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Susan K. Gardner and Daniela Veliz

Institutional striving can be defined as “the pursuit of prestige within the academic hierarchy” (O’Meara, 2007, p. 123). Striving behaviors within higher education institutions result from a desire to emulate more successful institutions in an effort to gain more market advantage (Bess & Dee, 2008). Given the declining economic climate in this country for public higher education, institutions may be even more apt to participate in what has been termed “mission drift” or “academic drift” (Berdahl, 1985) in which “institutions drift away from their original missions toward norms of prestige and status typical of and established by more elite institutions” (Morphew & Huisman,

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2002, p. 492), often referred to as institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The perspective offered by DiMaggio and Powell and others is one in which organizations—or, in this case, higher education institutions—are highly influenced by the external environment. The environment can be defined as the social, cultural, political, legal, and economic trends; technological advancements; information; and the surrounding physical environment (Bess & Dee, 2008; Katz & Kahn, 1978). In this way, institutions that strive for market advantage or prestige are influenced by the external environment to do so, whether due to economic, social, or political reasons.

Striving behaviors are often seen in multiple aspects of the institution, such as changing rhetoric about increasing student quality, but they may also be seen through changing expectations and guidelines for faculty work (O'Meara, 2007), as evidenced in the faculty reward system. As such, the faculty reward system is a direct reflection of institutional priorities (Diamond, 1993).

Studies of faculty working at institutions exhibiting these striving behaviors have pointed to their sense of increased expectations for publication and research to gain promotion and tenure, particularly in those institutions originally considered comprehensive institutions (or regionally serving institutions) in their quest to become more research-oriented (Finnegan & Gamson, 1996; Henderson & Kane, 1991; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2005; Youn & Price, 2009). At the same time, relatively little empirical research exists analyzing actual differences in expectations over time in these striving environments.

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of a changing mission at one striving university upon its promotion and tenure criteria over time. We begin with a brief discussion of the related literature, followed by an overview of the methods in the study. We then discuss our findings as well as implications for practice and future research. In our treatment of the topic, we use “striving” to identify the behaviors exhibited by institutions of higher education, as outlined by O'Meara (2007) and describe the institutions that participate in these behaviors as “striving institutions.” This use of terminology is not meant to conflate the issue: While all institutions of higher education certainly strive for success and excellence, not all necessarily strive to gain prestige or a higher place in the academic and research hierarchy. However, we use “striving” as an umbrella term to describe behaviors that aim to increase prestige and ranking and the institutions that exhibit them.

STRIVING AND FACULTY REWARD SYSTEMS

Faculty work is largely seen to encompass three main areas: teaching, research, and service (Clark, 1987). How this triumvirate of faculty work is distributed, however, varies greatly by both institutional type as well as

individual setting; for example, teaching and advising may be emphasized more strongly at a liberal arts institution whereas research is indicated as the most important for those employed at research universities (Clark, 1987). As such, “institutional mission sets the expectation for faculty performance and how teaching, research, and service are weighted in the reward system” (Chan & Burton, 1995, p. 222). The faculty reward system, or the system through which promotion, tenure, and other assessments of faculty work are made, is often based on the evaluation of a combination of these three arenas (O’Meara, 2011). Faculty learn how to engage in these areas of academic work through the process of socialization (Austin, 2002; Corcoran & Clark, 1984), during which they participate with others in more advanced positions both formally (e.g., graduate school, faculty mentoring programs) and informally (e.g., observation). Coming to understand a given academic unit’s faculty reward system is, in itself, a process of socialization as new faculty watch and learn how their more senior peers have advanced and succeeded in the unit and receive feedback on their own progress toward the goals of promotion and tenure, such as through annual evaluations (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996).

Generally, faculty have a better idea about how the faculty reward system works if they are in an institution with a clear mission (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006a). Thus, a particular institution’s faculty reward system becomes a proxy through which the institution’s priorities and mission are transmitted (Chan & Burton, 1995; Diamond, 1993). O’Meara (2011) comments: “Reflected in reward systems are the greatest aspirations of its leaders, its greatest insecurities, and a distribution of power” (pp. 164–165). In other words, faculty reward systems—such as the promotion-tenure system at a given institution—reflects what the institution’s leaders value (e.g., a desired level of scholarly output at a research university) as well as their concerns (e.g., not enough scholarly output at a comprehensive university that strives to be known for more research). In turn, those individuals who exhibit the desired traits are rewarded with promotion and tenure, for example, and those who do not are denied.

If institutions with clear missions provide greater clarity for faculty about its reward system (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006a), then institutions exhibiting academic drift, or “the tendency of institutions, absent any restraint, to copy the role and mission of the prestige institutions” (Berdahl, 1985, p. 303), may provide a more uneven context for both faculty work and institutional priorities. In other words, when an institution’s mission changes or drifts, so, too, may the faculty reward system (O’Meara, 2011). In their study of academic mothers on the tenure-track at different institutional types, Wolf-Wendel and Ward (2006a) found that newer faculty members at striving universities were often expected to teach heavy course loads and publish while their more senior colleagues had received tenure and promotion through lesser expectations in these arenas. They remarked, “The missions of these

campuses are in a considerable state of flux, leaving faculty uncertain about what it takes to get tenure” (p. 504). Moreover, given the socialization process in academia that expects new faculty to be mentored by their more senior colleagues (Buch, Huet, Rorrer, & Roberson, 2011; Hilmer & Hilmer, 2007), problems may arise for new faculty in these striving environments who are to be mentored by senior faculty who were tenured and promoted under a different set of expectations (Austin, 2003; Coppola & Roush, 2004).

The literature related to institutional striving has pinpointed the fact that particular institutional types are more prone to academic drift than others. Specifically, comprehensive institutions—or public institutions characterized by an emphasis on teaching (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006a)—are often those found in the “middle of the institutional hierarchy” (Clark, 1987, p. 126). Scholars have found that these institutions may be more apt to lean toward these striving behaviors (Finnegan & Gamson, 1996), particularly in times of declining resources or uncertain futures (O’Meara, 2007). In their study of faculty life at these striving comprehensive institutions, Wolf-Wendel and Ward (2005) commented that the “upward mobility the campus desires is often [gained] at the expense of faculty” (p. 8). An institution seeking to increase its prestige will often pressure its faculty to garner more research support (Brewer, Gates, & Goldman, 2001), thereby changing the institutional culture through a new set of behaviors and attitudes (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Tierney, 1988). At the same time, a relationship may exist between those institutions seeking to increase prestige and rankings due to diminishing funding (Massy & Wilger, 1995), in that higher rankings and classifications—seen as markers of prestige (McCormick & Zhao, 2005)—can also become the basis for the allocation of such resources as research grants (McCormick & Zhao, 2005) and increased admissions applications (Gamson, 1997).

