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Institutional Change in Undergraduate Education at a Research University: The Stony Brook Undergraduate Colleges

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This qualitative case study concentrates on the evolution of undergraduate education at Stony Brook University, with particular focus on the establishment and continuity of the Undergraduate College program. The Undergraduate Colleges represent the most broadly imagined undertaking in undergraduate education in Stony Brook's history and, therefore, is a good case study for the exploration of the topic of institutionalizing change and programmatic persistence.

The Undergraduate Colleges marked the first attempt to establish a formal introduction to Stony Brook as a research university to all incoming freshmen, involving both academic and student affairs components and, most importantly, faculty. Program architects contended that creating smaller active learning communities would enhance the quality of education by offering a more coherent, more clearly directed first year of college with greater academic guidance and faculty participation than is typical in large public universities.

Research in the sociology of higher education and the sociology of organizations are used to examine factors that contribute to enduring institutional change. Comprehensive interviews with the team that established the program, current academic and student affairs staff, the Provost, and faculty who have taught the University's freshman seminar provided the data to explore various factors leading to the persistence of this program, which was established in 2002. I conclude that there are three primary factors to change in undergraduate education in a research university: collaboration between academic and student affairs, leadership and allocation of resources, and the role of faculty and faculty culture.

Dedication Page

For my parents, Anthony and Antoinette Di Donato, who taught me the importance of political and social consciousness and therefore inspired my sociological imagination.

And my husband, Mark Aronoff, who brings
great joy, love and support to my life every single day.

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Preface

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Professor of Anesthesiology
SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor

I try to avoid just babbling, because they're adult learners, and if they don't see relevance to it, it's useless. If it's not something that's going to be meaningful, it's pretty useless. And that LDS [Leadership and Development] class, I do have to say, I had one student who was in the first or second year that I taught the seminar, so she is probably a junior now, I haven't heard from her in a little bit of a time, but I'm sure she'll get back with me. She did the program and then she came to me at the end of the term, the end of her freshman year and she said, "I'm interested in medical school." She heard the lecture on preparing for future options and all of that stuff and said, "I'd like to start looking into a research experience; what do I do? How do I get into research?" And I said, well, it's kind of hard and it's really hard as a freshman, because faculty are committing time to you. They're going to train you in their lab. You don't want to blow up a lab or anything like that. Those things could happen realistically.

I said, be careful, a lab can be a dangerous place if you don't know what you're doing. The faculty has to train you. You've got to learn some techniques that are being done in the lab to do the science properly. So, it's tough as a freshman. The way you do it is you go around, get online, start looking at things you're interested in, find faculty, look at their research interests, and, make some order of it and when you think, "This sounds really interesting, I wouldn't mind being involved in that," go find who that faculty member is and go knock on their door. *And*, I said, be prepared to be turned away, because they may be busy. They may not have a grant right now. There may be a multitude of reasons—that have nothing to do with you—for why they

can't accept you: they've got three postdocs in their lab; they've got two other undergrads, and they don't have any more room for students. Or they're between grant cycles and they're feverishly writing for grants. So, I said, there is a multitude of reasons why they can't, so, don't be discouraged. Just keep knocking on doors, and by the time you're done you're probably going to have some sore knuckles but, I said, you will find something.

Next, I said, what you do is the following; here is your approach. You go in, you introduce yourself. You explain what you want. No one is going to welcome you with open arms. If they tell you, "Well, here is what I do, if you're interested, go look up an article, look up something on this topic in the library and then come back and talk to me about it." I said, *that's* an open door. If they tell you *that*, you write it down, you do it, and you get back to them. Because, they're not just going to say, "Oh sure, I'd love to." That's not going to happen. I said, so that's usually the end of a first visit, go get an article, go read something, come back and talk to me, and then they'll see if you got it, if you understood it, whatever, if you're motivated. So, if they tell you that, you do it. And, now that you've just been through this LDS class, let's make use of what I've been telling you. Take that nice c.v. that you just made, and that nice personal statement that you just wrote, and do what we talked about. Fashion that personal statement and fashion that c.v., focusing on getting a position as a lab person or student in a laboratory.

So, again, very motivated kid, very bright. Her GPA was 3.9 at the end of her first year or first semester. So, she was a real player, and a delightful kid. So, she planned to knock on the first door. And she emailed me and said, "My classes end at noon tomorrow I'm going to start knocking on doors. I'll let you know how I do." And at 1:30 pm she emailed me and she said, "Dr. Vitkun, I can't believe it was exactly what you said." She said, "I went in. The guy told me he was really busy. He really didn't have a lot of time, blah, blah, blah, and he told me that I

could check back with him, but he was very busy." And then she said, "I did what you told me to do. As I was leaving I said to him, by the way, I am really interested in your work, and if you have an opening, I would really appreciate if you could contact me; and here is my c.v. and my personal statement." And she said, "He looked at me, the guy was shocked," and he looked at her and he said, "I never had a student that was so organized and motivated and prepared— that they had a personal statement and a c.v. Have a seat. I've got to rethink this." He took her in his lab. She knocked on one door.

Acknowledgments

One major focus of this dissertation is the importance of collaborative effort as a factor influencing change in undergraduate education. The product of my doctoral research is no different. I am fortunate to have a number of people to thank for their support and guidance along the way.

I wish to acknowledge members of the Stony Brook Sociology Department, past and present, who have supported me at various points throughout my doctoral career and symbolize the importance of mentorship and collegiality. Great appreciation goes to the members of my Ph.D. committee, Catherine Marrone, Manuel London, and, in particular, Norman Goodman and Kenneth Feldman, who spent hours working with me as I regained my sociological voice after years of absence from the discipline. I am grateful, as well, to Maria Anderson, Ray Maietta, Michael Schwartz, and Judith Tanur for their time and tutoring at critical points in this project. A big thank you to my good friends Patricia Roos and Chip Clarke for making the trip from New Jersey to share in the joy of my defense day. Not enough can be said for the Graduate Program Coordinator in Stony Brook's Sociology Department, Wanda Vega, who was my guardian angel throughout.

I am indebted also to other members of the Stony Brook community, especially Andrei Antonenko and Lawrence Martin, for their support and friendship, and to Timothy Ecklund and Stacey Sgro for their generous offer to use facilities in the Dean of Students office suite to conduct a number of the interviews for this dissertation. To all those Stony Brook faculty, staff and administrators who took the time to sit for an interview in the spirit of collegiality and

support for this research, I am very grateful. Many thanks to Dallas Bauman for his friendship and the many hours spent talking about this project and undergraduate education.

My family is a steady source of love and encouragement, never ceasing to enthusiastically cheer me on and support my goals. Thank you Mom, Dad, Paula, Jackie, Janet, and Francis. Much love to my wonderful daughters, Julia and Katherine, who inspire me to strive every day to be a better role model as they make their own mark on this world. Thanks also to my step-daughter Ruth Aronoff for her encouragement as we traveled down the dissertation road at much the same time.

Finally, I offer much love and gratitude to my husband Mark who somehow always knows what I need and provides more patience, love, and reassurance than I could ever expect.

Chapter 1

Focus of the Dissertation

From the founding of the first universities in Europe almost a millennium ago, their core mission has always been undergraduate education. To this were added, a little over a century ago, first research and then graduate education. The growth of external funding after the Second World War led to the creation of the modern research university, in which the latter two functions pushed the core mission of the university aside, at least in terms of prestige. Within the last two decades, a movement arose in American education, led by the Boyer Commission, to restore undergraduate education to the first rank by emphasizing its function within the new research university.

Over many years with administrative responsibility for a range of undergraduate programs at Stony Brook, I became increasingly interested in identifying the factors that contribute to the establishment, growth and long-term sustainability of undergraduate academic programs in universities, especially considering the status of undergraduate education in research universities. Although my administrative work was devoted to the enhancement of academic success of Stony Brook's undergraduate students, this dissertation is not an analysis of the quality of undergraduate education; it is an analysis of programmatic persistence in a particular organizational context. More precisely, it is a case study and qualitative analysis of the successful persistence of one comprehensive undergraduate program in a setting that prioritizes research and graduate education. The academic success of our students may be why we do the work we do, but understanding what is necessary to propose and foster effective, long-lasting initiatives in the environment on an American research university is essential to the enduring success of these programs and a more balanced prioritization of the undergraduate experience.

My longstanding commitment to undergraduate education certainly encouraged the selection of this topic for my dissertation, but from a different perspective than that of a college administrator. My doctoral work gave me the opportunity to widen the lens and gain some distance from the daily routine of establishing and managing programs, and explore the larger question of undergraduate education in an institution like Stony Brook from a sociological perspective.

This dissertation concentrates on the evolution of undergraduate education at Stony Brook, with particular focus on the establishment of the Undergraduate College program, a relatively new initiative but one which appears to have taken hold in the structure of the institution. In 2002, the university reorganized and redefined the first year student program with the formation of Undergraduate Colleges. At the inception of this initiative, the Provost and his team imagined the potential for a great cultural and practical shift.

The Undergraduate Colleges represent the most broadly imagined undertaking in undergraduate education in Stony Brook's history and, therefore, a good case study for the exploration of the topic of institutionalizing change and programmatic persistence. Stony Brook University is an interesting institution to use as the basis of a study on the undergraduate student experience. It has an excellent reputation as a research university, but undergraduate education has not always fared as well. Over the more than fifty years since Stony Brook's founding in Oyster Bay, a number of curricular and co-curricular academic programs meant to improve undergraduate education have been initiated. Some of these programs have been successful, some short-lived, but most rather modestly conceived. The Undergraduate Colleges, by contrast, affect all first year students. They are small thematically based, academic and co-curricular communities whose primary goals are to reduce the psychological size of the university and

connect students to the vast resources of a major research university, including most notably, its faculty. I have chosen the system of Undergraduate Colleges as the vehicle through which to explore the factors contributing to the institutionalization of lasting change in undergraduate education at a research university. The key elements in creating and sustaining such change in undergraduate education at research universities through this and other initiatives have not been widely explored. I am interested not only in identifying the various components that contribute to or hinder enduring institutional change, but also in understanding the impact of each of these components and how they contribute to the persistence of the program.

From their inception, the Undergraduate Colleges were a collaborative effort between academic affairs and student affairs with the intention of blurring organizational lines university-wide. The new structure and mingling of these organizational areas brought together existing efforts, amplified the resources dedicated to undergraduates by the university, and facilitated delivery of academic and co-curricular services to students.

Before the Undergraduate Colleges, there were numerous well-intentioned efforts to establish and develop programs that would enhance the undergraduate experience inside and outside the classroom. But these efforts addressed small segments of the overall student body. The Undergraduate Colleges marked the first attempt to establish a formal introduction to Stony Brook as a research university to all incoming freshmen, involving both academic and student affairs components and, most importantly, faculty. The intent of the project was to enhance the academic success of entering students and to reduce the imposing nature of the institution. Program architects contended that creating smaller active learning communities would enhance the quality of education by offering a more coherent, more clearly directed first year of college

with greater academic guidance and faculty participation than is typically the case in large public universities.

The Colleges were named for broad themes that drive the academic and co-curricular lives of the students, they are: Arts, Culture and Humanities; Global Studies; Human Development; Leadership and Service; Information and Technology Studies; and Science and Society. The core components of the Undergraduate College program include a fall semester 101 seminar, taught by university professional staff and designed to comprehensively orient new students to the complex and rich landscape of a research university and its valuable resources. Unlike other such courses that are taught around the country, Stony Brook's orientation seminar is approached from the perspective of the theme of the particular Undergraduate College the student is admitted to. Following the 101 orientation seminar, the spring semester of the first year includes a 102 seminar taught by tenured and tenure-track faculty, devised to intellectually enrich the intellectual academic experience of freshmen and to foster enhanced contact between faculty and students. The course topics for these seminars are proposed by the faculty and are typically consistent with the themes of the Undergraduate College in which they are involved. Operationally, each College is led by a team of faculty and staff with a faculty director to provide academic and programmatic direction and leadership. Mandates for the Undergraduate Colleges included the strengthening of academic foundations, promotion of a more inquiry-based freshman year (as recommended in the Boyer Report), integration of the academic and co-curricular experiences and greater faculty engagement with freshmen. The expectation was that this integrated approach to the undergraduate experience would serve as a strong foundation for subsequent college years. It is not my claim in this dissertation that the Undergraduate College initiative alone is responsible for improvements in student retention or greater academic success

in the first year. That would have been a different study that required different data. I do contend, however, that the galvanizing effect of the many facets of the initiative led to the persistence of an innovative undergraduate education program at Stony Brook. I demonstrate this, in part, through the interview data collected from those who designed and established the program as well as those who have participated in its implementation.

By studying the founding and development of the Undergraduate College system, I explore various elements that are likely to contribute to permanent institutional change in undergraduate education in an any American research university, with particular focus on Stony Brook University. My premise in this context is that the collaboration of academic and student affairs, the nature of administrative support, and most notably, the role of faculty, function as critical components of durable institutional change to improve the undergraduate experience. To examine this premise, I briefly review selected major programmatic initiatives in the history of the institution, but concentrate more substantively on the most recently established of these, the Undergraduate Colleges, and show how they can be and have been promoted as a mechanism for raising the quality of engaging and educating college freshmen.

Colleges and universities in the United States vary widely in terms of their roles and functions. Institutional goals, who they serve, public or private control and how funding is generated are diverse, depending on whether the organization is a community college, comprehensive four-year college or research university (Bess and Dee, 2008, p. 20).

> "…a research university which seeks to provide an education for undergraduate students that is somewhat broader in curricular scope and for graduate students at advanced levels. Research universities also seek to produce new knowledge through both basic and applied scholarship. Funding for private research universities comes from student tuition and an accumulated surplus of funds, called an endowment. Public research universities, in contrast, derive a proportion of their revenues from state government appropriations. This

> proportion has been declining over the past several years. When state governments decrease their funding for higher education, public institutions often raise tuition levels to make up the difference" (Bess and Dee, 2008).

In addition to tuition increase, as government support has diminished, public research universities have had to find alternate sources of funding. Endowment revenue becomes more important. Although research universities serve a minority of the total undergraduate student population, they are central to the training at the doctoral level and "produce the bulk of the research output" (Altbach, 2011, p. 11). According to the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, there are approximately 300 doctoral universities in the country, with one-third at the Highest Research Activity (R1) level (http://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu). Stony Brook is a member of this most elite set of institutions and a member of the prestigious American Association of Universities, which comprises 62 of the leading public and private research universities in the United States and Canada.

> "Research universities produce the bulk of original research…and receive the most funding for research. Their professors are hired on the basis of their qualifications to conduct research and are rewarded for research prowess and productivity. The organization, reward structures, and, indeed, the academic culture of these universities focus on research. In the hierarchy of academic values, research ranks highest, although teaching and advisory services remain important" (Altbach, p.12).

Higher education researcher Philip Altbach argues that research universities must sustain a flow of support and a positive work environment to fulfill their academic mission. In addition, "a considerable degree of autonomy—to make decisions about degrees, programs, and other academic matters—must be provided, and academic freedom is central." The Boyer Commission report, *Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities* states,

> Because of the research universities' commitment to create new knowledge, they consider research capability as a primary qualification of appointment, promotion, and tenure of faculty members, and they pride themselves on having world-class scholars among their ranks. Significantly, almost all the Nobel laureates who have identified themselves as professors have been affiliated with research universities. Of course, outstanding researchers are not limited to these institutions; nearly all colleges and universities can point to strong scholars within their departments. But at research universities, these faculty become a defining element (Stony Brook, 1998, p. 2).

As a defining element, an examination of the role of faculty in undergraduate education, and the Undergraduate Colleges in particular, is fundamental to this study. An appreciation of the inherent nature and expectations of the faculty role in a research university contributes to the understanding of the persistence of the program itself. Many of the emblematic elements of the American research university also contribute to the difficulty of fostering a quality undergraduate program. Faculty are often expected to respond principally to their peers and advancement of scholarship, rather than to the "customer;"—undergraduate students.

> Benefits have costs, strengths have weaknesses. Operating as a professors' medium, the university has difficulty in being responsive to undergraduate students. As professors turn to their research and their graduate students, freshman and sophomore students get the short end. Since the turn of the century, and especially in the post-1945 decades, the task of teaching beginning students has drifted toward the margin of reward and interest (Clark, 2008, p. 316).

As educational sociologist Burton Clark argues above, the evolution of the research university in the 20th century has not always incorporated undergraduate education into its top set of priorities. The pressure to respond to the growing recognition of the importance of the research university to economic growth and the creation of new knowledge internationally inevitably required choices, and the choices leading to income generation, research innovation, and strong graduate training have overwhelmingly led to a more competitive position in the marketplace often at the expense of a thriving undergraduate program.

This study tells the story of the development of a program that sought to take advantage of successful national models and the work of the Boyer commission to alter the trajectory of undergraduate education at Stony Brook, particularly for first year students. But it also tells the story of the persistence of the Undergraduate College initiative, established in 2002, and the major factors contributing to its institutionalization. Stony Brook is not unique. Every research university, and every organization for that matter, wrestles with the tensions between competing priorities. Although clearly limited by state or private oversight, each institution has the discretion to manage these conflicting challenges. The response by many universities to the ongoing decline in resources has been cut backs on expenditures, a shift in the mode of delivery of curriculum and, in some cases, downsizing. These measures often affect undergraduate education first. In this dissertation I review a number of efforts over the second half of the 20th century to draw attention to and address the continuing struggle of undergraduate education in the context of higher education and more importantly, for this study, research universities. The role of the research university in society is more important than ever, but the terms of their survival and mission are more complex.

Chapter 2

Historical Framework: Undergraduate Education at Stony Brook University

Stony Brook is a research university in its adolescence. This makes an examination of its history somewhat simpler, but also more thought provoking from the perspective of what may be possible in the future. Stony Brook's history began with a commitment primarily to training science and mathematics secondary school teachers, and the university quickly became the center for active recruitment of science research faculty.

Although it took nearly forty years for Stony Brook to consciously rededicate significant resources—human and financial—to the undergraduate academic program, a template was put in place much earlier for the development of this sector. In his book, *Politics and Public Higher Education in New York State: Stony Brook-A Case History*, Sidney Gelber describes the initiation of a plan in 1971 to create the position of Dean of Undergraduate Studies. This plan was in large part a response to a campus self-study conducted in advance of a review by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools to be held in 1973. This comprehensive self-study, entitled *Stony Brook in Transition: A Report on the Self Study of the State University of New York at Stony Brook*, focused partially on undergraduate students, and discovered what has come to be known as "The Two Stony Brooks", a bifurcated set of experiences for students and faculty. Survey data exposed either very positive impressions or very negative ones of the undergraduate experience; both, it was judged, had great validity (Gelber, 2001, pages 266-7).

According to Gelber, who was Stony Brook's Provost at the time, the proposal for a new Dean met with a great deal of resistance, particularly from faculty who believed that this position would mark a departure from Stony Brook's primary missions of research and graduate

education. Although obvious, it is worth noting that proposing a new and major administrative position is rarely popular. But even more tentatively received was the nature of the position. Also interesting in regard to this study was that the justification for the resistance in some quarters, according to Gelber, rested with a comparison to the San Diego campus of the University of California. Selected Stony Brook faculty accurately observed the great similarities between the two institutions, both in terms of the period in which they were founded and the declared missions of each. Even, however, in the midst of the launching of an undergraduate college system as the defining centerpiece of the San Diego undergraduate experience, faculty at Stony Brook focused on the primacy of graduate student education and training.

After much debate, the University Senate ultimately endorsed and Provost Gelber established the office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies (Gelber, pages 291-3). The founding Dean was historian Robert Marcus. Dr. Marcus's tenure was critical to building a foundation for a strong undergraduate program at Stony Brook, but it also fell victim to the original and persistent cynicism regarding a separate and distinct office for this function. There were then, as there continue to be today, a number of dedicated faculty and administrative staff working to support undergraduate academic affairs. Missing, though, were at least two important factors; a consistent stream of financial support dedicated to the undergraduate academic program and a true appreciation of what was necessary to build a strong undergraduate program to compete with peer institutions nationally and internationally. In his history of Stony Brook University published in 2004, Distinguished Professor of History Joel Rosenthal describes the establishment of Stony Brook's administrative structure:

> One missing link in this chain was a comparable administrator for undergraduate studies as such. Even when Ross and then Gelber were deans of Arts and Sciences or VP's for Liberal Studies—when the university was smaller and less complicated—they had been forced to juggle undergraduate needs against the

> higher priorities of new graduate programs, and we know who wins this sort of arm-wrestling. Though eventually the University did establish an office of undergraduate affairs, with its own dean or director (Bob Marcus of History, and a student of Sid Gelber's from Columbia days), the weaker sibling always went to the wall. That this appointment was not made until 1974-5 says a lot about priorities. Furthermore, Marcus was junior in rank to the other administrators, and this seemed to symbolize a position with fewer resources and less authority. Where the others had dollars his office took over undergraduate advising. (Rosenthal, 2004, p. 157.)

When Provost Gelber named Robert Marcus Stony Brook's first Dean of Undergraduate Education, he had a particular goal in mind; to create a stronger foundation for undergraduate education at a new university established with research and graduate education as its primary defining features. Gelber may have even realized at the time that a strong undergraduate program could serve as support to these other areas. It was not until the Kenny administration, however, that the Stony Brook community joined the conversation in a meaningful way regarding the necessary elements to institutionalizing change in undergraduate education.

Stony Brook's first commitment to undergraduate education lay in the development of a number of small-scale programs designed to enhance the experience of few undergraduate students. To better understand the historical context in which the Undergraduate College initiative was positioned, I briefly discuss three of these initiatives: the Federated Learning Communities, Living Learning Centers and, more extensively, the Honors College.

The Federated Learning Communities

The Federated Learning Communities was proposed and established in 1976 by then Stony Brook philosophy professor, Patrick Hill. Innovative undergraduate programs at other institutions influenced Hill, who later became Provost at Evergreen State College in Washington, itself known as an innovator in undergraduate education. He observed what he termed "ills" embedded in the structure of a university education that reflected a profound mismatch between

faculty and student expectations. In the context of the University's self-study, this argument resonated with Dean Marcus. Hill wanted to confront what he saw as isolating and passive educational practice in the undergraduate area that focused narrowly on the delivery of disciplinary material, with little active debate across disciplinary lines between faculty or faculty and students, or students and students for that matter. To tackle this, Hill proposed that courses taken by undergraduates be grouped together with an overarching interdisciplinary theme connecting them. It was important that the courses used for this project already existed and were part of the mainstream curriculum. Further, it was critical, Hill thought, that the faculty who should teach these courses be regular department faculty, not new lecturers or faculty hired solely for this purpose. In 1976, the first iteration of this program included Hill as Master Learner with a group of twenty-four students who explored the theme of World Hunger.

> A pioneering program called Federated Learning Communities was early established at an otherwise traditional institution, SUNY Stony Brook, by Patrick Hill, who later went on to play a significant role at Evergreen State. At present the yearlong program focuses on a major issue such as world hunger, creativity, gender and sexual diversity, or globalism. For two semesters, students take three regular university courses relevant to the issue and a substantial program seminar that integrates the material. Each seminar is taught by a regular faculty member called a *master learner* who actually takes the three courses—exams, papers, and all—and acts as a model for the students. Students may earn a minor in the program (Muscatine, 2009, p. 69-70).

In 1983 Patrick Hill left Stony Brook to assume the position of Provost at Evergreen State College in Washington, an institution that was persuaded by the value of Hill's Federated Learning Communities initiative and the bridge that the program created across the divide that too often existed between faculty and students at research universities. While at Evergreen, Hill continued to develop his model, which led to increased attention to learning communities and the adoption and/or adaptation of these programs at colleges and universities nationwide. In an

address to the Association of American College and Universities Conference on Learning Communities in 2001, then Provost of Evergreen State College, Barbara Leigh Smith, stated,

> There was a joining of the east and west coast learning community effort when Patrick Hill became Provost at Evergreen in 1983. The momentum for learning communities dramatically increased in 1985 with the establishment of the Washington Center for Undergraduate Education at the Evergreen State College. The Washington Center served as a statewide and nationwide dissemination system for the idea of learning communities (Smith, 2001).

In 1985, with the benefit of some hindsight, Patrick Hill spoke at the inaugural Conference on Learning Communities of the Washington Center for Undergraduate Education about the "rationale" for learning communities' programs and the seven problems, or "ills", in higher education that this initiative was designed to address. These problems are the mismatch between faculty and student expectations, inadequate interaction between faculty and students, the isolated and unconnected nature of non-major courses, a lack of faculty development resources, increasing complexity of societal issues which disciplines must attempt to address, high rate of students who do not complete college, and finally, the ubiquitous shrinking budget problem which, he argues, exacerbates the other six problems. Hill contended that the importance of learning communities' programs rests in the way that they work to change the structure of the educational process with dynamic interaction among all involved as a key variable. Additionally, and contrary to common assumption, this structure does not result in a special opportunity for a small number, but if done properly, will operate as a series of laboratory-like experiences using the already existing curriculum.

> You are releasing the capacity of people to learn from each other, and it is simple as that, what we are after. How you give them real time and real space will vary in different administrative contexts. But I emphasize that a structural change is necessary which actually puts at peoples' disposal real time and real space which is rewarded, and which is there to be used for the sake of learning from each other, learning from diverse perspectives (Hill, 1985).

The Federated Learning Communities program benefitted originally from a large federal (FIPSE) grant, and faculty and administrative support, particularly from Dean Marcus and Provost Gelber. Between 1981 and 1983 however, Patrick Hill and Robert Marcus left Stony Brook, and Sidney Gelber stepped down from his position. These departures negatively affected the institutional commitment to FLC and, consequently, the realization of Hill's primary goal of permanent institutional change. Interestingly, however, FLC is still acknowledged both within Stony Brook and nationally as a model of innovation in undergraduate education, the potential of which was realized upon Hill's move to Evergreen where, in a position of institutional leadership, he provided strong support for the growth of the learning communities writ large.

Living-Learning Centers

The establishment of the Living-Learning Center program at Stony Brook represented one of the earliest collaborations between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. These thematically designed programs included an interdisciplinary academic minor and bridged the classroom to the residence halls with co-curricular events and activities outside the classroom. Similar to a number of other initiatives, the Living Learning Center (LLC) program was a response, although not immediate, to the problematic institutional self-study of 1973 and borrowed a great deal from the original Stony Brook Residential College program:

- The Director of Residence Life appointed a steering committee in 1983 that included campus residences staff and faculty. The charge of the committee was to create a program that would bridge and enhance the undergraduate academic and residential life experiences.

- The committee proposed the first LLC, *Human Development*, which was launched in the fall of 1985, followed by *International Studies* in 1987 and *Science and Engineering* in 1988.

In the chapter, "Improving Student Learning by Forging Partnerships Between Academic and Student Learning", found in the edited volume, *Residential Colleges: Reforming American Higher Education*, former members of the Stony Brook faculty and administrators of this program James Mackin and Jerrold Stein state:

> The basic operation of each of these Living-Learning Centers was the same. A faculty director taught interdisciplinary courses and advised students from an office within the residence hall, while the residence hall director organized extracurricular programs centering on the theme of the Living Learning Center. The program was and is still administered separately by student affairs and academic affairs staff through the Division of Campus Residences and the Office of Undergraduate Studies [later renamed the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs] (Stein and Mackin, 1998, p, 88).

This active collaboration between Campus Residences and Undergraduate Affairs continued over the next seven years or so and resulted in the establishment of four more Living Learning Centers. Stein and Mackin argue that the partnership created by Campus Residences and Academic Affairs with a clearly defined division of labor between faculty and residential staff promoted a successful enterprise. But it was not just that the division of labor was clearly defined, but how it was defined that encouraged success. The faculty director was primarily responsible for teaching interdisciplinary courses that were required by the LLC minor and advising students in those courses and other requirements of the minor. The Campus Residences staff planned the educational and social activities connected to the minor's theme. In other words, each member of the team was expected to support the program with activity consistent with their primary role at the University. The administrators and faculty involved in designing

and implementing the Living Learning Center program understood the importance of greater faculty involvement with undergraduate students, both inside and outside the classroom. This understanding as well as the recognition that the best way to invite this participation was to design the faculty role as academic mentor with support from Student Affairs for co-curricular enrichment produced a successful model of organizational collaboration.

Today, the Living Learning Center program continues to operate, but not without obstacles similar in nature to those experienced by other undergraduate academic programs. Recruiting faculty for the position of Director has not always been easy and in recent years, even more difficult as the appeal of the academic themes and associated minors of selected LLCs have waned. In a few instances, this struggle has led to the suspension of certain LLCs (e.g., Interdisciplinary Arts and Science and Engineering). Another compromising influence on the terms of the original LLC model is the increasingly diminished number of students affiliated with the program who actually live in the LLC designated residence halls. Although not a requirement, living in the building in which LLC classes, programming, and other activities are held contributes to the life and vitality of this thematically driven initiative. In recent years, as residence halls have exceeded capacity, mobility between buildings is more problematic.

During the period of research for this project a committee of academic affairs and campus residences staff recommended a name change for the Living Learning Center program, to directly address the increasingly challenging residential issue. The new name for this program, Academies, was designed to explicitly broaden the definition of the program and encourage wider participation. The problem with this new nomenclature (as I have learned in the interviews conducted) is that, unlike the previous title, Academies does not adequately communicate the core purpose of the program and is unfamiliar enough as to not encourage

participation. Resources, on the other hand, have not been a major issue in the development of the program, as the LLC's are not particularly capital intensive to operate and the partnership with Campus Residences has provided much needed fiscal and other resources to support the program. The architects of the Undergraduate College initiative supported the continued growth of the Living Learning Centers and considered them the "upper division" component of the Colleges. It is still unclear, however, whether this vision will fully materialize.

The Honors College

I detail the establishment and early history of the Honors College to highlight the intentional and extensive planning and implementation of this program by various and central University constituent groups. Faculty, staff and administration alike were involved in the founding and execution of this elaborate endeavor.

Concrete plans for a Stony Brook Honors College evolved over a four-year period of faculty committee and governance discussion punctuated by a proposal drafted in 1986 by a faculty advisory committee appointed by then Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies, Aldona Jonaitis. A few years earlier, the University Senate endorsed a report submitted by the Curriculum Review Committee, which strongly encouraged an honors education option for high-achieving undergraduates. In August of 1985, Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies and Professor of Chemistry, Theodore Goldfarb, encouraged the University Senate Executive Committee to lend its support to the discussion of a baccalaureate level honors program at Stony Brook. Less than one year later, the Vice Provost presented a proposal for an Honors College at Stony Brook to the campus and, although the Undergraduate Studies Advisory Council (a group comprised of faculty and governance leaders) had unanimously endorsed consideration of the proposal for an honors college, they did so with some qualification. A major reservation

expressed was a fear that such an endeavor would drain off a significant portion of already insufficient resources to support existing programs for non-honors students. Overall, however, the growing sentiment of the faculty and administration was that a signature honors program would help to attract high-achieving students who, no longer considering Stony Brook for their education, were enrolling elsewhere—for example at the State University of New York at Buffalo, State University of New York at Binghamton, and Cornell University.

