floyd & Preston, 2019). This selective encouragement, or "arm twisting" as it is often called, may at first seem counter to the principle of academic governance. However, at this level of administration, direct appointments or selective encouragement may be a generally necessary and effective way of choosing individuals because of the need to work well and in concert with deans who are typically chosen by a more rigorous collegial system.

Assumptions Underpinning the Theories used and Possible Effects

Beyond implications of the findings, it is worth discussing the assumptions underpinning academic identity theory and their possible effects on the analysis. As noted earlier, academic identity theory is rooted in the philosophies of Mead (1934) and Taylor (1989), among others, and draws from British and German idealism. It is associated with a communitarian approach to understanding the self – as opposed to, for example, a liberal individualistic approach. It is possible, then, that the use of such a lens, while focusing on the values and ideas associated with the academic communities of importance, obscures other values, ideas, commitments, or interests that individuals may have that might be more closely aligned with liberal individualistic aspirations. That said, this is one of the strengths of the narrative and interpretive research methodology I have chosen, which brings theoretical literature to the interpretive task as is found necessary rather than imposing an a priori choice reductively. In other words, had patterns been evident in participants' stories of more self-interested, power-seeking, or extrinsically motivated behaviours, then the researcher as bricoleur would return to the literature and employ that which is necessary for interpretation. In this case, it wasn't necessary. Further, the more recent evolution of academic identity theory toward the

acknowledgement of elements that go beyond the traditional three (i.e., the discipline, local institution, and profession at large) allowed for a sufficiently expansive definition of academic identity that could have included individuals' more liberal individualistic interests had they been expressed.

Finally, it is similarly worth discussing the assumptions made in my use of higher educational leadership and organization literature. As was presented in chapter three, I brought with me to the interpretive task these large bodies of literature, which are comprised of untold numbers of more specific theories. Earlier versions of this dissertation were much longer and contained more detailed descriptions of many such theories. The thinking was that participants' stories might reveal evidence of implicit or explicit use of some of the models scholars have used to explain organizational actors' behaviours and decision-making. It soon became clear, however, that academic identity was the conceptual kernel around which the research revolved – and that it was most useful for me to explore its formation and possible changes from a higher level view. This perspective of higher educational and leadership literature is more dichotomous in nature with a split between the more cultural and the more bureaucratic way of seeing and acting within organizations. It is possible, of course, that this dichotomous perspective obscures gradations along a continuum with those two particular views as extremes. If so, then one effect on analysis might be a lower likelihood of noticing more subtle changes in participants' views, actions, decisions, or beliefs that might indicate a smaller shift from one point along the continuum toward another.

That said, the higher level perspective of leadership and organization as presented in chapter three explicitly incorporated the idea of such a continuum, as articulated by Meyer and Rowan (1977), which served as a reminder that while people may have leanings that are evident in their stories, there is no specific and static location inhabited on this continuum. In other words, part of the interpretation involved looking for subtle changes in academic identity (and changes in beliefs, actions, and decision-making) through the hermeneutical back-and-forth process of analysis that can find such patterns within narrative accounts. In this research, the narrative accounts helped with understanding the movements associated with academic identity formation and with understanding its centrality with respect to the living of one's organizational and institutional life. The lack of identification of more subtle shifts from one location on the continuum toward another once participants were in the role of associate dean means, I think, that holding tightly to one's academic identity was an important part of carrying out the role of associate dean while in the midst of the flurry of administrative activity and while living organizationally in "a paradoxical in-between position" (Kallenberg, 2015, p. 204). If, however, there were subtle shifts that went unnoticed in my research, they might be picked up in longitudinal research or in similar research to mine carried out with participants who moved on to other more senior academic administrative positions.

Part Three: Evaluation of the Research

Evaluation of the Narrative Analyses and Analysis of Narratives

Chapter three sets out criteria for evaluating the narrative analyses (the five career-life stories) and the analysis of narratives contained in this dissertation. For the evaluation of how well each story is "put together," Polkinghorne (1995) sets out seven guidelines, which were outlined in chapter three. Upon reflecting on each story as suggested by Polkinghorne (1995), I believe that the variety of cultural contexts are well described and it is obvious that the protagonists are "embodied" (i.e., "real" people). Significant others also exist and are well described in each story. Further, the protagonists' actions in response to circumstances or events and their approaches to their roles are not confusing for readers. Continuity in the protagonists' experiences exists, so their timelines are not out of sync with their contemporary realities. Finally, beyond simply providing credible explanations of the protagonists' behaviours and beliefs, the stories are in depth, of high quality, readable, and even compelling for those who have an interest in the topic area.

With respect to the analysis of narratives, Packer and Addison (1989) and Ellis (1998a) provide six criteria, which can also be found in chapter three, to help evaluate the overall interpretive account. Upon reflecting on the big ideas, common career-life experiences, and implications articulated in this dissertation, I believe that my interpretive account is not only plausible but reasonable, insightful, and informative. It fits with other material but also adds to the scholarly literature in the area of higher educational leadership and organization. The accessibility and genuineness of the stories contained in this dissertation can serve as a resource for professional practice for those

entering or engaging in academic administration and the findings can be helpful for academic administrators to reflect on their professional practice. A "solution," per sé, has not been uncovered – as that was not the nature of the motivation of the research. However, fuller and richer understandings of theory and practice have been achieved as desired and the research experience was beneficial, certainly for me, but also for participants.

Participants' Derived Benefits and Using Pre-Interview Activities

When seeking research ethics board (REB) approval for activities involving humans, it is necessary to make a statement regarding participant risk. For this research, it was clear that there was no risk to participants beyond what might be experienced during their normal daily professional work. When studying narrative research methods, however, it came to my attention that participants often experience benefits through engaging in the process with the narrative researcher. I did not fully understand why this might be but trusted that it was possibly the case and reported it to the REB. In other words, I saw the commitment of time, emotion, intellect, and energy as a drain on these individuals and a generous gift – that is, a "big ask" that I was making. While most definitely it was a big ask and a generous gift, it turned out that all participants did in fact experience benefits from engaging in the process and, at the end of our formal meetings, said as much and thanked me. The benefits ranged from an almost cathartic process for one participant to a deep consideration of post-appointment career options and desires for another participant. The participant who had the longest career and was in the longest period of still educationally active retirement came to the sudden realization of a thread that tied his early formative positive teaching experience in an open experimental school

through his entire career up to the volunteer work in classrooms he was committed to in retirement.

One of the reasons that these benefits were achieved and that the research process was successful in generating complete, forthright, and detailed stories was the use of PIAs. At the end of our formal meetings, when I asked Deanna if there was anything we hadn't talked about that she'd like to mention or felt needed to be added, she said:

> I think that you need to make a big deal about your methods … it's a great way to get somebody thinking about themselves without having to think about themselves. It does really well in the conversation part of it. I think it's innovative, and I think it's so much more refreshing than the question after question route. So I think you need to make a big deal about that." (Deanna, #3, p. 35)

I agree with her sentiment. It should be noted, though, that participants were often initially a little unsure and maybe a little uncomfortable about what they were supposed to do for a PIA and about what its purpose might be. This is likely to be particularly the case with my population being academics who spend much of their professional lives operating within the realm of the intellect – but it is likely to also be the case with other adult participants who have become unaccustomed to drawing and sketching in their daily lives. We overcame this initial uncomfortableness by talking openly and genuinely about the PIA and its purposes as well as me being very careful not to convey any judgement on the artifact produced and to offer reassurances and gratitude for participants having done the activity. The extra time and effort spent by both parties with PIAs was well worth it. In addition to replacing the grand tour type opening questions, it provided the gateway to genuine conversational interviews where the participant was "in the driver's seat" and knew instinctively that the researcher was interested in what the participant wanted to share – rather than wondering what it might be that the researcher

wanted to hear. The PIAs were instrumental in setting an excellent and proper environment, tone, and focus for the interviews as well as for the narrative and interpretive processes.