Striving institutions also exhibit several traits in relation to their faculty members and their reward system. These traits include (a) a greater attempt to hire “faculty stars” who possess a research emphasis; (b) a decrease in faculty teaching load, an increase in discretionary time, and a loosening of institutional ties with an increased emphasis on disciplinary ties; (c) an increase in expectations for research in promotion and tenure; and (d) a rise in expectations for grants, awards, and prestigious fellowships (O’Meara, 2007, p. 131).

Interestingly, disciplinary differences have been evidenced in these striving traits, with the result that disciplines in STEM fields may be expected to carry much of the prestige-seeking load through producing more external funding in exchange for a reduced teaching load, while disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, for example, have often been expected to meet higher teaching and advising expectations due to what has been seen as an inability to procure substantial extramural funding (Massy & Wilger, 1995; Massy & Zemsky, 1994; Meyer, 1993; Sanford, 2011; Volk, Slaughter, &

Thomas, 2001). In turn, disciplinary differences and conflicts can also play out in these striving institutions' environments, particularly as those disciplines that can create more funding, like STEM fields, are also those that are the most costly for an institution to run (McLendon, Mokher, & Doyle, 2009).

Faculty are often seen as the cause of such striving behaviors—perhaps due to their graduate training that emphasizes research over teaching, for example (Fairweather, 1995; Massy & Zemsky, 1994; Morphey & Huisman, 2002). However, also dictating these changes are the administrators seeking such upward mobility (Gonzales, 2013; O'Meara, 2007; Rhoades, 2000). O'Meara discussed certain symbols of striving behaviors emanating from the administration including the use of language, speeches, and websites to shape the external image of the institution as more prestigious, or using this language to shape an internal view of the institution as evidenced through goal statements and directives (p. 131). Examples of such symbols might be in shifting mission statements, strategic plans, and expectations for promotion and tenure (O'Meara, 2007; O'Meara & Bloomgarden, 2011).

In any given institution of higher education, its promotion and tenure criteria not only reflect institutional mission, goals, and directives (Diamond, 1993) but also reflect particular disciplinary and departmental norms and conventions (Becher & Trowler, 2001), such that, even within a single institutional context, disciplinary differences may result in diffuse promotion and tenure expectations. For example, a striving institution may exhibit increased expectations for scholarship production for all of its faculty but this explicit expectation may vary greatly from a department in the sciences to one in the humanities. These disciplinary differences represent cultural differences that may promulgate a stronger emphasis on particular parts of the faculty reward system or the faculty work load (Becher & Trowler, 2001; Clark, 1987).

Regardless of disciplinary difference, however, researchers have found that these striving institutions generally place a greater emphasis on research productivity and, increasingly, on extramural funding efforts (Henderson, 2011; Morphey & Huisman, 2002; O'Meara, 2007; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2005). Indeed, research productivity has become a central hallmark of faculty reward systems, including faculty pay, regardless of institutional type or mission (Dey, Milem, & Berger, 1997; Fairweather, 1995). At striving comprehensive institutions, however, researchers have discussed the self-reports of faculty members who comment about an increased pressure to produce (Henderson, 2011), as evidenced through the expectation to publish more or procure more external funds.

In sum, the combination of an institution's promotion and tenure criteria in concert with its stated mission may reveal its striving ambitions. And while the literature has pointed to these upwardly ratcheting expectations in promotion and tenure standards as reported by faculty in striving universities (Chan & Burton, 1995; Finnegan & Gamson, 1996; Henderson, 2011;

O'Meara, 2007; O'Meara & Bloomgarden, 2011; Rhoades, 2000, 2009; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2005; Youn & Price, 2009), no known studies have actually analyzed the promotion and tenure criteria of such institutions to examine changes over time and to document these striving behaviors.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGY

Inherent in the academic drift or striving behaviors of a given institution is its changing or shifting mission (O'Meara, 2007). The mission of an institution "influences all aspects of the day-by-day institutional life and the future growth and development of the college or university" (Barr, 2000, p. 25). In this way, the mission of the institution represents its particular strategy about its future goals and change. Organizational strategy can be defined as "the use and allocation of organizational resources to accomplish long-run objectives" (Middlemist & Hitt, 1988, p. 433). A key premise of organizational strategy is that the organization cannot be separated from its environment (Chaffee, 1985): "The organization uses strategy to deal with changing environments" (p. 89). From this perspective, a college or university uses strategy in either a proactive or reactive fashion to respond to external environmental actions (Bess & Dee, 2008). In other words, an institution of higher education that seeks to change its mission through striving behaviors may be implementing strategy to meet the goal of increased prestige, rankings, or external funding.

Higher education literature discusses several types of organizational strategy, including linear strategy, adaptive strategy, and interpretive strategy. We present here the oft-cited conceptualizations of Chaffee (1985) related to strategy. Linear strategy focuses on planning, including the planned steps, decisions, and actions that will meet a stated goal. Linear strategy is often seen in strategic planning initiatives, for example. In this view of strategy, the administration or top managers have the capacity and power to change the organization, typically in a tightly coupled environment. A typical view of the environment external to the organization from this perspective of strategy is that it is relatively stable or predictable. Obviously, this form of strategy may not be robust if it does not take into account the variable environment or the complexity of the process.

The second type of strategy, adaptive strategy, is more flexible. Adaptive strategy "suggests that successful strategy depends in part on the potential of organizations to deviate from extant patterns of behavior and culture. It focuses less on decisions about goals but more on the means to reach such goals. Unlike linear strategy, adaptive strategy is characterized by a less top-down model of control. While managers and administration will still take responsibility for the direction of these types of strategy, this model has more opportunities for other stakeholders' involvement. In other words, this view of strategy is more nuanced and amenable to a changing environment

(Chaffee, 1985). Adaptive strategy is often seen when colleges and universities are seeking “practices to borrow, markets to enter, and new ideas to implement” (Bess & Dee, 2008, p. 726).

Chaffee’s (1985) third model is interpretive strategy. In this model, strategy is considered more of a social contract among individual members in the organization that results in a mutually beneficial exchange. In effect, the interpretive model promulgates a social constructivist viewpoint of strategy wherein each individual’s perceptions and viewpoints are valid and come together to create a favorable outcome for the organization. This more symbolic view of strategy is one that produces “a common understanding of the institution’s goals, behaviors, and outcomes” (Bess & Dee, 2008, p. 713). Given the need for consensus and collectivity among stakeholders, such a model of strategy is certainly more difficult to implement and is one that cannot be as easily directed from the administration as adaptive or linear strategy. In Chaffee’s (1984) own study of strategic management in higher education, she remarked, “Generally speaking, the interpretive model depicts strategy as disjointed, unintegrated, and multifaceted. Such characteristics are inevitable in a system that exists only because participants have consented to act together as long as their individual interests are satisfied” (p. 220). From this perspective, interpretive strategy exists in an organization where participants are “autonomous, willful, self-interested, social beings” (p. 221). Faculty members could certainly fit this bill, especially when one considers the existing pressures on faculty members to conform at once to individual, departmental, disciplinary, and institutional pressures to gain legitimacy and credibility. In this way, promotion and tenure criteria at a given institution can be seen as reflecting an individual’s need to gain legitimacy, while at the same time meeting disciplinary and institutional standards that are joined together at the departmental level.