After additional discussions in January of 1987 by the Undergraduate Studies Advisory Council, Vice Provost Jonaitis sent a revised version of the proposal to the chairs of several governance committees to continue the consultation process. Feedback was generally positive, but questions regarding curriculum and budgetary details persisted. The Vice Provost contended that such details should be left to a faculty committee once the framework for the initiative was endorsed. By March of 1987, the Education and Teaching Policy Committee of the University Senate formally recommended going forward with planning for an Honors College, with the assurance that a faculty committee would convene and flesh out the proposal. In addition, the University Senate Executive Committee endorsed the Honors College in principle, but reiterated concerns regarding resources and disparities in cost of the various undergraduate academic initiatives that were already undertaken or planned. Specifically noted was the support received by the Federated Learning Communities (FLC), which was seen by some in governance as excessive in comparison with other programs, potentially to be exacerbated with the addition of any new projects. Faculty who participated in the FLC were given a semester leave at full pay, which if not resource intensive, might at least prove to be prohibitive going forward. Vice Provost Jonaitis pledged to "regularize and rationalize" the compensation policy that the University used for such extra service by faculty. Simultaneously, she also worked to identify

the membership of an Honors College Advisory Curriculum Council, chaired by History Professor Barbara Weinstein, to design the interdisciplinary Honors College seminars. As work commenced to develop the academic core of the program, a senior member of the Undergraduate Studies staff, Dr. Laurie Johnson, was reviewing honors programs at other American universities and preparing recommendations for components of the initiative, including administrative structure, faculty participation, a budget, student recruitment, academic advising, program promotion, and a physical home. Weinstein's Advisory Council also examined the academic requirements of other major honors programs and ultimately recommended a university-wide four-year program that would include the following components: a 36 credit honors curriculum that included five specially designed interdisciplinary seminars; a first year scholarship; an individual faculty mentor assigned to each student; an Honors College Master to develop and supervise the academic program.

In the spring of 1988, as work on curriculum development continued, Jonaitis sent a memo to the faculty inviting nominations for a Master of the Honors College. The Master not only would work with an administrative director and devote half time of the appointment on academically related issues (curriculum development, recruiting faculty to the seminars), but also would interact closely with the students through teaching, advising and co-curricular activities. This invitation resulted in approximately ten nominations and ultimately the naming of Biochemistry professor Elof Carlson as the first Master. Professor Carlson was a SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor, had previously served as a master learner in the FLC program and, for many years, taught a popular introductory biology course for non-majors. He came to this new position enthusiastically with many ideas and was ready to enroll the first cohort of students in the fall of 1989.

The initial proposal for an Honors College called for the enrollment of a modest cohort of thirty students with additional plans to enroll a small number of transfer and continuing Stony Brook students. Eligibility for admission included quantitative criteria (high school average and SAT score) as well as letters of reference and a writing sample. For freshman applicants, evidence of outstanding achievement or talent was required. Less emphasis on quantitative criteria existed for applicants who demonstrated an extraordinary talent. In the initial stages of implementation, a faculty-staff committee not only selected the cohort each year, but also worked to establish procedures for application and admission to the program. Honors College membership benefits included supportive academic guidance, a merit scholarship, and priority for course registration, residence hall assignments and a designated space for seminars, study and other program-sponsored activities. Early on, a faculty mentor was assigned to each student and, over the life of the program opportunities for students to interact with faculty on an ongoing basis, both inside and outside the classroom, were actively encouraged and made available. A 3.30 cumulative grade point average was required for continuing membership in the program. Upon graduation and successful completion of all Honors College requirements, participation in the program was noted on each student's transcript.

In preparation for the recruitment of the first class of students, the Office of Undergraduate Studies, with the participation of the Admissions office, prepared materials that were sent to every guidance counselor in New York and selected high schools in New Jersey and Connecticut. In this first year, although there were over 250 inquiries about the Honors College, only 149 met the eligibility criteria. Completed applications were received from ninety students, which ultimately yielded twenty-three students in the inaugural cohort.

The first class of Honors College students enrolled in one specially designed three-credit seminar in each of the first two semesters, and one seminar each year after for three years. The seminars were broadly thematic, interdisciplinary and designed to be team-taught. The required curriculum also included departmental honors courses, one-credit enrichment classes and a six-credit senior project representing the culmination of each student's honors experience. The curriculum was supplemented with various enrichment activities including field trips, academic presentations and other co-curricular events. Many of these activities occurred in the Honors College Center, a dedicated space on the third floor of the Melville Library. The Center, which included office space for the College Master, was designed to integrate learning and the informal interaction between students and faculty with the goal of creating a lively academic community.

As the infrastructure for the Honors College was evolving, issues related to budget and faculty participation presented the greatest challenges. Most problematic was the recruitment of faculty to the three-credit required seminars. The Honors College academic curriculum stands in place of the University's general education curriculum that all other students complete. Recruiting faculty to teach these special seminars is included among the duties of the Honors College faculty director. This obligation has consistently been a challenge and at times very problematic. Staffing these required courses has been and continues to be an effort of personal appeal rather than institutionally embedded. Each appointed faculty director for the Honors College, from Elof Carlson to the present incumbent found it necessary to approach colleagues and personally negotiate their participation in the program. Over the more than 25 years since the Honors College was established, faculty directors and undergraduate administrators alike have vigorously appealed with concrete recommendations to institutionalize the staffing of Honors College seminars. These proposals include assigning faculty to the program for a single

seminar upon hire by an academic department, with the understanding that this would be a part of their regular teaching portfolio. Another suggestion has been to increase the compensation to academic departments who release faculty to participate in the Honors College. Neither of these, nor any other mechanism to insure the flow of faculty to the Honors College curriculum has been put in place. What makes this particularly significant is the fact that the students enrolled in this program are required by the university to take the seminars, yet their staffing remains tenuous and uncertain. Rosenthal points out,

> One major problem at Stony Brook is that faculty are not hired for an interest in such ventures, and the programs have a constant fight to find dedicated people whose departmental chairs are willing to spare them from the regular discipline-oriented curriculum they are expected to deliver. The administration tends to encourage the development of alternatives, though it is often hard pressed to maintain the original level of special funding without which the project never could have left the ground. Once in a while there is some help from a source like the Carnegie Foundation or the Lillie Foundation, but such funding tends to come with term limits and provides rather shaky planks on which to build an edifice (Rosenthal, 2004, p. 175).

With no endowment or grant-sponsored support, the financial backing for the Honors College derived solely from the organization. In recent years, although some of the original elements of the program have been cut back (field trips for instance) due primarily to reductions in the budget, the willingness to continue the program and recognize its value to the institution has remained more or less constant. Why then, is the fortitude to institutionalize one of the more important components of the program been so lacking over time? This question is key to the general topic of this dissertation and the factors that contribute to the persistence of undergraduate programs in research universities.

Reinventing Undergraduate Education

In 1983, the National Commission on Excellence in Education published *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform*. The commission was charged with investigating the state of learning and teaching in primary, secondary and post-secondary schools and, although the report dealt primarily with grade school levels, the effect on higher education could be felt. The report, which gave American education a failing grade, made recommendations for changes in a number of areas including standards and expectations, teaching, leadership and financial support (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The Commission's work triggered a number of other studies. According to Wendy Katkin, the former director of the Stony Brook University Reinvention Center, a common theme among these reports was the need for the examination of, and change in, undergraduate education. Change came to higher education, but at least initially, it was the four-year liberal arts colleges that embraced the effort most heartily "both with curricular and pedagogical experimentation on their own campuses and through combined action" (Katkin, 2003). As I will discuss below, not until the Boyer Commission did its work was there a significant engagement by research universities regarding undergraduate education.

The fact that Stony Brook's initial development profile did not stress undergraduate education was a weakness identified in the University's 1993 self-study and highlighted in the 1994 Middle States review. The neglect of the undergraduate program exposed by the evaluation was pervasive and required action. Middle States promised to revisit the campus in five years, rather than at the normal ten-year review interval, a very public black mark on the university. Stony Brook's lack of adequate attention to undergraduate education helped to encourage the choice of Shirley Strum Kenny as the University's fourth president in 1994.

Among her priorities, Dr. Kenny delivered a clear message that undergraduate education would receive the attention it greatly needed to create a nationally and internationally competitive research university. Fourth among the thirteen presidential goals presented in Kenny's inaugural address in April of 1995 was the transformation of Stony Brook into a model of undergraduate education among research universities. As a public declaration she coined the phrase, *student-centered research university* to clearly set the stage for what would become an important focus in her administration. The most significant initial step in the Kenny presidency in this regard was the establishment of the Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in a Research University. Although there already existed some discussion nationally about undergraduate education in research universities, and various attempts to integrate more successfully research and undergraduate education into the mainstream of the institution's business, the work of the Boyer Commission helped to galvanize this national discussion. Fundamentally, the subject of undergraduate education in the research university came out of the shadows with the publication of the Boyer Report and for Stony Brook specifically with Shirley Kenny's mandate to recognize the saliency of a strong undergraduate program to Stony Brook's aspiration as the "Berkeley of the East".

The Boyer Commission was formed to explore innovative ways in which research universities could use their primary mission to enhance the undergraduate experience. "What is needed now is a new model of undergraduate education at research universities that make the baccalaureate experience an inseparable part of an integrated whole" (1998, p. 7). The Carnegie Foundation's former president, Ernest Boyer, who presided at the initial meeting and was the intended chair of this Stony-Brook-launched commission, unexpectedly died five months later. Boyer viewed the groups' work as a successor to two earlier Carnegie reports, "Scholarship

Reconsidered" and "Scholarship Assessed" completed in the 1990's (Wilson, 1998). The Boyer Commission's "star-studded" membership included Bruce Alberts, President of the National Academy of Sciences, Chen-Lin Tien, Chancellor of UC Berkeley, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Dean of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania and Stony Brook's C.N. Yang, Nobel Laureate in Physics. The Commission's work ultimately resulted in a report entitled, "Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities," which made a set of ten recommendations, some more controversial than others (Stony Brook, 1998). At the heart of these recommendations, however, was the admonition that, rather than attempting to mimic the liberal arts college model, research universities should use the unique and powerful resources of this type of institution to directly enrich the undergraduate program. Another key Boyer Commission proposal was to involve undergraduates in a first year experience that encourages active learning and development of critical skills development. In April of 1998, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* responded to the release of the Commission's report with an article entitled, "Report Blasts Research Universities for Poor Teaching of Undergraduates", citing this report as the most recent, though not only, attempt to raise the flag of undergraduate education in the research university. The article quotes President Shirley Kenny, "For 30 years, universities have been saying that we've got to fix the problem of undergraduate education, and we have done a lot of interesting things. But the core has not changed" (1998, p. A13).

Not surprisingly, reaction from the academy to the recommendations of the Commission were mixed. They varied from the very enthusiastic, "its time has come" to the dubious sense that the extensive suggestions were unrealistic and excessively resource intensive (Katkin, 2003, p. 23). What is necessary to institutionalize change in undergraduate education? The seeds of

the answer to this question are buried in the divergent reaction to the Boyer recommendations and reflect the ongoing struggle that undergraduate administrators and dedicated faculty experience when working to make, and keep, the undergraduate program a serious priority in a research university setting.

In April of 2000, then Provost Robert McGrath spoke about the Boyer Commission report and its recommendations at a symposium celebrating the establishment of the Reinvention Center at Stony Brook. The Reinvention Center was an outgrowth of the Boyer recommendations and was designed to serve as a catalyst to help realize the change that Commission members envisioned. McGrath addressed local and national goals in undergraduate education, providing examples from Stony Brook's history and trajectory in this arena. From the perspective of this research, the most noteworthy point that McGrath made in his remarks was that although programs like the Honors College, Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) and the Educational Opportunity Program/Advancement on Individual Merit (EOP/AIM) were all successful by many measures, they exposed only a very small segment of the total undergraduate student body to a special programmatic experience. For change to be truly made and sustained in undergraduate education, most if not all students must be offered an experience that is consciously tailored to their academic success while also making use of the unique qualities of a research university. Smaller honors and learning community programs inevitably work at the margins of the institution, and are therefore, in some ways, easier to establish and operate over time. To institute a 'special' experience for most or all students would require much more than the creativity and commitment of a relatively small number of faculty and staff. Among other things, it would require a change in the allocation of resources, as well as in institutional culture.

Less than a year after making his remarks at the opening of the Reinvention Center, Provost McGrath would propose the establishment of an Undergraduate College system at Stony Brook. Although the architects of this organizational change did not propose it in direct response to the Report, it was impossible for its message and recommendations not to have been an influential guiding force.

The goals of the Undergraduate College initiative included reducing the psychological size of the institution, creating smaller active learning communities that would provide quality education and, more importantly, creating a more coherent, more clearly directed first year of college with greater academic guidance and greater faculty participation. Approximately ten years after publication of the Boyer Report, it can be argued that the Undergraduate College system, along with other concurrent organizational changes to the student experience at Stony Brook, embodied a most ambitious effort to realize the chief goals for the first year of college called for by the Commission. Most noteworthy of these was the opportunity for students to interact in a meaningful way with faculty in the classroom through research and inquiry based education. There had been many attempts to crystallize the undergraduate experience at Stony Brook, most rather modest. The Undergraduate College initiative, however, marked a more determined attempt to establish a first year experience at Stony Brook that was specialized and distinctive enough to attract the attention of academically competitive high school seniors (and their parents), as well as recognizable enough to keep true to the mission of a state university.

Chapter 3

The Stony Brook Undergraduate Colleges: A Case Study

As stated earlier, the Stony Brook Undergraduate Colleges grew primarily out of a realization on the part of Provost Robert McGrath that, although Stony Brook University had a number of successful programs that targeted specific segments of the incoming first-year students, these programs were single points having little effect on the great majority of enrolled students. With the recommendations of the Boyer Commission report fresh in the minds of those charged with undergraduate education, a Stony Brook delegation of academic and student affairs administrators, led by the Provost, traveled to the University of California at San Diego (UC San Diego) in May 2001 to explore their undergraduate college system. The trip was initially inspired by a conversation between McGrath and a member of the UC San Diego faculty who was visiting Stony Brook. Exploring the undergraduate program at UC San Diego particularly appealed to Provost McGrath and his team because of the significant similarities between the two institutions. Stony Brook University and UC San Diego were established at roughly the same time and, as public research universities, with largely the same set of priorities: scholarly research and graduate education.

> One of the [external] reviewers was from UC San Diego, and I had always been interested in San Diego because, as you know, it's essentially the same age as Stony Brook and in many ways, it had developed faster. And I always like to say that they had the good fortune to have been born into a better university family, namely the UC system, compared to SUNY. [I] asked this guy…do these colleges actually work? And I remember he kind of looked at me and said something like, 'Well, of course they do'. Because, you know, a lot of places advertise they have whatever, but if you ask, is it really comprehensive in covering all undergraduates, the answer is, maybe not so much. (Interview, former Provost, 2015).

Unlike Stony Brook, the University of California at San Diego included undergraduate education as a priority from the very start and, by all apparent indications, was successful in providing rich academic and co-curricular experiences for all undergraduate students. The hallmark of the undergraduate experience was their system of undergraduate colleges, "…a unique university structure that personalizes the delivery of service to undergraduate students. The Colleges are residential neighborhoods on campus with their own residence facilities, staff, traditions and general education requirements. Every UC San Diego undergraduate is assigned to one of six colleges when they are admitted to UC San Diego". (UC San Diego website, www.provost.ucsd.edu/colleges/#start).

The Colleges of the University of California at San Diego

Established in 1956, the University of California at San Diego campus was designed from the start around a set of undergraduate residential colleges. Unlike the Stony Brook academic structure, each residentially based college has its own set of general education requirements. Similar to Stony Brook's model, the UC San Diego colleges are comprised of dedicated residence halls, staff, and, although students may choose from the full range of academic majors available, college assignment is not based on major.

The two-day visit to UC San Diego included meetings with faculty serving as Undergraduate College Provosts (the equivalent of Faculty Directors at Stony Brook), the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Planning and Resources, the Dean of Biological Sciences, and undergraduate students. The group of visitors heard first-hand from people like themselves about promising educational practices. Not surprisingly, the feedback varied depending on institutional role, but it was largely very positive. This is not altogether surprising, considering

that the college system at UC San Diego is foundational to the student experience as well as to the institution itself. UC San Diego's enthusiasm for the structure, along with organizational similarities between the two universities, led the Provost and his team to further consider a parallel configuration at Stony Brook. Such an initiative would need to span the academic and student affairs divisions, and the campus dialogue would necessarily be broad and include the range of constituencies. Fortunately, productive working relationships between academic and student affairs preceded this effort and were critical to the establishment of such an initiative.

Reorganization of Undergraduate Education

In 2001 Paul Armstrong, who had served as Stony Brook's first Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences for five years, left the University. Armstrong's departure as well as a report issued in that same year by the Provost's Steering Committee on Undergraduate Education that strongly recommended enhancing the first and second year student experience, contributed to a restructuring of undergraduate education and the centralizing of the administration of undergraduate academic programs and services, which had some years earlier been decentralized under the academic Deans, primarily the Dean of Arts and Sciences. On December 3, 2001 Provost McGrath, in his report to the University Senate, announced a new reporting structure for university-wide undergraduate academic programs. The programs included in this reorganization were the Honors College, Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (URECA), Learning Communities, Living Learning Centers, Multidisciplinary Studies Major, Academic Standing and Appeals, and Academic Integrity. The administrative unit assigned to coordinate these programs was Undergraduate Academic Affairs, which reported to the newly named Deputy Provost and Professor of Linguistics, Mark Aronoff. In his memo announcing this new role for Aronoff, the Provost stated,

> Professor Mark Aronoff, who has been serving as Associate Provost, has accepted my offer to become Deputy Provost. In this position, he will work closely with me on all matters that come before the office. As Associate Provost he took the lead in developing our campus response to the SUNY general education requirements and to the new SUNY requirements on assessment. He has chaired the provost's undergraduate steering committee, organized an expanding provost's lecture series, and organized most of the recent external program reviews done by our office.
>
> As Deputy Provost he will bring university priorities on undergraduate programs into strategic planning processes, work with several of the units in the academic sector that report to this office in needs assessment and strategic planning, and help coordinate all the activities of this office. (Provost's Memo, 2001).

In addition to the shift in reporting structure, McGrath announced the formation of a new standing group called the Committee on the Undergraduate Experience (CUE). The committee, chaired by the Deputy Provost, was charged with overseeing initiatives and developing priorities with respect to undergraduate education at Stony Brook. It included faculty, staff from academic and student affairs, and two faculty members from the University Senate Undergraduate Council:

> Our University has come a remarkably long way in forty years. By many measures, we are among the preeminent research universities in this country. At the undergraduate level, we can be proud of our many innovations in the integration of research into undergraduate education that have led to important university awards. We also have some excellent programs for a subset of our students such as the Honors College, WISE, URECA, and the learning communities. Nonetheless, many of us share the belief that we must do more to improve the everyday experience for all our undergraduates.
>
> Until we are as proud of Stony Brook's undergraduate education as we are of the best of our graduate programs, we cannot truly rank ourselves among the best educational institutions in the country. The task of this committee is to bring us to that point by setting achievable concrete goals that will further the education of our undergraduates seeing that they are carried out. An action plan will have better integration of academic and student affairs staff and activities, and also mechanisms to help all students get more involved in the academic activities that happen at a great research university such as ours. (Provost's Report to the University Senate, December 3, 2001).

The importance of this organizational change is, first, that it was made as McGrath was considering a major new initiative that would alter undergraduate education at Stony Brook. Second, McGrath understood the importance of appointing a member of the faculty with a significant scholarly reputation, and a direct reporting relationship to the Provost, to oversee and develop undergraduate education at Stony Brook. The foundation for institutional change was being laid and reinforced in terms of the all-important factors of leadership and resources. It bears mentioning, however, that the McGrath team was not the first task force or steering committee on undergraduate education at Stony Brook to make recommendations for improvements to the first year undergraduate student experience. Among the most significant efforts in this regard was the work of a task force on the first year experience in 1993-4 created by Vice President for Student Affairs Frederick Preston. The fourteen-member task force representing west campus faculty, staff, and students was asked to consider a number of issues related to the experiences of students in the first year of college. This mandate came, in part, as a response to the work of the Undergraduate Project Steering Committee appointed by then Provost Jerry Schubel. The Select Task Force on the First Year Experience submitted a report, and although, as the Student Affairs Vice President, Preston's charge was not primarily academic, the task force did include faculty, attempted to pick up where the Schubel steering committee left off, and ultimately made a number of recommendations that were consistent with those that came later from other groups, particularly regarding enhanced academic support for students, more 'informal out of class contact between faculty and new students', and improved teaching in large introductory courses. (Report of the Select Task Force on the First Year Experience, 1994). However, whereas Preston's task force offered suggestions for undergraduate education that represented changes to existing structures, the recommendations

made during the Kenny/McGrath administration encouraged new structures and more significant change to the institution itself. There was also a greater degree of success implementing these more ambitious proposals than there had been previously. In this dissertation I consider how mechanisms in place may have contributed to the success of effecting change in undergraduate education in the period during which the Undergraduate Colleges were established.

A further key dynamic during this period were strong relationships growing between academic and student affairs administrators. From its inception the development of the Undergraduate College model was a consciously collaborative effort between academic affairs and student affairs. The visit to the UC San Diego campus by the Provost, two members of his staff, and a senior student affairs staff member sparked the discussion of ways in which academic and student affairs could work together to facilitate greater interaction between faculty and undergraduates. By this time there was a commitment among those with responsibility for the Stony Brook undergraduate experience, academic and co-curricular, to work together and end the organizational divide between these areas.

> Well, I think they both had deep respect for one another's roles and responsibilities at the University. That is, the Provost and the Vice President of Student Affairs. And they saw that the student was, so to speak, one being and that their academic and intellectual development were as critical as their social and interpersonal development. So, the two of them…came together and indicated their support. Probably more the Provost at the time, in terms of what was committed to and wanted to make a significant impact on the undergraduate experience here at the University. (Interview, Dean of Students, 2015.)

Collaboration

Following the trip to UC San Diego in May of 2001 and the reorganization of undergraduate academic affairs by year's end, a small group of administrators had begun working together in earnest to advance the idea of Undergraduate Colleges at Stony Brook with

consideration of various models, including UC San Diego's. Visits to Yale and Bucknell University followed the trip to UC San Diego and the original Oxford and Cambridge residential college models also served as sources of inspiration. As stated earlier, from their inception, the Undergraduate Colleges were a collaborative effort between academic affairs and student affairs with the intention of blurring these organizational lines university-wide. The blurring of organizational lines brought together existing efforts, maximized the resources dedicated to undergraduates by the university, and enabled the academic, residential, advising and counseling needs of students to be addressed by members of a single team within each Undergraduate College. The UC San Diego model was intuitively attractive to the Stony Brook Provost's team and their colleagues, who worked to devise an approach to organizing a more sound first-year experience that combined what was gleaned from the UC San Diego visit with the current research literature and the realities of the Stony Brook campus. Without question, it was a great advantage in the planning of the colleges to have like-minded people committed to student success with knowledge of the higher education literature, and the fortitude to engage in the implementation of complementary programs. Creating a common vision and establishing common goals across the provostial and student affairs landscape accelerated the collaborative process and made it easier to move the implementation along at a good pace.

Building the Undergraduate Colleges

In the summer of 2001 the Provost and the Vice President for Student Affairs, Dr. Frederick Preston, hosted a retreat of undergraduate program directors to present the idea of an Undergraduate College system to a group of faculty at the University whose appointed departmental role was most directly engaged with undergraduate education. At the time, Stony Brook enrolled more than twenty-two thousand students, over fourteen thousand of them were

undergraduates, the great majority of whom attended full time. The University offered more than sixty academic majors through the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, the School of Health, Technology and Management, the School of Medicine, the School of Dental Medicine, the School of Nursing, the School of Social Welfare, the Marine Sciences Research Center, and the School of Business. New York State's provisional teaching certification was also available in the sciences, mathematics, foreign languages, social studies, English, and the teaching of English to speakers of other languages. Innovative programs offered to undergraduate students included the Honors College, the Educational Opportunity Program/Advancement on Individual Merit (EOP/AIM), a program designed to provide access to higher education for educationally and economically disadvantaged students, Living Learning Centers, and Women in Science and Engineering (WISE). The trend of student enrollment in the late 1990's and early 2000's was increasing and between 1997 and 2002 SAT scores had risen by approximately 75 points (President's State of the University Address, September 2002). The student body had traditionally been highly diverse and included a great number of students who were the first in their families to attend college or who come from low-income homes. In 2002 about 87% of first-time, full-time students were still in attendance after their first year and approximately 60% of each freshman class graduated from Stony Brook within six years.

The retreat, entitled *Building a Culture of Student Success*, was the first event of its kind and an indication of a deliberate shift in practice for the two executive areas. The two vice presidents and their staffs would now set priorities for the undergraduate student experience together by formulating a broad notion of where the university was heading with a set of concrete action items generated by members of the retreat. This was one of a number of working

groups and presentations to campus governance, faculty, staff, and students to garner support and build on the proposed concept for Undergraduate Colleges at Stony Brook.

Given the exigencies of time and complexities of long range planning in an institution that is heavily influenced by the unpredictability of state budgeting, it was decided that the Undergraduate College effort would be guided by sensitivity to campus culture and knowledge of best practices. This approach was inspired by higher education literature and followed the University of Indiana model (A Vision for Indiana University Bloomington, 1995; Bolman and Deal, 1991; Senge, 1990). George Kuh's work on intentionality in undergraduate education was also an influence (Kuh, 1995 and 2001).

The core principle of the Undergraduate College project overall was to enhance the academic success of students by creating a more deliberate and coordinated experience, thus communicating the true essence of a research university to first year students. The colleges were designed to make Stony Brook more attractive to prospective applicants and to enhance the experience of those students who elected to enroll. Those working to establish the program adopted an integrated approach to undergraduate education motivated by the Kenny presidency and the Boyer Commission report. This tactic included blurring the boundaries between academic and co-curricular experiences for both resident and commuting students, realizing the goal of a student-centered emphasis at the university and creating a freshman experience that would serve as a foundation for subsequent years. The imperatives associated with the Undergraduate College enterprise involved strengthening the academic foundations of students, community building and mentoring, and the inclusion of inquiry-based learning in the freshman year, as recommended by the Boyer commission.

As Tinto (1996) has noted, in the past institutions have responded to the perceived academic needs of their students in non-academic terms: introducing a range of remedial (or developmental) courses, tutorials, and supplemental instruction activities to enhance the skills of these students. They have turned to extended orientation sessions and required freshman courses like University 101, which stress coping skills as well as providing information about how to negotiate the demands of college life. Some colleges have also emphasized better advising and career counseling as ways of helping students make more informed academic and career choices. Other institutions have stressed freshmen social activities and faculty and mentor programs as mechanisms for the development of much needed affiliation among new students and between students and faculty. However, most colleges have seen only modest improvement in academic success. Tinto argued that the main reason for the modest gains was that most of these efforts and programs are largely non-academic in nature. Some faculty members have been involved in these programs but they are usually not integral to the student experience. The Stony Brook organizers of a new freshman experience had something more ambitious in mind.

The structure of the Stony Brook Undergraduate Colleges that emerged is:

- there are six colleges
- each college is an academic and social community, the size of a liberal arts college.
- the colleges are names for the broad themes that drive their academic and social lives. The themes are: Arts, Culture and Humanities, Global Studies, Human Development, Information and Technology Studies, Leadership and Service, and Science and Society.
- each college has a faculty-staff team made up of a Faculty Director, a Living-Learning Center director, academic (College) advisor, Residential Quad Director, and Residence Hall Directors (RHDs).
- the college curriculum consists of College 101 and College 102. College 101 is a one-credit introduction to the Stony Brook as a University tailored to each college theme. The course is taught primarily by College Advisors and Residence Hall Directors. College 102 is a one-credit faculty seminar taught by tenured and tenured track faculty. It is considered an "enrichment" course and is less formal than most courses. Topics for the classes are of the instructors' choosing and

> should appeal to first year students. The primary purpose of this course is to foster contact and build relations between faculty and students that could last throughout the student's stay at Stony Brook.

The six Stony Brook Colleges were designed to be both academic and co-curricular communities, each between 350 and 400 students in size. The number six was determined by the simple fact that Stony Brook, for many years, had six residential quads. These were originally built on the College model, complete with a resident faculty master, although they had not operated as academic colleges since very early in the history of the university. The themes of the Colleges are not tied specifically to particular majors, but are broad and designed to appeal to a wide range of student interests. However, since many incoming students are quite major conscious, analyzing the degree programs of graduating students to identify themes that would best match the eventual interests of the students generated the choice of the six themes. As stated in an early program brochure, "The Colleges are named for distinct themes around which academic and social life revolves: the system is intended to let students explore a wide range of interests, both within their intended majors and across the academic spectrum. While each College has its own personality, there are many experiences that will be the same for every first-year student." Senior members of the faculty who had the opportunity and resources to make decisions would lead the Colleges. It was anticipated that each of the six Colleges would consequently develop its own character and traditions but have an academic focus supported by advising, residential, counseling, and career center staff. Invited faculty would teach a small first-year seminar in the second semester, and play a central role in College life. This component of the program responded directly to Tinto's (1996) call for faculty led efforts. As integral parts of the Undergraduate Colleges, the residence halls were also given an academic focus. For some time, students had been given their choice of housing, though their accommodations were based

entirely on housing criteria. The thematic College system, therefore, represented a redirection of process and existing resources. Commuter students, who comprised less than 10% of the first-year cohort, were also included in the Colleges. A professional academic advisor, referred to as a College Advisor, was assigned to each College. The advisor works with individual students to plan their course of studies, monitors academic progress, is available to assist students with other academic questions that they may encounter and works as a member of the team to deliver programs throughout the year. Each College Advisor also teaches a number of sections of College 101 each fall semester, as do the residence hall directors. By the end of the first semester, each student should have developed a connection with their advisor that, ideally, lasts throughout their undergraduate career.

A full-time tenured member of the Stony Brook faculty was identified to lead each college as faculty director. The faculty directors were appointed personally by the Provost or the Deputy Provost, who ensured that each was a respected teacher with a strong research program in a field related to the theme of the College. The inaugural faculty directors were:

- Imin Kao, Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering, College of Information and Technology Studies.
- Perry Goldstein, Associate Professor of Music, College of Arts, Culture and Humanities.
- Michael Schwartz, Professor of Sociology, College of Global Studies.
- Jeffrey Levinton, Distinguished Professor of Ecology and Evolution, College of Science and Society.
- Manuel London, Professor of Business and Psychology, College of Leadership and Service.
- Paul Bingham, Associate Professor of Biochemistry, College of Human Development.

The faculty director oversees the academic activities of the College, which include first-year seminars taught by members of the faculty, the College affiliated Living-Learning Centers for upper-division students, faculty-student lunches and dinners, and special academic programs and

events held throughout the year. By far, the most considerable director responsibility is the recruitment of faculty colleagues to teach the 102 seminar. According to the current faculty director of the Global Studies College, "My primary responsibility is to staff the 102 seminars for the spring. And this usually takes place between May and October or November, with most of the work done in September and early October."

The faculty director, College faculty, and College Advisors work in partnership with student affairs staff (e.g., Quad Directors, Residence Hall Directors, Dean of Students staff). As noted earlier, the students living on campus are linked to one of six residential quads and the new first-year students in the program live in the quad associated with the Undergraduate College: students of Information and Technology Studies reside in Mendelsohn Quad, students of Arts, Culture and Humanities in Tabler Quad, and so on. The Quad Director, the Residence Hall Directors, and the Resident Assistants work as a team with the Faculty Director, College faculty, and College Advisors in organizing college activities and programs. Commuter students, regardless of College affiliation, are included in all planned activities in the residential quads and elsewhere on campus. One feature of the Stony Brook environment that made involvement of campus residences staff feasible was the well-established expectation of academic background and participation for the Campus Residences professional staff. Nearly all Residence Hall Directors (RHDs) have master's degrees, and each is expected to be involved in an academic credit-bearing experience. This meant teaching a course in a Living Learning Center or working with a peer-education program. RHDs also met with every new student in the residence hall to discuss a "contract for success" executing the Campus Residences motto *"Education Beyond the Classroom."* The staff in Campus Residences were therefore prepared to become partners in the Undergraduate College team. Many Quad Directors and each RHD would teach a section of

College 101 and contribute to providing educational guidance to first year students. The expectation of this active participation precipitated changes in training and program planning, but it is change primarily made possible by the pre-existing philosophy and leadership within the department that made this change possible.

> Well, one thing I remember very well was while we were at San Diego, Bob McGrath asked me if I thought that RHDs could handle the responsibility of teaching a 101 seminar and first line advising. I said, 'no question'. And, of course, one of the things that was clear very early on was if we were going to set an expectation that every freshman would have a 101 course as opposed to it being optional, there were going to have to be a whole lot of people teaching. (Interview, Assistant Vice President for Campus Residences, 2015).