Part Four: Making Personal-Professional Meaning

My Story Continued

When I reflect on the stories gathered here – and on the big ideas, themes, and commonalities found – I cannot help but wonder how and to what degree they might connect with my own career-life experiences (despite not having been a tenured faculty member or academic administrator). In other words, is there some transferability between the narrative accounts and my own experiences and situation? I do not wish to take the reader for granted, but some exploration of my own past is warranted in the hope of deriving some further and more personal sense- or meaning-making and of achieving a measure of clarification of my own academic identity.

Some Commonalities with my Career-Life Experiences

Similar to my participants, I had a modest upbringing with loving and supportive parents who were strong supporters of education. I had relative freedom and opportunities to experience various activities in my youth. Later, throughout my professional career and academic studies, I, too, experienced much good fortune – or happenstance – with numerous good friends and colleagues coming into my life and with opportunities opening that I chose to pursue. I travelled internationally early in my career, and I had a personal-professional shift in disciplinary focus, research methodological focus, and life focus when I chose to become a teacher and study educational policy – perhaps along the lines that Oussoren (1992), Greenfield (1980), and Greg referred to as a critical part of growing into leadership. I was always "wanting more" in terms of understanding, learning, and participation or influence – never being satisfied with the state of the body of literature or theories in any of the disciplines I

explored and seeking to apply my understandings to the improvement of the organizations for which I worked.

One area in which my experiences may have differed from those of my participants was that of "home." Having found a "reconstructed present home" early on in my career, during graduate studies in agricultural economics at the U. of S., and having left it in pursuit of broader multi-disciplinary understandings, I have been searching ever since for a new intellectual and physical home that I can settle into and where I can become part of the related communities. Perhaps now that my Ph.D. studies are complete this may become a reality. Regardless, like my participants, I am now better at striving for balance and I have found my second "retreat" home in Cowichan Bay on Vancouver Island. Even if I never set sail, I like the idea that I could – and that I am perched on the dual-edge of society and adventure.

My Experiences as they Relate to Leadership and Organization

Throughout my career, I sometimes experienced wise, empowering, and inclusive leadership within culturally healthy, vibrant, and supportive organizational environments. When this was the case, I was fortunate to have good mentors and excellent colleagues with whom I worked closely and collaboratively. Unfortunately, at times I also experienced authoritarian or militaristic leadership within organizational environments that were culturally unhealthy, unproductive, de-professionalizing, and ultimately de-humanizing. Like my participants, I strongly prefer to take a cultural view of leadership and organization, especially for education and higher education organizations. I believe in respectful, open, collegial relationships among co-workers and a shared commitment to creating a healthy workplace environment. This does not, of course, mean the

exclusion of debate and disagreement. Rather, finding ways to have genuine dialogue and constructive responses to disagreement wherever possible is essential. Trust in, and support of, colleagues' professionalism within the boundaries of a reasonable work-life balance and offering one's own professional best in return are ways in which organizations can be re-humanized – and in which those who are most concerned with increasing "productivity" can get their wish over the long run.

Beyond the fortunate opportunities and positive individual relationships I experienced over my career, front and centre within my story is the "bumping up against" administration at certain times and places. That is, against the forces of managerialism and New Public Management (NPM), which is a term

> coined by English and Australian public administration scholars (Hood, 1991) … [to describe] a reform model arguing that the quality and efficiency of the civil service should be improved by introducing management techniques and practices drawn mainly from the private sector. (Bleiklie, 2018, p. 1)

I bumped up against these forces as a professional teacher where school divisions were amalgamating and looking for "efficiencies," as a professional researcher where senior leaders were concerned with the "brand" of a new president, and as a professional teacher-researcher where a shift in organizational culture was being attempted from a communitarian-based service organization to a command and control power-based corporate entity.

These very real experiences of tension between two dichotomous approaches to, and beliefs about, the administration of educational and higher educational organizations are, on hindsight, not surprising. As numerous authors attest, there has been a neo-liberal gale force wind blowing over all areas of the public service since the 1980s and the

intensity increased to tidal wave proportions since the 2000s (Arntzen, 2016; Lazzeretti & Tavoletti, 2006; Park, 2013; Shore, 2010; Veiga, Magalhaes, & Amaral, 2015). The public and higher education sectors have not only not been immune, but have been a primary target. Within the public education system, Armstrong (2012) notes that "organizational socialization processes exert pervasive pressure on new [vice-principals] to discard teaching loyalties and comply with administrative group norms" (p. 402) that are more in line with NPM views.[29] Within higher education, the "guild" idea of the university has "been under increasing attack" (Amaral, Fulton, & Larsen, 2003). This long-standing foundational ideal held that, according to Karl Jaspers, the university is necessarily a

> community of scholars and students engaged in the task of seeking truth. It derives its autonomy from the idea of academic freedom, a privilege granted to it by state and society which entails the obligation to teach truth in defiance of all internal and external attempts to curtail it. (as cited by Wilson, 1989, p. 38)

In its stead, as Olssen and Peters (2005) put it,

> the ascendency of neoliberalism and the associated discourses of 'new public management' during the 1980s and 1990s have produced a fundamental shift in the way universities … have defined and justified their institutional existence. The traditional professional culture of open intellectual enquiry and debate has been replaced with an institutional stress on performativity, … strategic planning, performance indicators, quality assurance measures and academic audits. (p. 1)

Given these notable and ubiquitous trends, and based on my own recurring experiences, I am moved to ask: Why did my participants not elaborate more upon their own experiences of bumping up against administration – or, more specifically, against the NPM and neo-liberal forces sometimes encountered within administrative realms?

[29] Manderscheid and Ardichvili (2008) and Armstrong (2012) found, also, that research on the cognitive and emotional dimensions associated with career transition continues to be sparse.

There are, of course, many possible answers to that question. For example, it may simply be that participants did not want to share overly detailed specific examples so that individuals' anonymity might be better protected and so as not to be unfairly critical of specific individuals who might have no opportunity to respond. Or, perhaps they were not inclined to expand on these sort of experiences because I did not primarily employ a critical theoretical perspective that would lead me to ask related go for the throat follow-up questions. Regardless, it is certainly not that my participants were unaware of these forces, as they did make reference to them directly and indirectly. For example: Jennifer spoke of the "mechanistic cyphering of [academic] work that … [she] resented tremendously … [and] undermines what is at the heart of why we do what we do"; Scott spoke of "a drastic cut" and the committee he led "recognizing that we had to change, given the economic reality"; Deanna explained how academic administrators "tend to be institutional type of people … [who] believe in programs … [and] the institution, even though we might critique it and think it is horrible at times"; Gwen shared that the situations she "liked least [were] … where you had people that brought a lot of self-interest and the discussions that became competitive and not very inspiring … where [maybe it wasn't about] the good of the program"; and Greg shared that he had become "a vocal critic … [of what] was contravening academic freedom" and had "a fantastic group of colleagues … [who were] courageous [in their] challenging of dominant neo-liberal type trends and audit culture."

My belief, then, and answer to the question above, is that the main reason participants did not elaborate more on their experiences of bumping up against the forces of neo-liberalism, NPM, and audit culture – the conceptual kernel that can be seen

throughout their narrative accounts and my dissertation – is their desire to focus on the positives and importance of knowing, maintaining, and holding steadfast to one's academic identity while in the midst of the neo-liberal storm. In this way, and only in this way, can the purposes of the university be realized and NPM be resisted.

Affinities with Academic Identities

My research identified both shared and more individual personal-professional aspects of academic identity among my participants. I, too, share a strong belief and commitment to the values that provide the ancient foundations of the university, such as academic governance and academic freedom in teaching and research. From the depths of the wells of the university institution spring all other socio-cultural institutions upon which Canada relies – and some of which other countries are in desperate need: Our supreme court and other justices, lawyers, and police officers that comprise our (still fallible) justice system; our teachers, superintendents, trustees, and education ministry professionals that comprise our (still reconciling) public education system; our doctors, nurses, and other public health professionals that comprise our (still bursting) health system; and, yes, our politicians, civil servants, business people, artists, actors, musicians, athletes, and other professionals that reach every corner of our society. Without freedom in university teaching based on tenured professors' freely pursued research and learnings, there can be little if any sustained fostering of critical and creative thinking among students as they grow into these societal roles, and democracy as we know it will cease. These foundational ideas and ideals of the university are not impractical or passé. They are the very fabric and life-blood of our society.