In this way, interpretive strategy is well suited for most higher education institutions, particularly as they are often described as “organized anarchies” (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972), where there is rarely agreement about goals and how to achieve them. In these situations, ambiguity reigns and the linear, rational view of reality that might be suggested by linear or even adaptive strategy is not realistic for leaders (Bess & Dee, 2008). Similarly, since higher education institutions are populated by different constituencies with often differing (and even competing) goals and needs (Birnbaum, 1988), strategy can be seen as an organization-wide activity, not just a top-management concern (Van Cauwenbergh & Cool, 1982). In ambiguous environments, such as higher education organizations, strategy may almost be seen as evolving rather than as an intentional, a priori goal (Bess & Dee, 2008). In this way, the self-interests of the diverse constituencies in higher education organizations are often best served by the interpretative model of strategy (Chaffee, 1984). At the same time, however, an interpretive strategy is often evidenced

through symbols and symbolic communications (Chaffee, 1985), as is true of the social constructionist perspective of which interpretive strategy is a part (Bess & Dee, 2008).

Regardless of the model employed in an organization, strategy exists in higher education institutions to allow for competition and responsiveness to changing external environments (Bess & Dee, 2008). Particularly in times where economic environments may be less favorable to public higher education, strategy can become an important tool for adaptation and survival (Bess & Dee, 2008). Indeed, there is evidence that striving behaviors exhibited by higher education institutions can be economically driven (Gardner, 2013; Gates, 1997; Slaughter, 1985), because mimetic isomorphism—or the desire for organizations in uncertain environments to emulate or imitate successful organizations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983)—can be seen in the highly ambiguous environments produced by budget cuts or reduced funding. Certainly, the eroding fiscal environment for public higher education in the United States is one source of pressure for increased market advantage and prestige seeking (Brewer, Gates, & Goldman, 2001; Leslie & Rhoades, 1995; Sanford, 2011).

Returning to the discussion of striving institutions of higher education and their shifting faculty reward systems, one can see how a strategy to pursue more prestige in the academic hierarchy might be manifested through increasing expectations for faculty work, in what Scott (1987) referred to as “procedural conformity,” or “the pressure to carry out activities in specified ways. These pressures often emanate from uncertainty or explicit normative pressures that require their adoption” (p. 196). In other words, strategy guides the decisions to change promotion and tenure criteria as one vehicle through which the goal of increased institutional prestige may be reached. It is this understanding of strategy that we employed in our study of one striving university’s changing promotion and tenure criteria.

METHODS

The research question driving this study was, “How do the promotion and tenure guidelines from 1980–2012 reflect the striving ambitions of one formerly comprehensive university?” The study was qualitative in nature as it allowed for a deeper understanding of the context (Maxwell, 1996) within which the striving behaviors occurred. We refer to the institution we studied as Striving University (SU). Located in the United States, it is part of a larger, public university system in its state. A mid-sized institution, SU offers a full complement of academic programs as well as degrees ranging from the baccalaureate to doctorate. None of SU’s programs was nationally ranked by the National Research Council.

The data for the study consisted of the promotion and tenure documents stored in the SU provost's office dating from 1980. Of SU's total 36 academic units, promotion and tenure criteria for 30 units were available from at least 1980. We excluded the six remaining units, since they did not exist until later. Of the 30 units whose criteria we analyzed, 28 had criteria to 1980, with the remaining two dating from 1973 and 1978 respectively. Thus, the documents for our 30 units of interest reflect a convenience sample, while nevertheless also reflecting an interesting and turbulent time in the history of public higher education in the United States—one in which public approval and funding diminished (Cohen, 2007).

During the 32-year time span from 1980 to 2012, most of the academic units had several iterations of their promotion and tenure criteria on file, ranging from two to six revisions. The mean number of revisions for all units was 3.83 in the 32 years examined. The units examined also varied in the amount of detail provided as well as other supplementary materials included in the promotion and tenure criteria. Individual sets of criteria ranged from three to 15 pages. In other words, SU did not have a standard guideline for the structure or format of these criteria; instead, academic units were allowed to create their own criteria and revise them at will, thereby making them excellent artifacts to demonstrate change over time. Once revised, units passed up new criteria through the academic administration to be approved by the respective college's dean, the provost, and then the president of the university before they were considered fully ratified.

SU's process for the creation and revision of promotion and tenure criteria is based on its unionized status and regulations for such policies in its contract. In other words, the contract stipulates which aspects of faculty work are to be examined in evaluations, including teaching, research, and service. In this way, promotion and tenure criteria at SU were like those of other U.S. universities, which also have requirements for teaching, research, and service for most academic units' faculty. SU's unionized status also ensured that, according to its typical contract in use in 2008, the full-time faculty of a given academic unit were responsible to "develop evaluation criteria, select members, and designate appropriate review committee structures." While academic administrators were allowed by contract to approve or suggest revisions to a given unit's criteria, ultimately the faculty had the final say about what a fellow faculty member would be evaluated on and how. In this way, the faculty members' voices were apparent in the promotion and tenure criteria examined.

To analyze the data, we used document content analysis techniques (Merriam, 1998), specifically those of ethnographic content analysis (Altheide, 1987) to identify thematic elements of the promotion and tenure criteria at SU. Content analysis is "a systematic procedure for describing the content

of communications” (Merriam, 1998, p. 123). We primarily used an inductive technique in the analysis that was simultaneously guided by categories and variables for examination (Merriam, 1998)—specifically, categories and variables related to teaching and research as stated in the promotion and tenure criteria. Given the focus on the striving behaviors of SU, however, we specifically examined the portions of the criteria that detailed expectations related to teaching and research/scholarship as these areas are typically indicators of shifting expectations in these striving environments (Chan & Burton, 1995; Finnegan & Gamson, 1996; Henderson, 2011; O’Meara, 2007). For example, as a striving institution is often focused on shifting from a teaching-centered to a research-centered mission (O’Meara, 2007), we purposefully sought wording that discussed the value of teaching and research in promotion and tenure decisions.