The primary academic component of the College experience for first-year students is the seminar program, and at the heart of that program is the spring semester College 102 seminar. In the Fall semester students enroll in College 101, a one-credit introduction to the university course that bears resemblance to other such classes offered nationally, but with the distinguishing feature of being tailored to each College theme. Primarily the College Advisors and RHDs teach the College 101 sections. The faculty-delivered 102 seminars are designed to be much less formal than other academic courses and seminar leaders are encouraged to explore topics of their own choosing with a group of about 20 students. The original design specifically called for the 102 seminar to be taught by tenured and tenure-track faculty to introduce students to the most significant component of a research university-its faculty. Sample topics of the first series of seminars included; *Recent Discoveries in Human Evolution, Information Technology and Decision Making, and The Marriage of Figaro.*

In contrast to the San Diego model, architects of the program at Stony Brook thought it best to keep the mandated curriculum associated with the new freshman experience to a minimum. Introducing an initiative of this scope to a large organization is challenging in itself,

and when that organization is a research university it is essential to have faculty endorsement, particularly when it comes to proposals related to the curriculum. After a series of meetings with various groups on campus, the modest approach to this fundamental piece of the program seemed prudent and more likely to garner the support of the most important constituent group, the faculty. Moreover, additional extensive curricular requirements could have made it difficult for students to meet graduation requirements in a timely way, potentially jeopardizing the objective of the entire enterprise. Review of the College 101 and 102 course proposals was identical to that of any other, and required approval by the university's undergraduate curriculum committees. The curriculum for College 101 was similar to SBU 101 and required minor revisions with new designators to be college specific, e.g. ITS 101. College 102, however, was a completely new course and required careful planning and preparation by the initiation team and the college Faculty Directors. Once these one-credit courses were approved, faculty were recruited to teach each section by the Faculty Directors. Spring 2003 was the first semester that the freshman 102 seminar was offered, and there were ten distinct sections of ITS 102 listed in the class schedule with titles such as *Computational Robotics*, *Information Technology and Decision Making, and Engineering: Society's Enabling Profession* (Stony Brook Undergraduate Class Schedule, Spring 2003). All ten sections of this course were taught by tenured members of the Stony Brook faculty. As the university added more Undergraduate Colleges, and mandated the freshman seminars for all incoming first year students, the number of sections would increase from ten to approximately twenty per college each semester. This meant, for example, that each spring it would be necessary for approximately 120 faculty to volunteer or accept an invitation to teach a section of College 102. The program was developing in terms of organization and size, and considerable faculty support for and participation in this initiative would be crucial.

> Beginning in the fall 2004 all new freshmen will take SBU 101 within their Undergraduate College, and the curriculum has been redesigned to incorporate the colleges' academic themes throughout the course. Curriculum based seminars will be offered in the college in the spring semester. For example, the College of Science and Society will offer a seminar focused on the influence of science on culture and thought and designed to improve students' written and oral communications skills. (2003-04 Accomplishments Report, *Five Year Plan*, 2000-2005).

Another component of the College system and further sign of change in undergraduate education during this period was the ambitious undertaking to create specially designed facilities for each Undergraduate College. Believing that dedicated space provides greater potential for institutionalization of the endeavor, the Assistant Vice President for Campus Residences envisioned physical locations for colleges within each residential quad. These locations would provide a center for thematically driven programming, College activities, delivery of the freshman seminars and space for informal gatherings to engender an educational community among students, staff and faculty. The first one of these spaces, the Center for Arts, Culture and Humanities, was realized through a massive renovation of Tabler Cafeteria, a previously abandoned building in Tabler Quad. The new facility would include a student gallery, music practice rooms, an art studio, a digital arts computer lab, space for a radio station, meeting rooms, classrooms and a 250-person capacity performance space. In an effort to facilitate an academic presence and activity in the residential quads, each of the College Center's included office space for the College Advisor and Faculty Director. As was the case in subsequent iterations of this project, the Faculty Director of the new College of Arts, Culture and Humanities participated in the planning stages of the renovation with Campus Residences, as well as presided over the use of the Center. This undertaking proposed by the Assistant Vice President and Student Affairs signified a tremendous contribution to the collaboration between

academic and student affairs and was a significant component to the construction of a strong foundation to the initiative:

> It was evident from the earliest stages of the development of the Undergraduate College model that facilities that could accommodate the activities and functions of the Colleges would be critical to their success. What became the Tabler Center is a great example of the combination of a space for large events (the Performance Space), as well as smaller venues that support theme-specific functions (the gallery, studio, and practice rooms) (Interview, Assistant Vice President for Campus Residences, 2015).

In addition to providing customized facilities for academic and co-curricular student life, the facilities provided the tools for exploring the themes of the Colleges and classrooms for the delivery of instruction-a valuable and scarce resource on most any campus. Completion of the Center was also touted as an accomplishment of the University*'s 2000-2005 Five Year Plan*, http://www.stonybrook.edu/sb/5yrplan03-04/faculty.shtml.

The renovation and opening of the Tabler Center for the Arts in 2004 was followed in the next eight years by similar renovation projects in each of the other residential quads, some more elaborate than others and each distinctive (based on the available space in the quad and other logistical factors), until all six Undergraduate Colleges could claim a specially designed student facility, http://ucolleges.stonybrook.edu/facilities. Parallel to this grand effort on the residential side, was a more modest renovation of space in the Melville Library (the location of Undergraduate College administrative offices) that was primarily planned as a meeting place and classroom for commuter students.

Early Implementation

With many of the necessary components to launch a system of Undergraduate Colleges approved and in place, planners turned to the daunting task of introducing the first College. After much consideration and consultation with various campus units responsible for the

admission, advising, housing and teaching of undergraduates, a decision was made to phase in the six Colleges over three years and introduce one College in the first year (2002), two more in the following year and the final three in the third. It is important to note that establishment of the Undergraduate Colleges was complemented by other first-year actions, including more directive academic advising, a revised and more supportive academic standing procedure for students in academic jeopardy, greater managing of gateway courses, and the limiting of the number of credit hours for new students. These were all efforts that, to be successful, required intentional and collective action across the provostial, student affairs and governance sectors of the university (See Appendix A).

The first Undergraduate College to come on-line was Information and Technology Studies (ITS). This choice stemmed primarily from the pattern of Stony Brook applicants who were admitted to the university but denied admission to a major in the academic College of Engineering and Applied Sciences. These students were considered "pre-admits" to the major, but did not have the same access to courses and advising that students did who were directly admitted to a major. Since the primary goals of the College program were to reduce the psychological size of the university, improve the academic success of its students and increase faculty engagement with freshman, targeting a population that on the one hand, met the admission requirements of the university but, on the other, fell short of direct admission to certain challenging academic major programs, seemed an ideal place to start. These were students, many of whom had a history of falling through the cracks and were in great need of direction, advising and encouragement. Program architects thought that the College of Information and Technology Studies could help students realize their goal to complete a major in engineering or, alternatively, help them see beyond the College of Engineering and Applied

Sciences and pursue a new set of goals. The first task at hand was the selection of a Faculty Director. The Provost invited Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Imin Kao to serve as the first Undergraduate College faculty director of the college of Information and Technology Studies. According to Professor Kao, he viewed his "responsibility to be available to help students to learn, grow and realize their dreams at Stony Brook." (*Statesman*, October 2002). Kao's long dedication to teaching and scholarship as well as his entrepreneurial spirit encouraged this choice for the academic leader of the pilot College. "We all worked hard on it, and we had an awful lot of good people. Think of the founding Directors, think of how good they are. And how generous they were. Imin Kao, I remember, he was almost too good to believe, right?" (Interview, former Provost, 2015).

In addition to the Faculty Director, a College Advisor needed to be identified and the curriculum planned and approved by the university's curriculum committees. The first College Advisor was chosen from among the staff in the university's Academic Advising Center and once Mendelsohn Quad was chosen as the ITS College residential quad, the quad director for Mendelsohn became the third member of the ITS team. The three got to work planning for the first cohort of ITS students which would include planning programs reflecting the theme of the College, plan events for new student orientation and opening weekend, determine College-specific curriculum for the 101 seminar and develop ways to build an ITS community. Beyond the team, the implementation of the program required campus-wide planning and participation from academic affairs, student affairs, academic deans, governance, admissions, registrar, student activities, communications, information technology, food services, etc. The formerly siloed organization came together on behalf of first year students to deliver the various components of this ambitious endeavor. Regular meetings of key players were scheduled to

strategize every element and phase of the program, from promoting the Colleges to prospective applicants to admitting students to one of six Colleges, to planning the curriculum for College 101, new student orientation and other events and activities. This planning crossed all organizational lines with the objective of consistent messaging and coordination. This group, called the Undergraduate College Council, was chaired by the Deputy Provost (later named Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education), and included the Associate Provost for Enrollment Management, the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Assistant Vice President for Campus Residences, Dean of Students, Undergraduate College faculty directors, and the Director of Advising. As the program evolved other relevant members of the campus community were invited to join the Council including Associate and Assistant Deans from the Colleges of Arts and Sciences and the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, and a representative from the University Senate's Undergraduate Council.

Implementation of the initiative was rapid. In the fall of 2003 two more Colleges were added; the College of Arts, Culture and Humanities led by an Associate Professor and the Undergraduate Program Director of the Department of Music; and the College of Science and Society whose first Director was a SUNY Distinguished Professor from the department of Ecology and Evolution. The three remaining Colleges were added in the fall of 2004, one built on the theme of Global Studies, directed by a Professor of Sociology, one centered on Human Development directed by an Associate Professor of Neurobiology and Behavior and the College of Leadership and Service guided by a Professor of Business and Psychology. In his memo to the faculty calling for nominations for faculty directors of the last three colleges the Provost stated:

> I believe that these Colleges are a very effective and practical way to enhance the undergraduate experience through engagement with research faculty in ways that

> complement classroom experiences, or research experiences enjoyed by a fraction of our students. The fact that these Colleges are for first-year students addresses an issue faced by most research universities like ours, helping entering students gain a sense of what drives academic inquiry and learning. The commitment of time and effort on the part of faculty (and students) associated with the College activities is compatible with the myriad other demands on time, and modest compared to the payoffs. (Provost's memo, 2004).

Also in 2004, an administrative director for the College program was hired, a position which represented significant new provostial resources allocated to this endeavor and an organizational infrastructure that would grow over the following decade to include additional staff such as advisors for each College, and a facilities manager to oversee the Tabler Center for the College of Arts, Culture and Humanities.

To determine College membership, each incoming first-year student was asked to complete an on-line preference form in which they rated each of the Colleges on a five-point scale. Staff made assignments balancing student rankings with space availability in the residence halls and an eye on a relatively equal distribution of students among the colleges. Some Colleges were more popular from the start, for instance the College of Science and Society, resulting in some admitted students not receiving their first choice. This was perceived as an inevitable and relatively minor issue. The themes naturally attracted certain students; for example, engineering and aspiring engineering students were often interested in the College of Information and Technology Studies. Ultimately, the intent was for each College to develop its own set of traditions and culture, which would be broadly appealing based on several factors: the theme, the academic discipline and style of the Faculty Director, interests and participation of the students. Since the typical Faculty Director term is three years, it was thought that the change in directors would help to reinvigorate and reinvent the College. Once students were assigned, College teams planning for their arrival, first at New Student Orientation then the semester.

Members of the Undergraduate College Council and their staffs worked to reorganize the entire Orientation program to reflect the theme of the Undergraduate College and prepare the student for membership in this new structure. As students arrived at Orientation and Opening of School events, the teams were working to establish relationships and create a sense of identity with the University. The focus throughout was student success and providing more efficient and effectively delivered opportunities for access to the rich resources of a research university. College Advisors worked to ensure that students were registered for the courses that they needed, as well as ones they could manage. Quad Directors and RHDs were reinforcing the goal of student success with thematically oriented programs, residential tutoring centers, meetings with students. Staff from the Commuter Student Services Office were also reaching out to commuting students and providing resources for support. Although these units have a history of supporting student success, the important and new elements here were coordination and collaboration. For the first time in the history of the University, academic and student affairs personnel were working from the same "script" developed within the context of a thematic college. No longer working in parallel, student service departments were brought together to create a vibrant educational community for new students with the conviction that they would now more richly benefit from the great advantages of a research university and consistent guidance from three groups: academic and student affairs staff and university faculty.

Chapter 4

Theoretical Framework

Both the sociology of higher education and organizational sociology provide the theoretical foundation for this dissertation. Although Max Weber's foundational analysis on bureaucratic organizations is inevitably an influence, this dissertation focuses more directly on post-World War II organizational theory. The sociological interpretation of the organization and internal workings of colleges and universities (institutional priorities, faculty culture, leadership, etc.) is a developing field, but very useful analyses can be found in the work of Burton Clark and Patricia Gumport. In his 1973 article, "Development of the Sociology of Higher Education", Clark laid out the evolution of the study of higher education in the field of sociology: "General sociology developed about the turn of the century and was a viable enterprise with a number of subfields by the 1920's. Among the subfields, the sociology of education was a fragile enterprise until at least the 1950's" (Clark, 1973, p. 3). But higher education became more relevant to American citizens as the number of people going to college increased dramatically, and scholarly analysis of higher education grew. Even so, the bulk of research examined schools, not colleges and universities. As recently as the 1970s, Clark argued that sociology of higher education remained an unformed field that had not yet made a significant contribution (Clark, 1973). Its relevance, however, has been augmented in recent decades by changes in education and increasing demands for accountability and productivity in this sector (Meyer and Rowan, 2006).

In *Sociology of Higher Education*, Patricia Gumport reviews Clark's assessment and details the more recent progress of this subfield, which has included work on the academic

profession, governance, organization (internal workings and culture of colleges and universities), higher education in a changing environment (adaptation), and inequality (Gumport, 2007). This dissertation makes use of their work to explore the hypothesis that a collaborative relationship between academic affairs and student affairs is critical to institutional change in undergraduate education. Collaboration between academic and student affairs was indeed key to changes in undergraduate education at Stony Brook. This collaboration was not accidental, but a deliberately pursued working strategy to reinforce efforts to enhance the quality of undergraduate experience in all ways. Architects of the program had been working together on behalf of Stony Brook's undergraduates in various capacities and understood the benefits of joining forces in terms of aggregating human and financial capital to the success of this initiative. This understanding did not derive simply from the fortunate and friendly relationships between undergraduate academic and student affairs administrators, though those did exist. These administrators drew lessons from the higher education literature that pointed to the benefits—for students, faculty and staff working with students—of collaboration between academic and student affairs. This literature was a tool already integrated by student affairs administrators in their overall planning and strategy in support of student success; another component that made collaboration with academic affairs a critical change factor. The importance of such collaboration in developing a truly integrated and meaningful undergraduate experience has also been explored in earnest over the last two decades by John Gardner, President of the Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education and leading figure on the first year of college experience. Gardner's Institute sponsored the First Year Matters survey, conducted at Stony Brook in 2007, where collaborative relationships are a featured element, and which will be discussed later.

The work on organizational models and facilitating lasting change in higher education by Adrianna Kezar also informs the examination of the topic of institutional change. Although collaboration between academic and student affairs was overall clearly supported in the literature of higher education, very little research was conducted on the topic until Kezar's national survey, conducted by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education in 2000, of institutions involved in academic and student affairs collaboration. In the analysis of the survey results, Kezar considers the question of collaborative efforts between academic and student affairs and compares them to programs that lie solely within one area or the other (Kezar, 2001). This important exploration of three organizational models of change in a college or university environment, Planned Change, Restructuring and the Kuh Model, heightens our appreciation of the difficult task confronting those interested in collaborative and persistent change. A brief description of these models is useful here both in terms of what makes them distinct from one another and what theoretical similarities they share. Kezar's work examines cultural, structural and rational theories of change, which were predominant in the literature prior to 2005. George Kuh's model rests heavily on cultural and human relations theory. Cultural theory argues that the shaping of values and shared systems of meaning are crucial to successful change and, Kezar contends, sets the stage for a more protracted, unpredictable framework. Human relations theory stresses formal training and staff development as the best vehicles for organizational change. Rational theories of change focus on "leadership, planning and scientific management tools as the key to creating change" and have given rise to the model of planned change (Kezar, 2003). In contrast, structural theories of change focus on the ways in which institutions shape the individual, and how persistent patterns of behavior resist change. The restructuring model relies on this line of

thought and the view that changing institutional structures is the only potentially fruitful method for changing the institutions themselves.

Table 1
Summary of Change Frameworks
(Kezar, 2003)

Category	Kuh	Planned Change	Restructuring
Theory base	Cultural and Human relations	Rational	Structural
Main Strategies	Altering values, traditions, languages, and vision	Creating goals, planning process, and assessment	Altering roles, and functions, inventory and assess structures
Target of activities	Collective effort related to values and beliefs	Leadership	Organizational chart, operating procedures
Outcome	New set of values or norms	Accomplished goals and new processes	New structures or organizing principles

Kezar's survey was sent to 260 chief student affairs officers with a response rate of 49% or 128 individuals. Seventy-five percent of the respondents came from four-year colleges, comprehensive colleges or universities. Results of the survey indicated that most institutions used strategies consistent with the planned change model, followed by the Kuh model, and then restructuring. In terms of success, however, "the Kuh model was seen as slightly more successful than planned change strategies" for various kinds of institutional change. "Restructuring was seen as the least successful with over half the individuals who used these strategies responding that they were only occasionally successful" (Kezar, 2003, p. 69). Kezar argues that the institutions that pulled elements from more than one of the models considered here were the most successful. Senior administrative support was seen as the single most important factor for creating conditions for change. Stated another way, no one model was sufficient to realize sustainable change, and factors such as institutional size, administrative leadership and organizational priorities were seen as influences on the effectiveness of each one

of the models. Ultimately, she contended that a selectively blended use of the three models would be most effective in realizing stable collaborative organizational change.

The higher education literature is less useful in understanding faculty culture and the role that faculty play in the collaborative relationship. A notable exception is Kathleen Manning, who tackles the historically orthogonal perspective between faculty and administrators on a college campus:

> Nowhere is the simultaneous existence of several organizational perspectives within a single institution more apparent than at the intersection of faculty and administration. Faculty adhere predominantly to a collegial model while administrators typically operate as a bureaucracy with aspects of the political and organized anarchy perspectives often obvious (Manning, 2013, p.35).

The faculty collegium model, as Manning writes, stresses peer relationship and is less hierarchically motivated. The typical administrative structure is a hierarchical bureaucracy with power and positional authority operating throughout. While there clearly is a faculty culture in higher education, this culture varies depending on institution type. Typically, research universities include faculty who have allegiance not only to their home department and colleagues, but also more broadly—and perhaps more insistently—to a national and international audience. "Their interest lies in research and scholarship more than in teaching and service" (Burton Clark in Manning, 1973, p. 38). Manning's work makes clear the key source of complication in implementing initiatives embedding faculty into a collaboration between academic and student affairs. The significance of this analysis is particularly relevant here since, unlike much of what was previously written on higher education which, sometimes awkwardly, used theories generated through the study of other organizations, Manning, as well as Kezar, generate their analyses through the study of higher education directly. This dissertation will seek to build on their insights and contribute to managing this complexity.

Robert Merton's work, though not directly concerned with educational organizations, provides considerable insights into the collaborative dilemma raised by Manning. Merton developed the concept "role set" to define a circumstance where occupying a single status entails involvement in a number of role relationships (Merton, 1957). This conceptual definition marked a departure from the traditionally cited concept of multiple roles, which can be described as the various statuses that people singularly occupy (student, daughter, sister, etc.) (Merton, 1957). Role sets, in contrast, occur by virtue of the structural context. For example, the status of medical school student includes the role of that student to his instructors, but also the relationships between that status of student to "other students, nurses, physicians, social workers, medical technicians, and the like" (Merton, 1957, p. 111). Merton's argument is useful in the context of the range of roles that faculty status includes in an academic setting and the impact that these roles have on the social structure of the organization. Merton argued, "status and roles become concepts serving to connect culturally defined expectations with the patterned conduct and relationships, which make up a social structure. [Each] social status involves not a single associated role, but an array of roles", (Merton, 1957 p. 110). The status of university faculty includes roles such as teacher, researcher, colleague, and the like, as well as a set of relationships associated with each of these roles. Faculty, as do other status groups, have to manage possible conflict among roles and role relationships. Each of these roles comes with different demands and potential role strain resulting from possible conflict and imbalance of power among role set members. The relationship of an assistant professor to her department chair brings a different set of demands and expectations than does the structure of the relationship between that assistant professor and her students or her colleagues. These relationships vary further depending on the nature of the institution. For instance, the preferred balance between teaching, research and

service may differ significantly between a liberal arts college and a research university. Merton's analysis, and role theory more generally, are useful in the interpretation of the interview data. Faculty responses to questions related to their participation in the Undergraduate College program, as well as the perceptions of others interviewed (professional staff and administrators) regarding the role of the faculty in the College program, is key to understanding what factors contribute to change and programmatic permanence in undergraduate education in research universities.

Finally, new or neo-institutional theories of organizations which were framed initially in the 1970's by John Meyer, Richard Scott, Brian Rowan and Lynn Zucker, and developed more fully with significant contributions in later years by Walter Powell and Paul DiMaggio, provide an examination of organizational environments and factors influencing change in organizations, particularly the social context in which organizations are positioned (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). Generally speaking, institutional theory endeavors to understand how and why particular organizational arrangements develop and whose interests are served by the configuration.

> Institutionalists want to understand the trade-offs involved in using one form of institution to the exclusion of other possible ones. They want to know what alternatives a society and its policy makers might have; which social group might be favored or disadvantaged by a particular arrangement; whose vested interests might be tied up with a given institutional form and practice (Meyer and Rowan, p, 4, 2006).

Contrary to the old-institutionalism model which relied on a "rational actor" model as the primary explanation of organizational change, new institutionalists view institutions often as independent variables where cognitive and cultural forces, rather than individual motives play the dominant role:

> In their review of the state of institutional theory, DiMaggio and Powell [1991:13] distinguished between the old and the new institutionalism. In the old

> institutionalism, issues of influence, coalitions, and competing values were central, along with power and informal structures [Clark, 1960; Selznick, 1949, 1957]. This focus contrasts with the new institutionalism with its emphasis on legitimacy, the embeddedness of organizational fields, and the centrality of classification, routines, scripts and schema [DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1977] (Greenwood and Hinings, 1996, pp. 1022-23).

Central to the theory of new institutionalism is the notion that organizations become more alike over time when they face similar environmental conditions, a theoretical foundation that DiMaggio and Powell refer to in their defining article as isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). According to the argument, isomorphic change can take one of three forms, coercive, mimetic, or normative. Coercive change factors "involve political pressures and the force of the state, providing regulatory oversight and control" while "mimetic forces draw on habitual, taken-for-granted responses to circumstances of uncertainty" (Powell and Colyvas, 2008, p. 976). This dissertation focuses on the role of normative organizational change, which emanates primarily from professionalization. "First, members of professions receive similar training (such as that received by physicians, attorneys and university professors), which socializes them into similar worldviews. Second, members of professions interact through professional and trade associations, which further diffuses ideas among them" (Mizruchi and Fein, 1999, p. 657). The strong role of education and professionally adopted values which are shared over time, within an institutional framework, contribute to the reproduction of a certain understanding of what is expected and, by consequence, a resistance to change by actors in the organizations themselves.

Neo-institutional theory is concerned not as much about efficiency in organizations or ideal performance, but rather "explanations of the ways in which institutions incorporate historical experiences into their rules and organizing logics" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991, p. 33). Structural influences in conjunction with the cultural development of an institution transmit

behavioral expectations and perpetuate the organizational structure. The constraint of institutional legitimacy, rather than efficiency, is also a key factor.

> The new institutionalism in organization theory and sociology comprises a rejection of rational-actor models, an interest in institutions as independent variables, a turn toward cognitive and cultural explanations, and an interest in properties of supraindividual units of analysis that cannot be reduced to aggregations or direct consequences of individuals' attributes or motives (Powell and Bromley, 2015, p. 764).

Similarities identified among the various types of organizations that make up the institution of higher education can be viewed as a consequence of external influences dictated by a number of factors, including the rise and development of the academy and internal dynamics that serve to reinforce and reproduce patterns and practices. Take as an example the college admissions requirement of standardized testing scores, which has long been common practice in the United States. Recent years, however, have seen a growing movement to make exams like the SAT optional or, in fewer instances, eliminated altogether. By 2014 approximately 800 schools nationwide had chosen the "test optional" path. In 2013 when Ithaca College decided to join some of its colleagues in making the SAT exam optional their President, Thomas Rochon claimed that "at the heart of their decision was the conviction that requiring a test score might limit our applicant pool and potentially distort our admissions and financial aid decisions" (US News & World Report, Sept. 6, 2013). Kevin McKenna, the dean of enrollment at Sarah Lawrence stated, "Sarah Lawrence became test-blind because we feel strongly that standardized tests are not reflective of every student's ability to succeed" (USA Today, July 7, 2014). It is difficult to believe, however, that the precarious relationship between standardized test scores and prediction of academic performance, which has been widely maintained by many for decades, was at the core of this recent decision. Rather, institutional theory helps us to recognize

that the growing number of colleges and universities becoming test optional or blind represents an institutional response for survival and adaptation to changes in the professional field of enrollment planning. Selected colleges and universities recognized the organizational recruitment benefits to lifting an admissions barrier and, over time, the institution of higher education caught up and the pace of change accelerated. A growing organizational imperative to compete more effectively in the market of college students is ultimately influencing the broader institution and the direction of higher education.

Neo-institutionalism highlights the ways in which individuals actively participate in the continuation of a structure through embedded mechanisms like professional development, networking, and training. This dynamic occurs within and between organizations and creates an institutional homogenization which is "a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, p. 149). The process of homogenization contributes to the stability of the institution and resistance to quick and easy change. DiMaggio and Powell acknowledge, however, that this active participation within an organization, may also steer it, at least temporarily, away from a more homogenous equilibrium. These forces, they argue, are political and depend on the relative power of the actors themselves and is the aspect of neo-institutional theory most relevant to this dissertation (Powell and Colyvas, 2008).

> Institutionalists make no assumption that institutional arrangements garnering the support of the most powerful coalitions necessarily produce the most efficient institutional arrangements. In fact, dominant coalitions may precisely act to delay or prevent institutional change toward more optimal solutions. This also means that institutional change may also require political change—a redistribution of power that issues in greater societal emphasis on heretofore neglected or suppressed ideas and the groups that hold them (Meyer and Rowan, 2006, p. 9).

Beyond the theories of higher education and organizations, the work of the Boyer Commission, initiated and then chaired by former Stony Brook President Shirley Strum Kenny, is also particularly important. The Kenny administration compelled the Stony Brook community to join the conversation surrounding elements necessary for catalyzing change in undergraduate education at a research university in a meaningful way. Sociological theory of higher education and organizations amplify the significance of the original Boyer report, and the findings of the subsequent survey, and support the exploration of factors leading to institutional change in large organizations of higher education. Although a national conversation had begun around undergraduate education in research universities, with various attempts to integrate research and undergraduate education more successfully into the mainstream of the institution's business, the work of the Boyer Commission stimulated this national discussion. The final words of the Commission's report speak to this mission:

> In the preface to his 1990 study *Scholarship Reconsidered*, Ernest Boyer wrote, 'the most important obligation now confronting the nation's colleges and universities is to break out of the tired old teaching versus research debate and define, in more creative ways, what it means to be a scholar.' This report hopes to refine the context of that remark and to affirm that the most important obligation now confronting research universities is to define in more creative ways what it means to be a research university committed to teaching undergraduates. The nation demands and deserves no less (Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University, 1998, p. 38).

Published in 1998, the Boyer Report was the primary, comprehensive, and nationally recognized publication on undergraduate education in a research university during the period that preceded the creation of the Stony Brook Undergraduate Colleges. It also solidified, in a very visible way, Kenny's declaration that serious steps would be taken under her administration to raise the profile and performance of undergraduate education at Stony Brook and beyond. As the report argued, tuition from undergraduate students represents one of the major sources of university

income and is used to help support research and graduate programs while, at times, not always providing adequate value for money in the undergraduate arena (1998, p. 5). The Boyer Commission's "star-studded" membership included Bruce Alberts, President of the National Academy of Sciences, Chen-Lin Tien, Chancellor of UC Berkeley, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Dean of the Annenberg School for Communication at the University of Pennsylvania and Stony Brook's C.N. Yang, Nobel Laureate in Physics. The Commission's proposed *Academic Bill of Rights* sought to create a mandate for engaging undergraduates in a first year experience in an intentional and comprehensive manner that encouraged: active learning, critical skills development, removing barriers to interdisciplinary education, changing faculty reward systems to include good teaching as well as the interface between teaching and research, cultivating a sense of community and culminating the undergraduate experience with a capstone component. Inquiry based learning, already inherent to a research university, rather than the simple transmission of knowledge was key to achieving these goals.

In April of 2000, the formation of the Reinvention Center at Stony Brook was a further indication that the Kenny administration was determined to keep undergraduate education on the front burner of institutional priorities. The Center was designed to serve as an organizational catalyst for inventory, development and implementation of undergraduate initiatives in research universities around the country. It would promote an "expanded view" of undergraduate education, sponsor conferences and symposia, and track activity in research and best practices which were reflecting change in the undergraduate experience at research universities (see The Reinvention Center website, http://reinventioncenter.colostate.edu/history/). Three years after release of the Boyer report, the Reinvention Center commenced with a follow-up survey of the research universities that were included in the original study. The purpose of the survey was to

examine any efforts made to develop undergraduate programs, consistent with the goals set in the Commission's report. "The survey was distributed in 2001 to 123 Research I and II universities nationwide that offer baccalaureate degrees. Representatives from 91 institutions, 74% of all research universities, responded" (Stony Brook, 2001, p. 3). The respondents were typically senior administrators with responsibility for undergraduate programs. "The survey included multiple response questions on ten components of the Boyer agenda. There were also open-ended questions to identify the most important one or two things these institutions had done in in the previous three years to improve undergraduate education" (Stony Brook, 2001, p. 3). The conclusions of the survey revealed that increased attention was indeed being paid to undergraduate education at research universities nationwide, but that attention was modest in terms of scope and commitment of financial resources. For instance, in the three years between the publication of the original report on *Reinventing Undergraduate Education* and the subsequent survey, most research universities had integrated the words "undergraduate research" into their lexicon and had begun programs dedicated to encouraging greater numbers of students into research-based learning experiences. Perhaps not surprising, the sciences and engineering departments were ahead of the social sciences, arts, and humanities in regard to this practice. But most institutions "had not yet fulfilled their ambitions for undergraduate programs although many offered special opportunities such as research and freshman seminars to the best students" (Stony Brook, 2001, p. 29). This profile should sound similar to the Stony Brook model prior to the advent of the Undergraduate Colleges. Change in undergraduate education had not advanced into a significant set of institutional priorities, jointly held by those in a position to initiate and realize such a transformation. "Discussions with campus officials who administer the programs indicated that they believe supportive leadership, administrative structures, and financial means

are all necessary for substantial change." (Stony Brook, 2001, p. 2). At this point in time, a national commitment was underway, but largely to the institution's "best" students or through other small programmatic initiatives for special student groups. In sociological terms, the research university culture did not support substantial change and the original question raised by the Boyer Commission—what would it take to realize sustained change in undergraduate education—was left unresolved.

Higher Education and neo-institutional theories of organizations provide a useful foundation, therefore, for the analysis of the institutional identity of the research university and the forces that create its reproduction as well as organizational change. In this dissertation, I argue that transformative forces include sustained collaboration between academic and student affairs, faculty support and participation, continuous administrative leadership, and prioritization of adequate resources. Responses to interview questions in this study reveal a research university faculty professional identity that inevitably impacts a view of undergraduate education in a research university, and more specifically, the faculty role in undergraduate education, and the potential for or resistance to change in the context of that professional identity. The data also include patterns of responses from other university constituent groups that will serve to tell a story of the establishment of a program in a particular environment and the factors that have contributed to the persistence of that program over time.