More specific to my own academic identity, my leanings are toward teaching, as it is not only rewarding, but I think students may generally be in more need of empathetic collaboration or guidance as they engage in their search for what they are looking for than one's research colleagues might be. Of course, I do enjoy the challenge of reading, writing, and thinking that research provides and I hope to continue where this project leaves off. With respect to the discipline, academic profession, and local institution triumvirate model of academic identity, I have an affinity for local institution building because of my early formative experiences as a graduate student in agricultural economics at the U. of S. Strong programs with good people working and living together within healthy organizational cultures also have an immense positive impact over time – but, again, like with teaching, it is an impact that is difficult to see with precision and impossible to calculate with certainty.

With respect to the more individualistic parts of academic identity, I believe professional integrity must be a central feature. Along with the academic freedom that is necessary for faculty within the university environment to have, and the similar freedoms that I believe are necessary for all true professionals to have, comes significant personal responsibility and potentially heavy obligations. I do not regret standing up and speaking out when bumping up against neo-liberal administrative forces that were contrary to fundamental organizational and institutional values – despite the significant personal costs I bore and my children bore as a result. I am able to now leave my professional career in favour of an academic life with my head held high, knowing that I did not compromise my principles, that I was fortunate to do some excellent work with many

wonderful people, that I (hopefully) have left a little legacy through some of my cherished students and others, and that my personal-professional integrity is intact.

Finally, reflecting upon those similarly individual pieces of academic identity that my participants conveyed, the notions of emancipatory learning, open education, reciprocity, and social justice resonate loudly for me. With respect to the latter, I am of the belief that fundamental, wholesale, and systemic changes are needed to truly support Indigeneity in public and higher education – but fear that too few people have fully come to that realization. I am heartened, though, by Senator Murray Sinclair's statement: "Education is what got us into this mess … and is key to getting us out of it" (as cited by Jamieson, 2017). It is a statement that fits well with how I have come to understand educational and higher educational administration and leadership. That is, as an application of educational foundations to organizational life that requires one to acquire deep understandings of multiple perspectives and values, internalize such understandings in unique and complex ways, and possess the courage necessary to, at times, speak out and take action to preserve one's personal-professional self and our most important socio-cultural institutions.

Chapter Six: Bringing the Field with Me into the Future

Emancipate yourself from mental slavery …
Only we ourselves can free our mind …
They can never take, these songs of freedom…
So won't you come and join me, these songs of freedom?
Cuz that's all I ever had, these songs of freedom [וו]…[30]

It is now May, 2017, as I write the first iteration of this final chapter – and it has been a long, cool, late spring in Edmonton. As I realized earlier and wrote in the introduction to chapter four, this is the time of endings for me rather than of new beginnings. It is the time, often, for me to "wrap things up" and prepare for the future. That is what I have been doing, writing in my tiny shared windowless graduate student office, with a little crack of sunlight from the mezzanine peeking through my open door.

Initially, early in my studies of educational leadership, I wondered how the numerous academic administrators I had worked with had experienced their roles in formal university leadership. Later, I wondered how the thoughts and the beliefs they brought with them to their roles might have differed, how these might have been formed, and how they experienced and viewed their universities and academia more generally. From these early wonders my overall (open) research question was formed. That is: How do individual university faculty members experience becoming and being an associate dean? Of course, as I pursued my research I continued to carry with me questions related to my early wonders but that were refined with respect to the academic literature I also brought with me on my narrative journey. These "back of mind" questions involved participants' approaches to leadership, participants' perspectives on

[30] Bob Marley (1980).

their surrounding social milieu(s), and the nature of any changes to academic identity participants may have experienced in becoming an associate dean.

Over a period of one and a half years I engaged in in-depth conversational interviews with five current or former associate deans. I named the method I employed a Narrative Aggregate Inquiry because I used both narrative analysis and analysis of narratives methods. A relatively unique part of my particular method was the use of Pre-Interview Activities (PIAs), as developed and encouraged by one of my mentors (Ellis, 2006), where participants created visual artifacts that, among other benefits, served as an effective replacement for the more usual grand tour type of introductory interview question.[31] My research resulted in complete career-life type stories that I think are compelling, informative, and rare accounts that can provide multiple insights into universities and university life for interested readers. The so-called data is, indeed, "rich" and "thick" – and I now have a much better understanding of these terms, which I previously felt were somewhat vague or ill-defined.

While writing this conclusion, I noticed a yellowed newspaper clipping on the bottom of my graduate office bookshelf that I had been holding onto for years. The timing of this rediscovery was perfect (The result of happenstance, perhaps? Or maybe some brooding at my desk?). It commemorated the life and works of the famous economist and U.S. policy advisor from Canada, John Kenneth Galbraith (1908-2006):

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[31] Some visual artifacts that don't compromise participants' anonymity are included in the appendices.

Poetic Justice

He knew the numbers always lied:
They left out money's moral side,
The greater good that wealth can bring
When goods are not the only thing.
For truth, look to his written word
Where economics turns absurd
When those who give their lives to stats
Ignore the public housing rats,
The filthy air and dead-end schools,
To praise the fixed free-market rules.

The world is not a Harvard course:
He made light of the market's force,
For he well knew its "unseen hand"
Just means the bland will lead the bland.
But who still cares? All those tax cuts
That treat us as consumer mutts
Now mock his outsized farm-boy mind
With science of a dismal kind –
In place of Galbraith's bonhomie,
Quick cash and false economy. (Allemang, 2006)

Who still cares? I care. These five current or former associate deans still care. They care about individuals – students, colleagues, and those in their wider communities – and they care about cultivating environments, educational and otherwise, that nourish individuals and encourage positive connectivity. They care about the sharing of, refining, and acting upon ideas, which depends upon the growth of critical and creative thinking and the development of moral purposes – both individually and collectively. They bring their unique academic identities – and their whole selves – to serve the greater good for students, the university, and the community at large. This is reflected in the three themes found, which revolved around community, relationships, and commitments. That is: 1) Attending to local and broader cultural environments; 2) Fostering relationships with others; and 3) Commitments to foundational ideas and ideals.

Like Galbraith, the backgrounds of all five participants are consistent with a modest Canadian upbringing – most in a rural or small town environment. There are a number of other career-life experiences that are also shared among the participants. Some of these key common experiences were: Curiosity and a "need for more" during early professional work; a rewarding graduate student experience; international work/travel broadening horizons; attaining balance; a supportive early home life; being "invited in" to academic administration; a significant focus on program development or implementation; extreme busyness, especially as related to administrative tasks; isolation and loneliness; insider versus outsider differences; and happenstance.

Some implications from the big ideas and common experiences of the participants are that: Academic identity is an important driver of associate deans' perspectives on their organizational social milieu(s), approaches to their roles, and decision-making processes; academic identity appears to be well-established prior to coming into an associate dean appointment; associate deans may tend to privilege the cultural view that universities are institutionalized organizations that rely on a high degree of congruency between university norms and academics' values and beliefs; associate deans may tend to privilege a cultural approach to leadership focusing on the fostering of relationships; the choice of academic administrators has both long and short term effects on a faculty's cultural environment making the "knowing of" individuals' academic and personal selves and the "matching of" these to situational needs an important consideration; and associate deans need time for structural-functional learnings but, more importantly, they need time and space to maintain their academic identities.