All promotion and tenure documents at SU were organized by individual sections describing the expectations for teaching, research, and service, as well as some preamble material that often discussed the value of each in overall decision-making. While we note that it is typically the triumvirate of teaching, research, and service that guides faculty work and the corresponding reward system (Clark, 1987), both the literature related to striving (e.g., O’Meara, 2007) and the institution’s own mission statements overemphasized teaching and research. From this perspective, our initial coding of the documents sought only incidents or words related to “teaching” or “research,” including terms such as “scholarship” or its variants (e.g., “scholarly pursuits”) within each individual section of the criteria as well as in expectations for promotion to different ranks (i.e., associate, full). In addition to expectations surrounding teaching and research, we also examined preamble materials in the criteria to better understand how the departmental mission and, in some cases, the institutional mission affected their expectations of the particular faculty reward system in that unit.

Each file also included internal memos and letters from previous SU deans, provosts, presidents, and the academic unit’s chairpersons and directors. These memos provided feedback about the units’ revisions and whether they were up to the standards of these individual administrators as well as some campus-wide memos that were distributed in a given year to all academic units asking them to pay particular attention to specific areas when revising. As discussed earlier, however, not all units had made revisions in any given year, pointing to a unit’s independence in creating revisions when desired rather than when prompted to do so. Finally, to complement data analysis and to better situate changes in promotion and tenure over time, we also analyzed the mission statements of SU dating back to 1980 through the latest revision in 2010. These documents were available through SU’s library archives, generally in the preface information of the university catalogs.

We were both simultaneously involved in coding each of the 30 documents, but we worked independently, seeking terms related to teaching and research and how each unit's criteria emphasized them over time. Each department had a file that included current and past revisions of their criteria dating back to the late 1970s. We noted the number of revisions and then began with the most current version of the criteria and worked backward, noting changes in wording relating to teaching and research in each revision.

We also conducted more inductive analyses, involving "the simultaneous coding of raw data and the construction of categories that capture relevant characteristics of the documents' content" (Merriam, 1998, p. 160). This approach allowed for a more reflexive meaning-making of the documents. Specifically, we examined criteria across departments as well as within them, noting similarities and differences, resulting in themes. Altheide (1987) explained, "Although categories and 'variables' initially guide the study, others are allowed and expected to emerge throughout the study" (p. 68).

Finally, the view of strategy according to Chaffee (1985) entered into our analysis. Specifically, we utilized her three models of strategy (linear, adaptive, and interpretive) as a guiding framework, as we sought to understand the who, how, and why of any changes in promotion and tenure expectations over time. In the end, we produced individual documents representing the codes and incidents of "teaching" and "research" for each of the 30 units' criteria. We then considered these 30 code sheets to observe larger trends among changes in teaching and research expectations within individual units over time and at SU overall, resulting in the themes discussed below.

We obtained trustworthiness of the analysis through researcher triangulation, in which we both coded each document independently and then compared and contrasted our analyses in the 30 individually produced code sheets, including a comparison of codes and themes we determined in the inductive analysis. In these sessions, we each provided a code sheet for each department reviewed and the major themes across departments, both of which we developed independently. We then compared codes and themes. While the general themes were congruent, we did find some dissimilar initial codes. Through our conversations, we came to see that, while we had initially different codes, the themes we found were congruent. Ultimately, conversations about the meaning of the independently created codes and their connection to the larger themes led to the findings we present below.

In addition, we also engaged in peer debriefing through conversations with four full professors at SU from different disciplines ranging from STEM to the humanities, who had built their entire careers at the institution (averaging 22 years). In these conversations, we shared our themes resulting from data analysis, and every individual enthusiastically validated these findings.

FINDINGS

The analysis of the 30 units' promotion and tenure documents at SU revealed several interesting dynamics at play during the time period studied. Below, we present an overview of each of the themes that emerged from the analysis, including (a) shifting priorities, (b) increased expectations, (c) quantity and quality, and (d) expanding reputation. We also provide examples of each of these themes and changes over time, most often presented by each department throughout the time period studied, in tandem with Chaffee's (1984, 1985) view of strategy.

Shifting Priorities

Discussing strategy as either adaptive—in which an organization faces an uncertain environment and adapts in order to gain sufficient resources to survive—or interpretive—in which the organization exists as a social contract among individuals who jockey for positions that will let them achieve their individual aims, Chaffee (1984) focused on small private colleges facing changing environments and how they managed these changes. In our study, SU, though a public university, also experienced many changes in both its external and internal environments. These changes were made apparent in a few different aspects of the promotion and tenure criteria examined as well as in the institution's mission statements. As historical document analysis indicated, SU has struggled with its identity and mission over time, focusing in its first century on being a teaching-centered college that served its surrounding region. As public expenditures on higher education in the state dwindled in the past 30 years, however, SU has shifted to a greater focus on research and external funding. The context in which SU currently finds itself is between its teaching-centered past and its research-centered future, often evidenced by disparate teaching loads among departments with more teaching being expected of disciplines that bring in less extramural funding (e.g., the humanities) and less teaching of those in the STEM fields, in particular.

These shifts were also reflected in SU's criteria for promotion and tenure. For example, it was interesting to note the preponderance of revisions in particular years. In 1980, 16 of the 30 units (53.3%) revised their criteria; in 1985–1987, 12 units (40%) revised their criteria; in 1998–1999, 22 units (73.3%) revised their criteria; and, in 2004–2006, 19 units (63.3%) also had revisions. Upon closer examination, these revisions coincided with new presidential appointments at SU; however, we found no explicit directive to revise criteria in any of the files corresponding to these years.

Similarly, SU's mission statements from 1980 to 2010 also reflected shifting priorities. For example, the mission statement in 1980 mentioned "research" twice but seven times in 2010. The 1980 mission statement reads:

The mission of [Striving University] is to provide for the State . . . a center of academic excellence in which are housed the resources for knowledge creation and dissemination to a statewide audience. . . . Basic and applied research appropriate to [the State] is an ongoing responsibility, while other creative endeavors, including basic research of national or international significance, are encouraged.

In contrast, the 2010 mission statement emphasizes:

The mission of [Striving University] advances learning and discovery through excellence and innovation in undergraduate and graduate academic programs while addressing the complex challenges and opportunities of the 21st century through research-based knowledge. . . . Internationally recognized *research, scholarship, and creative activity* [emphasis in original] distinguish [Striving University] as the state's flagship university, where faculty and students contribute knowledge to issues of local, national, and international significance. As the state's doctoral-granting institution, research and education are inextricably linked.

In other words, it was apparent that SU had shifted from a teaching-focused, regionally based institution in the early 1980s to one that has become more research-driven and internationally focused.