Chapter 5

Research Design

This dissertation is a qualitative case study analysis. I conducted 50 interviews of selected faculty members, staff, and administrators who have been involved in the Stony Brook Undergraduate College initiative (See Appendix B). In May of 2015 I obtained approval from Stony Brook's Human Subjects Committee to proceed with the interviews. To develop a comprehensive understanding of the establishment as well as the operation of the Undergraduate Colleges, I interviewed the original team that designed and launched the initiative. This group included the then Provost and Academic Vice President; the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education; Associate Vice President for Student Affairs (now the Vice President for Student Affairs); Assistant Vice President for Campus Residences; and the now retired Dean of Students and Associate Vice President for Student Affairs. Also interviewed were the six founding Undergraduate College faculty directors, two current directors, as well as the current administrative program director and associate director, who have the primary day-to-day responsibility for the initiative. In addition, I interviewed four residence hall quad directors and six Undergraduate College advisors who, as members of the teams assigned to each College, provided a student affairs and academic affairs perspective respectively to the implementation of the program. Staff turnover in the decade since the inception of the program required interviewing both the original and succeeding staff members. These conversations provided a picture of the roles of the program staff as well as the nature and effect of faculty participation within the team and the program overall.

Despite several months of attempts on my part, there was one interview that I was unable to secure, the original administrative Director of the program—who left Stony Brook in the spring of 2014. Having served in that role for almost ten years, it must be said that this set of observations and perceptions would have been valuable to the project. Interviews with the current administrative Director and Associate Director (who also previously served as an Undergraduate College advisor), however, were excellent substitutes for the original director's interview and provided valuable data on the development of and current trends in the program.

Faculty member support for this initiative was and is critical. Between the Spring of 2005 and 2014, approximately 375 faculty members representing the range of disciplines across the University taught one or more of the freshman seminars. I used a random sample generator in Excel to sort the total number of faculty who taught a freshman seminar at least once between the spring of 2005 and 2014 and invited the first thirty-nine of these faculty members to participate.

Initial contact with each person was made by sending a letter to their Stony Brook email account with an attachment of the Interview Recruitment Letter which had been approved by Stony Brook's Institutional Review Board (See Appendix C). The letter provided a brief description of the project and a request to conduct an interview at a place and time of their choosing and convenience. Most responded positively to either my first or second attempt to make contact. Of the thirty-nine faculty members on the randomly selected list, I ultimately interviewed twenty-four who taught a seminar at some point during this period. Faculty ranks in this sample included: Lecturer; Assistant Professor; Associate Professor; Visiting Professor; and Professor. In several cases faculty members in this sample currently or in the past held an additional role in their department, such as chair, undergraduate program director, or graduate

program director. The faculty members were interviewed about their experiences as well as their involvement with the Undergraduate College program and undergraduate education more generally. The remaining 15 faculty members on the randomly selected list were not included either because of retirement or lack of response to repeated invitations to participate, or because they were no longer employed at Stony Brook. Of all the interviews conducted, those with the faculty are the most central to this project and comprise almost half of the total number. The role of the faculty in undergraduate education in a research university is more varied and self-defined than that of the other constituent groups surveyed here. The questions posed to the faculty revealed both their objective participation in the Undergraduate College program as well as their perceptions of this involvement, with the ultimate purpose of better understanding the potential agents of long-term change in an organization of higher education. Responses to the interview questions contributed to an understanding of the significance of the role of faculty members and other factors that influence the course of undergraduate education in a research university. Common, as well as unexpected, responses to the questions illuminated the differential effects of several variables, including the role of faculty, resource allocation, and administrative leadership.

Finally, I interviewed the sitting Provost of the University in 2015, who was the third to preside over, and therefore at least tacitly endorse, the system of Undergraduate Colleges. Since programmatic persistence is the focus of this study, it is important from the perspective of his institutional role to have included the sitting Provost and to explore his perspectives on undergraduate education in a research university. The university's Provost is the administrator who most significantly represents and sets a standard of expectations for the faculty. It is important to know the Provost's perceptions of this initiative and the message he communicates to the faculty directly or implicitly. The Provost was the only person I interviewed who asked to

see the questions in advance. I resisted initially and provided additional information about the nature of the questions and orientation of the project. In the end however, the Provost insisted and I conceded. Holding the interview with the University's chief academic officer was more important than insisting on this condition.

Generally, the interviews were conducted in the following order:

- Establishment team
- Founding faculty directors
- Current faculty directors
- Undergraduate College and Campus Residences staff
- Seminar Faculty
- University Provost and Academic Vice President

This sequence provided the historical context of the first days of the initiative and reflections from those who established it, followed by the staff and administrators whose former and current job duties included the support of students and delivery of the program, and finally observations from faculty who taught the spring semester freshman seminar and, the University's Provost. In compliance with the exemption review by institutional human subjects, each person interviewed signed a Research Consent Form (See Appendix D).

The interview data is complemented by the *First Year Matters* self-study carried out by the Provost's Office in 2007-08 as well as my direct experience as a member of the team that established the College program. Throughout the project, care was taken that my former role in undergraduate education at Stony Brook, as well as my involvement with the establishment and development of the Undergraduate College program, not compromise the interview process or the interpretation of results. This is true from the initial presentation of the study to the formulation and presentation of the questions to those I interviewed and later in the analysis of responses and the determination of what data were most relevant. In qualitative research, it is often the case that, to garner the comfort and trust of others, the researcher must spend a great

deal of time within the environment being studied and develop a sense of empathy with the subject. My familiarity with a number of the respondents, as well as the program itself, was clearly beneficial to the project, contributing to an overall ease and "short-hand" style to the dialogue. I further discovered that my effort to remain impartial to avoid biasing the observations was enhanced as a consequence of having been absent from oversight of the program for more than three years before conducting the interviews. This lapse in time helped to facilitate greater objectivity to the exchanges as well as an emotional detachment from the overall subject.

Educational researcher Robert Stake asserts, "…qualitative research is special in its personalistic orientation, relying on empathy with the humans and enterprises studied for understanding how things work" (Stake, 2010, p. 46). Qualitative research is also typically inductive. That is, it starts with a set of observations, then the collection of information about specific experiences, followed by an analysis of the data to develop greater generalizations. Interpretation of the data (in this instance, interview data) is the key to meaningful qualitative research. How the questions are interpreted by the respondents can be as important as the interpretation of the responses by the researcher. Care must be taken to produce interpretations that are as true to the data as possible. The primary purpose of qualitative interview design is to derive meaningful interpretation of experiences and events from the respondents (Warren, 2001). Gathering the insights and opinions of those involved in the planning and delivery of the program that is the focus of this research is important to an analysis of the organization, the roles the members of each group occupy in the organization, and the historical context of the common perceptions, ranging from planning to implementation to evolution of the program for more than a decade. In addition, through the process of collecting and analyzing the data, I identified not

only the individual perspectives but also the emergence of common themes that focus attention on a discrete set of explanatory influences, ultimately revealing how these influences relate to each other and to organized, persistent change in research universities—change that represents continuous improvement in undergraduate education as a serious institutional priority.

This qualitative research project is a case study of a particular program and as in other such research, experiential data (words) were gathered rather than measurements. Case study research examines something in particular (the Undergraduate College program) to draw inferences about one or more aspects of something more general (undergraduate education in research universities). "The case study…draws attention to the question of what specifically can be learned about the single case. [It] concentrates on experiential knowledge of the case and close attention to the influence of its social, political, and other contexts" and the collection of data typically occurs over a period of time. (Stake, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 444). "Case study is not a methodological choice but a choice of what is to be studied" (Stake, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2005, p. 443). The use of qualitative interviews is the methodological choice here. Unlike some other quantitatively oriented approaches, potential hypotheses may be the product of case study research, not the catalyst. Case study is a strategy of inquiry, while qualitative interview is the method of data collection (Creswell, 2003). "The methods for case work actually used are to learn enough about the case to encapsulate complex meanings into a finite report but to describe the case in sufficient descriptive narrative so that readers can experience these happenings vicariously and draw their own conclusions" (Denzin and Lincoln, p. 450). The primary goal of the collection and analysis of the data in this dissertation was to create a narrative that is illuminating and reliable so that interpretations and recommendations can be made regarding the future of undergraduate education in research universities. "The task for the

qualitative evaluator is to provide a framework within which people can respond in a way that represents accurately and thoroughly their point of view about the program" (Sewell, 1998, p. 1). Qualitative researcher Meg Sewell provides a useful guide to the advantages and disadvantages of the qualitative interview method:

Advantages:

- Allows the participant to describe what is meaningful using his or her own words rather than being restricted to predetermined categories, thus participants may feel more relaxed and candid.
- Provides high credibility and face validity; results "ring true" to participants and make intuitive sense to lay audiences.
- Allows evaluator to probe for more details and ensure that participants are interpreting questions the way they were intended.
- Interviewers have the flexibility to use their knowledge, expertise, and interpersonal skills to explore interesting or unexpected ideas or themes

Disadvantages

- May be experienced as more intrusive than quantitative approaches.
- May be more reactive to personalities, moods, and interpersonal dynamics between the interviewer and interviewee than methods such as surveys.
- Analyzing and interpreting qualitative interviews can be expensive and time-consuming
- More subjective than quantitative interviews, because the interviewer decides which quotes or examples to report.
  http://ag.arizona.edu/sfcs/cyfernet/cyfar/Intervu5.htm

As I lay out the analysis of the interview data, I will demonstrate how I have worked to minimize the disadvantages and maximize the advantages of this qualitative approach. I can say unequivocally, however, that the cost in time as well as dollars was high and, in my view, unavoidable.

The data were coded and analyzed manually to effectively organize interview responses with the ultimate goal of progressively focusing the interview responses and reveal patterns that would have otherwise remained hidden. Thought clusters and patterns within as well as across the interview categories are exposed. In their field-defining book, *Qualitative Data Analysis. A Methods Sourcebook*, Matthew Miles, A. Michael Huberman and Johnny Saldaña describe thirteen tactics for generating meaning from collected data. These tactics include the noting of

patterns and themes, identifying plausibility and clustering, counting, noting the relations between variables, and building a logical chain of evidence. The tactics are useful for "testing or confirming meanings, minimizing bias, and ensuring to your best ability the quality of the conclusions" (Miles, et al., 2014, p. 277). A number of these tactics were applied when analyzing the interview data which, I believe, uncovers an interesting narrative of the first decade of the Undergraduate College initiative told through the observations of faculty, staff and administrators. These inform our understanding of the persistence of this program specifically, and the prioritization of undergraduate education in a research university environment more generally. Robert Stake argues that qualitative research is all about studying how things work and gaining an understanding of a situation in general, rather than a particular situation (Stake, 2010, p. 20). Carefully weeding through and sorting these relayed experiences, searching for patterns across the text, leads to a more focused lens on the subject at hand and a construction of a reality with the interpretations (Schutt, 2014, p. 321). The analysis of the text however is but one component of a more general ongoing observation:

> Next to her field notes or interview transcripts, the qualitative analyst jots down ideas about the meaning of the text and how it might relate to other issues. This process of reading through the data and interpreting them continues throughout the project. The analyst adjusts the data collection process itself when it begins to appear that additional concepts need to be investigated or new relationships explored. This process is termed progressive focusing [Parlett and Hamilton, 1976] (Schutt, 2014, p. 322).

The narrative inquiry of this case study, therefore, uses interviews, as well as documents and other observations, to draw a "big picture" examination through the conveyed experiences of the respondents and other supporting documentation (Schutt, 2014). "Narrative analysis focuses on the story itself and seeks to preserve the integrity of personal biographies or a series of events

that cannot adequately be understood in terms of their discrete elements [Riessman 2002:218]" (Schutt, 2014, p.339).

Interview questions for these groups are included in Appendix E. I designed the interviews with three kinds of questions for each group: main, general questions that begin and guide the conversations; more targeted probing inquiries; and lastly questions that follow-up on responses and pursue the implications of previous answers. The questions addressed to members of the team that established the program were designed to explore the stimulus for the initial idea of Undergraduate Colleges, the general approach to proposing and implementing the initiative, the actual implementation of the goals and, finally, how the role of faculty in this initiative was imagined. How and when these plans were communicated to and subsequently interpreted by the faculty was also important to explore. The questions addressed to the administrative program Director, associate director, the Undergraduate College advisors and the residential quad directors were aimed at identifying the roles each played in the program, their understanding of the program's goals, and the perception of the degree of administrative and faculty member support for the Undergraduate Colleges. Additionally, these staff members have responsibility for teaching the Undergraduate College 101 freshmen seminars. The 101 seminars, offered each fall semester, provide a thematically driven introduction to resources of the university and prepare students for the spring faculty seminar (102). Faculty members were asked about the scope of their understanding of the goals of the Undergraduate College initiative, the nature of the role they believe faculty play in the program, as well as more specific questions regarding the freshman seminars. These questions were intended to reveal both what faculty members perceive as their role and contribution to the Undergraduate Colleges, and how the role has actually evolved over time. In each set of interviews, respondents were asked whether they

believed that the Undergraduate Colleges were "here to stay" and why. With this question, I explored not only the range of factors contributing to long-term programmatic strength of undergraduate education in research universities, but also the relative importance of each of these elements in making undergraduate education a strong priority in this environment.

I conducted 50 interviews in total, 24 of which were faculty members who have taught one or more of the freshmen seminars. This group of faculty, staff and administrators who have designed, planned and participated in the delivery of various features of the initiative provide a comprehensive understanding of the first decade of the Undergraduate Colleges specifically and undergraduate education at Stony Brook more broadly.

In the context of noting patterns and themes, an added strategy for verifying observations in qualitative research is referred to as triangulation. Triangulation seeks to find supporting evidence from various sources which lend validity to the original assertions. "In effect, triangulation is a way to get to the finding in the first place—by seeing or hearing multiple instances of it from different sources by using different methods and by squaring the finding with others it needs to be squared with" (Miles, et al., p. 300). "Part of learning how to do qualitative research is learning how to minimize the flaws in our observations and assertions. We will 'triangulate' our data in order to increase confidence that we have correctly interpreted how things work" (Stake, 2010, p. 37). Triangulation focuses the data and increases certainty of interpretation. This method inevitably increases the quantity of data that must be examined, to draw from the various perspectives represented. In this case study, for example, similar questions were posed to a number of staff holding the equivalent position in the university, but also across organizational roles. The comprehensive and illuminating nature of the feedback is enhanced by posing same (and different) questions across, as well as within, institutional roles.

The responses express experiences of the observers and help build the narrative in their own words. Keeping in mind Sewell's framework for advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research, narrative analysis of "real world" understandings can be compelling, but care must be taken to reduce the subjectivity of conveyed experiences. Tactics for generating meaning from the data (e.g., clustering, identification of patterns) together with triangulation is vital to a comprehensive analysis of the data in this study.

First Year Matters

I noted earlier the importance of the Boyer report and its contributions nationally to a greater understanding and commitment to the standing of undergraduate education in the research university. Similarly, the theoretical underpinnings of the Foundations of Excellence-*First Year Matters* survey of faculty, staff and students conducted at Stony Brook in 2007 and 2008 explored this topic and helped inform the analysis of enduring institutional change. Structured much like a Middle States self-study, the *First Year Matters* examination of the University's program for first-year undergraduate students was conducted under the guidance of the Policy Center on the First Year of College. The Policy Center was directed by leading figure in higher education research, John N. Gardner. Close to one hundred faculty, students, and staff members from across the campus participated in the self-study as members of a task force comprising nine subcommittees, each of which represented various aspirational principles of excellence. Gardner chose to serve directly as Stony Brook's Policy Center liaison—an unusual step as this role would have normally been assigned to a member of his team. Gardner was, however, particularly interested in Stony Brook's willingness to participate in a study sponsored by his organization, which was not a typical commitment for a research university. Stony Brook would be the first (and remains one of two) member of the Association of American Universities

(AAU) to conduct a study through the Foundations of Excellence program, which has included more than 275 institutions since its conception, further indication that the Provostial leadership at the time was willing to support and commit resources to the undergraduate academic program.

The primary goal of the self-study was not to report on the status quo, but to assess current policies and practices and create a strategic plan for the first year student experience going forward. The aspirational principles focused on the various features of the undergraduate experience and were referred to in the study as "dimensions." Components of the *First Year Matters* study, particularly those involving the Philosophy, Organization and Faculty Dimensions were influential in the choice of topic for this dissertation. The **Faculty Dimension** explored the ways in which the first year of college could be a high priority for the faculty. The **Philosophy Dimension** examined the institution's approach in ways that are intentional and based on a philosophy or rationale of the first year that informs relevant institutional policies and practices. The **Organization Dimension** explored whether the institution creates organizational structures and policies that provide a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated approach to the first year of college. There was a great deal of data to analyze from this self-study, but in an earlier paper entitled "First Year Matters: College Role and Perception of the First Year Student Experience," I chose to focus on the role of faculty in this institution and the interplay between faculty and administrators in proposing and developing undergraduate programs. I was particularly interested in the feedback from faculty who had taught a freshman seminar and the differences between their awareness and support for programs launched for first year students and that of staff and administrators who responded to survey questions.

The survey sample size was rather small and the response rate was relatively low, but the consistency in response could not be dismissed and did lend support to my hypothesis that

organizational role influences awareness and attitudes of the first-year experience at Stony Brook. This question is important because awareness is a first step in building support for an initiative. At the time that the *First Year Matters* survey was distributed, the Undergraduate Colleges was in its fifth year. The data revealed a strong level of awareness and support of the first year student experience from professional staff and campus administrators, but less so from faculty. The analysis, and responses to the survey generally, indicated that efforts to communicate with faculty members in order to develop an ambitious initiative had been less effective than among other campus constituent groups. In part, this result reflects the nature of undergraduate co-curricular programs, the operation of which often rests primarily with professional staff and administrators. But, it would be a mistake to underestimate the importance and challenging nature of continued communication and consultation with faculty beyond the planning stage, once an initiative has been approved and initially established. An ongoing plan of communication, which the data indicated was lacking, must be included as a piece of the overall operation and strategy of the program. Faculty must continue to be included beyond the approval process of new initiatives. I argued that the survey responses revealed a great deal of effort put forth to building a truly collaborative organizational structure between academic and student affairs as well as the consequences of a less coordinated effort cultivating faculty sponsorship and potential participation in that collaborative relationship.

The competing demands on faculty status by its role-set relationships vary depending on institution type and must be factored into any agenda that is dependent upon the involvement of this key constituent group. The role-set of faculty in a liberal arts college may be comparable to that of a research university, but the culture surrounding faculty status varies according to institution type. Although it may be generally acknowledged that undergraduate education is an

important priority in a research university, it does not mean that everyone essential to the growth of a strong undergraduate program will participate or even agree with the nature of that priority. Crafting an initiative that grabs the enduring attention of full-time, tenure-track faculty in the context of an environment with very powerful signals to focus their attention elsewhere is complicated. Among other factors (e.g., adequate resources), it requires that those whose primary interests lie in the undergraduate arena effectively cultivate the interest of the faculty, who have a greater degree of autonomy than other status groups in this environment.

Initial endorsement by faculty of an ambitious program proposal is not sufficient to ensuring its growth and institutionalization, no matter how many resources and how much human effort are expended, if there is no concomitant grasp, over the long term, of faculty culture and the multiplicity of roles that faculty occupy in a research university setting. Even in the context of a programmatic design and approach that attempts to consider the demands of faculty in a Stony Brook environment, support for the initiative must be sustained throughout the upper reaches of the administration through word and deed. In a small supplemental survey conducted by the *First Year Matters* Faculty Dimension sub-committee, 27 of the 59 faculty surveyed (46%) said that a larger research stipend (than the $1000 awarded at the time) would make teaching an Undergraduate College seminar more attractive. Only University administrative leadership (the Provost, and/or President) can fulfill this and other resource related requests. The point is that the materialization of support over the long term requires both recognition of the multitude of variables at play as well as an institutional commitment to the importance of the undergraduate program to the organization over time. The present limited analysis of the *First Year Matters* survey helps us begin to understand the varying perceptions among faculty and staff in 2008 regarding their knowledge and comprehension of the first year

program. It also raises many interesting sociological questions about the social structure of an organization, in particular an organization of higher education and the multifaceted nature of the role of faculty in a research university and its impact on the undergraduate program. Although there may be tacit faculty endorsement of undergraduate initiatives, the countervailing pressure for the faculty to be productive in scholarly and research matters—which permeates the world of promotion and tenure—is usually more powerful. In the context of this analysis, there is no way to know the degree to which institutional role, faculty culture and/or ineffective communication with the faculty explain differences in attitudes, but the consistency of response patterns to the questions concerning the overall evaluation of the first year yields some insight into perceptions and the need for a greater effort with faculty to build a more solid foundation of support. This effort must incorporate a comprehension of faculty culture in a research university—a culture that primarily rewards excellence in scholarship and graduate training. Beyond greater appreciation for the distinct nature of a research university setting, any strategic model that is adopted must include ongoing involvement by influential faculty in supporting enduring change in undergraduate education. In a chapter devoted to understanding continuity and change in higher education in his book, *On Higher Education, Selected Writings, 1956-2006*, Burton Clark quotes sociologist Andrew Abbott who wisely argues, "things happen because of constellations of factors, not because of a few fundamental effects acting independently." This is certainly the case as university leaders and educational reformers attempt to balance competing demands in an increasingly complicated higher education environment (Clark, 2008, p. 552).

Analysis of the *First Year Matters* data five years after the establishment of the Undergraduate College initiative was useful in terms of laying groundwork for a broader examination of programmatic persistence in undergraduate education in research universities, the

focus of this dissertation. Interview data from faculty, staff and administrators who were and are engaged in one way or another with the Undergraduate College program provide the material for a rich narrative which share some common themes with the *First Year Matters* results but also reflect another five years of institutional response and change.

Chapter 6

Institutionalizing Change: The Narrative

The University is a large organization with multiple constituencies. Faculty members, students, staff and administrators work within the same organization with diverse agendas and understandings of the needs and nature of the institution. As pointed out earlier, these agendas conflict at times, or at least, may be orthogonal to each other. Based upon research cited in this dissertation and observations in the First Year Matters survey I expected to find the following factors as central to the possibility of long-term change in undergraduate education:

Collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs

The interview data will reveal that a consciously collaborative relationship between the areas of academic and student affairs is a key to sustainable change in, and the well-being of, undergraduate education in a research university.

Leadership and allocation of resources

I expected my research to indicate that changing leadership and the consequent changes in prioritization of resources impacts the status and growth of undergraduate education, both short and long term. In 1994, Shirley Strum Kenny was named Stony Brook's fourth President with a clear mandate to address the state of undergraduate education at this aspiring Carnegie I institution. Executive level support for a "student-centered research university" was sustained throughout Kenny's tenure, which impacted the attitudes and behavior of the faculty and staff working within her administration. The retirement of Stony Brook's fourth president and the recruitment of the fifth inevitably brought a new set of perceived urgencies, influencing the choice of the institution's leader as well as the new president's decisions regarding the

University's next phase. I examined the data to note whether the change in leadership of the University over approximately the last five years has affected the campus commitment to undergraduate education and more specifically, the Undergraduate College project.

The role of faculty and faculty culture

Finally, I expected the data to show that faculty members, and the specific role that faculty members play, serve as the cornerstone of institutional change in undergraduate education in the American research university. I expect that feedback from a range of faculty members and others who have participated in the development of the Undergraduate Colleges in a teaching, leadership, or programmatic capacity supports the premise that, without significant faculty support and participation, lasting change will be tenuous at best. Furthermore, I expected the interviews to sharpen my contention that faculty backing and engagement are the most critical of the many factors leading to enduring change. In addition, although the role of faculty in higher education is similar across institutional types, the reward structure for faculty in a research university is geared heavily towards research rather than teaching. This dynamic contributes to a culture that often isolates undergraduate teaching from research, and faculty from students. As suggested in the literature, higher education is a unique organization. The various cultures that develop in the organization, whether a liberal arts college or a research university, impact programmatic planning and implementation. I expected the data to show that faculty culture in a research university is significant to, and influences the evolution of, institutional priorities once established and that priorities associated with the undergraduate experience are rarely as compelling for faculty as those related to scholarship and graduate education.

In addition to those influences listed above, I anticipated that the interview data would point to other factors that might well affect the institutional commitment to change in

undergraduate education, for example, enrollment pressures, the governance structure, and dwindling state support for higher education. Moreover, exactly where the organizational change is initiated impacts its reception and persistence. By virtue of the structure of the university, administrators are often the initiators of academic programs. If the process of proposing, planning, and institutionalizing programmatic change does not adequately engage and include faculty members from the very beginning, it may be destined to failure. As a result of an analysis of the literature and interview data, I expected to have a clear understanding of the many competing institutional priorities and cultures to make suggestions for sustainable change in undergraduate education and potentially encourage the consideration of additional avenues of research on undergraduate education in the research university.

The Interviews

The analysis of the interview data included a number of steps. In addition to recording each interview, I took notes, registering what seemed significant either because the remarks were resonant with my expectations regarding factors associated with programmatic persistence, or alternatively, discordant with these expectations. The interviews were transcribed and read through, in some cases more than once. While reading the transcriptions, relevant and repeated words, phrases, sentences or sections were labeled. The labels, or coding, for this data are associated with actions, activities, concepts, differences in opinions, concurrence of thought, etc. I decided that something was relevant and should be coded if, for instance, it was repeated, it surprised me, the person being interviewed explicitly said that it was important, or a remark reminded me of a theory or concept relevant to this study or something that I previously read. The coding aimed to reveal underlying patterns of responses related to the three primary factors associated with programmatic persistence listed at the beginning of this chapter; collaboration

between academic and student affairs; leadership and allocation of resources; and the role of faculty and faculty culture (as well as other factors noted above) in an effort to reveal underlying patterns. The initial coding was followed by a review of the patterns among all interviews and decisions regarding which were most important. Although I make comparisons between the constituent groups of faculty, staff and administrators interviewed, I also make observations within these groups. My analysis begins with these observations.

Establishment Team

The Undergraduate College establishment team comprised selected administrative leaders in academic and student affairs. The group included the then Provost, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Dean of Students and Assistant Vice President for Campus Residences. When members of the initiation team (most of whom are still at the university) are quoted in this dissertation, the titles held at the time of the planning and establishment of the program are listed.

There were a number of uniform responses among this set of interviews. All showed a sustained commitment to the principles that triggered a passion for the proposal to improve college life for first year students. Members of the team recalled the period during which the initiative was being considered and established with enthusiastic pride:

> I think it was amazing. I think that we worked on it and had an amazing success. In think it might well not have happened. I remember going around and bragging about this in the…SUNY system and talking to provosts and how many hundreds of campuses are there. People sort of acted with incredulity, 'how could you do this so quickly? (Interview, former Provost, 2015).

Each member believed then, and still does, that the Undergraduate College program was an effective, comprehensive, and ambitious undertaking that successfully brought disparate

sectors of the campus together on behalf of first year students. Major areas of consonance among this group included:

Reasons for launching the program-to reduce the psychological size of the university, provide better support to students in their transition to a research university, improve retention rates, particularly between the first and second year, and to make generally available what had been previously offered to small segments of the undergraduate first year class:

> I'd been at Stony Brook a long time. I thought that Stony Brook had some very—was strong in a number of ways, primarily in graduate education, research and so forth. But, it dawned on me that it was a sort of unstable situation because we hadn't really turned the undergraduate program into something that people aspired to attend" (Interview, former Provost, 2015).

> Stony Brook had a peculiarly large College of Arts and Sciences that had virtually no identity to it for undergraduates. I come from Syracuse where we place undergraduates into somewhere around 11 or 12 different schools or colleges. And the only group here that had identity at all was students going into engineering. So the notion of an undergraduate college program was to be able to try and break up in a meaningful way this 2,400 student group that was nominally under the arts and sciences (Interview, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, 2015).

Resistance to the program-each member of the initiation team listed faculty as the primary source of initial resistance to the establishment to the program:

> Good faculty do an awful lot of things, right? They're juggling fairly many balls at one time. And you want good faculty. It's the old cliché, you want people who are already busy doing things. And so the question is, can they fold this into their schedule? Is it worth it to them? (Interview, former Provost 2015).

> There certainly was resistance on the campus to it. I wouldn't say in student affairs because I think we—and I'm speaking in general—is that we saw [the college program] as an add on, as a value added to the student experience. I think there was some resistance on the part of the faculty in terms of workload...and I know that some people embraced it, but I wouldn't say that was there was general consensus on the campus (Interview, Dean of Students, 2015).

Although one or two other sources of resistance to the launching of the program was mentioned, for example concerns expressed by the Director of the undergraduate Advising Center about potential changes in the structure of advising services, the unanimity expressed by the initiation group with regard to this issue, accompanied by the recognition that it was essential to overcome the possible opposition, was sharp and further amplified by the responses to the question, "What do you think were the most significant factors to the successful launching of the program?" Overwhelmingly the data point to faculty leadership and participation as the single most important factor to the successful launching of the program, with other factors cited such as the strong commitment of the Provost and Student Affairs to see the effort through:

> I think we started out small, we started out with one college and we started with a faculty member in the School of Engineering who I think had charisma and the reach to certain faculty members at the University, and the respect (Interview, Dean of Students, 2015).

> Well the Provost was super committed and I think, I know that there was a general agreement in the university that undergraduates had been given very short shrift since the founding of the university. So I think that people who were committed to undergraduate education saw it as—faculty who were committed to undergraduate education—saw it as a legitimate effort (Interview, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, 2015).

> And why did it happen? I don't know. We all worked so hard on it and we had an awful lot of good people. Think of the founding faculty directors, think of how good they were. And how generous they were (Interview, former Provost, 2015).

Another significant point made by the then Associate Vice President for Student Affairs regarding the potential for a successful launching of the program had to do with resources, and the perception, particularly in the academic sector, that it would not be necessary to redirect considerable funding to the undergraduate program to establish the colleges:

> …and this wasn't costing a ton of money because we pulled things out of different areas. So, it wasn't one of those, "I've got to find three or four million dollars in the first instance, although it did evolve into having to find some money. So if you want to think about it in a classic sense, it was a pilot study that worked and evolved in an incremental fashion. So, you didn't have to go nuclear on the budget side or the staffing side (Interview, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, 2015).

There was also general consensus among members of the initiation team that the decision to implement the program gradually over the course of several years reduced resistance and inspired a more solid foundation of support.

The role of faculty- Once the program was established, what was the role of faculty? And had the role that had been envisioned been realized.? Responses on the nature of the role itself centered on the position of faculty director and instructors of the freshman seminars. Although these were roles intentionally included in the design of the program, a greater more diffused involvement by faculty was also imagined:

> ***Q.*** *What is the role of faculty in the Undergraduate Colleges?*
>
> ***A.*** The role of faculty? Whatever they want to do. I know we don't have a job description. They should provide leadership, a sense of direction and enthusiasm. And not get into the weeds. A lot of them do incredibly well and the ability to be able to sort of be around and be human at important points in time (Interview, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, 2015).
>
> ***A.*** Well, we expected through the one hour seminars that entering students, many of whom didn't have much of a sense of what you do in university, would have a small group experience. They would get a little sense of how faculty think about things; not necessarily the specifics of whatever the topic was in the course, but just how they think about things. And also, secondarily, hopefully, if they knew somebody, if they had some problems or something, or they wanted to talk about the great issues of life or whatever, they had somebody they might be able to contact (Interview, Former Provost, 2015).
>
> ***Q.*** *Is the role of faculty as envisioned?*

> ***A.*** No. Well, it's hard because I think one of the models was that the faculty, in general, would be affiliated with the colleges and would be somehow members of the colleges and be involved in undergraduate college activities beyond the 102. And I don't think that has happened very much. But I think that is probably true in most places. I don't know (Interview, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, 2015).