The research presented in this dissertation has made a contribution to academic and professional literature in higher educational organization and leadership. It is worth noting that the research process was also beneficial for participants, who all expressed gratitude for a variety of reasons and experienced different benefits, and the PIAs played a key role in the success of the research process. However, despite the contributions and success of the research, it is only a small first step made by a beginning scholar. To be sure, I am proud of the work that we have done. It was very difficult, intense, time consuming, and emotionally demanding work that came at great cost and that required all of the determination and perseverance I could muster – but there remains much to be done. Some future research falling naturally out of this dissertation is an expansion to other university constituents. I would, therefore, in future like to gather stories from associate deans across multiple faculties, from senior academic and professional administrators, from board chairs and faculty association leaders, from graduate students who are working and/or with families, from international and Indigenous students and faculty, and from government and corporate leaders. I would also like to undertake similar research within the public school system, such as with rural teachers, vice-principals, principals, directors, superintendents, school board chairs, teachers' federation leaders, parents, and other educational community members. Finally, I'd like to supplement my current research method with an embedded ethnographic method of observing various constituents and participating in their environments.

As I conclude this study, I am reminded of the wise words that Scott used to describe a number of turning points in his life: "It's been hard to say goodbye, but interesting to say hello" (Scott, #1, p. 15). And I can't help but return to Deanna's

question about whether, with this research, I have been in part searching for my own identity. Despite learning to walk comfortably as a narrative researcher, or even maybe to run with it or groove to people's lyrics, there's still more to her question – or, rather, my initial answer was lacking. As a narrative researcher one must, actually, always be looking for oneself. The stories are, indeed, co-written. I am a part of each story, in its becoming and in its interpretation, and I have, unsurprisingly, discovered a strong affinity for much of what participants had to say – but the stories are certainly not mine. I am brought fully into the research – not "bracketed" or apart from it. So Deanna's question may be better interpreted as: How well do I know my own story? The answer I have for now, though still lacking, is: I'Me. In other words, I am knowing it better and my own academic identity better – but there is a winding path ahead with much remaining. To what I might be saying "hello," I don't yet know. I do know it'll be interesting. And I do hear the call to join others in the songs of freedom.

While I still am learning, then, how my own story might tie together, being dad is by far most meaningful for me. I sincerely hope my children have not endured too much as we have crafted this part of our story together and that they, too, might benefit from it somehow, some day.

Aidan, Rowan, and Elsie, I love you with all my heart and am immeasurably proud of what you do, how you do it, and who you are.

May your stories be the most joyous and wonderful ones yet!

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Appendix A: Research Ethics Board Approval Letter

Notification of Approval (Renewal)

Date:	May 4, 2018	
Amendment ID:	Pro00054121_REN4	
Principal Investigator:	Derek Stovin	
Study ID:	Pro00054121	
Study Title:	Transitioning to university academic administration: A narrative inquiry into the associate deanship	
Supervisor:	Randolph Wimmer	
Approved Consent Form:	Approval Date 6/14/2016	Approved Document Information & Consent Letter v4 with Track Changes
Approval Expiry Date:	Friday, May 3, 2019	

Thank you for submitting this renewal application. Your application has been reviewed and approved.

This re-approval is valid for one year. If your study continues past the expiration date as noted above, you will be required to complete another renewal request. Beginning at 30 days prior to the expiration date, you will receive notices that the study is about to expire. If you do not renew on or before the renewal expiry date, you will have to re-submit an ethics application.

Sincerely,

Anne Malena, PhD
Chair, Research Ethics Board 1

Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system).

Appendix B: Pre-Interview Activity Request

Date: Month, Day, Year

Dear: Dr. Associate Dean

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my doctoral research project about how faculty members experience the early time period in their role as an academic administrator.

As mentioned earlier, an important part of the interview process is the completion of a pre-interview activity (PIA) that allows you to reflect upon your experience and that provides us with an excellent place to begin each interview.

The first interview is called a "getting to know you" interview. For the first interview, would you please choose from two of the following suggestions and bring them with you to our first interview? We will begin by having you present and talk about the ones you completed.

1) Create a diagram that shows where your support or support systems come from.

2) Draw a picture of a place that is important to you and use key words to indicate its parts or what happens in each part.

3) Think of an activity that is important to you. Make an abstract diagram using at least three colours that expresses what it is like for you to do this activity.

4) Think of something important that happened in your life. Make two drawings that show what things were like before and after it happened. Feel free to use thought bubbles.

5) Make a schedule for your day, week, month, or year and use colours to show how time is spent. Include a legend to explain the colours.

6) Think of an activity that is important to you. Draw three pictures using colours to show how the activity has changed over time for you.

7) Think of one important part of your life (perhaps sport, money, home, a relationship, travel). Make a timeline that lists critical times or events that changed the way you experienced it.

The follow-up interviews are intended to learn more about your life/career experiences leading up to and during your time as a faculty member and as an academic administrator. Prior to each follow-up interview, please choose at least one of the PIAs and bring it/them with you to our meeting.

Suggested PIAs for Interview #2

1) Create a time-line that includes milestones along your path to entering academic life.

2) Think of something that you particularly enjoyed during your own time in school or university. Draw a sketch of what you enjoyed, including the place or location. Feel free to use labels.

3) Recall the start of a year when you were well into your academic career but not yet an academic administrator. Draw two pictures, one showing something that you found enjoyable and the other showing something that was less enjoyable. Use at least three different colours.

4) Draw a typical daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly schedule for when you were a faculty member prior to your academic administrator appointment. Use colours to indicate how time was spent and include a legend.

5) If someone made a movie about your time as an academic administrator, what would the key scenes be? Make simple hand drawn sketches of these scenes. Include thought bubbles, too.

6) Draw a diagram or picture showing your sources of support in your faculty role – prior to your academic administrator appointment. Use labels, and thought bubbles too! If you'd like, draw a second diagram or picture showing sources of support in your life prior to becoming a faculty member.

Suggested PIAs for Interview #3

1) Create a time-line that includes milestones along your path from new faculty member to the present.

2) If someone made a movie about your time as an academic administrator, what would the key scenes be? Make simple hand drawn sketches of these scenes. Include thought bubbles, too.

3) Make two drawings, one showing a good day and another showing a not so good day in your early time as an academic administrator. Feel free to use thought bubbles and colours.

4) Make a diagram of the cycle of the year in your academic administrator role. Use colours, labels, and a legend.

5) Draw a picture showing your sources of support in your academic administrator role. Use labels and thought bubbles, too!

6) Make at least three drawings or diagrams showing what it was like for you in your role as an administrator at the beginning, after a while, and at the end of your term.

7) Make a visual representation of a place that was important to you during your time as an academic administrator.

Thank you, again, for your participation. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call, email, or text.

Derek Stovin

Ph.D. Candidate (University of Alberta)
Research and Policy Analyst (Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation)

Appendix C: Clusters of Open-Ended Interview Questions

These questions are not interview scripts. Rather, they were developed as possible prompts that could be used during the field interviews. It was hoped and expected that the interviews would be conversational in nature, opening with the participant talking about the pre-interview activity, and that the need for prepared questions as prompts would be minimal.

Getting to Know You

1) Is there anyone, either real or fictional, you admire and would like to be like?

2) In the world of nature, the world of things, or the world of people, what surprises you the most?

3) If you could pick one thing that you wouldn't have to worry about anymore, what would it be?

4) Have you ever done something that has surprised other people?

5) In the year ahead, what are some of the things that you'd like to accomplish – or try for the first time?

6) In all of your interests, or all the things that you've thought about, what has puzzled you the most?

7) What is the most difficult thing you've ever had to do? Or - Is there something you've done that was really difficult to do, but you really wanted to do it?

8) If you had one week off a month, what are some of the things you think you'd like to do with that time?

9) Can you think of anything that is a nearly constant nuisance? What have you tried to do about it?

Questions related to your education and early career experiences

1) Do you recall a teacher from K-12 that you particularly enjoyed learning from? Could you tell me something that you remember from that time? What about in university?

2) What was the first university class that really got you intrigued about something? Or that maybe "scratched an itch" that you already had? With what were you engaged?

3) Do you remember applying to graduate school? Can you tell me about the time when you were deciding where to apply?

4) What did you look forward to about the role of a university professor? Was there anything that you thought you might not enjoy?

5) When you first became a university faculty member, was there anything that surprised you? Was anything more enjoyable than you thought it would be? Was anything more difficult?

6) Can you remember a time, after you'd been a faculty member for a while, when you were asked to take on something new?