In regard to promotion and tenure criteria, then, it was perhaps not surprising to see a corresponding shift from a teaching focus to a more intense research focus in almost every single academic unit (97%). In the Department of Physics in 1980, as an example, the preamble of the document remarked, "We expect all faculty to be serious and effective teachers"; it does not mention scholarship. For promotion to associate professor, the department observed: "Initially, for a new faculty member, we want to sense a serious devotion to teaching and a desire to learn and improve that art." These standards remained the same until 2000 when the unit revised its criteria to include a specific number of publications as requirements for promotion to associate professor with tenure. By 2006, the last revision on record, promotion to associate professor was based on "a national reputation" in scholarship.

The Education Department also demonstrated this shifting emphasis, stating in 1985 that "teaching is of major importance to the College and University." This department's criteria further highlighted:

Departments of education are professional schools. As such they cannot afford to allow distance to occur between themselves and the profession they serve. The University must ensure that those faculty who are performing these essential and timely functions are not penalized for not having their scholarly inquiry result in a number of refereed publications at promotion time. For these faculty, a broader definition of scholarship or inquiry is appropriate.

By 2012, however, the emphasis on scholarship and the kind of output this scholarship should take was emphasized: “The primary currency for demonstrated productivity in scholarship is refereed scholarly publications.”

Finally, it was interesting to observe the differentiated workload that was more apparent among faculty in the early 1980s and even into the 1990s, which later seemed to disappear. Examples of such differentiated workloads included language in early criteria about faculty who either chose or were assigned higher or lower teaching loads or even those faculty who could choose to focus more on service. For example, the 1985 criteria for the Department of Mathematics noted that all members “shall maintain a satisfactory level of performance and participation in the areas of the departmental mission,” but faculty were also evaluated at “a higher level of performance and participation in the individuals’ area of primary responsibility, as defined by his/her interest.”

In the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department in 1998, however, this faculty differentiation sounded a different note in its preamble:

These guidelines are particularly relevant given that the University is currently moving towards establishing a stronger research presence by hiring faculty whose primary responsibilities are research and graduate teaching. For the Department to address the missions of undergraduate teaching and service, some faculty must make these latter areas their primary responsibilities. As a result, different distributions of effort among teaching, research, and service are appropriate.

Increased Expectations

While excellence in teaching, research, and service are typically a hallmark for receiving tenure or a promotion in academia, they are not always given equal weight in promotion deliberations. Expectations at SU also emphasized one area over another that shifted as time passed. The Anthropology Department provides one example. In 1980, the criteria stated, “All members are expected to participate and demonstrate competence in teaching, research, and service, and will be evaluated on their performance; however, not all members will place the same degree of emphasis on any one of the three areas.” By 1999, however, the Anthropology Department had experienced a shift in expectations from “competence” to “excellence”: “All faculty members are expected to demonstrate excellence in research, teaching, and service, and will be evaluated on their performance in all three areas.”

It was not only Anthropology that evidenced such changes. In the early 1980s, for example, most SU academic units identified being deemed “excellent” or “satisfactory” in only one or two areas as required for promotion to both associate professor or professor. By the 2000s, however, these standards changed, and faculty needed to demonstrate excellence in all three areas of teaching, research, and service. In 2005, a memo from the interim presi-

dent—and former provost—expressed to the Department of Ecology his concerns about their latest revisions:

The section on promotion to full professor indicates that faculty cannot be promoted based only on teaching and service; I agree. But that statement implies that promotions to full professor could be based only on research and service. I think that candidates should understand that excellence in teaching, research, and service is essential for attaining the highest faculty rank.

In prior years, the expectation of attaining full professor had been lessened. For example, in 1999, Ecology expected that those who sought promotion to full professor would evince “continued excellence in one of the three major categories of evaluation [teaching, research, service] and satisfactory performance in the remaining two.”

In this instance, the pressure to demonstrate excellence in all areas emanated from the president. However, several internal memos from the files point to both internal desires within the academic units to increase expectations in addition to external pressures. For example, this ratcheting-up of expectations seemed at times to be elicited by the faculty themselves. A 1997 memo from the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to the English Department, which had recently revised its criteria, stated:

I have decided not to send forward to [the] Provost the revised English Department criteria for promotion and tenure. . . . One provision in the document seems to be problematic: the requirements for full professor. The new criteria state that for promotion to full professor, a faculty member must demonstrate excellence in teaching, research, and service. This demand seems to me more rigorous than the requirements of any other department in the College. I question whether any faculty member can in fact achieve excellence in all three areas, and the demand that faculty will do so will, I believe, have one of two consequences: either our sense of what we mean by “excellence” will be so diluted that the term will become meaningless, or no faculty member will hereafter be eligible for promotion to full professor. . . . I urge you to think again about the kind of demands you are making upon yourselves by establishing such over-rigorous requirements for promotion to full professor.

A statement in the Chemistry Department’s criteria as early as 1980 demonstrated this predilection toward excellence in one or two categories but dismissed excellence in all:

The Faculty Handbook describes general objectives of SU as teaching, research, and public service. Each college and department has its own perception of its role in meeting these objectives. Some units emphasize public service, others teaching, while some try to strike a balance between teaching and research. It is not likely that many faculty members can excel in all of these areas, even if their ratings say they do. It may, in fact, be difficult to really excel in one while maintaining adequate performance in one other.

Quantity and Quality

Another marker of increased expectations for scholarship at SU was the specific detailing of numbers of publications and grant applications that became more prevalent in academic units' criteria over the years studied. The age-old debate of quality versus quantity was visible in SU's criteria. A number of units went so far as to spell out their stances in this debate. The Education unit, for instance, announced: "This procedure will ensure that the Department will concern itself more with the *importance of what* the faculty member's scholarship has produced rather than *how many* [emphasis in original]." By 2012, the Education criteria included "a target average of at least one [publication] per year." However, if admonitory statements like Education's were made, they were done so earlier in the years examined at SU. In units where explicit numbers were established earlier, such as Ecology in 1999, their criteria established an emphasis on both: "Quality as well as quantity is considered in evaluating publications."

In turn, it was interesting to note that the level of specificity related to scholarship output moved over the years examined. In the early years, while scholarship may have been encouraged in some units—even if to a lesser degree than teaching—the shape that such scholarship took was often vague. For example, in Communication Disorders in 1980, the standards stated that a faculty member seeking tenure and promotion to associate professor should "have demonstrated ability as a scholar by significant research published. . . . [C]reative productions and publication and/or presentation of research derived from such efforts will be considered appropriate for the fulfillment of the research component." As the years continued, however, the level of specificity about what "counted" as scholarship became highly articulated at SU. As an example, by the last revision in 1999, the Communication Disorders Department specified, "As a minimum standard of scholarly accomplishment . . . the candidate must be the first author of at least four scholarly publications."

