

2006

## The Emerging Culture of a Community College

Misty Kyle O'Connell

*Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool\\_theses](https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_theses)



Part of the [Mass Communication Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

O'Connell, Misty Kyle, "The Emerging Culture of a Community College" (2006). *LSU Master's Theses*. 644.  
[https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool\\_theses/644](https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_theses/644)

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Master's Theses by an authorized graduate school editor of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [gradetd@lsu.edu](mailto:gradetd@lsu.edu).

# **THE EMERGING CULTURE OF A COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Mass Communication

in

The Manship School of Mass Communication

by  
Misty Kyle O'Connell  
B.A., Louisiana College, 1999  
December, 2006

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iii
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2 HISTORY .....	4
3 LITERATURE REVIEW .....	11
3 METHODOLOGY .....	19
4 FINDINGS.....	25
5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION .....	45
REFERENCES .....	50
APPENDIX	
A LIST OF LOUISIANA COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM (LCTCS) INSTITUTIONS.....	54
B CONSENT FORM.....	56
C INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	57
D PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS.....	58
VITA .....	59

## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores the emerging organizational culture of Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC). Specifically, the study looks at how faculty and key administrators describe the institution's culture. Qualitative interviews with seven administrators and ten faculty members reveal the two groups had consistent viewpoints on many themes. Findings indicate BRCC exhibits the characteristics of an adhocracy culture. BRCC's administration and faculty also describe the college's culture as strong and externally oriented.

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC), named the “fastest growing community college” in 2002, has been an institution of tremendous growth since its inception in 1998 (BRCC Student Handbook, 2004). In the college’s short history, BRCC has seen outstanding increases in enrollment, millions of dollars in construction projects, and strong support from the community. Established by a settlement agreement to end a desegregation lawsuit, the college was created with the intention of bringing together diverse groups of people in the capitol city of Baton Rouge (United States v. Louisiana, 1994). BRCC’s young age provides an excellent opportunity to study a new community college and its developing culture. As the college grows and develops as an institution, the college’s culture is being socially constructed by the actions of employees, students, and other individuals who determine the institution’s day-to-day activities (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). This study looks at the institutional culture emerging at BRCC.

No other segment of higher education has been more receptive to the needs of its community and workforce than the community college (Phillippe and Patton, 2000). Community colleges play an essential role in the American educational system and often have cultural, social, and economic implications in a community. The low tuition, convenience, and accessibility of community colleges provide many students their only opportunity for higher education (Baker, 1994). While community colleges all share the same philosophy of open access admissions, affordability, and service, each college has its own mission and is unique to its community and local economy (Phillippe and Patton, 2000).

Although most states have had a community college system for several decades, Louisiana only recently developed a system to oversee community and technical education in 2002 (Phillippe and Patton, 2000). Until the 1990s, Louisiana had two community colleges and 53 freestanding technical colleges, commonly referred to as “trade schools” (Public Affairs

Research Council of Louisiana, Inc., 1997). The technical college campuses were originally created as an expansion of the state's high schools to offer postsecondary vocational-technical education and were later governed by the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) (Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, Inc., 1997). After the creation of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) in 1998, community and technical college education was transferred to the LCTCS. The technical campuses around the state were reduced and combined into a single technical college. Today the state has a total of seven community colleges, two community technical colleges, and one technical college with 42 campuses (see Appendix A for institution names) (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2005).

The creation of a community college in Louisiana's state capitol has provided an opportunity to bring together people of diverse backgrounds. While both Louisiana State University (LSU) and Southern University (SU) have coexisted in the city for many years, a clear division separates them. LSU's student body has always been majority white, whereas SU maintains a predominantly African American student population. BRCC was established as a way to bridge this division of higher education in Baton Rouge. As mandated by the settlement agreement, BRCC's student population mirrors the city's community in racial composition (United States v. Louisiana, 1994). The college is bringing together students of all races and ethnic backgrounds by offering accessible, affordable, and high educational quality instruction. The social dynamics of BRCC's history, unique focus on diversity, and community college mission are shaping the institution's culture and influencing higher education in Baton Rouge (Baton Rouge Community College institutional self-study, 2004).