7) Recall the start of a new university school year. Can you describe the first day of classes? What did you do as a professor that day?

8) Looking back, what did you like about being a professor?

9) Was there anything outside the university that you did because of your role as a professor?

Questions related to your experiences as an academic administrator

1) When you think back, before you became an academic administrator, was there anything you took on that was administrative in nature?

2) Do you remember your first day as an academic administrator?

3) When you accepted the position, what parts of the role did you look forward to? What parts of the role did you not look forward to?

4) Was there anything that surprised you when you first began your new role?

5) Did you do anything differently to prepare for your time as an academic administrator?

6) Was anything more enjoyable that you thought it would be? Anything more difficult?

7) Do you remember when you moved into the new office space? Can you describe your first impressions of the office?

8) Did you take on new committee responsibilities in your new role? What were some of them?

9) Could you describe a typical day or week in your new role?

10) With whom did you interact most often in your new role? What about in your previous role?

11) Were there people who were particularly helpful to you when you transitioned to you new role?

12) What was important to you when you first began your administrative role? How about after you'd been in the role for a while?

13) In your administrative role, is there anything that you became better at doing as time went on? Is there anything that became more enjoyable over time?

14) After you'd been in your administrative role for a while, was there anything that you missed about your previous faculty position?

15) In terms of how you went about your work when you were new in the admin role, looking back, would you have done anything differently?

16) What would you say contributed to your success or to things going well in your administrative role?

17) What did you look forward to about changing to another administrative role – Or to returning to your previous faculty appointment?

18) Looking back now, during your time as an administrator, is there a moment or an event or a person that jumps out in your memory? Perhaps something that was funny? Or surprising? Is there a particular accomplishment, small or large, that you remember?

Appendix D: Sample of Formal Invitation to Participate in the Study

Month, Day, Year

Dear: Dr. Associate Dean

I am writing to ask whether you would be interested in participating in interviews with me on the topic of how faculty members experience the transition to academic administration within the context of the Western Canadian university organization.

I am currently working to complete the requirements of a Ph.D. degree in the Educational Policy Studies department in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta.

If you were interested in participating, the research plan consists of three interviews (with the possibility of a fourth). Prior to each interview I would ask you to do a pre-interview activity in which you would make a diagram, time-line, or other visual representation about some of your experiences related to the interview topic. Each interview would take an hour to an hour and a half and would begin with a discussion of your visual representation. It is hoped that the interviews will be conversational in nature but I will also have some prepared open-ended questions that I may use to invite your reflections and memories about the interview topic. Two sample interview questions are:

1) When you first became a university faculty member, was there anything that surprised you?
2) When you accepted the administrative position, what parts of the role did you look forward to?

Please note, however, that the first interview is intended as a "getting to know you" interview, so it will be more general in nature. The interviews would be scheduled at your convenience.

Your participation is voluntary. If you consent to be involved in this interview activity, your anonymity will be maintained. You would be free to withdraw at any time. If you decide to withdraw your participation after one or more interviews, any data collected from you would be withdrawn from my study. A digital audio recorder will be used to record our interviews, which will be transcribed verbatim. You will have the opportunity to revise the transcripts if you wish. I will use a pseudonym to represent you in all work that is written or verbally presented about the interview and I will keep your audio recording, visual representation, and transcripts locked in a secure place for a minimum of 5 years following completion of this research activity.

I do not foresee any harm resulting from this activity. Instead, people often find the opportunity to reflect on their experiences to be beneficial.

If you have any further questions about the interview activity, please feel free to contact me at (306) 202-8820, my research supervisor, Dr. Randy Wimmer, at (780) 492-????, or the Chair of the Department of Educational Policy Studies, Dr. Jennifer Kelly, at (780) 492-????. Please complete and return the attached consent form if you are willing to participate. Thank you for considering this request.

Yours sincerely, Derek Stovin
My Contact Address
My Contact Email

Appendix E: Sample of Formal Consent Form to Participate in the Study

Project Title: Experiences of Transitioning to Academic Administration: A Series of Career/Life Mini-Portraits

Investigator: Derek Stovin, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta.

_____ **No**, I do not choose to participate in the interview activity.

_____ **Yes**, I agree to participate in the interview activity.

I give my consent to be interviewed for this dissertation research project. I understand that the interviews will be audio recorded. I understand that only the investigator, Derek Stovin, and his formal supervisor, if necessary for research purposes, will have access to the audio recording and transcripts. I understand that the information I provide will be kept anonymous by not referring to me by my name or location and by using a pseudonym. I understand that the information I provide may be used in oral or written research dissemination activities but that my name will not be used. I understand that I will be asked if the visual representation I draw can be used in research dissemination and that my decision about this is strictly voluntary. If I wish to see any speaking notes written from the findings of this study, I am free to contact Derek Stovin at any time and copies will be provided.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, to refuse to answer specific questions, and/or to withdraw my participation at any time. I understand that participation in any aspect of the study is voluntary and that my participation has three parts: doing pre-interview diagrams or drawings, participating in a series of 3-4 audio recorded interviews of one to one and a half hours duration, and possible follow-up questions of clarification for approximately ten minutes in the week or two after each interview.

I understand that there will be no risks involved in this study. I may, in fact, benefit from reflecting upon my experience.

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by the Faculties of Education and Extension Research Ethics Board (EE REB) at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Chair of the EE REB at (780) 492-3751.

Name of participant (Please print) _____

Signature of participant _____

Date _____

Appendix F: Selected Pre-Interview Activity Artifacts

Figure 1 (Jennifer 1):

Figure 2 (Jennifer 2):

Figure 3 (Jennifer 3):

Figure 4 (Deanna 1):

Figure 5 (Greg 1):

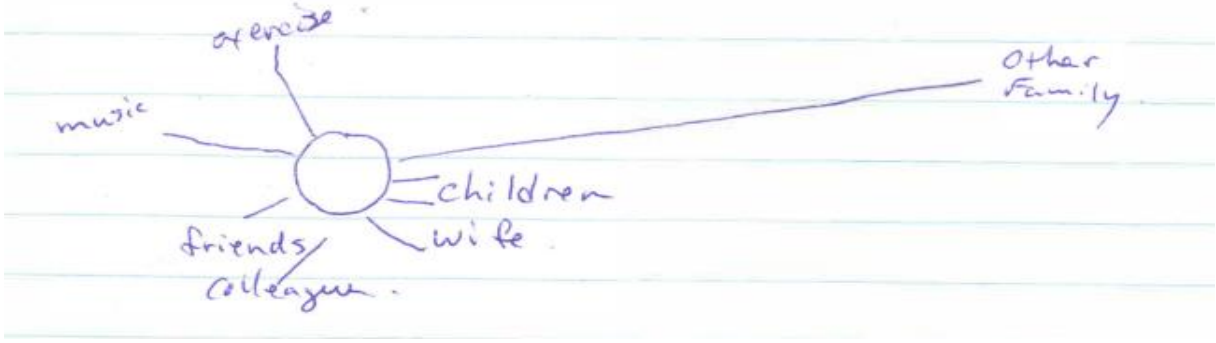


Figure 6 (Greg 2):

Figure 7 (Greg 3):

Figure 8 (Greg 4):

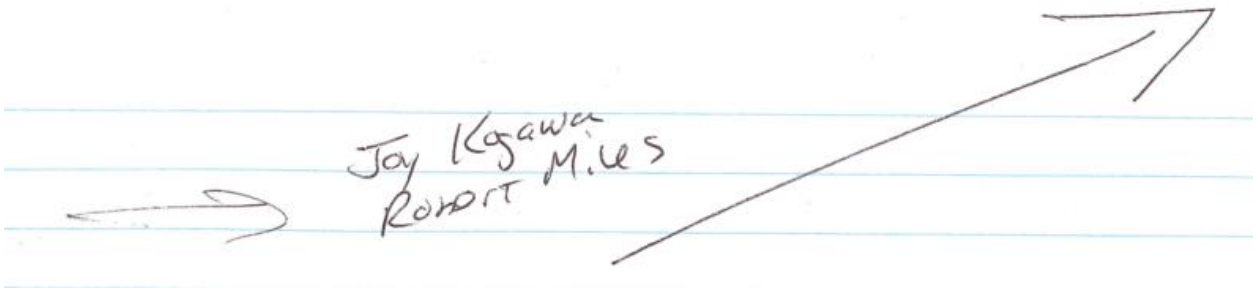


Figure 9 (Greg 5):