To further illustrate the articulation of quantities, we note that none of the units in 1980 had any detailed guidelines or specification for the amount of scholarship to be produced, but 12 of them did by 2012. Indeed, the Department of Plant Sciences became the first to set a numerical standard (1987) by announcing that a faculty member with a 100% research appointment would be expected to produce five publications by the time of application for promotion and tenure. Indeed, units where such specificity appeared early on often had evidence of internal memos from administrators questioning such a strategy. The other academic units that followed, however, seemed to do so beginning in the early 1990s; and by 1999, the expectation was almost explicitly stated. In that year, a memo from the Provost's Office to Anthropology remarked, "These criteria would not give me much guidance in terms of

what is expected in *quantity* of publications” (emphasis in original). In this sense, a sort of isomorphism occurred at SU itself, as some units began to emulate one another in stating a specifically expected number of publications. Even to date, the mean number of publications expected of faculty in units that have specific requirements is given as one to two per year, depending on one’s teaching load.

The source of these decisions to ratchet up expectations is not entirely clear. While some of these decisions may have evolved internally from faculty in a particular academic unit, some were more directly influenced by the academic administration at a given time. For example, in 2004, a memo from SU’s president to the Department of Environmental Sciences stated his concern about their revisions:

The proposed standard of “one peer-reviewed publication per year” for a candidate with a 100% research appointment has been questioned. . . . If there is a minimum standard expressed in terms of publications, my recommendation is that an average of two per year might be more appropriate.

Similarly, for Social Work, the word “weak” was penciled onto the 1994 revision by an unknown reviewer, next to the paragraph stating that faculty should have “at least one research project in process at all times.”

The expectations for external funding also grew at SU over the years. While only two departments mentioned an expectation for extramural support in 1980 (Chemistry & Chemical Engineering—the only two units not to demonstrate a significant ratcheting-up of expectations in the 32 years examined), 15 more units had added this criterion by 2006. In fact, it was interesting to note the proliferation of this expectation among social science departments and even those in the humanities by the late 1990s and mid-2000s. Perhaps one memo from SU’s president in 2004 to the Department of Marine Sciences demonstrates one such push for revision in criteria: “Under research and scholarly activity, there should be a section on extramural support (grant requests and grants funded, including clear information on the *applicant’s* contribution to the proposal or award, the agency, the funding level, etc.)” (emphasis in original).

Expanding Reputation

Perhaps connected to numerical increases in scholarship production was the expectation that SU’s faculty would also expand their reputations in order to gain promotion and tenure. More specifically, the expectations of being promoted to “full” or “professor” took on a different flavor as the mission drifted at SU. Like scholarship expectations, the impetus for these changes was, at the same time, internal to the faculty as well as external from the administration.

This expectation for an increased reputation was often articulated in words such as “beyond campus” in SU’s early years, to “national” or even “international” in its latter years. In English, for example, the importance of reputation in being promoted to full professor appeared in 1978: “The candidate for full professor must demonstrate a professional reputation that is more than local,” but by 2006, “candidates for professor must demonstrate excellence in intellectual work and academic/professional citizenship. Through their work, they should have established a national reputation, as validated by experts in the field.” In other words, these changes reflected importance in not only the extent to which one’s reputation is known (i.e., beyond campus or international) but also what the candidate has a reputation for (i.e., scholarship).

Perhaps even more intriguing is that the expectation for one to have an expanding reputation has moved down the ranks at SU in recent years. For example, in the Department of Communications, its last revision in 1999 expected even those who sought tenure and promotion to associate professor to have established “a national or international reputation as a scholar.” This expectation also appeared in the 2006 revisions of the Department of Forestry and the Department of Physics criteria.

The forces promulgating such changes were evidenced in memos from the provost in 2006 telling the Social Work faculty, in particular, that “the section on promotion to full professor needs strengthening. Specifically, full professors should demonstrate national recognition.” The rationale behind these changes was even evident in some units’ criteria. For example, the Forestry Department remarked that the purpose of expanding one’s reputation was ultimately “to enhance the reputation of the University.”

In turn, it is perhaps not surprising that SU itself was concerned with increasing its own reputation during the same years. The mission statements from 1980 to 2012 demonstrate this desire in remarks such as this in 2010: “Internationally recognized research, scholarship, and creative activity distinguish Striving University as the state’s flagship university, where faculty and students contribute knowledge to issues of local, national, and international significance.” In prior years, such an awareness of SU’s reputation beyond the state was rarely seen in its mission statement. For example, from 1980 to 1992, SU’s mission statements dictated that “basic and applied research appropriate to [state] is an ongoing responsibility, while other creative endeavors, including basic research of national or international significance, [are] encouraged.” In 1992, however, this “encouragement” of research extending beyond the state was extolled: “The University recognizes the increasingly global context of economic, social, scientific, technological, and political issues.” It continues, “With programs that are national and international in scope, the University is also a major resource for [the state] in the increasingly interdependent world community.” In this way, the state in which SU

is located was moved to a back burner while national- and international-focused scholarship took a more prominent place, again demonstrating the mission drift of the institution.

DISCUSSION

Chaffee (1985) remarked, “A basic premise of thinking about strategy concerns the inseparability of organization and environment” (p. 89). In this study of one university’s promotion/tenure criteria during 1980–2012, it was apparent that the shifting priorities and goals of the institution and a changing external environment during this time were very much interconnected. Specifically, these shifts in environment and strategy could be seen as being reflected in the ratcheted-up expectations for faculty members, particularly as they related to a shift from teaching excellence to excellence in all areas, with a specific emphasis on scholarship. While no documentation was available in either the files we examined or in any other institutional documentation to point toward the explicit requirement to revise promotion and tenure criteria at any given time, the changing external environment nevertheless had an influence on institutional and departmental priorities. How one views organizational strategy, however, might lead to different conclusions about how and why such shifts in priorities and expectations occurred.

Chaffee (1985) and other neo-institutionalists have pointed to the nuanced nature of strategy. While a linear view of strategy, or planning that is methodological, directed, and sequential, is currently seen as somewhat outmoded due to its overemphasis on a rational view of reality in which upper management controls the organization regardless of the surrounding external environment (Bess & Dee, 2008; Chaffee, 1985), it nevertheless remains a dominant view of strategy. A more flexible view of strategy—that of adaptive strategy—posits that the organization aims for its own survival and for the resources that will provide security in a changing and uncertain environment, in both proactive and reactive ways (Chaffee, 1984). In contrast, the interpretive model of strategy sees organizations as social contracts among the individuals inhabiting it—individuals who have each consented to work together while at the same time ensuring that their own individual needs are met (Chaffee, 1984).