> ***A.*** I think the thought was that it was going to be more of a traditional—maybe sort of European style of residential—or Yale type role. It just didn't work that way (Interview, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, 2015).

Another response to the question regarding how the role of faculty was envisioned by a student affairs administrator reflects the common vision by the initiation team:

> I don't think it's gotten to where we originally envisioned it because of the challenges getting people to be faculty directors. Some of the Provosts for the Colleges at San Diego held a more significant role. People who were in those positions were regarded more highly among their colleagues, is my sense. So it's part of the recognition and reward structure of how important faculty directors are seen by academic affairs in the larger realm of the academic mission (Interview, Assistant Vice President for Campus Residences, 2015).

Response to the question *Do you believe that the Undergraduate College program has enhanced the quality of the undergraduate experience at Stony Brook?* was unanimous and emphatic; "I think without a doubt it has." and "Yeah, it has given students a sense of what it means to have intellectual inquiry and to ferret things out. It must help them to be able to interact with faculty in a small group setting, and college activities that directors provide…to get comfortable with what you're supposed to be doing in the university". The belief on the part of this team that the considerable time and effort spent on this project was a successful investment in Stony Brook's students and undergraduate education is borne out by the data;

> In my 38 years, it was probably the best example of a collaborative project where the academic sector and student affairs, or the student life sector, came together as one. And it was a true team effort" (Interview, Dean of Students, 2015).

The initiation team cited resources, dedicated personnel, strong leadership, collaboration and the fact that the program was structurally embedded in the structure of the university, particularly the admissions process, as critical to facilitating the development of the Undergraduate Colleges over the last decade.

> Well, first of all, there was real resources put into it and real personnel, mostly the advisors. And all of the first year experience was organized around the Undergraduate Colleges. So, the colleges really became, and I hadn't really thought about this before, but really kind of bureaucratically ensconced, entrenched… (Interview, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, 2015).

> …we had to really make a concerted effort to improve the undergraduate experience. So obviously leadership, and commitment of funds. I think appointing more academic advisors to the colleges over the years, which I think was critical in terms of having the staffing to do it right. And I think in general just the excitement about working on something like this. As someone who was on the student affairs side, who was helping to create this from the beginning, there couldn't have been a better opportunity for staff who wanted to go into the field of student affairs, to be able to teach an introductory freshman seminar class, or to be part of an academic community. There's usually such a barrier between academic affairs and student affairs. And here we are allowing entry level professionals, we're inviting them in to be part of an academic community where the faculty—a senior member of the faculty is serving a faculty director (Interview, Dean of Students, 2015).

"Bumps in the road" cited by this group that they perceived as impeding growth and development over this same period of time included competition for resources with the academic colleges, particularly the College of Arts and Sciences, the struggle to recruit tenured and tenure-track faculty to teach the 102 seminar, and the shift in the direction of the program that slowed its original identity as a true balance of curricular and co-curricular enhancement of the student experience. Asked whether they believed that the Undergraduate College program was "here to stay" the establishment team was optimistic, but concerned about changes in leadership in recent years, particularly in the academic affairs arena.

> Oh, what's forever? I think is it here to stay. Universities are very bad at sort of putting things to bed, so I suppose so. I think the bigger question is what are they going to—is the Undergraduate College program going to improve? Anything has its ups and downs, it's the natural life cycle. And I think that we've gone into a dip here and can it get pulled out. Because it has become more seen as an advising entity than an enrichment program (Interview, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, 2015).

> I don't know. I certainly hope so. And the reason that I don't know is that I think that it requires continual signaling to the university by administrators, by the important faculty at Stony Brook, that this is a worthwhile thing to do, even an important thing to do. And if that doesn't happen, then it'll just kind of sink away (Interview, former Provost, 2015).

> Maybe this is Pollyannaish, but I think that it is [here to stay]. And that's despite my sense that the current provost has little regard for the Undergraduate Colleges, only because I don't think he or the president are—I can't say the president because the president's taken some very unpopular positions. But I think the provost is probably unwilling to take on what would be some degree of adverse reaction if he attempted to eliminate the Undergraduate Colleges. But I don't know. I mean, that's speculation on my part (Interview, Assistant Vice President for Campus Residences, 2015).

The resonance among responses to questions posed to the initiation team speaks in support of the factors that I propose as key to enduring institutional change in undergraduate education. The overall gestalt of these interviews was prideful certainty. Certainty that this was a program that benefitted students and pride of the unique collaborative effort in a setting that often presents obstacles to this sort of partnering. Their speculations, however, reflected ambiguity about the future and concerns that the same level of commitment to bold and innovative change in undergraduate education may no longer be present.

To a large degree, I found what I thought I would find in my interviews with the establishment team: a group of like-minded university colleagues, led by a determined Provost, who came together to develop the undergraduate program at Stony Brook to a level parallel to

the excellence achieved in research and graduate education. Fifteen years on, the team still believed that they had accomplished many of the goals they set out for themselves, but with a mostly common view, they also expressed concern about the quality of the program in the future, and the commitment to it by university leadership. Of all fifty interviews these five, presumably, represent those who are the most identified with the Undergraduate College initiative. Feedback from a wider group of those who participated in delivering the program currently, as well as the recent past, should provide a more inclusive perspective.

The Founding Directors

The founding directors were each invited by the Provost to consider serving a three-year term as the academic leader of their respective College. As the first to serve in this role in a fledgling program, they were expected to shape the position as well as help to shape the program itself. The interviews with the six directors were among the longest in duration of the fifty I conducted. It often seemed that they had been waiting for someone to come along and query them on the experience. Reflections were lengthy, comprehensive and seemed very fresh in their minds. At the time of the interviews, each director had been on the faculty for more than twenty years, some more than 30. With the exception of one, the directors hold the rank of full professor; the sixth is an associate professor with a very active research program in the life sciences. The six Undergraduate Colleges were phased in over a three-year period and the directors were recruited over that time. Since the Provost was fully invested in the successful launching of the program, and the faculty director position was central to its design, he was an enthusiastic recruiter and offered the equivalent of an academic department chair's compensation to the candidates—a stipend of 10 percent of their salary for each year of the three-year term. The data point to a respectful and productive relationship between the six faculty directors who

quickly became invested and eager to contribute to the development of this new endeavor. For these senior faculty, whose profiles were rich in university service and scholarship (having served in a range of university roles including department chair, undergraduate program director, and graduate program director), this involvement represented a departure. Providing leadership in an endeavor designed to permanently change the undergraduate student experience was unchartered territory:

> So that was a time-consuming job. And it wasn't clear to me at first, I don't know that it was clear to anybody at first what the Colleges would be or what the responsibilities were. Nor did I really have the kind of organizational experience to sort of form something out of what felt like nothing yet (Interview, founding Faculty Director, 2015).

As relayed in the interviews, the responsibilities for the faculty director included academic and intellectual leadership, participation in the planning of New Student Orientation, providing leadership and direction to the Undergraduate College team (which included the Faculty Director, College Advisor, Residential Quad Director, Living Learning Center Director), development of theme-related programming for students, and the most demanding of the set of responsibilities, recruiting faculty to teach the spring semester freshman seminar. As I will show, while the other faculty director duties were delivered with a good deal of collaborative effort among members of the College team, the onus of filling a minimum of twenty sections of the 1-credit seminar each spring was then, and remains, a solitary task. Further, interviews with two current directors indicated that the task of recruiting faculty to teach the seminars continues to be a struggle with little institutional support:

> My primary responsibility is to staff 102 seminars for the spring. And this takes place usually between May and October or November, with most of the work done in September and early October. It has become more and more of a daunting task, and one that is not predictable in terms of workload because from one year to the next, you never know how many instructors will agree to return

> and teach again. And what degree of success you'll have trying to find new instructors, because the incentives are limited, financial incentive is limited, especially for professors. Assistant professors are being advised not to teach, not to offer those courses anymore. Their mentors, for the most part, tell them that this is not only not relevant, but also harmful to their tenure case (Interview, current Faculty Director, 2015).

> And the thing we really had to worry about was the spring freshman seminar, because it wasn't required. And [the College Advisor] and I immediately saw this as a terrible problem. But [the College Advisor] had a very good solution, and that was to make it seem as if it was required. I think I'm not being too– we both made it seem like this was something that every student was going to do, because we wanted to see whether the system would work. And we didn't think it would be useful unless we had a set of volunteers in the faculty, but much more importantly had a set of students that engaged in it (Interview, founding Faculty Director, 2015).

Prior to the Spring of 2006, before the freshman seminars (101 and 102) were required curricula for first year students, the faculty directors, and the College Advisor, needed to worry about recruiting *both* faculty and students to the course. The quote above from a founding faculty director indicates an almost entrepreneurial planning around this effort, while the *current* director's statement points to a tension between an increasing number of students and the uncertainty of guaranteeing that a mandated course will be delivered. In both cases, however, the effort has been ad hoc, and not organizationally embedded.

The excitement and energy of building a new program permeated each of the interviews with the original six directors. The difficulty of ensuring numerous sections of a required course for all first year students was nearly overwhelmed by the thrill of creating something unique and ambitious together with colleagues and for students:

> The Undergraduate College is one of those initiatives that really brings different parts of campus together. So it isn't just an academic exercise of academic department or academic programs. And not merely an exercise of staff initiative and decision by staff. But rather it is integrated from different disciplines and

> different parts of the campus. I think that's something very unique about the Undergraduate Colleges (Interview, founding Faculty Director, 2015).

> …the other thing that kept me in this was the collaborative nature of the Directors. I guess they were roughly monthly meetings that we used to have. I really grew to have a lot of respect for the people in that room. These were actually, if you look around the table, these were six rather different people, but they shared certain core values and they understood this virtue of brainstorming and collaboration and mutual support. That was the thing that made me sign on and stay for the full four years as opposed to exiting at two or three or whenever the original arrangement was up (Interview, founding Faculty Director, 2015).

> I thought it was a really good idea, and to this day, I remember feeling like, 'Well, it's about time that the freshmen at this school finally get a really positive experience in their first year.' You know, it was such an anomic, alienating place for freshmen because they got no 'human' contact. They just got institutional contact (Interview, founding Faculty Director, 2015).

Similar to initiation team responses, the founding directors spoke with considerable unison regarding many aspects of their involvement, each offering illustrative reflections of their experience. Significantly analogous replies pointed to the importance of a more personalized and intentional approach to the academic and co-curricular first year student experience, and the benefits of a team method in the implementation of the program. In addition, they seemed to agree that the greatest challenge faced in their role as director was recruiting faculty to teach the 102 seminar. Asked if they thought that the College program was "here to stay," the Directors were unanimously affirmative:

> Yeah, from what I can see. Despite budget problems, I think they're building other elements of undergraduate support. But I've never heard anything about, 'Oh we need to do away with this'; …or 'This isn't working'. So I think it has a life of its own. I think it's part of the residence halls. I think it's expected that we do freshman seminars, expected we have a freshman reading. These are things that universities do. It's not unusual these days to have freshman seminars and faculty teaching them. We have the Centers, they're built, the infrastructure's there, and the support in residence life (Interview, founding Faculty Director, 2015).

> Yes, because it's hard to get rid of things that already exist. I don't think that the campus environment is very warm and cuddly. So warm and cuddly programs are probably more at risk at this moment than they were ten years ago. I think it's as simple as that (Interview, founding Faculty Director, 2015).
>
> Yeah, I think they're here to stay. I'm not privy to the conversations. I guess if one talked to the Directors and they were saying it's getting harder and harder to recruit people to teach... But we've had a big influx of faculty the last couple years, three years. I think 71 on West Campus alone last year. Which means that there are young, new faculty and while the conditions for tenure seem to keep getting ratcheted up– I know my junior faculty are great, and scared that teaching this course might–on one hand, it might be a hard sell because, well, what do I want to do this for? I've got my research to do and I've got to get a book done in the next four or five years. But I think also it's a good opportunity to demonstrate service to the institution (Interview, founding Faculty Director, 2015).
>
> I think they should be [here to stay]. But I think it depends a lot on the devotion of resources at the provostial level. I think that's the question. They absolutely should be. And I think we should actually be trying to make them work better. We should be extending them into the sophomore year. Extending them into the sophomore year would bear huge fruit, because a lot of students actually make their real major choices and their real commitments in the sophomore year. A lot of kids come in quite naively. They choose a major as freshmen, but–for example, I started undergraduate school as a political science major. I was going to go to law school and be a politician. This was the height of the Vietnam War. And by the end of my freshman year, I knew that that was absolutely absurd. I was absolutely not going to do that (Interview, founding Faculty Director, 2015).

Important criteria for programmatic persistence listed by the founding directors include organizational embeddedness, faculty support (particularly in the form of seminar teaching), resources, and an overall institutionalization of the program. These interviews depicted a positive image of the formation of the program with considerable new and unique effort by faculty working together with staff and administrators. Overall, the founding Directors conveyed a perception of strong administrative support for the initiative, and confidence in the organizational model. Their "bump in the road," however, was the lack of institutionalization of

a recruitment process of faculty to the 102 seminars. This view was strongly echoed by the two current Faculty Directors that I interviewed.

Current Faculty Directors

Interviews with two of the current Faculty Directors reveal a similar level of commitment to the task but, perhaps, a greater degree of frustration with execution. Both of the directors that I spoke to had served for at least three years in the role, both held the rank of associate professor and served in their role under two iterations of provostial and programmatic administrative leadership. The current Directors exhibit a clear understanding of the original goals of the program, they worked to accomplish the goals with a team of academic and student affairs professionals, and believed that the Undergraduate Colleges had been, and continued to be, beneficial to the student experience at Stony Brook:

> It was also rewarding for me on a human side. There was an immediate kind of gratification, to be able to spend time with freshmen, discuss issues that pertained to the construction of their future, the design of their career, and see immediately what impact one could have. Possibly because it is a different kind of advising, at least for the faculty director in the group, as compared to advising majors and providing specific details. But it is more like human design, to sit down with a student who says, "I'm not sure what I should do, and what's the best thing for me?" And to entertain a discussion to discover what would be natural match or a natural fit for the skills, the qualities, the talents of that particular student (Interview, current Faculty Director, 2015).

> I've always enjoyed interacting with students. At one point, I taught, I think it was SBU 101, or USB 101. So I enjoyed being with freshmen. And when the opportunity presented itself, once I found out what the commitment was, I felt it was something worth pursuing. If you look at the concept of what the Undergraduate Colleges are, you are building a community, and when I work with freshmen, freshmen are clueless. They're in these large courses. They don't have the opportunity to really have contact with a faculty member. And I was intrigued by the fact that there were small, smaller communities within a large research university that gave students the opportunity to feel connected to something and someone (Interview, current Faculty Director, 2015).

The statements above express support for some of the defining goals of the program and the potential for continuity of the original model, at least with these two Directors who were handed the baton by previous incumbents, including a Founding Director. Accounts of their tenure as Director, however, also shed light on the challenges they confronted and shifts in what I would refer to as an overarching coherence in the planning of various components of the program, particularly those related to administrative support, selected aspects of the collaborative relationship between academic and student affairs, and the evolution of the 102 seminar:

> [Recruiting faculty for the 102 seminar] has become more and more of a daunting task, and one that is not predictable in terms of workload because from one year to the next, you never know how many instructors will agree to return and teach again. And what degree of success you'll have trying to find new instructors, because the incentives are limited, financial incentive is limited, especially for professors. Assistant professors are being advised not to teach, not to offer those courses anymore. Their mentors, for the most part, tell them that this is not only not relevant, but also harmful to their tenure case.

> We also find that at this point we have more part-time lecturers and full-time lecturers who are among the most enthusiastic supporters and the most committed instructors. And this in a way takes away from the original mission of 102, which called for full-time faculty engaged in research. Although some lecturers do some research. At the same time, students are happy with many of these lecturers. Students react well to the relationship, to the rapport that these lectures are able to build with the students. So how could I not have them? (Interview, current Faculty Director, 2015).

> The challenge [of recruitment of faculty] is that it's not valued. So if you are a young faculty member, this isn't valued because it has nothing to do with tenure. So I think that's something that we could– I don't know what we could do, but it's not the culture of the university. Although this year we had 92 returning faculty, which is awesome. But it's very hard to get newbies. This is a research university. Teaching may or may not be valued by some people. Hence, what is the value of teaching freshmen? We are kind of out on our own, trying to do it (Interview, current Faculty Director, 2015).

Frustrations related to the primary component of the Director's role (staffing the spring semester seminar), are coupled with observations about more general aspects of the evolution of the program. For example, one of the hallmarks of the original program design included monthly meetings of the Undergraduate College Council which was chaired by the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. The membership was comprised of the Faculty Directors, academic affairs and student affairs administrators, a member of the Senate's Undergraduate Council and representatives from the academic colleges. This group was responsible for general oversight of the initiative and strategic planning. It was intentionally devised as a mechanism to preserve and sustain collaborative effort as a central and essential goal. According to the current Faculty Directors, as well as the current administrative Director, the Council ceased meeting several years ago, shortly after the current Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education assumed his position. The current Vice Provost has continued the practice of monthly meetings with the Faculty Directors of the Colleges, but discontinued calling meetings of the Council.

> The [Undergraduate College Council] used to meet, not anymore. But the faculty directors meet once a month. Also, with the director of the Honors College and University Scholars. I'm not 100% sure why. I don't know what the goals of those meetings are (Interview, current Faculty Director, 2015).

> [The Undergraduate College Council] doesn't meet, but it should. I think it's going to be coming back. There was a reason why it stopped and I wonder if it had something to do with just like people-people left and so I think that was part of it, was that there were gaps in terms of certain leadership in terms of replacement of Faculty Directors. And I think it got put on hold because of that and it just hasn't sort of emerged again. To have a kind of collaborative enterprise like this and to not have that kind of meeting, it doesn't make sense to me. I think that needs to happen (Interview, current Administrative Director, 2015).

The interviews with current Faculty Directors depict ongoing investment in an initiative as it was first modeled, through to the current stages of development. The Directors' satisfaction in

accomplishment is mitigated, however, by their concerns regarding decreasing administrative backing and funding over the course of their tenure. Support is sought from higher levels of the administration who, with the exception of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, emerge to this group as uninterested in the Undergraduate College beyond a generic cognizance of its goals.

> At the level of the central office of the Undergraduate Colleges, there is a lot of administrative support. And a lot of attention and consideration to all kinds of proposals or suggestions. So no idea is quickly dismissed; no request is dismissed without appropriate explanation or without proper consideration. And that is great. The higher you go, the more you get the sense that the targets are generic, that metrics and generic kind of improvements drive the operation. And in terms of vision, certainly there is concern for the wellbeing of the students. But in terms of a strategic vision that might include how to achieve those goals, or how to– or what to prioritize, given the limited resources we have, whether it be at the provostial level or higher up at the presidential level, there is no indication or, at most, there is the sense that, yes, we know that resources are limited, but you have to do more with less; you have to do as much as possible. And "as much as possible" is often almost impossible (Interview, current Faculty Director, 2015).

> Because if you think about it, whose baby is this? And I don't know how far up the food chain this is valued. So is it important to the President? I don't know. Is it important to the Provost? I don't know. Is it important to the chairs of the department? Probably not. Is it important to the Vice Provost? Yes (Interview, current Faculty Director, 2015).

Despite concerns regarding the unpredictable nature of support from the highest levels of administration, both current Directors believed that the College program was here to stay, at least, according to one, in the “medium term”. Reasons for this assertion include the increase in retention rates of students from the first to the second year of college, and the degree to which the Undergraduate Colleges have become “entrenched” in terms of infrastructure and organization of the first year experience in academic and student affairs that has become solidly delivered through the Undergraduate College configuration. There was, interestingly, little

dissonance between the responses of the current Directors. The data show two engaged faculty working earnestly with faculty and staff colleagues to deliver the University's freshman program. The overall tone of the responses suggests a steady state implementation with some struggle, rather than the excitement of invention and innovation expressed by the founding Directors. Although, this may not seem unusual for a program of more than a decade standing, I would argue that comments by the directors, including those shared here, infer a shift in the operationalization of key components of the original model including shared ownership, administrative support and collaborative and effective leadership.

Undergraduate College Staff–The Director

As stated earlier, the Undergraduate College prototype included teams made up of academic and student affairs staff. The performance programs for Residential Quad Directors were amended to include their role in the program and new staff were hired in academic affairs to serve as Undergraduate College Advisors. Shortly thereafter, in 2003, there was budgetary approval for the addition of an administrative Director for the program. This person, as well as the Advisors, reported to Undergraduate Academic Affairs, a Provostial unit. The College Advisors were phased in gradually, along with the phasing in of the Colleges themselves. The original proposal called for a total of twelve Advisors, two per college. This number was calculated to adequately address the needs of an estimated 350 freshmen admitted to each Undergraduate College every fall semester. A number of students were admitted to special programs that were defined by the institution as the student's primary programmatic affiliation, for example the Honors College. As a result, the number of students assigned to each Undergraduate College Advisor was reduced. In addition to serving as members of their College's team, the Advisors taught several sections of the introductory 101 class and were

responsible for the academic advising of these students through the first year. Quad Directors also taught one or two sections of the 101 course and planned theme related programs in the residence halls.

In this section I present interview data from professional and administrative staff to illustrate, from those perspectives, the early establishment of the program and its more recent development. Questions posed to the professional staff and administrative Director and Associate Director are included in Appendix E and were designed to explore their roles as well as perceptions of various features of the program including the effect of the Undergraduate Colleges on the student experience, the nature of faculty participation, and administrative and resource support from academic and student affairs. These twelve interviews (8 from academic affairs, 4 from student affairs) represent individual perspectives across the lifetime of the program. Turnover of entry level professional staff is relatively high, and in the case of both the Quad Directors and College Advisors, I interviewed staff who were serving currently in the position, or who had held the relevant position at an earlier point, and at the time of the interview were working elsewhere in the University. In yet other cases, the incumbent had been hired to the position relatively recently. The Associate Director, for example, served originally in 2007 as a College Advisor for Science and Society, then in the same position for the College of Leadership and Service, and most recently as Associate Director. Comprehensive feedback from several staff holding various Undergraduate College positions over a number of years helped to connect the developmental dots of the program.

The current administrative Director of the Undergraduate College program has been in the job since 2014 and is the second incumbent to the position. Her official title is Assistant Dean and Director, she has a PhD, and her background includes a decade of work in academic

and student affairs positions, including work with another first-year college program. The Director's duties include day-to-day administrative oversight of the program, and supervision of the Undergraduate College staff (Associate Director, College Advisors, support staff). The Director works in conjunction with her colleagues in academic and student affairs, the faculty directors, and other campus staff to help insure the successful delivery of the program. When she came onboard, the Director was guided generally in terms of priorities:

> But I would say, I guess, the starting point was that I was charged by [the Vice Provost] when I got here to take a fresh look in multiple areas, kind of undefined. And the second piece of that was the *graduate in four* initiatives, the commitment that the [Stony Brook] president made at the White House, which is an institutional priority right now. And within the division, is an institutional—or is a divisional priority— toward academic success and academic success programming. So I think part of the motivation is that there was a feeling that there was maybe not enough academic success content or support in the current [Undergraduate College] curriculum (Interview, current administrative Director, 2015).

Much of the Director's attention in her first year, for instance, was aimed at revising the curriculum for the staff who taught the 101 seminar:

> So it's really what I see is more like a three-year plan. This [year] was kind of the first revision. We made what I would consider to be more minor modifications. Other people may not necessarily agree with that because it may have seemed more like an overhaul to some people that had been involved for maybe a long time, in the particulars of this curriculum. My other observation with the curriculum was just that it had sort of morphed into these one off lessons where there wasn't really a unifying thread throughout them.
>
> So the other main, I think, motivating factor was that there was some concern that we were giving maybe a little bit too much flexibility to instructors for some of the content. So like for the diversity lesson, for instance, the instructor could teach that on the last day of class if they so choose to do so. And I'm not sure there was a sense that that's really not kind of the best use—the best timing of that lesson. That maybe we were leaving a little bit too much to the instructors to decide.

> There's no flexibility for the instructor to teach diversity on the last day. They have to teach it on the fifth week, and that's sort of where it exists. And people, I think, did not reject that as much as I thought that they might. I think there are a good number of instructors that really want that kind of structure (Interview, administrative Director, 2015).

At the time of the interview, with a bit less than one year in the position, the issue that she recalled with special interest was the way in which the Undergraduate College program was described by the Stony Brook search committee and its Chair:

> So the other piece I will say that was emphasized very heavily which I can talk more about, but might get off topic, is the way that it was referred to as an advising unit. It was often spoken—it was very much emphasized—I don't think the emphasis was intentional, but there was—I think the default in the way that the search committee may have presented it or in some of my meetings with people, was that it was an advising unit. And that's something that I reject now. I mean, I rejected when I got here, not that I think there's anything wrong with that, but I think it's a very limited perspective of what the program does. And I don't want to get boxed—I don't want our program or our department to get boxed in that (Interview, current administrative Director, 2015).
>
> ***Q.*** So was it as though you were being hired to oversee or another advising unit on campus?
>
> ***A.*** Correct. And so I did not find that attractive. But I was able to talk to enough people. I mean, especially when I came in for the campus visit itself, was able to talk to enough people and had done enough research that I was very much aware that that's not what it was. And I think I rolled the dice a little bit, that it wouldn't be as much that as it was. And it turns out that it's not, and I think it's been over the last year where I have tried to push back a little bit on that (Interview, current administrative Director, 2015).

Interestingly the Director associates the error in the description of the program primarily with the Chair of the search committee whose institutional position was a senior academic affairs administrator, who reported directly to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of the Undergraduate Colleges:

> Yeah. I mean, I think that in the context of the search committee, it was definitely made up of a variety of people, but [the Assistant Provost] was the search chair and I know that his background is very heavily in advising and that's the perspective he comes out of. And so I think that to some extent that's his bias a little bit. It's his lens, so to speak. And so I think he applies that. You know, I think you can get away from the fact that we do most of the advising for first year students. I mean, it's there and that's a great thing. One of the richnesses of the program, is that the advising does happen within the context of the Colleges and it is so proactive. The model is such a proactive advising model. So I think that's his lens, I think that's part of where that came from. I think it's part of their reality of some of the work that we do (Interview, current administrative Director, 2015).

But where does this misrepresentation come from? Poor communication regarding the goals of the initiative seems an unlikely cause, as this administrative manager had been heavily involved in the undergraduate program at Stony Brook for some time. Whatever the reason, this messaging from administrative leadership may have impacted the direction and persistence of the College program. Comments from the Director that imply a degree of tension between campus personnel regarding the definition and implementation of the College program is consistent with response from a senior Student Affairs administrator, also involved in establishing the program:

> But the other thread of curious resistance that I remember very clearly was that we would discuss something in the planning group and discover that the Advising Center was not fully on-board. And I think we later came to conclude that that was coming from a staff person who continues to be a source of resistance on the evolution of the Undergraduate College model. And the main reason that it is stuck where it is, not going beyond the first year despite plenty of indications that it would be beneficial to the undergraduate experience to expand beyond the freshman year.
>
> The director of advising had previously been at an institution where he was part of instituting a college year model, and was very invested in that. I've never heard an explanation; this is my own assumption based on just circumstances. That moving the undergraduate college model beyond the freshman year was inconsistent with a college year model (Interview, Student Affairs administrator, 2015).

The resistance of one senior administrator however, unless that administrator is the President or Provost, should not be sufficient to sabotage a major initiative that otherwise has significant support. But it could delay or temporarily derail progress if tension more broadly exists around the nature of the program's growth or if the foundation of support is vulnerable, which is often the case with undergraduate education initiatives at research universities. In any case the current Director has continued to pursue a model very similar to the original, but with some important distinctions. It is apparent in her responses that the Director sees the Undergraduate College program as an academic program first and she has moved to pivot the development of the program in a direction that she sees as more solidly academic. The modifications to the 101 seminar, described above, is one programmatic example of this. She also acknowledges the importance of collaboration, but identifies some difficulties as well:

> I will say from the start that I was very well aware of the collaborative nature of the program from its inception all the way into the way that it's been operationalized and managed, which is one of the things I found most attractive about it. So, the fact that it was housed in Academic Affairs was very attractive to me because that's where I come from. But I also have had this background in Student Affairs and in campus residences in particular. And so for me, it was kind of the merging of those worlds and that in and of itself was the way that it was explained to me.
>
> You know, I think the collaboration can be—it's not problematic, but I certainly would say it's a challenge because I think it's always a challenge when you're trying to negotiate different priorities and different interests across different units. I think it's one of the richest aspects of the program, but to try to coordinate faculty interests just with the Undergraduate Colleges sort of central interests and Campus Residences interests and Student Affairs interests at large and/or priorities and personalities and obligations within their own spheres can be very challenging (Interview, current administrative Director, 2015).

The Director believes that the College program has enhanced the student experience and, like others, points to the University's strong retention rate as evidence. As far as faculty support

and participation, the Director sees this as a challenge, particularly the recruitment of tenured and tenure track faculty to teach the 102 seminars:

> I think that we have a good sort of core group of faculty that see significant value in the program and see the program as kind of a mechanism for student success and see that as being valued and see the academic credibility of the program. I do think that there is definitely a set of faculty on campus that still sees the program as being significantly auxiliary, that it's kind of outside their scope of interest and/or outside the scope of what they need to be concentrating on, or what their faculty need to be concentrating on.
>
> I think that [lecturers and non-tenure track] are the individuals that are most available and most willing from either their perspective or from their department's perspective to participate in a 102 seminar. There's a couple of things with that. I think that it concerns me in the sense that we can't seem to get 150 faculty, full time faculty to teach. I mean, that concerns me. And I've said this to [the Vice Provost] and the Faculty Directors. [And the Vice Provost] is very clear on this, that he does not think part time or part time non-tenure—well I don't even say—I wouldn't even necessarily say the non-tenure track part. I think he's given up a little bit on that, but he's loosened up a little bit on that. But the full time piece. I mean, he is adamant that only full time people should be teaching 102 seminars. And my perspective is this. I think that should be the goal. I think that was the goal of the program (Interview, current administrative Director, 2015).

I asked the Director about the nature of administrative support she believed the College program was receiving. Her most direct knowledge of support comes from the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, beyond that, for example from the Provost and President, she was less certain:

> I mean, they are definitely further removed, I think, from the Undergraduate Colleges. I think at one point in the [Vice Provost's] conversation with the President, the President said that he believed that all faculty should teach a 102 seminar. He sees value, I mean, he certainly sees value in it, but I don't know what it is that he would do to put behind that, right? Or whether he would make that an institutional priority.

> But I think that my interactions with either the Provost or the President have been very limited to this point and I think mostly [the Vice Provost] has been a conduit to them about the program (Interview, current administrative Director 2015).

Regardless of the challenges that she encounters and seeks to address, the Director believes that the College program is here to stay:

> Absolutely, yeah. I would not hesitate to say that. I don't think it's going anywhere. Whether it takes some, you know, there's some modifications at some time in the future, I can't predict that. Or whether based on the direction of undergraduate education where there's some modification based on that or whatever, it's maybe likely because certainly the field is evolving and—but I absolutely think the program is here to stay. What I actually would think is that it's more likely that the program will be expanded in some way or would spin off in some way to accommodate—I know this has been a discussion here quite a bit—but to accommodate beyond the first year. I would actually see it being used more as a model toward that than ever going away (Interview, current administrative Director, 2015).