As an institution of higher education in the city of Baton Rouge, BRCC was created on the premise of bringing diverse groups of people together (United States v. Louisiana, 1994).

The present study will explore the emerging organizational culture at BRCC by examining the college's values and philosophy evidenced through the daily actions and assumptions of the institution's members. As a new and emerging institution, BRCC's organizational culture is being socially constructed by the actions of employees, students, and other individuals who determine the institution's day-to-day activities. These daily activities are what make up the college's culture. In-depth interviews were conducted with BRCC's academic deans, vice chancellors, and selected faculty members. Interviews with BRCC's members asking about these daily interactions and behaviors provided insight into the organization's culture.

This topic is important because community colleges provide educational opportunities and access to people who would not otherwise be able to attend college (Phillippe and Patton, 2000). It is valuable to study BRCC's emerging organizational culture because it ultimately affects organizational action and effectiveness (Tierney, 1988; Cameron and Quinn, 1999; Obenchain, Johnson, and Dion, 2004). This study will contribute to the body of knowledge in mass communication by building upon current literature about the social construction of culture. Culture is important to the field of mass communication because it determines and influences how an organization's members interact and communicate. Effective public relations and advertising require an understanding of an institution's culture and how messages are communicated and received. Studying BRCC's culture will provide valuable research for mass communicators to use as they develop plans for community colleges to communicate both internally and externally.

## **CHAPTER 2: HISTORY**

Before examining the organizational culture of Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC), it is important to understand the history of how community colleges have evolved. This section will provide a brief history of community colleges in the United States and then more specifically, in Louisiana.

### **AMERICAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

American community colleges began as junior colleges and date back to the early 1900s. Although a few institutions existed prior to this time, they were privately held junior colleges (Baker, 1994). Established in 1901, Joliet Junior College in Illinois is the oldest continuously existing public two-year college (Quigley and Bailey, 2003). Leaders of the time, such as Stanford University President David Starr Jordan and University of Missouri President William Ross, promoted the idea that high schools or small colleges could offer the first two years of college courses (Phillippe and Patton, 2000). In 1909, the California state legislature agreed to help fund high schools' efforts to offer the first two years of college course work. Because of this support, California became the largest system at that time with 21 junior colleges (Cohen and Brawer, 1989).

In 1947, President Harry Truman's Commission on Higher Education concluded that a large number of two-year public institutions needed to be created due to the small percentage of people going to college. The Commission suggested the name "community college" be applied to the institutions designed to serve chiefly local community education needs. The Commission acknowledged the financial barriers that prohibited many from attending college and suggested that the first two years of education be tuition-free at community colleges (Quigley and Bailey, 2003).



In the 1960s, community colleges increased over 100% in numbers from 412 in 1960 to 909 in 1970, which equaled to a new college opening nearly every week. By 2000, there were 1,173 public and independent community colleges in the U.S., with at least one in every state (Phillippe and Patton, 2000).

While the missions of individual community colleges differ, they all share common values of open access, low tuition, and community service. Depending on the needs of the community, community colleges offer a variety of programs, such as credit and noncredit courses, developmental education, transfer programs, workforce training, and leisure classes. Each college adapts to its community and local economy through its course offerings and programs (Baker, 1994).

## **LOUISIANA’S COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

Louisiana’s approach to governing higher education has changed extensively in the last decade. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the end of the state’s oil boom and loss of revenue led to disproportionate cuts in funding for higher education. Two-year institutions at that time were all under different higher education boards (Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, Inc., 1997). To manage higher education more effectively, three governors (David Treen, Edwin Edwards, and Buddy Roemer) had previously tried to develop a single board for higher education without success. When attempts to create a single higher education board failed once again, Governor Mike Foster sought to create a new board to oversee the community colleges and technical college campuses (Governor’s Task Force on Technical and Community Colleges and Adult Education, 1998). In 1998, Louisiana voters overwhelmingly approved the establishment of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) Board of Supervisors (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2005). The Board

became operational on July 1, 1999, and now oversees all community and technical colleges in the state (Louisiana Board of Regents, 2001).