In the case of SU, a linear view of strategy can scarcely be discerned in the analysis conducted of its mission statements or its promotion and tenure criteria due to the strong role that the external environment played during the time examined. More to the point, the external environment, characterized by a shifting economic climate for this public institution, as well as shifting disciplinary expectations may have had an impact on the changes occurring at SU. As such, the external environment may have influenced individual faculty members within their departments to change due to disciplinary shifts;

but when appraised in the context of a shifting mission statement, SU was also in the midst of changing its own view of itself and the kind of institution it desired to be. Change within SU's academic units and their criteria seemed almost ubiquitous from this perspective; indeed, only two academic units did not demonstrate significant shifts in expectations for faculty work during the period study—the Departments of Chemical Engineering and Chemistry. For all other units, however, increased expectations in scholarship production and a desire to expand the university's reputation were apparent in their revised criteria.

From the perspective of organizational strategy (Chaffee, 1985), these changes in promotion and tenure criteria could point to a more interpretive model of strategy in that both the upper administration and the faculty had a role in creating a change in expectations over time, as evidenced by internal memoranda and the faculty-driven revisions themselves. From this interpretive view, symbolic communications become the predominant form through which strategy is manifested (Chaffee, 1984). Certainly, promotion and tenure criteria can be viewed as such symbolic communications as they represent “strong messages to their faculty about what they value and who they value” (O'Meara, 2005, p. 482).

Moreover, an interpretive model sees the fundamental requirement of strategy as one that is triggered by a credibility crisis or a need for legitimacy (Chaffee, 1984). Changes that departments make to their criteria could be seen as being influenced by similarly increasing expectations in corresponding disciplines—indeed, most disciplines have seen a ratcheting-up of expectations for scholarship in the past several decades (O'Meara, 2005)—while at the same time being influenced by the need to be seen as legitimate to others. Perhaps the fact that only two units—both STEM areas—did not significantly change their criteria while other departments did might demonstrate a shift toward a nationally changing landscape where STEM has largely dominated both funding and prominence (Volk, Slaughter, & Thomas, 2001). From an institutional perspective, then, a need for more resources may have driven a more adaptive strategy—perhaps also fueled by this STEM dominance. Chaffee (1984) explained, “Strategy will be changed if the input of resources suddenly slows or ceases or when the organization becomes aware of actual or impending changes in environmental demand” (p. 221); SU certainly found itself in such a situation when state funds diminished steadily over during the time period examined.

On the other hand, the striving ambition, itself, can be seen from an interpretive strategy perspective because institutional isomorphism is often a reaction to external pressures to mimic successful organizations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In the case of comprehensive universities like SU that seek to mimic research universities with more prestige and, therefore, more funding (Brewer, Gates, & Goldman, 2001), the strategy relied on both upper

administrative action (i.e., strategic planning and mission change) as well as faculty action (i.e., a shift in valuing scholarship over teaching). In this way, the strategy at work within SU over time could be seen as interpretive because both faculty and administration sought mutually beneficial ways to gain market advantage, in the case of the administration, or to gain legitimacy among disciplinary associations, in the case of the faculty.

SU is not an anomaly in its striving ambitions; indeed, it is much like any other comprehensive campus that has made the conscious movement over time to a mission more centered on research and less on teaching. It thus echoes O'Meara's (2007) description as well as affirming the isomorphic tendencies of the institution (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The new perspective offered by SU and this study, however, rests in the historical documents available to examine this gradual mission drift over time. Previous studies have pointed to faculty members' perceptions of the ratcheting-up effect of striving behaviors on promotion and tenure expectations (Finnegan & Gamson, 1996; Rhoades, 2009; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2005; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006), but no known research exists that documents these actual changes over time. Moreover, given the relatively sparse amount of information about criteria for promotion to full professor in the literature, this study contributes to that knowledge base as well.

Several aspects of the study's findings deserve further discussion and provide implications. One is the quantity and quality theme and its relationship to the striving institution. What may at first blush appear to be simply the age-old debate of quality versus quantity in academic publication may perhaps also signal that a particular institution is a striving one. In other words, the emphasis on both quality *and* quantity at SU may point to unrealistic expectations placed on its faculty. While earlier versions of the promotion and tenure criteria among academic units exhibited much more leniency for faculty by allowing them to choose their own interests or be evaluated on their particular strengths, later versions of the criteria expected excellence of faculty in all areas. In other words, it was both quality and quantity that mattered to SU's faculty and its administration as its striving ambitions grew.

While we do not dismiss the need for excellence in academia, the notes found in the files from several deans and SU administrators early on merit further consideration: Can one be "excellent" in all areas? Does the concept of excellence lose its meaning if everyone is always excellent all of the time? Further, from an organizational perspective, can an institution be all things to all people? That is to say, can an institution truly be excellent in all areas? And, if not, can the institution demand excellence of its faculty in all areas?

Also of note were the disciplinary differences evidenced in these shifts at SU over time. Is it perchance coincidence that more of the STEM-related fields were among the earliest to set the highest expectations for research and scholarship while those in the humanities and professional fields were

more reluctant to shift away from an emphasis on teaching? Indeed, when humanities fields, such as English, ventured to place equal emphasis on teaching and research, the dean of their respective college was quick to point out the hazards of doing so. Further, the relative form of isomorphism evidenced among SU's departments also pointed to a privileging of the norms of STEM over other fields, in that it was most often the early expectations set for scholarly production in STEM fields that later guided expectations for other fields. Given the declining fiscal climate that SU found itself in over the study's time period as well as its striving behaviors, perhaps the emphasis on the STEM model was purposeful, particularly as STEM disciplines often play a key role in prestige- and external fund-seeking institutions (Sanford, 2011).

The shifting priorities of SU may also come with other consequences. The example from the electrical engineering and computer engineering departments in 1998 may be particularly noteworthy in this regard. In their criteria, they expected that newer faculty would be hired to conduct research and provide graduate training, suggesting that the already-hired faculty would have to take on the roles of advising and undergraduate teaching. While these two departments were explicit about this workload differentiation, it would not be far-fetched to assert that this divide occurred in other units as well. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that these striving institutions may create ambiguous environments for their faculty (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006) and even a type of generational divide among their faculty. Moreover, the "class society" that is implied in electrical and computer engineering's criteria may be detrimental to cohesiveness in the work environment, since some faculty are asked to do work that is regarded as more prestigious or important by the institution while others are not. Given the established positive correlation between research output and pay (Fairweather, 1995), this disparity may even have other deleterious consequences for faculty members.

Taken together, the indicators of striving behaviors were omnipresent in the analysis of SU's promotion and tenure documents. Using O'Meara's (2007) conceptualization of striving, it was apparent that shifting university expectations and goals were reflected in corresponding shifting expectations in the faculty reward system. Moreover, it was apparent that, while in many departments the expectations for research excellence replaced the department's expectations for teaching excellence, it was also true that many departments at SU still expect excellence in all areas. While many institutions of higher education in the United States have demonstrated an upward drift in regard to scholarship expectations for promotion and tenure (Henderson, 2011; Modern Language Association, 2006), the frequent changes in expectations at SU could prove problematic.