Undergraduate College Staff-Associate Director and Undergraduate College Advisors

Questions directed at the Associate Director and Undergraduate College Advisors were similar to questions addressed to the Director, but focused more on the day-to-day implementation of the program, sources of support and challenges encountered along the way. I placed the Associate Director in this category of interview questions because her most extensive experience has been as a College Advisor for two separate Colleges. The others interviewed in this category had tenures ranging from approximately three to nine years, and one had left the Undergraduate College program roughly one year earlier for the position of Assistant Director of the University Scholars program. There has been less turnover in the College Advisor position than the Residential Quad Director position, and the most turnover with Residence Hall Directors (who also teach a section of the 101 seminar). I was therefore able to cull information about the first decade of the program from the College Advisors that helped to complete the picture of this

initiative in a comprehensive manner. College Advisor responsibilities include academic advising, teaching two sections of the 101 seminar each fall, co-curricular programming, coordination and delivery of new student orientation and "opening of school." With the exception of academic advising, each of these activities is planned by the Undergraduate College team. Responsibility for each task is distributed among the team members and each member assumes more or less of the primary responsibility, depending on the nature of the task. The model assigns a College Advisor to every new first year student and it is stressed that this advisor will be available for support throughout that year, although College Advisors report that some students continue to seek them out in subsequent years for assistance. The original Undergraduate College proposal called for a steady state total of twelve Advisors; two per college. This goal has never been reached and at the time of these interviews there were eight advisors. Shortly before there were ten, but two left the program for other positions and the administrative Director was unsure whether these two would be filled in the short term. As of the writing of this dissertation there continued to be a total of eight advisors working with the program. It is important to mention here that the original proposal of twelve advisors was based on an incoming freshman class of approximately 2250, with the expectation that enrollment would grow modestly. According to the University's office of institutional research, approximately 2850 freshman enrolled in the fall of 2015 (an average increase of 100 students per Undergraduate College) with the fewest number of advisors in the history of the program. The College Advisors, and the Director, uniformly expressed frustration about this issue and doubt as to whether they would ever reach the steady state goal.

> I think the goal—I think there needs to be two advisors per college. I have no idea whether we're ever going to get there. But I also know that the functional assignments that they have now have evolved in such a way that many of them are unhappy with the workload related to the functional assignments. It is a

> significant additional responsibility for them, again given the way that they've evolved and given some institutional priorities like in terms of the at risk outreach piece, or in terms of the curriculum (Interview, current administrative Director, 2015).

In reference to expanding the program to include sophomore level students one advisor responded:

> So there's been lots of discussion about it, but I think what keeps that from happening is just the lack of resources. We've never been at full staff. We've never had two advisors for every Undergraduate College. So, I think until at least that happens, we can't take on [sophomores]. So HDV [Human Development] has one advisor, LDS [Leadership and Service] has one, SSO [Science and Society] has one, GLS [Global Studies] has two, ACH [Arts, Culture and Humanities] has one, and ITS [Information and Technology Studies] has two. It's a huge resource issue. It's huge. Well, I give us all credit and I think all the advisors who are here do a really great job at what they do. If you think about—I mean, I have a caseload of 513 students and so if you could have two advisors, and again it's because we're not just advisors. So, it's like we're doing everything else as well (Interview, College Advisor, 2015).

As the incoming class of students grew and the program developed the College Advisors responsibilities grew as well and they raised their concerns about the increase of duties with the administrative Director. Their primary argument was that the concomitant set of duties in the College Advisor position was now inconsistent with the professional rank it was originally assigned, and an official review of the position was requested. This personnel review resulted in a two-tiered system that included an entry level College Advisor position and what is now called a Lead College Advisor, a title which holds a slightly higher rank. The Lead Advisor position includes "functional" assignments, for instance academic standing and progress of students, international student support and the College Fellows program. The overall sense communicated in the interviews was that although this two tiered system resolved part of the problem (a recognition of the increasing work load) it neglected to address another issue, which is the title

Advisor itself which the staff believed to be an inadequate and partial description of the job they were expected to do, particularly with an increasing numbers of students. Some suggested that the title of Assistant Director may be a more suitable representation of the range of duties.

Another change made recently to address increasing work load on the Advisors was to reduce the number of sections of the 101 seminar they teach each fall from four to two. To reiterate an earlier point, one purpose of assigning the College Advisors four sections of 101 to teach, was to build a relationship with as many first year students in their College as possible and therefore encourage greater academic success and retention. Reducing the number of sections taught from four to two cuts in half the number of students in classes with staff who have primary responsibility for them and investment in the program. It also increases the burden of finding volunteer instructors.

> I mean, it's hard because I think we love teaching and definitely you're advising and you're getting to know those additional 40 students with those extra two sections, which is great. But it's really trying to find that balance. I mean, teaching those four classes and being out of the office for that amount of time has that impact (Interview, College Advisor, 2015).

> Yeah, I mean, they get paid more, they are a higher grade [as a Lead Advisor]. But I would say all of them, with the exception of one because there is maybe like one functional assignment that I think is more appropriate as a functional assignment, feel that the functional assignments were not what they signed up for with the SL3 level. They've moved in a direction that is not what they signed up for, which I don't disagree with. Which is to their credit. It means that there's been this kind of growth and development but it's beyond what any one person with the other responsibilities that they have I think should do. So it's trying to balance what's the next departmental priority in terms of hiring? Is it to get additional advisors back onto staff? Or is it to try to peel away some of these functional assignments? (Interview, current administrative Director, 2015).

The struggles of growth and transition are revealed in the staff interviews as much as their pride in accomplishment. Would the difficulties expressed by the staff exist or be as

prevalent with a full complement (twelve) of Advisors? Probably not to the same degree. But that would require a base increase in the Undergraduate College budget and assurance for that increase by those who control institutional resources. And the staff does not generally express optimism regarding such an increase with the current administrative leadership. It should also be mentioned that mid-level staff are rarely in a position to interact directly and steadily with upper level administrative decision makers, so the perceptions of this group are mostly generated by second or third hand observations. The impression, however, was that a lack of knowledge of and appreciation for their work resulted in relatively faint high-level leadership and support.

> No, I don't feel like there's enough resources in terms of financial support. And when I think of the Provost's Office, I think classes and with the money I think of just the classes for freshman and registration. And right now, it's embarrassing and unacceptable that when freshmen come to orientation, some of them are leaving with part time schedules and on wait lists because there are not enough classes. And so in terms of that type of support, as an advisor and somebody who's been here for a while, I just think it's really unfortunate and for me personally, it feels embarrassing that we can't provide students from the very beginning this outstanding experience because there's such a class availability issue. And as a university as a whole, there's this issue with classes, especially providing that support for freshmen (Interview, College Advisor, 2015).

Asked about the effectiveness of the College team structure, the Advisors maintained that it was dependent on the chemistry between team members and the style of the Faculty Director. If, for example, the Faculty Director was highly organized and comfortable working collaboratively, it was more likely to be a successful enterprise than if the Director was passively waiting for staff to take control or was scattered organizationally. The Faculty Director is expected to take the lead, but also work effectively as a member of a team. Turnover in Quad Directors also impacts the stability and smooth functioning of the team:

Q. No two teams are the same?

A. No two teams are the same, uh-huh.

Q. So, tell me why you think that is? Or is that inevitable?

A. I think that there could be clearer guidelines.

Q. Direction?

A. Yeah. I've gone through a couple of Faculty Directors in my time of being here, and they come in and, "So you tell me, what am I supposed to do? What's my role?"

Q. The Faculty Director says that?

A. Yes, part of it is just personality and what they're comfortable with or what their expectations are as the role. But I think that some of that could be alleviated more if there was a—if there were guidelines set up saying this is what the expectations are when you take on this role.

Q. And you think that that exists primarily for the Faculty Director or do you think—

A. And Quad Directors as well, I think.

Q. Because there's a lot of turnover there as well?

A. Yeah, uh-huh. And it's the same thing. They're trying to figure out what that role means. But again, I don't think that there's a clear direction when they're hired as to what that means.

Q. Do you think if guidelines and the directions were there, then that would sort of create more of a synergy across? It would create more consistency?

A. I think so.
(Interview, College Advisor, 2015).

The College Advisors seemed to agree that a lack of clear guidelines and direction for other team members impacted their position most and required them to play an anchoring role in the program which, at times, affected morale of the group.

Feeling the weight of the program on their shoulders as well as frustration over that role not garnering adequate acknowledgment was made more difficult by their overwhelming sense that the work they did with the first year class was, in good measure, responsible for the strong retention rates of first year students and the declining number of students in academic jeopardy during this same period. The rising retention rate was the unanimous response to the question asked about what evidence there may be for the positive effect of the Colleges at Stony Brook. Although the Advisors understood that no one variable could explain something as complex as student retention, they were certain that the comprehensive efforts of the Undergraduate College program played a major role.

Apart from the Faculty Director, most of the Advisors interviewed did not regularly engage many faculty members. If faculty were approached to participate in some academic co-curricular program, it was typically the Faculty Director who invited them. Perceptions were that faculty have been an asset to the program, but too limited in number:

> I think more faculty need to be aware of what the program actually is, this is still an issue that we're running into now. A vast majority of the faculty on campus, aside from those who are either faculty directors or who have been faculty directors, or who have taught a 102 for an Undergraduate College. Outside of that, I don't think many faculty know what the program is. And that's—it's a little bit scary but it's also disappointing because they are not aware of that resource that they can connect their students to if a student comes to them and has an issue and they're not sure what to do (Interview, College Advisor, 2015).

Regardless of the concerns expressed, there has been relative stability in the College Advisor staff and a strong sense of ownership and dedication to the work and to Stony Brook's students.

Residential Quad Directors

I interviewed four Residential Quad Directors, three of whom were in the position at the time of the interview and one who had moved on to another position in the Dean of Students' office. The same questions were broached to the Quad Directors as the College Advisors. The term of their appointments ranged from approximately two to seven years and in one case the Quad Director held this position in more than one Undergraduate College sequentially. One important distinction between the Quad Director and College Advisor positions is the supervision of staff by Quad Directors. They supervise the Residential Hall Directors (RHDs), who as entry level professional staff, live on campus in the residence halls and are the front line staff with students. Quad Directors also have overall operational and administrative responsibility for each Quad Office and its staff. As may be apparent, the primary difference between the Quad Director and College Advisor positions is that the Quad Director's job is not solely rooted in the College program and is more multi-dimensional. The College Advisor position was created with the establishment of the Undergraduate Colleges and is defined fully by their relationship and responsibilities to the College program. Quad Directors manage issues related to student conduct, physical and mental health crises, minor building maintenance problems and the like. It is safe to say, therefore, that the professional identity of the College Advisor role is more purely coupled with the Undergraduate Colleges than that of the Quad Director, a role that is operationally more multifaceted and amended to include Undergraduate College related activity and participation. Like the College Advisors, the RHDs and the Quad Directors teach the 101 seminar each fall semester, but typically one section rather than two. The Quad Directors are considered full members of the College team and RHDs occasionally attend meetings with the teams as well.

The history of commitment by the Division of Campus Residences to the Undergraduate Colleges is deep and finds its origins with the current administrative leader of that unit who was a member of the program's steering committee. In the last few years, however, professional staff positions (Director, Residential Programs and Associate Director, Residential Halls), at the Director level in Campus Residences have been in flux which have had some effect on the overall operational and directive support provided to the College program which is conveyed by Quad Director responses to interview questions:

> Undergraduate colleges are working through new change and new leadership. And right when they got their leadership in place, we lost our leadership. And now we're building that up again. And so I can see some of the wheels moving where there's more communication there now (Interview, Quad Director, 2015).

Although the Quad Directors responses revealed strong sense of obligation to the Undergraduate College program and a certainty that the initiative had made positive contributions to the student experience, much of the data generated from these interviews seemed to reflect a small degree of distance from the fuller identity that the College Advisors have with the program. Undoubtedly, this distance had something to do with the myriad of responsibilities held by these staff, but there was also less of a sense of ownership in recent years among the student affairs staff that I also heard echoed by the leadership team for this area. This diminished sense of equal partnership of the initiative appeared to be connected to other changes mentioned earlier, for example the discontinuation of Undergraduate College Council meetings where broad development issues were tackled and agreed upon between academic and student affairs senior administrative staff and faculty. One example of change with less consultation is New Student Orientation. Last year the new administrative Director worked with her staff to revise the summer orientation program which resulted in a themed initiative that they referred to as *Connect, Plan, Expand,* which served as a vehicle for students to approach their first year of

college through Orientation, Opening of School activities and the 101 course. In the early days of the program this sort of change to Orientation and Opening of School Weekend would have been raised with the Council and academic and student affairs staff would have likely planned activities together. According to interviews with the Quad Directors, changes of this sort are now occurring in academic affairs and communicated (not always in advance) to student affairs staff:

> And so, I don't know that anyone from our area was included in that conversation. And we are right now in a huge transition with our leadership. And so, I don't know if any of those people were there. But I don't recall them providing that information to us. I learned of this change through an outside event with another colleague from outside of the campus. From a colleague from campus, but it was an outside event. We were socializing and this is how I learned of this information, that we were going through this particular change. And so the bump in the road from my standpoint would be that there was this change made with expectations placed on our staff without considering us. Which became a challenge at some point (Interview, Quad Director, 2015).

Responses seemed to indicate a decline in the collaborative nature of the program and a frustration around this change. Revisions to the College 101 curriculum, mentioned earlier, was apparently managed in a similar manner.

The data indicate that the Quad Directors interviewed all believe that the Undergraduate Colleges have had a positive effect on students in terms of community and identity building, advising support, and enhanced connection to faculty and the academic mission of the university. Interestingly however, when asked what evidence there may be for this assertion, not one Quad Director mentioned improved retention rates, including directly claiming, "I haven't seen any data." Conversely, every College Advisor who was interviewed confidently pointed to this evidence as key. The interview data in this study as well as the survey data in the *First Year*

Matters self-study point to a lack of communication across the campus community regarding the achievement of program goals.

Relationships between faculty and the Quad Directors was similar to that which existed between faculty members and College Advisors. Quad Directors worked directly with the Faculty Director of the College, but had less interaction with other faculty who were invited to support and contribute to College activities. Quad Directors were generally impressed with the goal to actively involve faculty in the first year program at Stony Brook, which they observed as more ambitious than the degree of involvement at other institutions at which they have worked. They also seemed similarly mindful (as their College Advisor colleagues) of the need to engage more faculty in the program and the difficulties associated with this effort. Similar too was the reaction between the two groups regarding administrative support. Strong support for the program from supervisors in their area was identified, with less confidence about the depth of commitment and support for the Colleges by the senior administration at the University:

> I don't know how much conversation happens at those tables [of administrative leadership] regarding the Undergraduate Colleges. But I think that there was a lot of excitement in the beginning, a lot of conversation about how much this would put Stony Brook in the spotlight. And I feel like there was sort of a dip at some point with the attention that undergraduate colleges got. And I don't know, like now that we have a new president, not really so new anymore, but I think it still serves as a point of pride for the University to mention that we have this particular program. And I think it has some unique structures that some other first-year programs don't have across the country (Interview, Quad Director, 2015).

Each of the four Quad Directors interviewed believe that the Undergraduate Colleges are "here to stay", but speculated about potential changes the program may face, particularly in the capacity of serving sophomore level students. More than one Director referred to discussions over the last several years about extending the program through the second year and supporting that development:

> [When] I reflect on my college career at Stony Brook, and I'm actually being honest with myself, and not just remembering the great times, I think I struggled significantly my freshman and my sophomore year. And I often wonder if the Undergraduate Colleges were in place when I was a student, would I have had that same path? And being 100% honest, I don't think I would have. I think I would have been one of the people that would have been caught earlier on and before there were sort of huge disasters to avoid or fix or whatnot. I think I would have gotten that assistance, or at the very least felt much more comfortable in making decisions for myself. So I think it's a phenomenal program. If anything, I think it should grow to incorporate the sophomore experience. Because anecdotally, I can look at students from their freshman year to the time they graduate and just the difference that I've seen in them (Interview, Quad Director, 2015).

The Provost

I interviewed the Stony Brook Provost approximately one month before he announced that he would be leaving the institution to assume the Presidency of the University of Delaware the following fall 2016 semester. As I stated earlier, the Provost was the only person that requested to see the questions that I planned to ask in advance of the interview. I attempted to reassure him (through his assistant) that no preparation was necessary and that I was interested in his spontaneous reflections on undergraduate education at Stony Brook and more particularly the Undergraduate Colleges. Even so, he insisted and I consented. In addition to seeing the questions in advance, the Provost asked for the names of those I had already interviewed. I did not provide names, but did list some categories of staff and titles. The Provost came to the interview prepared with written responses to each of my questions and referred to these notes over the course of the interview. At the time of the interview the Provost had been at Stony Brook for roughly four years and was the third incumbent in that role to have oversight responsibility for the Undergraduate Colleges. Questions addressed to the Provost were designed to explore his understanding and commitment to the Undergraduate Colleges and undergraduate

education more broadly, his perception of the role faculty play in undergraduate education at Stony Brook and the relationship between academic and student affairs in relation to delivery of the Undergraduate College program. I initially asked the Provost about his knowledge of the program and whether he believed is had improved the quality of the student experience:

> I'm, of course, very interested in our Undergraduate Colleges because I see them as one of our strategies to enhance student success and graduation. So Stony Brook University as a whole has been very much engaged in efforts to improve the graduation rates of our students. And one of the things that we find that is critical, beyond the classroom, is building strong community which extends through other activities like—extracurricular activities, involvement in areas of common interests and so on.
>
> So, I think the undergraduate colleges is a great strategy to especially address this, to make the students feel like a community, to share interests, to associate more closely with Faculty Directors and learn about the University and so on. And, you know, it has been good, not only thankful to the students, but has also become good for those faculty to get involved more with the students.
>
> And we are a large place. Stony Brook is 25,000 plus students, and more than 18,000 of those are now undergraduate students. And so I think the number is approximately that. So it's always tricky how to make a big place feel like a little more private and a little more smaller communities kind of thing (Interview, Provost, 2015).

The then sitting Provost was quite positive on the status of the Undergraduate College program, it's contribution to an enhanced student experience and the role it has played in improving graduation and retention rates at the University.

> We're also seeing an improvement in academic performance of the students involved. So, how do you measure that? Well, one metric is a reduction of students on academic warning. So, that's a direct thing. Now, you can't always point to a direct correlation sometimes because we've done more things in the first and second years of the student experience.
>
> And the other thing that we've seen is dramatic increase in the retention of students from the first to second year. We were somewhere around 88 percent

> and now we're four points higher, it's more like 92 percent. So that's like at an all-time high. So again, it's not any one of those alone, but all together, they're part of the strategy of enhancing success (Interview, Provost, 2015).

The Provost also took some credit for what he described as an increase in the number of faculty interested in teaching a freshman seminar.

> So, when I first got here, it almost looked like we had to pull teeth for faculty to like engage, to teach the 102 seminars and so on. And we continued to, of course, aggressively recruit and encourage people to be involved. But it has become much more of a practice that people want to engage in. So it's less hard than the beginning because people are seeing the positive impact that it has on the students (Interview, Provost, 2015).

This assertion, however, is at odds with just about every other interview that I conducted. Faculty Directors and administrative staff alike pointed to the declining number of tenured and tenure-track faculty teaching the 102 seminar as a consequence of failing to institutionalize the delivery of this curricular requirement and an arduous task overall to fill the sections needed for every freshman. I also asked the Provost about formally affiliating faculty with an Undergraduate College, something that was proposed in the first five years of the program and occasionally has been raised thereafter, including by a few of the faculty that were interviewed for this study.

> ***A.*** We have not done that yet, no.
>
> ***Q.*** Is that a suggestion that's been made more recently that you're aware of?
>
> ***A.*** Nobody has come to me directly. They might have gone to [the Vice Provost], but you could follow up with him. But we're trying not to make what I would call force fits, especially with—a lot of the faculty we've hired, the new faculty, the 150 or so new faculty that I mentioned, most of them are junior faculty. So in the first three years, three to six years, the junior faculty, they're awfully busy getting acclimated in the institution, getting the teaching going, setting up the research program. So, you know, to some extent we see the involvement in the Undergraduate Colleges as service work as well as enhancing the interaction with

> students. And so we're not forcing them to get into that, but I think it is –it's a natural evolution, how people get engaged and involved (Interview, Provost, 2015).

These remarks are revealing and, I would argue, consistent with a very traditional model of faculty commitment to undergraduate education at a research university. Presumably, the terms of affiliating faculty with an Undergraduate College could be as flexible or prescribed as the Provost would like. But using phrases like "force fits" and "we're not forcing them to get into that" reflects a particular way of thinking about faculty culture and the role of faculty in undergraduate education. Institutional priorities place research above all and dictate a service relationship to undergraduate education. Participation in the Undergraduate College program is portrayed as one of the choices for service among all those available:

> This early interaction with faculty is one of the truly unique experiences available to Stony Brook students. I am writing to encourage every member of the faculty to become involved with our incoming students by teaching a 102 seminar. Because these seminars are essentially a service function, lying outside regular teaching assignments, the Provost's Office provides extra service in the amount of $1,500 to each faculty member who teaches one of these seminars (Provost's memo to Stony Brook faculty, September 2015).

In reference to the College 102 seminars themselves, the Provost indicated that he believes that they are good, but "could be better". He would like to see "themes that are more current and capture the fancy of the students" as well as topics with more "gravitas academically." This comment too is somewhat at odds with the original program design which called for the seminars to serve as enrichment experiences with the primary goal of connecting full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty to new students.

Another illuminating response relates to a question about how he believed the Undergraduate College program had changed over the four years of his tenure at Stony Brook:

> I think it has been improving constantly. I mean, I can point to a number of sort of profound impacts that it has had on the student experience. So, its dual emphasis, the dual goal of academic success and community building, is becoming much more strong.
>
> One metric is a reduction of students on academic warning. So, that's a direct thing. Now, you can't always point to a direct correlation sometimes because we've done more things in the first and second years of the student experience. We are improving class availability; we have hired more faculty. We used to be, when I came here, approximately 150 faculty, smaller faculty number which has been increased by about 150. So clearly, there are more things that we've done. We've improved some of our classrooms. There are better technologies, we've added advisors, which overall helped with the student experience. But certainly the Undergraduate Colleges is part of the strategy (Interview, Provost, 2015).

Interviews with current Faculty Directors, College Advisors and the administrative Director, (which were conducted at the end of last summer and early fall semester following New Student Orientation sessions), tell a very different story regarding the availability of courses for new students:

> [Regarding course availability], I think I have to say in my eight years of working with Undergraduate Colleges, this was probably the worst I have seen it. And yet, students are in courses. They have full time schedules, so yeah, it was quite a challenge this year, I think (Interview, College Advisor, 2015).
>
> You know, it's interesting because we get to a point in the summer where classes get tight and students don't have as much flexibility or as many options as they had at the beginning. And we found anecdotally, that this happened earlier than we were expecting, or earlier than has been our experience in the past. And we couldn't figure it out because we thought we had done a good job of [predicting need] (Interview, Associate Director, 2015).
>
> I think there's a lot of layers even at the highest levels at the university that are going to have to be addressed if they want to solve some of the problems with course availability based on what's been happening over the last ten years, including this year.
>
> And certainly one of the things is related to the new curriculum. It's been the first full year. This is now the second year that it's happened, that they've used it.

> They don't have a good read yet. I don't think that there's a good read at the University yet about what demand is. And especially demand related to what students are coming in with, so what needs to be offered relative to AP and transfer credits of incoming students. Very, very kind of uninformed. Departments are making kind of uninformed decisions about what to offer (Interview, administrative Director, 2015).

These comprehensive reflections by (Provostial) staff who worked directly with students through the summer at Orientation each year, communicate a scenario that is in sharp contrast with assertions by the Provost regarding the availability of courses. In many ways the interview with the Provost felt like a journalistic "puff piece" as it was occurring. He praised undergraduate education and the College program, while downplaying evidence of contradictory information. As an example, when I referred to feedback that I had received from faculty regarding the much lesser priority that the University places on undergraduate education at Stony Brook, particularly in terms of its place in the consideration of promotion and tenure, the Provost asserted that that probably had more to do with who I interviewed, not the actual state of affairs. He implied that the sentiment comes primarily from faculty who have "been around a long time" rather than junior faculty. I pointed out that I had interviewed a mix of faculty and he responded, "That's fair" and "When people look at the promotion case book of a faculty member, what plays a major role is the impact they've made in the field; publications, performances, scholarship."

> Scholarship. And so the outside reviewers, when they come back and comment on the faculty member's work, it's always about that. And when it comes to, what's your impression about the teaching and education initiatives have been involved in, they will always say, or typically say, I haven't had the opportunity to observe but I've seen them give seminars, presentations, I would think that they are a good teacher (Interview, Provost, 2015).

In his remarks, the Provost seemed to equate teaching with involvement in undergraduate education. The lens was narrow and quite conventional. He pointed out that the ways in which

the University primarily assesses teaching is through the use of teaching evaluations from students which he considers popularity contests and often unreliable. Evidence of greater effort, innovative learning techniques that inspire more active learning would all enhance a promotion case.

Once all 50 interviews were completed and I had the opportunity to go back and examine the data, looking for patterns in replies, the inconsistencies between some of the Provost's responses and others who were interviewed were striking. For instance, a quote from the Provost, included above, includes a claim about the number of academic advisors, which he says have been added to improve the student experience. Interviews with the College staff as well as follow-up more recently with the administrative Director indicate a loss of advisors to the program and failed requests for resources to replace these positions. According to the current administrative Director, in a post-interview email exchange, these positions remain unfilled.

Another area of contradiction, directly related to one of the factors I list as key to supporting programmatic persistence, is collaboration between academic and student affairs. The Provost was asked about the working relationship between academic and student affairs:

> ***Q.*** So related to what you just said in terms of curricular and co-curricular, what is the relationship currently between academic and student affairs in the delivery of the initiative and how they work together?
>
> ***A.*** So, I believe we're working well together. Certainly my group and the [Vice President for Student Affairs] group who we interact with quite often. I always compare notes with him, though he doesn't directly report to me. We both report to the President. I meet with [the Vice President] frequently just to coordinate activities. We really do see that when there are issues in the classroom, there are oftentimes other issues in what's going on with the students, whether it is a decreased level of interest in education or some problems and all that are going on. And we find that student affairs can really help us in the success of those students (Interview, Provost, 2015).

In contrast follows remarks by Student Affairs administrators regarding the direction of the program in recent years:

> As far as I know, there's no group that's actually looking at what are we doing and what else can we do better. And I think that's— some momentum I think was lost with that, because we may be doing good things, but we're not necessarily sharing them (Interview, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, 2015).
>
> And I think that may be the most obvious, which I didn't say earlier in terms of is that—there's no coordinating committee that I know about. I wasn't a part of, at least in the last several years, which may have something to do with—not me per se, but in terms of a group of people that are at least looking forward to what we could do to improve the undergraduate experience.
>
> ***Q.*** Do you see people working more parallel to one another rather than in that collaborative way?
>
> ***A.*** I think it was collaboration and respect. So, I'd add the word respect in terms of—not that people are disrespectful, but I think I said it earlier about we appreciated what we, both areas, brought to the table. And I don't know if it's there, it's just—there's no—the dialogue isn't necessarily happening with—when I held the position as Dean of Students (Interview, Dean of Students, 2015).

As a consequence of the interview, I would characterize the Provost's position on the Undergraduate Colleges as passively affirmative. He lists a number of positive contributions of the program to the undergraduate student experience, but in other ways his responses appeared uninformed or inaccurate. He is prepared to send a memo annually to the faculty requesting their participation in teaching a section of the 102 seminar, but would not endorse making this, or any other form of participation, obligatory. He asserts the importance of academic and student affairs working together on behalf of students, but did not cite tangible examples of how that collaboration is operationalized, aside from meetings with the Vice President for Student Affairs regarding isolated problem areas (for example, issues related to student behavior). According to the Provost's remarks, promotion and tenure of faculty is a "three-legged stool" and should be

comprised of teaching, university service (including with students), and a strong scholarship profile. He believes that the Undergraduate Colleges are "here to stay," but has resisted funding the program at previous levels or with the capacity to expand. With the healthy increase in undergraduate enrollment at Stony Brook in the last several years these fiscal decisions actually reflect a reduction in per capita budget support for the program. According to a senior Student Affairs administrator, for example, the Provost's Office has requested, and successfully gained, an increase in the budgetary contribution from that Division in support of the Undergraduate College facilities (Centers) which are chiefly located in the residential quads. This increase also resulted in a reduction in Academic Affairs funding for the program. With less overarching collaborative or joint planning, the negotiation of this arrangement was difficult (Follow-up to interview, Student Affairs Administrator, 2016). Taken together these examples and interview data provide an important account of the recent development of the Undergraduate Colleges, particularly as it relates to collaboration between academic and student affairs and effective leadership and dedication of resources to the initiative. I contend that faculty participation and commitment are critical to enduring programmatic strength, which is explored next through the interview responses of selected seminar faculty. But the story has begun to take shape as data from the founding architects of the program, current staff and administrators are contrasted with the interview data from the most recent chief academic officer to preside over undergraduate education at Stony Brook.

The Seminar Faculty

The twenty-four Stony Brook faculty that I interviewed represented a range of academic departments and university ranks. Fourteen were from the College of Arts and Sciences, 3 from the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, 3 from the School of Health, Technology and

Management, 2 from the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences, and 2 from the School of Medicine. (Appendix F). Seven of those interviewed held the rank of Full Professor, 9 were Associate Professors, 6 Assistant (one of which was a clinical assistant professor), 1 Lecturer and 1 a Visiting Professor (who had been on the faculty at Southampton College). In addition, one of the Arts and Sciences faculty that I spoke to had previously served as a faculty director for one of the Undergraduate Colleges. I stated earlier that the faculty interviews would, in some ways, be the most important to the project, given my argument that faculty support and buy-in is critical to long-term programmatic persistence. This assertion was borne out in terms of the wealth and diversity of material gathered through the interviews of twenty-four of the more than 375 seminar instructors of College 102. The most striking distinction between these interviews and all others I conducted was the greater range of responses to questions within the group. Although there was some consistency among the responses, the individual faculty seemed primarily to be representing themselves in the role of a Stony Brook faculty member, whereas others interview groups appeared to be responding as a representative of the program through their institutional role. Their personal interests, as faculty, were primary, not the Undergraduate College program. As a consequence, many of the responses were unvarnished and revealing. Nine of the twenty-four had taught the seminar only once, but most had taught two or more times. Review of the interview questions in Appendix E shows a range of questions regarding participation in the Undergraduate Colleges, the seminar teaching experience, compensation awarded for the service, and undergraduate education at Stony Brook more broadly. I was interested in understanding the perceptions of the experience they had teaching the seminar, the perceptions about the program more wholly, and the role of faculty in undergraduate education. Of the total number, three of the faculty canvassed indicated that teaching the freshman seminar

was a "miserable" experience. While experiences for the remaining twenty-one ranged from "okay" to "great":

Table 2

Seminar Experience		
Miserable	3	12.5%
Okay	6	25.0%
Good	7	29.1%
Great	8	33.4%
Total	24	100%

Reasons given for a particularly poor experience included inability to connect with the students, student apathy, and aiming too high academically in the class content. Two of the three faculty who had a bad experience never taught the seminar again, but thought that it was possible that they might do so and have a better experience. In one of these three cases, the structure of the course was more or less pre-determined by the Undergraduate College Faculty Director at the time, who standardized the seminars in his College with the use of video tapes of faculty that were shown in class as catalysts for discussion. This innovative approach resulted in a range of successes, but was too prescribed for some:

> I was disappointed because I was quite willing to be a resource person and I tried to chat students up before we started. They were not happy to be there. It is the most negative experience in a classroom I've ever had at Stony Brook, frankly, just because in a class that a person teaches—I think rather than being an opportunity where there was no sort of, I have power over you, you need to come to this class and be nice to your professor because you're going to get a grade and it's worth three credits, they really felt that that one credit—I had the sense that there was no—they felt no reason to show any interest in the material or even the professor (Interview, Seminar Faculty, Hispanic Languages and Literatures Department, 2015).

Reflections of the teaching experience for College 102 ran the gamut from rather unremarkable to a truly great adventure with first year students. There were even examples of the seminar experience benefitting the instructor's own scholarship:

> I actually chose a completely different topic from my research, so I did something different just because I thought I don't want to just sort of recycle something that I teach in other courses and I did something on natural resources and energy, which has nothing to do with my research. But I thought it was interesting, so I got to read the things, some things for the first time, and then I gave them to them. So the discussion was very fresh. I thought they responded great. I think the students were wonderful, and one of the reasons I'm in this business is, I have to call it business, but in this area is because I really like the interaction with the students. They always surprise you and they keep you on your toes and they keep you fresh (Interview, Seminar Faculty, Economics Department, 2015).