While community colleges have been in existence in the United States for more than a century, Louisiana has been slow to incorporate them into the state's higher education system (Phillippe and Patton, 2000). Prior to 1992, the state had only two community colleges, Delgado Community College (DCC) in New Orleans established in 1921, and Bossier Parish Community College (BPCC) near Shreveport established in 1966. Elaine P. Nunez Community College (NCC), established in 1992, became the third community college in the state. Three additional community colleges, River Parishes Community (RPCC), South Louisiana Community College (SLCC), and BRCC were established in the late 1990s. The system's newest community college, Louisiana Delta Community College (LDCC), was created in 2001 (Louisiana Community and Technical College System Board Minutes, 2001). Additionally, two technical colleges, Sowela and L.E. Fletcher, became technical community colleges in the summer of 2003 (Louisiana Board of Regents, 2003).

## **BATON ROUGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

BRCC was established on June 28, 1995, as an open admissions, two-year comprehensive community college (United States v. Louisiana, 1994). The creation of BRCC resulted from a settlement agreement between the U.S. Department of Justice and the State of Louisiana over the desegregation of higher education public institutions in the state. The agreement mandated that Louisiana "create and begin operation of a community college in the Baton Rouge area" that would "be jointly administered initially by the [Louisiana State University] Board and the [Southern University] Board" (United States v. Louisiana, 1994, p. 8). The agreement also mandated that BRCC "begin operation as an integrated institution with respect to students, faculty, administration, and staff" and maintain a focus on diversity (United

States v. Louisiana, 1994). Each year, the college was required to report the racial composition of students, faculty, and staff to verify compliance with the agreement. The settlement agreement expired on December 31, 2005 meaning BRCC is no longer required to report its racial composition (United States v. Louisiana, 1994). The end of the settlement agreement should not affect the college's enrollment since diversity of students and employees continues to be one of the college's major strategic initiatives (Baton Rouge Community College institutional self-study, 2004).

In 2001, the Louisiana Board of Regents developed the Master Plan for Public Postsecondary Education in the state. The plan called for increased selective admission standards at all four-year universities in the state, including LSU and SU in Baton Rouge. BRCC and other state community and technical colleges were required to maintain open admissions standards to provide greater access to the community at large (Louisiana Board of Regents, 2001). In accordance with the master plan, BRCC's mission is "to offer collegiate and career education through comprehensive curricula allowing for: transfer to four-year colleges and universities, community education programs and services, life-long learning, developmental education, distance learning, and workforce and continuing education programs" (Baton Rouge Community College institutional self-study, 2004).

The college was awarded full accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Universities (SACS) in December 2004 (Commission on Colleges, 2006). Prior to receiving full accreditation, BRCC was prohibited from adding new programs and degrees. However, the college is now working to increase their degree programs. The college currently offers five associate degrees and one certificate which include the Associate of Arts in Liberal Arts, Associate of Science in General Science, and the Associate in General Studies. All of these transfer programs designed to enable students to transfer to four-year institutions (Baton Rouge

Community College institutional self-study, 2004). The Associates of Applied Science in Business Technology and in Process Technology and the Certificate in Business Technology are career programs designed to enable students to enter the workforce (Baton Rouge Community College institutional self-study, 2004). The college also offers non-credit educational programs through the Workforce, Corporate, and Continuing Education Division.

BRCC does not have policies relating to faculty promotion, tenure, and rank at this time. All full-time faculty members are hired on one-year contracts, which are issued each spring. The college's current faculty members all hold the rank of Instructor or Assistant Professor and do not have the ability to move up unless they pursue an administrative position. BRCC's development of additional policies in this area is dependent upon the LCTCS creating system-wide employment policies for faculty. An LCTCS taskforce is presently reviewing these issues and will make a recommendation to the LCTCS Board of Supervisors regarding faculty employment policies for the system (Baton Rouge Community College institutional self-study, 2004).

Community colleges often have a hierarchical governing structure, even though this type of governance has been identified as the least effective (Smart and Hamm, 1993). At BRCC, the college has an Executive Cabinet that serves as the chief decision-making body of the college (Baton Rouge Community College institutional self-study, 2004). The Executive Cabinet consists of the Chancellor; Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs; Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance; Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs; Vice Chancellor for Workforce, Corporate, and Community Education; and the Executive Assistant to the Chancellor. An Academic Dean oversees each of the college's three academic divisions of Business and Technology, Liberal Arts, and Math and Science. Led by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and the Academic Deans, faculty are responsible for curriculum development

and the creation of policies relating to instruction (Baton Rouge Community College institutional self-study, 2004).