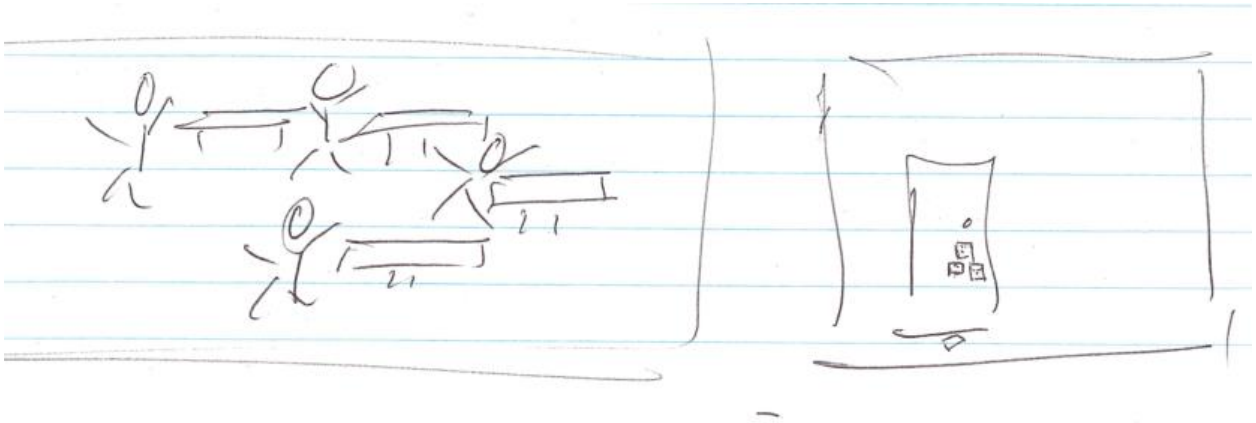


Figure 10 (Greg 6):

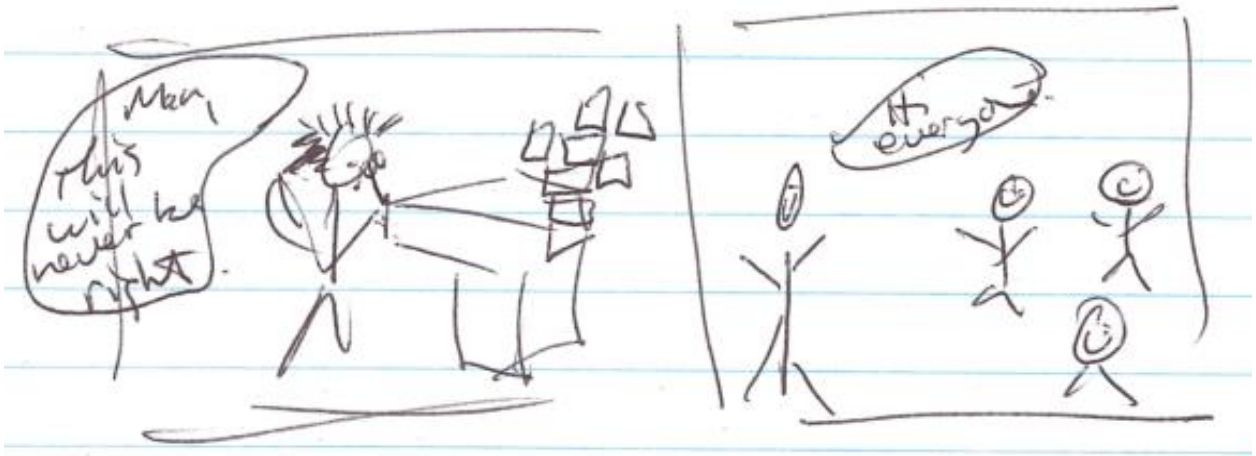


Figure 11 (Greg 7):

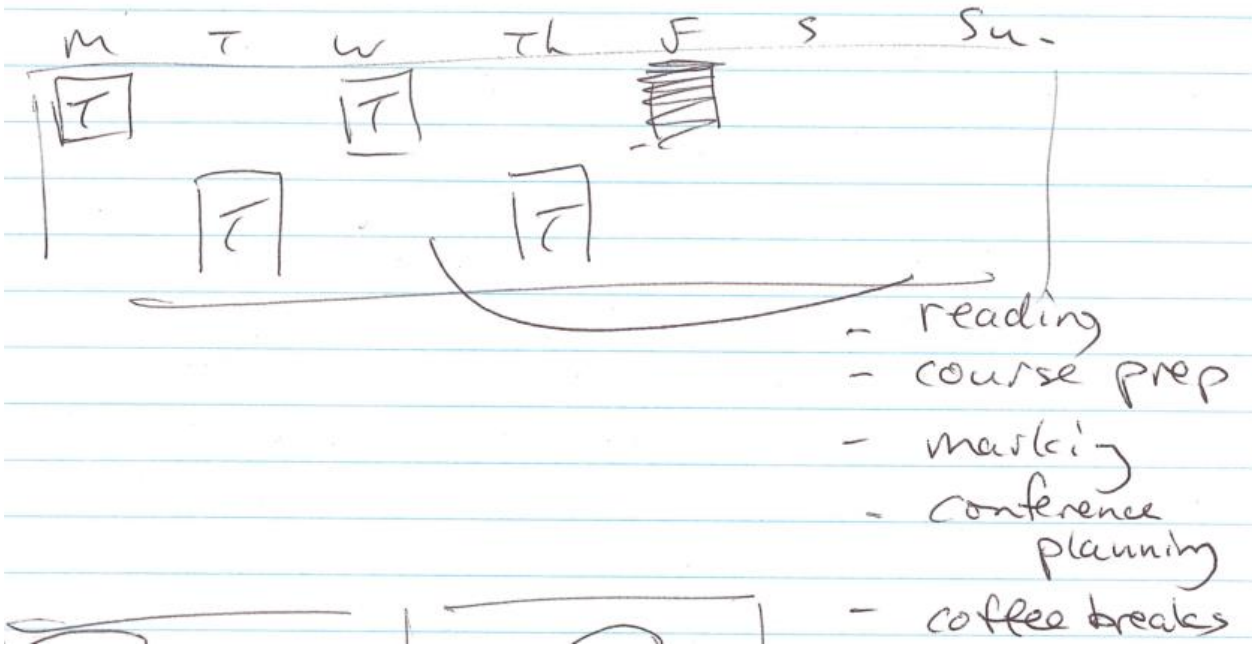


Figure 12 (Greg 8):