And, in another interview, in response to "What was your experience like?":

> Amazing. I have written a book chapter based on that course, for that somebody is publishing. Not entirely on that, but still, a lot of it based on that course. I blogged a few times, and I did one or two national conference presentations. I took my students to the URECA [Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities] Symposium. Some of the students from that class are still in touch and they want to come back and do interesting things, like complete student essays. The class was so inspiring, some students want to come back and talk to me about graduate school. One student simply said, the class was so interesting I just want to come in the office and talk to you at times. Like, come over, have a chat. That doesn't normally happen. It was a course that really took students out of the box (Interview, Seminar Faculty, Writing Program, 2015).

But these glorious experiences were by no means universal and instances of true struggling in the classroom were recounted. In some cases, the faculty members were mystified, still, about what went wrong and what they could have done to make it better. Others saw the first disappointing experience as an opportunity to re-tool and try again. The idea of delivering a non-rigorous seminar whose primary goal was not related to the content, but to the connection between the students and a Stony Brook faculty member was unfamiliar and not always easy to

operationalize. Faculty often reflected on the sense now that they assigned too much work, and made the mistake of simply trying to pare down a three credit course rather than creating something new. One faculty member who had an "Okay" experience rejected the idea that these courses were called seminars:

> I used a topic called, America at War, Readings about wartime experiences in World War II, the Vietnam War and the ongoing Iraq War. So, I had a reading on each of those, which in retrospect, was much too much, because this is not a seminar where students are expected to do a lot of reading. And that was a misconception that I probably should never have made, because it's a one-credit course. So, that was a big problem. That was just too much. But it's difficult to get a seminar going if students are not prepared on some readings. I mean, what can you do in an hour? So, I had a real misgiving about the seminar, that's why I wouldn't do it again. Because if it's called a seminar, seminar means that students have to contribute. And contribution means a lot of preparation. And a one-hour class, which is not your major or something like that, it's very difficult to get this work done by students to be up to snuff. Don't call it a seminar. Call it something else. And don't expect that students will do a lot of work outside. (Interview, Seminar Faculty, Political Science Department, 2015).

Perhaps not surprisingly, there were faculty who focused on what *they* might or might not have done to make the course successful, while others focused on "student apathy" and bewilderment about why they were taking the seminar at all:

> It is very interesting how the dynamics of these courses manifest itself. And I've discussed it with many of the colleagues who teach those courses. It seems that when you are teaching the courses, you find like most of the students are very apathetic. The majority of them don't participate, although you have a few who will participate. They are still in the mode of high school students who come to classes to take the notes and to write papers and get a grade (Interview, Seminar Faculty, Africana Studies Department, 2015).

Although this associate professor from the Department of Africana Studies described a challenging experience, he found a silver lining when students from the freshman seminar appeared in his upper division courses as a consequence of their experience in College 102:

> But one of the things I have experienced is that in the course of their stay on campus two years, one year down the line, you encounter them in your regular classes. So, they will come to you, say the reason why I'm signing for this class is because I took your one credit class. So, although they're not actively participating in the discussions, somehow you grab their interest in the topic, and they will sign up for your other classes either as electives or as part of a minor, whatever it is, because I have quite a few students who come from the "hard science" classes that are not really interested in social science classes. But you will find them in your classes eventually (Interview, Seminar Faculty, Africana Studies Department, 2015).

A mix of pedagogical approaches to the seminar teaching is represented in the data and although the Undergraduate College program provided a workshop each year to inform and guide the faculty who would be teaching, particularly those doing it for the first time, most of the instructors expressed a sense of "being out there on their own," exploring techniques that would hopefully work for this unique classroom experience. The faculty who seemed to find the smoothest path were those who had experienced a seminar like this themselves in the past, either as students or instructors, or those who had a history of active participation and achievement in undergraduate education. Faculty directors attempted to support their colleagues and the workshop for instructors was perceived as helpful, but once it concluded, there did not seem to be an effective network for responding to pedagogical issues. For many it was unchartered teaching territory and, for that matter, unchartered territory for the students as well.

In addition to learning about their experience teaching the freshman seminars, I was interested in determining whether the faculty were aware of other aspects of the Undergraduate College program. For significant faculty backing of the enterprise, there should be a cognizance of where the seminar fit into the larger context and, presumably those teaching for the program should be informed of the various components. As stated earlier, other facets of the program include dedicated academic advising, theme-related programs, dedicated facilities and programs

in the residence halls, the First Year Reading, and Living Learning Centers that represent an upper division opportunity for curricular and co-curricular involvement affiliated with the theme of the College. A high level of awareness in this case is defined as being aware of most or all of these aspects of the initiative; a low level is defined as awareness of one or two aspects, or being aware in principle that there are other components to the program but are unable to name them. As Table 3 below shows, of the twenty-four faculty interviewed only six had a high level of awareness of other aspects of the program, twelve had a low level of awareness and six had no awareness at all. In one case, for example, a faculty member interviewed was also serving as a Director of a Living Learning Center that is affiliated with one of the Undergraduate Colleges. He was completely unaware of this relationship between the two.

Table 3

Awareness of other aspects of the Undergraduate Colleges		
High	6	25%
Low	12	50%
None	6	25%
Total	24	100%

Factors affecting level of awareness included how active the Faculty Director and College team were in communicating with the seminar faculty, as well as the number of times the instructor had taught the class which consequently resulted in a growing awareness. In one case a faculty member designed his 102 course on broad topics debating and invited other faculty on campus to participate. This successful model eventually spread beyond the Colleges to campus wide events such the annual environmental festival Earthstock. Another faculty member

who borrowed this debate model cited it as an exceptional way to engage students with faculty and with each other. These sorts of experiences, which created a community among the faculty teaching the seminars, was not rare, but not altogether common either. When 75% of the faculty who have been invited to teach (in some cases numerous times) in the academic core of the program are largely unaware of its other aspects, the resulting commitment to the endeavor cannot be expected to run deep.

Compensation awarded for teaching the course was also a topic of two questions in the interviews. In the first years of the program, compensation was offered in the form of $1,500 in research funding which was transferred to an account in the instructor's home department. Faculty could make use of the funding for "education related" expenses of their choosing including travel, computer equipment, books, videos, etc. About five years into the program, and in the context of a series of budget reductions in the Provostial area, the total compensation was reduced to $1,000, (it is worth noting that this reduction was mandated by the successor to the Provost who established the program). Later, after concerns expressed by Human Resources regarding the nature of compensation awarded for an additional teaching obligation, the total was increased to $1,500, but in the form of an "extra service" addition to salary. The increase of $500 to the stipend was designed to maintain the $1,000 level of compensation, and offset taxes that would be deducted from the total.

Faculty at the rank of Assistant Professor were more likely to claim that the compensation was a significant factor in accepting an invitation to teach the freshman seminar, but most of the faculty said that they did not "do it for the money." Nevertheless, the opinion that increasing the sum would result in greater participation, and that the amount of compensation was somewhat insulting seemed to permeate the responses as well:

> Well, I mean, I think it's right that [the compensation] should be more. There is a carrot for faculty in the way that there is no carrot, very little carrot for students. We have no research money. We have no travel money. So, now that it's $1,500—I had a colleague this year saying I'd like to do this. I think it would be nice—let's say, $2,000 seems to be much more reasonable (Interview, Seminar Faculty, Hispanic Literature and Languages Department, 2015).

> Well, I think it could be a little bit more, and I think other faculty have talked about that too. I think they would get more participation also, because they're always looking for instructors (Interview, Seminar Faculty, Materials Sciences and Engineering Department, 2015).

The view that the University was eager to have full time tenured and tenure-track faculty teach the seminars, but then pay them at a wage equivalent to that typically given to a graduate student or adjunct faculty member, was not isolated. And underlying all of this was the second class status of undergraduate education:

> It's hard to coerce faculty to care about something that they, at the end of the day, are not going to get rewarded for, right? They get rewarded for their publications, and we all know that. And so it's a paradox that is, you know, sort of pulsates throughout the university. We are here to teach undergraduates. That's why we have this university. At the same time, the people who teach the undergraduates are not rewarded for that activity. They're rewarded for an activity that often comes at the expense of their undergraduate teaching. Not always; some great minds, great scholars also are really good teachers. But, that's not because the system sets that up. That's a happy sort of coincidence (Interview, Seminar Faculty, History Department, 2015).

In addition to the matter of compensation, I wanted to know if the faculty believed that the Undergraduate College program had made a positive contribution to the student experience at Stony Brook and whether they had been aware of or presented evidence for a beneficial effect. Table 4 below shows a majority of the faculty respondents voiced the opinion that the program has generated a beneficial impact on the student experience, but some with more conviction than others. In a near unanimous response, however, only two members of the faculty who were

interviewed were aware of any evidence or data that demonstrated this result, and one of the two of these responses came from a faculty member who had also served as a Director of an Undergraduate College. In addition, and particularly interesting to note, is the distinction between replies to the question on evidence from faculty and from administrators and staff who work directly with the Undergraduate College program. For instance, 100% of the College Advisors who were asked whether they were aware of evidence to support

Table 4

Have the Undergraduate Colleges made a positive contribution to the student experience?			Have you been presented with evidence of benefits?	
Yes	15	62.5%	2	8.3%
No	1	4.1%	22	91.7%
Don't Know	8	33.4%	na	na
Total	24	100%	24	100%

the perception that the College program has made positive contributions to the student experience replied 'yes'. The evidence most cited by this group was the climbing first-to-second year student retention rate, as well as the reduction of first year students in academic jeopardy. Communication of the outcomes and benefits of the program is key and an issue similarly revealed by the First Year Matters Survey results seven years earlier. More than half of the faculty surveyed in 2008 indicated a slight to no awareness of a first-year institutional philosophy. This stands in comparison to 74.6% of academic and student affairs staff surveyed who indicated a moderate to very high awareness. The final report generated by the executive committee listed communication of program data and goals as lacking and a necessary priority going forward. More specifically, recommendations included an improvement of internal

marketing and communication about the first year experience, and a sharing of data proactively with academic departments. ("First Year Matters: College Role and Perception of the First Year Student Experience", Di Donato, Track Paper, 2013). Developing an enduring foundation of support from influential constituent groups requires active and ongoing communication, especially if one of these cohorts is essential to the delivery and persistence of the program. The faculty opinions were not just at odds with the Undergraduate College staff, but also with the Provost, who argued the three legged stool of teaching, service and scholarship was the model for faculty review at Stony Brook. One senior member of the faculty in Political Science with a dissenting opinion indicated that faculty in his department taught the freshman seminar because the department chair asked for each member to volunteer once for the job. This was the only example of such a request from a chair that I was told about and so I explored this with him:

> ***Q.*** Do you have examples of other things that the chair of the department or the dean or the provost might require or mandate participation that you can think of?
>
> ***A.*** Well, you serve on committees. You're supposed to be serving in this and that. I think if you don't and you're up for promotion or something and you have nothing to show, it probably looks bad. That's the sanction. I mean, otherwise, there is nothing much a department chair can do. I mean, he can try to persuade, he can ask you nicely, but there are very few incentives that somebody has or penalties.
>
> ***Q.*** So, you haven't had a sense that junior faculty are encouraged to do the seminars to build up service?
>
> ***A.*** Absolutely not, no. Junior faculty are usually discouraged from doing this. By junior, you mean people that haven't gotten tenure yet?
>
> ***Q.*** Correct.
>
> ***A.*** No. They're discouraged very strongly from doing any of these things, because they have to focus on the things-- and service counts, yes, as I said. What, it's a three-legged stool, like service, teaching and research?

Q. Yes.

A. But no, it's not a three-legged stool. It's a one-legged stool. There are two little other, additional prongs.

Q. That is the case?

A. Absolutely. If you don't believe—if you delude yourself that it's a three-legged stool, you're not going to make it. That's just a reality. That's the fact. Unless you're an awful teacher who gets the worst evaluation possible in every one of your classes, you're not going to have any problem getting tenure if your publication record is solid. I mean, you've got to be really asking for trouble in your teaching to not get tenure with your publications.

Whether what this faculty member asserts is accurate or not, he conveys a view commonly held by the faculty I interviewed of the promotion and tenure process at Stony Brook. Undergraduate education and teaching are not valued and the "trivial" compensation awarded for teaching a freshman seminar is partial evidence for this. The faculty who were most enthusiastic about their experience appeared to be the same faculty who are passionate about teaching and engaging students in the classroom under any circumstances, not just in the College program. These are faculty who have been active with undergraduates and embrace the education mission of a university along with the other exigencies of their faculty position. They are eager to develop relationships with students, to experiment, to engage.

In addition to the pattern of responses to the question regarding evidence that the Undergraduate Colleges had contributed positively to the student experience, there was an overall bifurcated set of responses to the question, "Do you think that the Undergraduate Colleges are 'here to stay'? Most of the Undergraduate College staff and administrators, even the founding faculty directors, responded affirmatively to this, a majority with great conviction. The faculty response was more diffused; a few declared 'nothing lasts forever,' others thought it

was probably here to stay, but many confessed that they did not have enough information to assess the fate of the program. Regardless, most of the faculty expressed support, in principle, for the goals of the seminar and the program more broadly and said that it was probably a good thing for students and hoped it would continue:

> I would hope it's here to stay. I think [the Undergraduate Colleges] have value. I think it does provide things to the students. I think it provides an opportunity again to meet with professors, to have a closer personal interaction. And I can go back and I can tell you it was real culture shock for me personally. I'm going back now when I was a student here, and I went from a high school where you had 30 kids in a class to coming in here to freshman chemistry and having 800 or 900 kids sitting in the Javits Center. That was a real eye-opener (Interview, Seminar Faculty, School of Medicine, 2015).

Notably, these responses, overall, suggest a scarcity of information about the Undergraduate Colleges percolating through the channels of faculty communication. It is also symptomatic of a paucity of messaging from the University's leadership about the Undergraduate Colleges and the first year student experience. Undergraduate education is not promoted as an institutional priority and faculty have no way of knowing whether the program will continue to be supported by the Provost and President. In addition, if the Undergraduate College program does not effectively promote itself and fully involve faculty throughout, not just with an invitation to teach, the support of this essential group will be marginalized and shallow.

The interviews with faculty express a prevailing tension in their institutional role which includes teaching, service, and scholarship. The University exists for students, the Undergraduate Colleges seem to work well for students and faculty are needed to make the Colleges function. But what is the incentive for participation? In many ways, according to the faculty I spoke to, there is little to no incentive, as well as potential risk to one's career advancement if the participation is more than fleeting. Teaching a seminar once or twice as an

assistant professor is fine as long as the purpose, primarily, is to contribute to the service section of one's curriculum vitae, but the contribution should be instrumentally driven and not overwhelm other more significant segments of the faculty portfolio:

> It's very challenging in a research institution in which you know you're going to be assessed primarily because of your research in terms of your assessment at every stage. To have a commitment to undergraduate education, it's a tough task, you know? You know, the tradeoff between research and teaching is in terms of investment of your time and your effort. On the other hand, if you get into this profession, it's because you believe that you are more than just a researcher, once you've been at a research institute. And you're more than just a lecturer, because you're more, you're a professor, right? Which is different from someone that shows up, gives a lecture and his involvement can be limited (Interview, Seminar Faculty, Economics Department, 2015).

> I think some units do prioritize [undergraduate education], or at least don't de-prioritize it, if that's a word. But I think other units emphasize research and also emphasize graduate teaching. I mean, as a faculty person, I understand that all these components are important to, you know, my work. So, I think teaching undergraduates is an incredibly important aspect of my job. And I find it kind of a really valuable component. But no, I don't think that that component, you know, in terms of promotion, is the one that people are going to really focus on. I just don't think that's the way it works here (Interview, Seminar Faculty, Women's and Gender Studies Department, 2015).

It is little wonder then, that if young faculty are trained to devalue a professional commitment to undergraduate education in a research university, they then often carry this outlook through the maturation of their career:

> It's tough for people not to see undergraduate involvement as a cost with not many rewards except your personal growth (Interview, Seminar Faculty, Economics Department, 2015).

One word that I would use to describe the faculty interviews is cynical. Most had some element of skepticism about efforts surrounding undergraduate education at Stony Brook; the funding, the leadership, the intent of certain initiatives, the incentives, or lack thereof, to encourage

faculty engagement, the pressure to increase class size, the pressure to increase enrollments beyond availability of courses to accommodate more students. In many ways the faculty emerged as the "monkey in the middle", being pulled by competing demands. More than any other constituency studied here, the faculty articulated the sense that they had more to lose than gain by becoming actively involved in undergraduate education, and this perception was greater among the junior faculty interviewed.

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Future Directions

In the fall semester of 2016, the Undergraduate College system will enter its twelfth full year of implementation at Stony Brook University. By most standards, and based on the data collected in this study, it can be argued that this very ambitious program has become solidly embedded in the institution. It can therefore claim success.

The semi-structured interviews that I conducted comprise a series of personal observations about experiences with the Undergraduate Colleges and undergraduate education at Stony Brook. They uncovered a large amount of data regarding the formation and current functioning of the Colleges as well as the various perceptions by administrators, faculty, and staff of the role each plays in this environment. The data also produced a rich narrative that contributes to the analysis of undergraduate education in the American research university.

As previously stated, the specific purpose of this case study research was to explore the factors that contribute to the persistence of initiatives devoted to undergraduate education in research universities. The three primary factors that I expected to find responsible for enduring growth of the College program were collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs, leadership and allocation of resources, and the role of faculty and faculty culture in a research university. I also expected the data to point to additional elements that impact institutional change. These include pressure to maintain and build enrollment of students, university governance, and the decline in state support for higher education. Research in the sociology of organizations and higher education was used to explore these change factors and support the contentions made in this dissertation.

Similar to the three-legged stool for faculty in a research university, I suggest that the following three factors constitute a three-legged stool for change in undergraduate education in a research university.

Collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs

The data support the expectation that the intentional collaborative relationships developed between academic and student affairs staff and administrators in the planning and implementation phases of the Undergraduate College initiative were significant factors in the success and endurance of the initiative. The interview data also show some indication that there has been a breakdown in this collaboration, at least in terms of the way it was originally structured. I identify the trigger for the decline in collaboration as the change in a number of leadership positions in Undergraduate Academic Affairs and the Provost's office. Between the years 2010 and 2014 there were three major changes in administrative leadership; the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education who had presided over the establishment and initial six years of operation of the Undergraduate Colleges stepped down and was replaced, the Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs left the position and was not replaced, and the first administrative Director of the Undergraduate Colleges left that position in 2014 and was replaced later that year. Management of the Student Affairs side of the institution remained stable over this period. Much of the interview data from both student affairs and academic affairs staff and administrators directly and implicitly point to a shift in vision and approach of long range (as well as day to day) planning and implementation of the program. Interview responses from the current administrative Director of the program suggest an inclination on the Provostial side to define the Colleges as a primarily academic program with co-curricular and student affairs components. Examples of a less collaborative, more directive approach include

the revision of the College 101 curriculum and New Student Orientation program and elimination of the Undergraduate College Council meetings. Each of the senior Student Affairs administrators voiced regret and frustration with the current less inclusive and shared decision making process. Nonetheless, the structure of the program requires staff in these two divisions to work together to deliver this program. This appears to function reasonably well, but without the overarching collective strategizing. Upper level administrators, Faculty Directors, and other academic college and governance personnel no longer work in unison as a planning group. In addition, responses to interview questions by the sitting Provost indicate a somewhat regressive view of undergraduate education and the role of Student Affairs in a research university. In this study, therefore, change in leadership in Academic Affairs emerges as powerfully consequential for at least one important component of the Undergraduate College initiative as well as for enduring change in undergraduate education. When the Colleges were being established, Academic and Student Affairs did not collaborate on the project solely as a consequence of positive collegial relationships, though that dynamic did serve the effort well. Each side saw advantage for the goals of their own operation in reaching across the organizational aisle:

> There was, I think, real support from Student Affairs because at least at the time, there was—I think Student Affairs saw this as part—as legitimating them and it was a real cooperative effort with Student Affairs. And so I think that really helped because Student Affairs, you know, always, I think correctly, feels itself to be kind of a poor relation, especially academically. And especially at Stony Brook, I think the main people in Student Affairs saw this as a way of legitimating and furthering their own academic causes (Interview, former Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, 2015).

The collaborative relationship as an agent of change attempted to alter the campus structure and foster a more balanced position between Academic and Student Affairs in efforts related to the undergraduate experience. In a study conducted to determine the most effective approach to

successful collaboration between the academic and student affairs areas in colleges and universities, Adriana Kezar found that, in addition to cultural changes, "the analysis showed a statistically significant relationship between structural changes and the number of successful collaborations. The more structural strategies used, the greater the number of successful collaborations" (Kezar, 2001, p.45). This was particularly true in larger universities where the effect of leadership may be more diffused, making significant change more difficult. Academic Affairs at Stony Brook, in turn, saw benefit in a structure that would access Student Affairs staff and budgetary resources to bolster student success efforts. Finally, the architects of the College program were guided by the literature in higher education, something that Academic Affairs at Stony Brook had previously not integrated into the development of the undergraduate program.

A primary distinction to be drawn between interview responses related by the planners and early executers of the Undergraduate College initiative and those more currently responsible is the community of experience conveyed by the former group, which has seen some fracturing among the latter. The weakening of the collaborative relationships between the principal figures in Academic and Student Affairs has impacted program planning, as well as the day-to-day operations by staff in the relevant departments. The one-time blurring of organizations lines, so intentionally promoted by program initiators, has regressed somewhat according to the data, and has resulted in greater parallel functioning by the two major divisions. Furthermore, feedback from Student Affairs administrators lamented a "service orientation" in which the division is treated now as a junior, rather than full, partner in the enterprise.

Leadership and allocation of resources

Closely associated with the collaborative relationships that helped to launch the Undergraduate Colleges are the factors of changing leadership and the prioritization of the

allocation of resources to undergraduate education. The interview data reflect a depth of commitment to undergraduate education at the stage during which the Colleges were being considered. The foundation for this commitment had been laid by the university's fourth President, whose mandates to prioritize undergraduate education were unprecedented by a chief executive officer at Stony Brook. Kenny's leadership at Stony Brook in this regard, as well as nationally through the Boyer Commission, facilitated a similar commitment in the Provostial area. The active encouragement from the highest levels of the institution for ranking undergraduate education as a worthy counterpart to research and graduate education unleashed an unprecedented effort to innovate in this area. As discussed in Chapter 3, the Undergraduate Colleges were the most broad-reaching of these efforts, but in the few years prior to its inception, in the context of a supportive environment, other enhancements to the undergraduate experience were actuated in both the Provostial and Student Affairs sectors.

Beyond the steady communication by the President and Provost, additional budgetary resources were allocated to undergraduate education, as well as the Undergraduate Colleges. This study did not explore the range of changes made to improve the student experience, but a review of the Five Year Plan, 2000-2005 and State of the University addresses under Shirley Kenny helps to communicate the mission:

> Stony Brook will continue to improve undergraduate education and the recruitment and retention of students. In the last five years, the undergraduate program has been enhanced with initiatives ranging from increased mentoring, to special programs that engage undergraduates' interest, through programs that encourage pedagogical experimentation, to the establishment of several exciting interdisciplinary teaching and research units. To continue this development and accommodate the expanding undergraduate student body, the University will review what has been accomplished thus far to ensure that students' curricular needs are met, and continue carefully planned innovation (Five Year Plan, 2000-2005, Stony Brook University).

Due in great measure to the heavily collaborative nature of the Undergraduate College program, the effort was initially not terribly resource intensive. The redeployment of Student Affairs staff and operations according to the program design tempered the new resources required by Academic Affairs. Ultimately, however, a new allocation of funds from the Provostial area, in part supported by the President, was necessary to fulfill the full vision of the College model with the addition of College Advisors, an administrative Director, and other funding to support program development.

The interview data from the establishment team and founding Faculty Directors indicated satisfaction overall with the fiscal support afforded to the program, although, this was not altogether unexpected. Once a major initiative achieves approval, the formation and early stages are often accompanied by an adequate flow of resources. Moreover, this program was spearheaded by the chief academic officer, who had discretion over budgetary decisions in the Provostial area, and a President who was eager to have a "student-centered research university" realized. Other data in the study point to a decline in budgetary backing in recent years and discontent among those expected to deliver the program. As revealed through responses by current faculty directors, College Advisors, the administrative Director, and Associate Director, steady increases in undergraduate student enrollments at the university have not been matched with the funding to support this growth. The most visible, and potentially the most immediately consequential, instance of this is the program's inability to replace vacant College Advisor positions over the last year and a half. Another reduction has affected the funding given to each Undergraduate College for programming, events and other enrichment activities. At the outset of the program the budget included a $10,000 allocation for each College for this purpose. One current Faculty Director reported that, as far as he knows, this fund no longer exists. In addition,

many faculty members who were interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with the compensation awarded for teaching a College 102 seminar, some going so far as to say that this small token directly reflected the institution's absent commitment to teaching and undergraduates.

Although most respondents believed that the Undergraduate Colleges were "here to stay," Stony Brook faculty and staff who are more recently charged with realizing the goals set out by program architects are less sanguine about the essential support of the upper administrative leadership (particularly the Provost and President) and the compulsory foundation of institutional backing for long-term healthy growth. It is important to highlight again the relatively low expense associated with the Undergraduate Colleges and delivery of the freshman seminar in the context of the entire Provostial budget.

In other words, whether the program exists and whether it is once again prioritized among the many competing university demands are two very different things. The following quote from an Associate Professor of Economics, is an animated example of an unexpected view held by some:

> And I always say nobody's going to come and remove something or delete something or get rid of something if they think it's not the best move. It's better not to fund it, and that's it, right? So I don't know. The honest is I don't know if it's here to stay in the sense of whether they will promote it enough to be useful and functional. They might stay forever, but under-funded, which is almost equivalent to getting rid of them.

It occurred to some seminar faculty that under-funding a program that was not highly valued might be more politically and managerially expedient than eliminating it. The Undergraduate College staff shared similar concerns, and may have seen this as possible, but they did not appear to have the same political astuteness to make the observation. The tenor of the staff response on this issue was more perplexed than accusatory. They did not understand

how the program budget could continue to experience tightening when it was expected to do more with more students. This assertion by faculty, however, is particularly interesting in the context of an examination of programmatic persistence and long-term institutional decision making. It is important to make clear that the same concerns were not voiced about Student Affairs senior administration, who continue to be perceived as highly supportive of the Undergraduate Colleges and loyal to the original design. The data indicated that this strong support continues to extend itself to funding as well.

The role of faculty and faculty culture

Close to half of the interviews conducted in this study were of faculty and, if the Faculty Directors are included, more than half. The role of faculty in this program and at Stony Brook, a research university, is the centerpiece of this investigation of undergraduate education and programmatic persistence. Faculty are more autonomous than any other group in a university and claim a great deal of independence (Manning, 2013). In Chapter 6 I explored the faculty data and found these interviews to be the most skeptical regarding a commitment to the Undergraduate College program and undergraduate education at Stony Brook. Tales of positive, in some cases exhilarating, seminar experiences were muffled by complaints about compensation and the devalued nature of undergraduate education and teaching on campus. Merton's concept of "role set" is most useful in the analysis of faculty reflections in my interviews. The contribution by faculty in the Undergraduate College seminars as Faculty Directors and program participants lie at the center of the purpose of this initiative. The strain among the various roles that faculty occupy in a research university, however, are displayed powerfully in the data, sometimes overtly. The often used metaphor of the three-legged stool representing the faculty portfolio of service, scholarship and teaching continues to be unbalanced, as articulated by

interview responses. Faculty recounted instances of explicit direction by department chairs and colleagues not to participate in undergraduate projects or, if they do, to restrict the activity in a manner that will suit the service component of their promotion file, while keeping their focus on the true priority, scholarship. Over and over the data offer examples of faculty asserting the clear message, regarding the social construction of advancement at Stony Brook as well as in the wider academic community. Further, although there were instances of faculty using their seminar teaching as an opportunity for pedagogical innovation, the rewards and benefits for these efforts were largely personal, and not often seriously acknowledged by peers. As the interview data indicated, the last four years has seen a steady rise in the number of non-tenured faculty and adjuncts teaching sections of the College 102 seminar. Without exception, Faculty Directors expressed intense struggle recruiting faculty with little to no assistance with this task. One or two seminar instructors that I interviewed spontaneously suggested affiliating faculty members with the Undergraduate College program to encourage the development of a sense of programmatic community and duty to participate. In the initial trip to the University of California at San Diego, more than one senior administrator claimed that a range of participation by faculty existed in their colleges: about 25% were very active, 50% somewhat active and 25% had little to no involvement with the various components of their residential college program. Without the bolstering of this central feature of the program by *academic* managers of the institution, a clear message is sent that teaching and undergraduate education are largely discretionary and this is what the data communicated loud and clear. The increase in adjunct and non-tenure track faculty teaching the seminars echoes the sentiment by the faculty that the initiative may persist, but the form that the program may take could morph to comply with institutional negligence and pressure. And to be clear, it is not that the seminar experience with

fewer tenured and tenure-track faculty participating is necessarily inferior. It is however at odds with the original intent of the project which was to engage students in the first year with the mission of a research university and research active faculty. If this piece of the program ceases to exist, what are the Undergraduate Colleges?

In addition to administrative leadership, the data demonstrated the strong and unique leadership that faculty members exhibited in their role as Undergraduate College Faculty Directors. Interview data from this group, particularly the founding Faculty Directors, reveal a cohort of faculty who are senior enough and sufficiently committed to undergraduate education to actively contribute to the creation of a major undergraduate program with an academic focus. This group demonstrated complete awareness of the "publish or perish" pressure on faculty as well as the undervaluing of undergraduate education is research universities, but their professional standing in the institution and predisposition to significantly contribute to the leadership of such an enterprise expose and support the strength of faculty-driven undergraduate education.

The difficulty that the Faculty Directors continue to experience recruiting their most senior colleagues to the freshman seminar can be directly linked to the message faculty get regarding the second class position of undergraduate education and the unwillingness by upper administrative leaders to challenge that message by institutionalizing delivery of the seminar. Stony Brook recently revised its undergraduate general education curriculum. According to one of the interviews I conducted with a faculty member who served as a member on two of the committees charged by the Provost to recommend a new curriculum, the committee wrestled for some time with whether to include this mandated one-credit course into the University's general education requirements. It was apparent to the committee that the Vice Provost for

Undergraduate Education favored the inclusion of the course in the revised curriculum, but ultimately the necessary backing from the College of Arts and Sciences and the Provost was absent and no guarantee was therefore made for the delivery of a course currently assigned to every first year student at the university:

> I was on both of the general education committees. I was on the Hemmick Committee and on the Hammond committee. And so, in both of those, but particularly in the Hammond committee, we talked a lot because [the Vice Provost] was pushing to have it as part of the general education, and we said, "Well, you can't have it as part of general education if it's not mandated. You can't have it a requirement for students to graduate and then not be able to guarantee that you have faculty to teach it." Right?
>
> So, but as I understood the argument for why they wanted to have it, it was that they really wanted to enhance the freshman experience. That so many students come in to Stony Brook and they're just overwhelmed by it. They go into these large lecture halls, they have professors that they can't relate to and don't talk to. They may talk to the TAs but not professors. I mean, for all of these reasons, sort of structurally and institutionally, there's this gap between professors and students and my understanding was that this class was a way to sort of help break that down, which clearly I think is laudable. But, I just didn't think it could be mandated if you weren't going to have a way to guarantee it (Interview, Seminar Faculty, 2015).