For example, the Education Department made seven substantial revisions to its criteria during the 32 years examined, averaging a revision every four and a half years. The confusion that may stem from these constantly chang-

ing expectations for faculty—particularly those who are untenured—may be worrisome. Henderson (2011) and others have pointed to the “greedy” nature of institutions like SU that “make multiple, even unreasonable, demands” on its faculty with these constantly changing expectations or, many times, the expectation to be excellent in all areas. The increased focus on extramural funding in SU’s departments may also indicate the decreased state funding available at this public institution but add an even greater element of concern for institutions like SU that require faculty to literally do more with less (Massy & Wilger, 1995).

The origin of these pressures to strive is difficult to ascertain; certainly, we could infer no causal relationship from the documents we analyzed. While some have pointed to the faculty role in striving environments (Fairweather, 1995; Morphey & Huisman, 2002) and others the administration (Gonzales, 2013; O’Meara, 2007; Rhoades, 2000), it was apparent at SU that both the faculty and administration played a role in ratcheting up the standards for promotion and tenure over the time period we examined, particularly in this unionized environment. In this way, it was perhaps the external environment—whether it was the disciplinary context of the faculty or the state in which SU was located—that played the most even-handed role in the changes witnessed. Indeed, a sort of chicken-and-egg scenario may be at play at institutions like SU: Did its mission drift because of the promotion and tenure changes or did the promotion and tenure criteria change because of the mission drift? From this perspective, a model of strategy that “emerges from action” may be more pertinent to organizations such as SU (Bess & Dee, 2008, p. 730).

It was also interesting to note the variation among criteria standards, format, and time periods during which the revisions occurred in their respective academic units as well as across the whole campus. Perhaps these variations could point to an institution with a strong culture of departmental and faculty autonomy. On the other hand, these variations could also point to a divested decision-making process indicative of a loosely coupled organization. Either way, the strategy employed in such changes over time does not reflect any of Chaffee’s (1985) specific models. Instead, the changes witnessed at SU seem to represent a strategy that has been both opportunistic and also reactive to the external environment—or what we might explain as an emergent model of strategy (Mintzberg, 1994). In the emergent model of strategy, “organizational members take actions, assign meaning to those actions, and those meanings may be considered strategic” (Bess & Dee, 2008, p. 730). Retrospectively speaking, then, SU can be seen as a striving institution as evidenced through its changing promotion and tenure expectations and shifting mission. Perhaps these changes were not always strategic or even consciously made. Rather they can be seen as evolving over time to meet the external demands of its environment. Indeed, a model of adaptive strategy

emphasizes that organizations have agency in creating their own futures (Bess & Dee, 2008).

Bess and Dee (2008) would describe an organization like SU as one that has low determinism in regard to control over its external environment while also maintaining high determinism in regard to the individual actors experiencing a sense of agency. Perhaps a high level of determinism is borne out in the diverse sets of criteria by individual academic units at SU. The low determinism over the external environment can be seen through the economic decline that public higher education has experienced throughout the United States but also in SU's home state. Stated otherwise, perhaps SU's shifting priorities reflect a strategy to overcome budget shortfalls through an increase in external funding or by attracting more students through an improved reputation. While no information exists to determine any causal relationship, it is fascinating to note that this strategy to strive has endured at SU over many generations and through seven presidencies. From this perspective, it is perhaps the steadfastness of the external environment (i.e., a continual and persistent decline in state funding) that has kept SU on this course more than anything else.

IMPLICATIONS

Birnbaum (1988) remarked, "No single organizational design can optimize all legitimate organizational interests; a structure that provides the most effective support for research, for example, will be quite different from a structure that seeks to closely integrate undergraduate teaching activities" (p. 12). From this perspective, differentiated goals can be problematic for organizations and institutions of higher education; however, Birnbaum continued, "The problem is not that institutions cannot identify their goals but rather that they simultaneously embrace a large number of conflicting goals" (p. 11). This situation lies at the heart of the tension within a striving institution. There is a reason that several studies have referred to faculty at these institutions as caught "between a rock and a hard place" (Gardner, 2013; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2005); the faculty at these institutions with shifting and multiple goals can experience difficulties as they seek to advance in the faculty reward system. How does one target success in a shifting environment? How does one manage to satisfy senior colleagues who were socialized to a different set of norms but who are nevertheless evaluating junior faculty with a newer set of norms? These are delicate bridges to cross.

SU and its peers should consider how striving ambitions affect their faculty and how they can best position resources to offset the increased expectations for research and external funding. These striving behaviors often rest most heavily on the faculty (O'Meara, 2007). From this perspective, the strategies

employed by striving-minded institutions should incorporate thought about how to best balance external demands with the reality of internal resources. Without careful consideration of ambitions tempered by a realistic assessment of available resources, faculty turnover may be a negative side-effect of these behaviors (Gardner, 2013).

Faculty members and department chairs charged with revising their units' criteria should also be mindful of the expectations placed upon their peers in view of the resources available. While external budgetary pressures may be a constant stressor on faculty members (Hurtado, Eagan, Pryor, Whang, & Tran, 2012), faculty at many tenure-granting campuses also maintain much power and agency in determining expectations for performance, much like the faculty at SU. As such, faculty members can become their own arbiters of striving ambitions for better or worse. Considering a department or unit's own strategy about the future direction of its faculty and its role in the mission of the institution may be better accomplished through careful and mindful changes to promotion and tenure expectations.

At the individual level, departments and more senior faculty should consider how to best mentor pre-tenure faculty about the changing expectations in these environments. How should a department mentor faculty about expectations when the faculty who will be deciding upon an individual's tenure were not evaluated by the same standards? Providing some mentoring from more recently tenured faculty might be effective as well as frank conversations within the department about these changing expectations and faculty success. Departments could also consider hosting workshops, led by senior faculty from similarly situated campuses, that speak to the changes these faculty experienced and how they worked with shifting expectations.

This study was limited in its assessment of one institutional context and in the time period of available documentation. It is also possible that the documentation available in each file was not an accurate representation of a given academic unit's total history on its promotion and tenure criteria. Certainly, we could glean no causal link from our analysis of the documents. Future researchers can continue to explore different institutional contexts as well as analyzing such relevant outputs as grant dollars and publications to measure changes over time in such striving environments. Similarly, interviews with faculty who have witnessed changes over time at a given institution could supplement the data provided by document analysis. In addition, future researchers could also examine minutes from department or faculty senate meetings to further ascertain the impetus behind changes. Taken together, a deeper understanding of these striving environments may produce better outcomes for all.

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