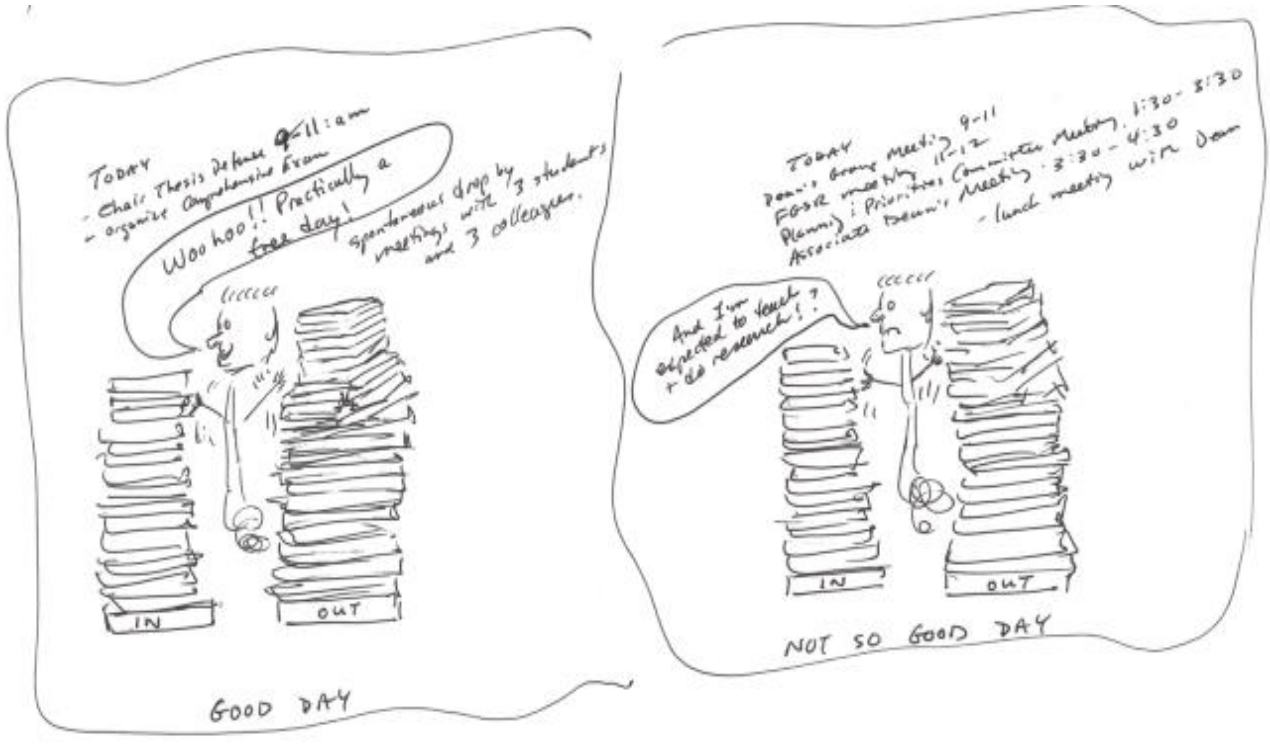


Figure 13 (Greg 9):

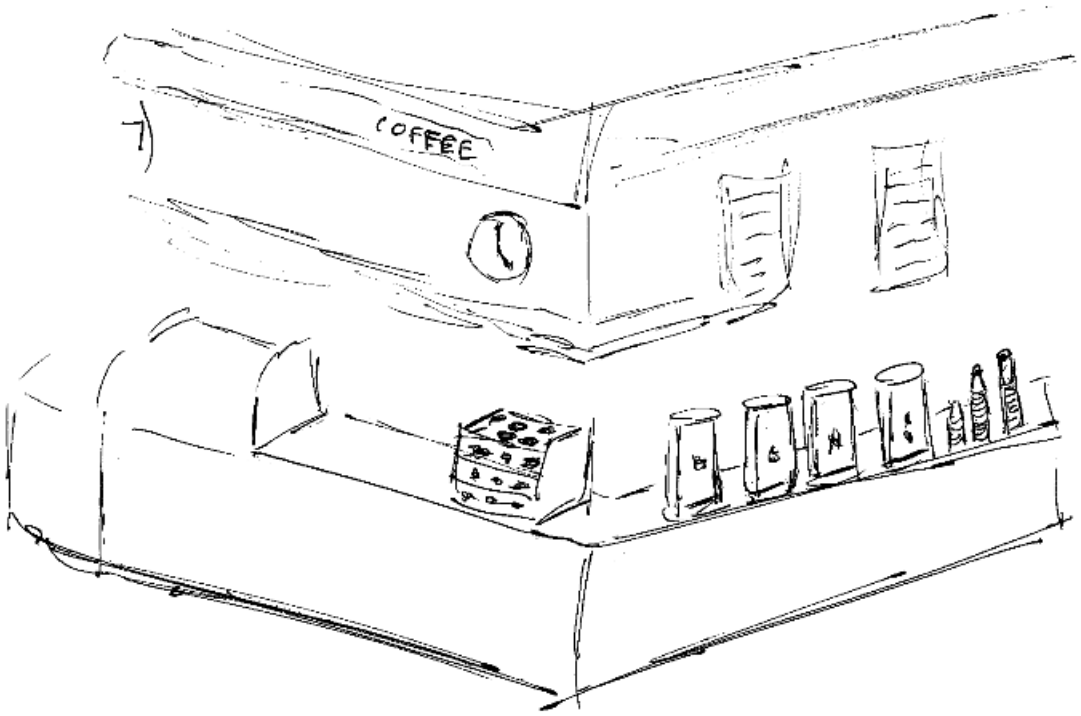
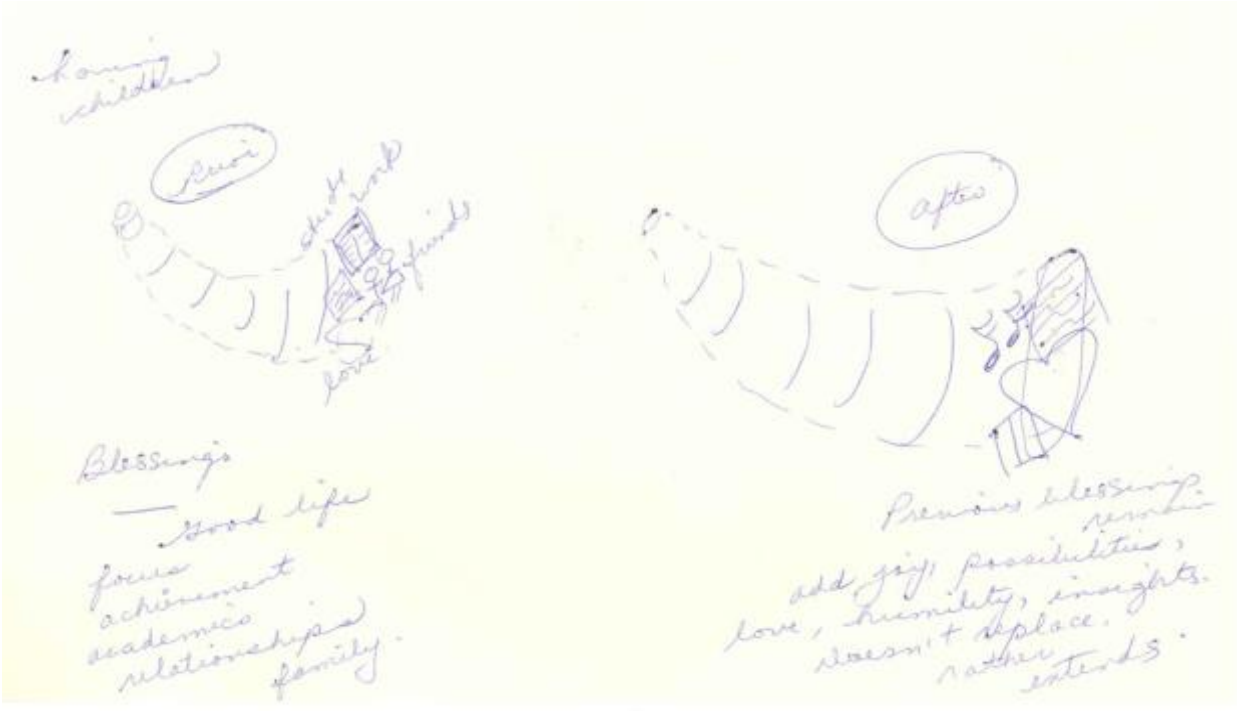


Figure 14 (Gwen 1):



Appendix G: Tables of Jennifer's Big Ideas

Table 1: Big Idea One from Jennifer's narrative: Quality of relationships through natural connections, risk-taking, and happenstance.