This quote speaks volumes, particularly in the context of the primary focus of this dissertation, programmatic persistence. The following is a course description for HDV 102 as it appears in the university's Undergraduate Bulletin:

> **HDV 102: Undergraduate College Seminar: Human Development**
> A seminar for all first-year students in the Undergraduate College of Human Development. Seminar topics vary annually by section and cover a variety of subjects under the general scope of Human Development. This course is a graduation requirement for all first year students.

The equivalent description appears for each of the other Undergraduate College course designators. How much more required can curriculum get than listing it as a graduation

requirement for all first year students? But, when the opportunity presented itself to formalize the inclusion of this course in the university's general education curriculum the actors with the most institutional influence and power refused to make it happen. A powerful message to both faculty and students that required really does not mean required when it comes to the commitment of academic leadership to undergraduate education. This quality of communication further undermining the weak leg of the stool that is teaching, and concurrently reproduces a faculty culture that underserves undergraduate education. Repeatedly, in the interviews, I was told that faculty could not be blamed for behaving in a way that maximized their best interests. This opinion came with the acknowledgment that the Undergraduate Colleges promoted a better experience for students through greater engagement with faculty, professional advisors and the true mission of a research university.

Concluding thoughts

In the end it must be contended that all three factors I expected to contribute to enduring change in undergraduate education in research universities indeed do, and more. A quote from Stony Brook trained Sociologist Andrew Abbott, referred to earlier in this dissertation, is very fitting here; "things happen because of constellations of factors, not because of a few fundamental effects acting independently" (Clark, 2008, p. 552). The Undergraduate Colleges were established at a very special point in time at Stony Brook University through the efforts of like-minded administrators who were led by the literature in higher education, with encouragement and resources from the university's leadership. These factors overwhelmed the typical institutional culture of a research university and the faculty culture within that university. Participants used the already redirected organization led by Shirley Kenny toward a new definition of undergraduate education in the research university which would integrate its most

active research faculty into the undergraduate program by asking them to engage and enrich the freshman experience through classroom interaction with students and beyond. Unlike previous attempts to involve faculty in the undergraduate program which asked faculty to serve in an academic advising capacity, this project consciously attempted to invite faculty to the table based on what they know best and would be interested in sharing with students. As the former Provost, Robert McGrath, said, "the seminars should be about anything that gets the faculty up in the morning!" Taking advantage and exploring what research university faculty do was central to planning the seminar, rather than the often tried traditional models of faculty-student engagement that shoe-horned faculty members into initiatives that were not academic or faculty led.

The intentional collaborative relationships between academic and student affairs that was advanced at the outset of the Undergraduate College initiative was influential in the early phases of the program as the collaboration, modeled by senior leaders, spread to the staff members that reported to the managers in these areas. Large administrative departments worked together and saw their participation as something new, exciting and innovative in terms of higher education practice. Where this collaboration stopped was with the faculty.

> Traditionally, there have been real obstacles beyond time and interest to faculty participation. A reward system that fails to recognize their participation provides a strong disincentive for faculty to become involved in student activities. In fact, this system may penalize them for their involvement. Thus it is crucial that as collaborative activities are developed, they must be meaningful, relevant, and rewarding for both the faculty members and the students (Hirsch and Burack, in Kezar, Hirsch and Burack, 2001, p. 60).

I would argue that in the case of the Undergraduate Colleges, the establishment team followed this dictum very closely and worked to design a model that included faculty leadership and collaboration. Over time, however, new university leadership, who did not share the passion for the project itself as an advancement in higher education or its continued growth, triggered the

conventional message that involvement in undergraduate education is laudable, but not a priority for serious faculty. Further, according to the data, the more senior administrators in Academic Affairs increasingly lost interest in a truly collaborative partnership with Student Affairs, relegating that division once again to its earlier subjugation to the academic sector.

As mentioned much earlier when Shirley Kenny retired from her positon as Stony Brook President in 2009, a new set of institutional urgencies drove the search for her replacement and, with the new incumbent, the pendulum swung away from undergraduate education and toward medicine and research. The recruitment of a research physician in the top position has altered the trajectory of the organization, just as it would have with any significant change in leadership. A major issue for Stony Brook's new CEO was the stress on American colleges and universities to maximize the influx of external funding, which ultimately privileges scholarship and graduate education in a way that undergraduate education cannot compete. As Meyer and Rowan argue, major changes in education in America have brought about "an increased level of centralization and *pragmentation*, an increased demand for accountability, and a heightened concern with educational productivity" (Meyer and Rowan, 2006, p. 2). These changes are accompanied by a greater societal reliance on knowledge and higher education to address major world problems. This is where the secondary factors affecting change, raised earlier, enter as instrumental. The declining support for higher education from the State requires more aggressive action in search of external income sources. Research that is scientific believed to be highly lucrative (particularly medical) is encouraged in this environment. Enrollment strategies that maximize tuition funding, recruitment of international students for instance, are pursued and budgets for student services which are often seen as more discretionary than necessary, are reduced. The governance structure of the institution provides a watchful eye on administrative decision-

making and attempts to modify the more extreme swings of the institutional pendulum. In Stony Brook's case, at least in the last five years, I would contend that efforts by governance and other proponents of a strong and innovative undergraduate program as requirements of a competitive research university have been strongly challenged. The strain that changes in higher education present to the traditional faculty role in research universities contributes to the shaky landscape for a solid commitment to undergraduate education. "Faculty self-governance, peer review, control of the curriculum, and tenure are aspects of the collegial perspective that are contested terrain in higher education. The introduction of academic capitalism has decreased faculty voice and influence. As multimillion dollar higher education operations grow in complexity and orientation to the student market, the areas where faculty can realistically exert influence decrease," (Manning, 2013, p. 51) and, I would add, more so for faculty in the liberal art and sciences. The data present the most visible champion for undergraduate education, the Vice Provost, as relatively impotent against the tide of conventional university leadership and in some ways (for instance the recruitment of Faculty Directors and seminar faculty) complicit. At the time of the writing of this dissertation, there were three vacancies in the cohort of Faculty Directors for fall 2016. Of the three that remain, one is a Clinical Associate Professor from Health, Technology and Management, one is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology and the third is a Lecturer and Director for the Introductory Biology Laboratory courses. Relevant to this study, none of these faculty occupy a tenure-track appointment. In her interview, held in the summer of 2015, the administrative Director of the Undergraduate Colleges when asked about the discontinuation of meetings of Undergraduate College Council (chaired by the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education), claimed that it should meet again. She learned about the Council from a Student Affairs senior manager who suggested that the group reconvene. One year later,

there is no indication that this group will become again be active. Given the literature in higher education and the successful origins of the Undergraduate College program, this is a truly perplexing circumstance. True collaborative partnerships with Student Affairs colleagues to bolster the forward-looking vision of undergraduate education should be seen as more essential now than ever and potentially help to tip the scale for greater influence of the undergraduate program within the university.

When Shirley Kenny commenced her campaign to revolutionize the place of undergraduate education at research universities, she took it to the national stage. I believe that she understood that the kind of permanent change she sought for Stony Brook could not be accomplished in a vacuum, or in one or two universities. It required an organization-wide transformation:

> *A Blueprint for American Research Universities* met unexpectedly strong reactions, both from a jubilant press and from far less jubilant research universities that claimed they were already doing the things recommended in the report anyway. The Boyer Report has had an amazing impact on undergraduate education nationwide. Most impressively, undergraduate research has become a staple, although at most institutions it remains available only to the most gifted students. Universities are paying attention to the freshman year, a key to good undergraduate education, though only the richest seem to have freshman seminars for all students rather than some. Publications on undergraduate education are multitudinous, and the rhetoric has changed to reflect the recommendations as expected goals, not only here but around the world. Now universities brag about what they are doing for undergraduates not just in recruitment brochures but among their peers. Even *U.S. News and World Report*, that arbiter of college excellence, now judges institutions on eight types of programs that enhance learning, for example, undergraduate research, freshman seminars, and other desiderata taken right from the Boyer Report (State of the University Address, Stony Brook University, 2002).

Neo-institutional theories lend an understanding of enduring change in organizations and the impact of institutional on the organizational structure as well as external demands. In contrast to the "old" institutionalism which explored how "the policies and routines of a particular organization acquired local resonance and became self-sustaining," neo or new

institutionalism, "examines how the external environment socially constructs organizations, providing them with templates for their formal structures and policies" (Powell and Bromley, 2015). As argued by DiMaggio and Powell, institutions are embedded in social and political environments and tend to become more homogenous over time as a mechanism for survival, cooperation and competition. The change that occurs is not necessarily driven by, and does not always result in, greater effectiveness in achieving the overarching goals of the organization. It may, instead, satisfy an effort to meet constraints imposed by the state and professions (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Normative isomorphic change results from the pressures brought about by professionally based normative factors and the role of education.

> Two aspects of professionalization are important sources of isomorphism. One is the resting of formal education and of legitimation in a cognitive base produced by university specialists; the second is growth and elaboration of professional networks that span organizations and across which new models diffuse rapidly. Universities and professional training institutions are important centers for the development of organizational norms among professional managers and their staff (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, p. 152).

Importantly, as mentioned earlier, each institutional framework contributes to the reproduction of a particular understanding of what is expected, and the consequences of resistance or failure. Whether in a liberal arts college, comprehensive four-year college or research university, organizational priorities and faculty culture have developed and become institutionalized, exhibiting differences depending on institution type and similarities within each type. The academic professional culture helps shape the organizational reality in higher education and, in research universities, diminishes the importance of undergraduate teaching and education.

The Boyer Commission worked to create an organizational tipping point in the research university nationwide by demonstrating the necessity of integrating undergraduate education into the life-blood of a research university. But Boyer was not enough. Institutions change based on

internal and external pressures. The Boyer Commission may have begun the conversation nationwide, but it was up to individual research universities to pivot toward this mission and sustain it. The research in this area points to liberal arts colleges as the most responsive to incorporating active, inquiry based learning into the undergraduate program. This makes sense considering the fewer demands on faculty members in this institution type to produce scholarship. It could be argued that the faculty status in a liberal arts college occupies a simpler role set that is a more fertile institutional breeding ground for strong commitment to teaching and undergraduate education. As the work of identity theorist Sheldon Stryker helps us to understand, the faculty role of scholar in a research university is more *salient* in the identity hierarchy than the teaching role and undergraduate education which, in turn, impacts the choices made by faculty in the organization. "[Identity] theory asserts that role choices are a function of identities so conceptualized, and that identities within self are organized in a salience hierarchy reflecting the importance of hierarchy as an organizational principle in society" (Stryker and Burke, 2000, p. 286). Change in faculty culture in a research university will not come without the leadership to inspire this change, and this leadership must be pervasive and solidly integrated into the academy. In addition to applying the weight of their position to this purpose, the senior administration must include the support for undergraduate education in their communication to faculty members. They must influence faculty participation by incorporating their support for undergraduate education into the promotion and tenure review process and the allocation of discretionary resources. In doing so, they are likely to raise teaching and undergraduate education higher in the salience hierarchy of the faculty role obligations in a research university.

The Undergraduate College initiative demonstrated that it is possible to achieve and sustain change and innovation in undergraduate education in a manner that is not terribly

resource intensive. The current Stony Brook administration could have chosen to reorient the institution's highest priority toward research, and still maintain the previous relatively insignificant level of funding to undergraduate education. All funding decisions are choices, not inevitable. But the orientation to prioritize in a particular way both in terms of communication from the leadership regarding institutional goals, and the subsequent fiscal decisions that either back-up that communication or fall hollow, impact the short and long term potential for persistent change. Just as the faculty role influences choice, so does the role-set of a President or Provost who must respond in various ways to a number of constituent groups, both within and outside their home institution. Responses are shaped by many factors including the type of institution they are leading, and the academic discipline in which they were trained. In the last five years, Stony Brook's academic leadership has been comprised of credentialed professionals in medicine and engineering who may value the credential the student leaves with more than the experience along the way.

The Undergraduate Colleges have endured, but the content and some aspects of the delivery of the program have morphed into a different, less innovative and less interesting form of undergraduate initiative. The signature elements of collaborative partnership between academic and student affairs and the critical role of tenured and tenure-track faculty have faded. The data point to a preference among the current academic affairs staff to reinforce the academic identity of the program and maintain bottom-line control over much of the programmatic decision making. The decline in the engagement in tenured and tenure-track faculty is more complex. Recruiting faculty to the Undergraduate College roles should be understood as a function of a matrix of relationships in an environment that must consistently value and reward the partnerships and contributions by faculty to projects dedicated to undergraduate education.

The relationship of faculty to their home department obligations, and the relationship of faculty to their disciplinary colleagues beyond the campus, must be considered when working to cultivate support for undergraduate programs. To promote and sustain the role of faculty members in this initiative, in the manner it was originally intended, emphasis for this participation must be relentless and continuous by those in charge of undergraduate education, and those in charge must have true backing from the highest levels of the institution. The executive level backing must not only support the desired excellence but foster it. Executives must send an important message that undergraduate education will not be slighted. There must also be conscious appreciation that innovation in undergraduate education beyond technology remains a struggle in research universities, and additional measures to sustain the strength and vitality of the endeavor will likely be necessary, with influential faculty members included as an integral part of that effort. I would contend that permitting small revisions to the original design of the College program, can sabotage the social change sought, in the first place, in the institution of higher education. The challenge to such change should be expected and planned for. The planning strategy should include collaborative relationships, substantive support from the highest levels of the institution and an appreciation of faculty culture in a research university. Senior administrators could take tangible measures to support undergraduate education through the promotion and tenure process as well as the allocation of discretionary resources. Otherwise, the persistence of the program may not be at risk, but the absence of change to the structure and functioning of the research university may continue to promote an unremarkable undergraduate program.

Future Directions

Although there were some "bumps in the road," the first five years of the Undergraduate College initiative were nourished by significant support from the upper administration of the university and received a good deal of positive response. In 2006 the program was recognized by the national organization NASPA (Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education) with an award for most *Promising Practices*. The establishment team was invited to present the program at the 2004 Oxford Roundtable, an annual interdisciplinary conference in the United Kingdom. In 2008 the team was invited to present the Undergraduate College initiative at the International Conference on the First-Year Experience in Dublin, Ireland and, in that same year, the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) awarded the Undergraduate Colleges a Certificate of Merit for *Outstanding Institutional Advising Program*. The University itself included the Undergraduate Colleges in a number of campus-wide meetings and conversations, including the annual Student-Faculty-Staff Retreats, monthly Undergraduate Program Director meetings, and the Student Affairs Leadership Symposium.

This dissertation addresses a number of factors related to the persistence of change in undergraduate education in research universities. But further examination of the evolution of the College program as well as other aspects of undergraduate education at Stony Brook would be useful. For instance, additional interviews with members of the Provost's staff would help to illuminate some of the major issues raised. As stated earlier, interview responses suggested that resources for the program had been reduced. Speaking to the Provost's budget director about any such reductions in the context of the entire Provostial division would shed light on the very significant funding variable for this program and across the tenure of several Provosts. The Associate Provost for Student Success, who previously served at the Director of the Academic

Advising Center should be able to offer an interesting perspective regarding student success and the place of the Undergraduate Colleges in that effort. And finally, an interview with the current Vice Provost of Undergraduate Education, who has held this position for the last six years, could certainly contribute important reflections on all aspects of the Undergraduate College program and his perception of support received from faculty members, the Provost and President for undergraduate education.

Although this dissertation does not directly address the issue of student success, the Undergraduate College system was established to enhance the success of Stony Brook students. Conversations with faculty, staff and administrators who shared their experiences and points of view regarding undergraduate education would be enhanced by similar feedback from students. A separate line of interviews with, or surveys of, students to collect data on their experiences and perceptions of the Undergraduate Colleges, including the freshman seminars, would be enlightening and one indicator of the fulfillment of the program's objectives. One student group in particular, the Undergraduate College Fellows, who have chosen a more active and extended involvement in the College program, would help determine whether the program goals are achieved with this enthusiastic cohort of students. In addition to student surveys, an examination of the relationship between relevant quantitative data and effects of the program would be useful, for instance retention rates from the first to second year of college, grade point averages of first year students, as well as a review of students in academic jeopardy. Since all new students are admitted to one of six Undergraduate Colleges, there is no contemporary control group for these data. The best alternative would be a comparison of a cohort of students who entered the program at its inception, and a more recent cohort with a cohort of students who entered Stony Brook before the establishment of the program.

Finally, the data collected in this study were explored in depth manually. Additional consolidation of the data with the use of a qualitative research computer program would likely uncover other associations and patterns for further consideration of programmatic persistence in undergraduate education.

In 2001 the Boyer Commission sponsored a survey, of 123 Research I and II universities, that served as a follow-up to the original Boyer Report published in 1998. The purpose of the survey was to collect information from the chief administrator principally responsible for undergraduate education at these institutions and determine how much progress was made instituting changes in the undergraduate program since the report was published. For a more national perspective on the topics covered in this dissertation, it would be useful to replicate that survey for a further exploration of the current status of undergraduate education in American research universities, particularly in the context of the most urgent demands and pressures on this institution type more than a decade later. Interesting, as well, would be to understand where Stony Brook is situated among this group of peer institutions.

There is much reporting these days in the national press and professional literature on the changing nature of the academy and the struggle for survival in an increasingly competitive, resource starved higher education environment. The stress of this condition has motivated a search for ideas related to increasing enrollments and entrepreneurial modes of curriculum delivery that maximize institutional income. Research in higher education and organizational sociology will continue to contribute a deeper knowledge of the future direction of higher education in the United States and undergraduate education in the research university.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A
Undergraduate College Flyer

STONY BROOK
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGES

An Exciting New Freshman Program

Stony Brook is in the process of transforming the way in which undergraduate students experience University life. Beginning in the Fall of 2004, every freshman will enter Stony Brook as a member of one of six undergraduate colleges organized around themes of general interest to students. The six Undergraduate Colleges will focus on the following themes: Leadership and Service; Human Development; Global Studies; Science and Society; Information and Technology; and Arts, Culture, and Humanities.

The Undergraduate Colleges are designed to support and develop the interests of students and assist them in taking advantage of the vast resources Stony Brook has to offer. All Undergraduate Colleges include individualized advising and support, special educational and social programs, and opportunities for close interaction with faculty and fellow students around themes of common interest. Each Undergraduate College will have both a commuter and a residential focus. First-year resident members of each college are housed together in the same residential quadrangle. First-year commuters have a centrally located home on the Academic Mall.

Faculty members participate in the Undergraduate Colleges through various events organized within the college, through college dinners, and most especially, through special one-credit seminars designed to introduce students to what it means to be a University student and a member of a community of learners. Each seminar addresses some aspect within the broad theme of the college, based on the faculty's expertise and interests, and is limited to no more than 20 students. As a result, the Colleges provide opportunities for students and faculty to meet both inside and outside the classroom.

Appendix B
Interview List

INTERVIEW LIST	
Establishment Team **[Titles listed were those at the time of establishment of program]** University Provost, Robert McGrath Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Mark Aronoff Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Peter Baigent Dean of Students, Jerrold Stein Assistant Vice President for Campus Residences, Dallas Bauman	**5 interviews**
Founding Faculty Directors Paul Bingham, Human Development Perry Goldstein, Arts, Culture and Humanities Imin Kao, Information and Technology Studies Manuel London, Leadership and Service Jeffrey Levinton, Science and Society Michael Schwartz, Global Studies	**6 interviews**
Current Faculty Directors Andrea Fedi, Global Studies Deborah Firestone, Human Development	**2 interviews**
Seminar Faculty A random sample of the total number of faculty who taught UG College seminars.	**24 interviews**
University Provost Dennis Assanis	**1 interview**
UG College Administrative Director & Associate Director Rachelle Germana, Director Anastasia Zannettis, Associate Director	**2 interviews**
UG College Program Staff UG College Advisors and Residential Quad Directors	**10 interviews**
TOTAL:	**50 interviews**

Appendix C
Sample Electronic Message Requesting Interview and
Interview Recruitment Letter

Dear,

I am completing a PhD in the Department of Sociology here at Stony Brook. My dissertation topic explores enduring institutional change in undergraduate education at research universities. Using the Undergraduate College initiative as a case study, I am conducting interviews with selected faculty, staff and administrators who have designed, supported and participate in delivering this program. As a faculty member who has taught an Undergraduate College freshman seminar, I would appreciate the opportunity to conduct a brief interview with you at a location of your choosing and convenience.

I have attached the IRB approved *Interview Recruitment Letter* for your reference and am hopeful that we may arrange for an interview sometime soon.

Cordially,

Donna Di Donato
Graduate Student
Department of Sociology
Stony Brook University

Date

Dear Colleague:

As a graduate student in the Sociology department at Stony Brook University, I am engaged in doctoral research on the evolution of undergraduate education at the University with particular focus on the Undergraduate College initiative. I am particularly interested in organizational change and the persistence of this program in the context of a research university environment.

My dissertation is a qualitative case study analysis of the Undergraduate College system and the study design calls for interviews with selected faculty, staff and administrators who have participated in and supported this program since its inception.

Your participation would involve an in-person interview of about 40 minutes at a location of your choosing. The interview questions explore your involvement with the Undergraduate College program, and more generally undergraduate education at Stony Brook.

If you are willing to contribute toward this research project with an interview, please respond to this message.

Cordially,

Donna Di Donato
donna.didonato@stonybrook.edu
516-702-XXXX

Appendix D
Research Consent Form

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Institutional Change in Undergraduate Education at a Research University: The Stony Brook Undergraduate Colleges
Principal Investigator: Norman Goodman, Professor, Sociology
Co-Investigators: Donna Di Donato, Doctoral Candidate
Department: Sociology

You are being asked to be a volunteer in a research study.
PURPOSE
The purpose of this study is:

- This is a qualitative case study analysis of the Undergraduate College program and the study design calls for interviews with selected faculty, staff and administrators who have participated in and supported this program since its inception. Approximately 48 interviews will be conducted to provide data to explore the programmatic persistence of the Undergraduate Colleges and what that may mean, more broadly, about undergraduate education at a research university. You have been asked to participate in

PROCEDURES
If you decide to be in this study, your part will involve:

- A face-to-face interview of approximately 30 minutes in duration at a location of your choosing.
- The interview will be audio-taped and subsequently transcribed.

RISKS / DISCOMFORTS
The following risks/discomforts may occur as a result of you being in this study:

- There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts associated with your participation in this study.

BENEFITS

- There is no benefit expected as a result of you being in this study.

PAYMENT TO YOU

- There is no payment made to you in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- I will take steps to help make sure that all the information is kept confidential. Your name will not be used wherever possible. We will use a code instead. All the study data that we get from you will be kept secure, as will the code. All audiotapes of interviews will be deleted after transcription.

COSTS TO YOU

- There is no cost to you to participate in this study.

ALTERNATIVES

- Your alternative to being in this study is to simply not participate.

YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT

- Your participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study if you don't want to be.
- You have the right to change your mind and leave the study at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty.
- Any new information that may make you change your mind about being in this study will be given to you.
- You will get a copy of this consent form to keep
- You do not lose any of your legal rights by signing this consent form.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY OR YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH SUBJECT

- If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the study, you may contact Dr. Norman Goodman, at 631-632-7750.
- If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject or if you would like to obtain information or offer input, you may contact Ms. Judy Matuk, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, (631) 632-9036, OR by e-mail, judy.matuk@stonybrook.edu.
- Visit Stony Brook University's Community Outreach page, http://www.stonybrook.edu/research/orc/community.shtml for more information about participating in research, frequently asked questions, and an opportunity to provide feedback, comments, or ask questions related to your experience as a research subject.

If you sign below, it means that you have read (or have had read to you) the information given in this consent form, and you would like to be a volunteer in this study.

_____	_____
Subject Name (Printed)	Subject Signature Date
_____	_____
Name of Person Obtaining Consent (Printed)	Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date

Appendix E
Interview Questions

Questions: Undergraduate College Initiation Team

1. Name and Title
2. How long have you held your current position?
3. Have you held other positions at Stony Brook? If so, what were they?
4. What factors led to consideration of a system of undergraduate colleges at Stony Brook?
5. Describe the process of establishing the Undergraduate College program.
6. Was there resistance to the program being established? If yes, what sort of resistance? How was it dealt with?
7. What were the most significant factors to the successful launching of this program?
8. What has facilitated the development of the program over the last ten years? What have been the "bumps in the road"?
9. What is the role of faculty in the Undergraduate Colleges?
10. Has the role of faculty that you envisioned been realized?
11. Do you believe that the Undergraduate College program has enhanced the quality of the undergraduate experience at Stony Brook? In what way? What evidence do you think is available to demonstrate the positive effect on the undergraduate experience?
12. Do you believe that the Undergraduate College program is "here to stay"? Why or why not?

Questions: Founding Undergraduate College Faculty Directors

1. Name
2. How long have you been on the faculty at Stony Brook? What is your rank?
3. When did you serve as an Undergraduate College faculty director? For which College?
4. How were you approached to consider the role of faculty director? What factors encouraged you to agree to serve?
5. What were the responsibilities of the job of faculty director?
6. Who did you primarily work with to accomplish these responsibilities?
7. From where did the daily administrative support for the program come? Was it adequate?
8. Do you believe that the Undergraduate College program has enhanced the quality of the undergraduate experience at Stony Brook? In what way(s)? How significant are the freshmen seminars to this impact? What evidence do you think is available to demonstrate the positive effect on the undergraduate experience?
9. Have you kept track of the activities of the program since serving as director?
10. What is your opinion of the development of the program over time?
11. Do you believe that the Undergraduate Colleges are here to stay? Why or why not?

Questions: Seminar Faculty

1. Name
2. How long have you been on the faculty at Stony Brook? What is your rank?
3. Have you taught an Undergraduate College Freshman Seminar? If yes, how many times did you teach the seminar? For which Colleges?

4. What are the primary reasons that you taught the seminar(s)? Was your department chair supportive of your participation?
5. What was your experience like (each time you taught a seminar)?
6. What is your understanding of why Stony Brook offers these freshman seminars?
7. What was the compensation awarded when you taught the seminar? What is your opinion about the compensation?
8. In addition to the freshman seminar, what do you know about the Undergraduate Colleges? Do you believe that the Undergraduate College program has improved the quality of the student experience? In what way? What evidence do you think is available to demonstrate the improvement?
9. In addition to teaching the freshman seminar, what role do faculty play in the Undergraduate College program?
10. What suggestions do you have for increasing faculty support and participation in this endeavor, and more generally, undergraduate education at Stony Brook?
11. Do you believe that the Undergraduate College program is "here to stay"? Why or why not?

Questions: University Provost

1. How long have you served as the Provost at Stony Brook University?
2. What is your knowledge of the Undergraduate College program? Has it changed over the years of your tenure?
3. Do you believe that the Undergraduate College program has improved the quality of the student experience? In what way? What evidence do you think is available to demonstrate the improvement?
4. What role do the faculty play in the Undergraduate College program?
5. What is your perception of the Undergraduate College freshman seminars that are taught by faculty?
6. What is your opinion of the compensation that faculty receive for participation in the seminar?
7. What role do you believe the faculty should play in undergraduate education at Stony Brook more broadly? Is this currently realized?
8. What suggestions do you have for increasing faculty support and participation in this endeavor, and more generally, undergraduate education at Stony Brook?
9. What is the relationship between academic and student affairs in relation to the delivery of the Undergraduate College program?
10. Do you believe that the Undergraduate College program is "here to stay"? Why or why not?

Questions: Undergraduate College Administrative Director

1. Name and Title
2. How long were you in this position?
3. Did you hold other positions at Stony Brook? If so, what were they?
4. What duties are included in your position as Undergraduate College director?
5. You supervised the Undergraduate College Advisors, what are their duties?
6. In your opinion, what have the positive contributions of the Undergraduate College initiative been for Stony Brook? Do you believe that the program improved the quality

of the undergraduate student experience? If so, in what ways? What evidence do you believe is available to demonstrate the improvements?

7. In your opinion, have there been problematic issues associated with the establishment/operation of the Undergraduate Colleges? Is so, what are they? How well have they been addressed? To what effect?
8. Specifically, how have the faculty been involved in the establishment and current operation of the Undergraduate Colleges?
9. What is your perception of the general faculty support of the Undergraduate Colleges?
10. Over the term of your directorship, what was your perception of the quality of resource and administrative (academic and student affairs) support of the Undergraduate College program?
11. How about the faculty support of the College program? Does it need to be improved? If so, how?
12. Do you believe that the Undergraduate College program is "here to stay"? Why or why not?

Questions: Academic and Student Affairs Staff (Undergraduate College Associate Director, Advisors and Campus Residences Quad Directors)

1. What is your name and title?
2. How long have you been in this position?
3. What Undergraduate College are you associated with?
4. What duties are included in your role?
5. What would you say are the positive contributions of the Undergraduate Colleges to the undergraduate student experience? What evidence might be available to demonstrate this?
6. Have there been negative consequences or challenges? If so, what are they and why do you believe they occurred?
7. Do you work with faculty in your role vis a vie the Undergraduate Colleges?
8. [If yes] What is your perception of the role faculty play in the Undergraduate College program? Have they been an asset or liability to the program? In what way?
9. In your view did/do you get adequate support from the Division of Academic/Student Affairs that you believe is necessary to have the program be effective? If not, what was lacking and why do you think that happened?
10. Do you believe that the Undergraduate College program is "here to stay"? Why or why not?

Appendix F
Seminar Faculty Interviewed

Hussein Badr, Associate Professor Emeritus
Department of Computer Science
Former Undergraduate Program Director, Information Systems

Hugo Benitez-Silva, Associate Professor
Department of Economics
Undergraduate Program Director
Former Graduate Program Director

Malcolm Bowman, Professor
Distinguished Service Professor
School of Marine and Atmospheric Science

Ritch Calvin, Assistant Professor
Department of Cultural Analysis and Theory
Program in Women's and Gender Studies
Former Chair, Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee

Allegra De Laurentiis, Associate Professor
Department of Philosophy
Former Faculty Director, Global Studies Undergraduate College

Lisa Diedrich, Associate Professor
Department of Cultural Analysis and Theory
Program in Women's and Gender Studies
Former Director of Graduate Studies, Comparative Literature
Former Interim Chair, Women's Studies

Marc Fasanella, Visiting Professor
Program in Sustainability Studies
Former Professor, Southampton College, Long Island University

Melissa Forbis, Assistant Professor
Department of Cultural Analysis and Theory and Sociology

Georges Fouron, Professor
Department of Africana Studies
Former Undergraduate Program Director
Faculty Director, International Studies Living Learning Center (Academy)

Sean Getty, Clinical Assistant Professor
Occupational Therapy Program
Site Coordinator, Stony Brook Southampton Occupational Therapy Program
School of Health, Technology and Management

Susan Hinely, Lecturer
Department of History
Undergraduate Program Director

Benjamin Hsiao, Professor
Department of Chemistry
Chair of Chemistry Department, 2007-2012
Vice President for Research, May 2012-December 2013

Evonne Kaplan-Liss, Associate Professor
Department of Preventive Medicine
Program in Public Health
Medical Director, Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science

Kathryn Koshansky, Associate Professor
Athletic Training Program
School of Health, Technology and Management

Judith Lochhead, Professor
Department of Music
Former Chair, Department of Music
Former Chair, Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee

Yizhi Meng, Assistant Professor
Department of Materials Science and Engineering
Program in Chemical and Molecular Engineering

Helmut Norpoth, Professor
Department of Political Science

Ghanashayam Sharma, Assistant Professor
Program in Writing and Rhetoric

Milutin Stanaćević, Associate Professor
Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering

Theresa Tiso, Associate Professor
Department of Physical Therapy
School of Health, Technology and Management

Kathleen Vernon, Associate Professor and Chair
Department of Hispanic Languages and Literature
Former Graduate Program Director
Former Undergraduate Program Director

Carlos Vidal, Associate Professor
Department of Health Sciences
School of Health, Technology and Management

Stephen Vitkun, Professor
Distinguished Teaching Professor
Department of Anesthesiology
Vice Chair for Special Projects
Professor of Pharmacological Sciences
Professor of Health Sciences

Michael Zweig, Professor (practice interview)
Department of Economics
Former Undergraduate Program Director