Related Quotes, Text, or PIA Elements	Explanation of Relation
"… it kind of brings me close to nature … and, um, to people … we are kind of connected and we are not connected … you can just enjoy being with people."	
PIA. Figure 1 (Jennifer 1).	People are central and foundational in Jennifer's PIA. Inward and outward strength is in relation to people and the environment.
"… my work consumed me. Actually, my kids used to get mad at me because I'd talk about my kids [students] … and they'd say 'mom, we're your kids' … but they enjoyed it … And I really enjoyed the community. I became quite well accepted by the community."	
"… I knew them, and they knew me, really, really well … and the parents knew that they could come and talk to me."	
"You also learn the complexities, that it's not all terrible, there's a lot of joy, there's a lot of laughter, a lot of close connection."	
"The first day I was there, I walked into the cafeteria, and [someone], who has become a very dear friend … introduced herself … She said 'Such an interesting application … You know, … you might be like me.'"	
"I actually met the person who would end up being my [Ph.D.] supervisor."	At Jennifer's first conference during Master's studies, which she was encouraged to attend by a mentor.
"… has become a dear friend … I just loved the paper that she gave, so I went up to her afterwards and we got talking, and so … you know, we just really enjoyed talking to one another."	Another established scholar met at the same initial conference.
"… I happened to be going out [to where she worked] … you know, all these connections … we had lunch at the Faculty Club. Well, that's where we really got to talk, … she invited me to teach."	
"I stayed in residence and we would have these fantastic conversations at dinner time … almost have a second class … it was FANTASTIC."	Experience of teaching first university class, during summer.
"It was this convergence of scholarship and friendship and location that has been really important in my life."	
"… I always love in September, getting back into my office, students … dropping in, chatting, chatting with your colleagues."	

Table 1 (Continued):

Related Quotes, Text, or PIA Elements	Explanation of Relation
"But THIS … I ALWAYS resented it tremendously … I had no reason to, it wasn't like I got bad reports … I just hated the process and I hated what it did to relationships."	Speaking about the negative side of returning to professor work each fall. That is, the review processes and how they didn't capture what was most meaningful.
PIA. Figure 2 (Jennifer 2).	Depicts the barrenness of an empty desk with reminders of annual report due. Contrasts with the vitality of the warm, open, inviting space where meaningful conversations happen – oriented to the greater good.
"… I would never have imagined that there would be people … so personally incensed by what had happened that they would see me and would literally turn around and walk the other way."	Speaking about negative outcomes when relationships are damaged.

Table 2a: Big Idea Two from Jennifer's narrative: Openness of literal space providing more egalitarian access to ideas.

(Literal Space) Related Quotes, Text, or PIA Elements	Explanation of Relation
"I know that I live here now, and that it is important to me now, but … in the summer, when I was doing my doctoral work, and then even after … I would come here in the summer … I LOVED [this place]."	
"I feel very still there, it kind of brings me close to nature … and we are all kind of just enjoying this place together."	
"It was the most fascinating place for thinking about power, and organizational structures, and how … hegemony works."	
"It was this convergence of scholarship and friendship and location that has been really important in my life."	
"… the Dean used to come by my door, literally every day, and say 'Jennifer, are you done yet? [laughter]"	The door of Jennifer's office was on the Dean's way to the parking lot.
PIA. Figure 2 (Jennifer 2).	The positive side of the PIA depicts the physical features of Jennifer's office set up designed to foster openness, conversation, and deliberation.
"… I always love in September, getting back into my office, students … dropping in, chatting, chatting with your colleagues."	
"I [returned] here, [my water front road] was my best friend …"	

Table 2b: Big Idea Two from Jennifer's narrative: Openness of figurative space providing more egalitarian access to ideas.

(Figurative Space) Related Quotes, Text, or PIA Elements	Explanation of Relation
"I found it was a place that was so peaceful and so energizing at the same time … it is the place that I return to."	
"I really enjoyed the community. I became quite well accepted."	
"… a very important part of my life … opening up my eyes [to] … what social injustice looks like … [to] begin to see it, to understand it in a whole different way."	Speaking about school and community experiences upon returning to teaching.
"It was this convergence of scholarship and friendship and location that has been really important in my life."	
"… the Dean used to come by my door, literally every day, and say 'Jennifer, are you done yet? [laughter]"	Jennifer was in a figurative space within a community of scholars where she experienced encouragement and positive relationships.
PIA. Figure 2 (Jennifer 2).	The positive side of the PIA shows a view out the window that reminds Jennifer of the purpose(s) of the university and what is most important in the work that she does.
"I had a view [out the window] … which always sort of reminded me of what this was all about, why we were doing the kind of stuff that we were doing."	
"Really, it was a space for interaction with people, and outside in the halls, and downstairs in the cafeteria, everywhere you went, you were bumping into people, and chatting … that kind of stuff, it was just sooo stimulating."	
"… having a bird's eye view of the university and how its parts interact with one another [is important] but … you learned so much, … you know an awful lot about the university and about the faculty … and you walk out with that knowledge and it is almost impossible to share it with somebody."	
"… our modus operandi was that this was a renovation, that this was practically a tearing the house down and starting again."	

Table 3: Big Idea Three from Jennifer's narrative: Commitment to the ideals of the academy.

Related Quotes, Text, or PIA Elements	Explanation of Relation
"When I became a teacher you didn't have to go to university … I WANTED to go to university."	Jennifer wanted to go to university to study at a higher level but was discouraged or not allowed by family member(s).
Jennifer began to study for a B.Ed. during a period of "mottled" work and when she returned to teaching.	Jennifer's university studies took on even greater meaning for her because of her more recent teaching experiences. She didn't need to, but wanted to – and made it work despite being a single mom.
Jennifer applied for and received a teaching sabbatical for post-graduate studies.	
"… I just kind of kept rolling … kept rolling with the opportunities as they presented themselves … I REALLY wanted to keep going."	
"I had a view [out the window] … which always sort of reminded me of what this was all about, why we were doing the kind of stuff that we were doing."	The view evoked thoughts of the foundations of public institutions, the purpose(s) of public education, the responsibilities of teachers, the necessity of valuing multiple perspectives and values, etc.
PIA. Figure 2 (Jennifer 2).	The positive side of the PIA depicts the importance of meaningful connections and positive relationships – the human side that is not valued by the structural university systems represented by the depictions of the annual report reminders.
"THIS [first side] was so positive, and so exciting, and so [pause] – That opportunity to think with other people, to share ideas with other people, that was sooo exciting, and why I was there, really, [pause]. That was what drew me to the academy."	
"But THIS [second side] part, this mechanistic, cyphering of the work that we did. I ALWAYS resented it tremendously … It just kind of sucked the air out of all that was so positive and rich about THIS [first] kind of experience."	
"This kind of centralized repository, … where they use algorithms to kind of congregate information so that you can make decisions about which faculty is doing what … That whole think really offended me, not because I didn't benefit from it, actually, but because it just flew in the face of what I really believed to be important in academic work."	

Table 3 (Continued):

Related Quotes, Text, or PIA Elements	Explanation of Relation
"The whole MERIT process was so repugnant to me, because in many ways it pushes you right back to constructing the work that you do in very particular ways – and someone else, outside, judging … and all these mechanical markers … so it really inserts itself into the kind of freedom of scholarship that was available to us prior to that."	
The previous committee's work included the development of faculty-wide acceptance of a philosophy and guiding principles for the re-development of the curriculum and program.	
"The first thing we did was the blue sky … based on the work that had been done … prior … we didn't need a redecorating, we needed a renovation … so we were really excited and convinced … [and] we came into this with our hearts and our souls."	
"We consulted, we worked together, we felt creative … spent a lot of time thinking about what this might look like in light of the principles and in light of the philosophy."	
"We were going to live true to the principles and true to the philosophy … [that] all the faculty had agreed on, and voted on."	
"We gave up tons of time, and tons of personal life, … because we really, REALLY, believed in this process. We REALLY believed in what we had put together … it offered the opportunity to be very CREATIVE."	
"I was trying to operate based on what the faculty had said is what should happen. And that was that we do this collaboratively, collectively."	
"I felt really strongly at the time that the fairer thing to do was to consult collectively, … that if you are doing it with particular individuals, that it kind of suggests a preference for particular voices."	
"… to me that seemed to go against the process [and the principles] that the faculty had set in place."	Speaking about consulting too heavily with individuals who "were strong" and "had strong voices." Jennifer had a desire to ensure that all faculty members' voices could be heard.