BRCC has experienced tremendous growth in only a short time despite the highly competitive educational market in Baton Rouge. The presence of LSU, the state's research-based flagship university, and SU, a well-known historically black university, have not stunted BRCC's enrollment. The city planned and built BRCC's first building with a projected enrollment of 700 students, but when the college opened its doors on August 20, 1998, the number of enrolled students was 1,866 (Louisiana Board of Regents Statewide Student Profile, Fall 1998). BRCC's enrollment continues to climb each year and reached 7,000 students in the fall of 2005 (Louisiana Board of Regents Statewide Student Profile, Fall 2005).

While BRCC's enrollment has increased at a tremendous pace, the college's growth has not affected LSU and SU. BRCC's market share for freshman students who are from Baton Rouge has recently surpassed LSU and SU (Baton Rouge Community College Fact Book, 2004). However, these three institutions are not competing for the same students. Their student bodies are as distinct as their missions and histories. LSU recruits high achieving undergraduate students and is focusing on becoming a national flagship research university (Louisiana State University National Flagship Agenda Preamble). One of the objectives of LSU's National Flagship Action Agenda is to increase the quality of undergraduate students and programs (Louisiana State University National Flagship Agenda Preamble). LSU already has the highest admission standards for a public institution in the state, and these standards will continue to increase as the college follows the flagship agenda (Louisiana Board of Regents, 2001). SU's student population is different from BRCC and LSU because of its status as a Historically Black College (Southern University Catalog, 2004-2006). Like LSU, SU has increased its admission requirements with the implementation of the Louisiana Board of Regents Master Plan (Louisiana

Board of Regents, 2001). Diversity is a priority for SU, and the college seeks to recruit all race students who meet the college's admission standards (Southern University Catalog, 2004-2006).

Whereas LSU and SU recruit students from all over the United States and internationally, BRCC's mission is to provide education to the Baton Rouge community (United States v. Louisiana, 1994). The college's service area is an eight-parish region that includes Baton Rouge and the surrounding parishes (United States v. Louisiana, 1994). For those students in the Baton Rouge area who may not be qualified to attend LSU or SU, BRCC provides an opportunity to attend college. Many of BRCC's students would not meet the selective admission standards of LSU and SU, but are able to transfer to these institutions once they have completed coursework or graduated from BRCC.

BRCC's relationship with LSU and SU continues to evolve. Whereas BRCC was once governed jointly by LSU and SU, the college is now a separate entity, governed by the LCTCS (National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 2005). BRCC's full accreditation status allows the college's credits to be eligible to transfer to other accredited institutions, including LSU and SU. However, the admitting institution determines how transfer classes will be applied toward a degree. BRCC and SU have an articulation agreement that allows BRCC graduates to enter SU at the junior-level, assuming the students meet SU's admission standards (Baton Rouge Community College institutional self-study, 2004). Although the majority of BRCC's students transfer to LSU, the two institutions do not currently have any formal articulation agreements (Baton Rouge Community College Fact Book, 2004).

## **CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE**

Colleges and universities with their long traditions of customs and precedent have been described as vehicles essential for perpetuating culture (Hefferlin, 1969). Culture includes the values, customs, rituals, and beliefs transmitted from organizational members (Gall, Borg, and Gall, 1996). Schein (1983) defines organizational culture as:

the pattern of basic assumptions which a given group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which have worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems ...[culture] is the assumptions which lie behind the values and which determine the behaviour patterns and the visible artifacts such as architecture, office layout, dress codes and so on (14).

By virtue of its “continual (re)creation through the interactions of organization members, their shared interpretations, and the significations they attach to what occurs,” culture persists and is changed or maintained (Jelinek, Smircich, and Hirsch, 1983, p. 336). Both a product and process, culture is continually being created and recreated by people’s ongoing interactions (Jelinek et al., 1983; Kuh and Whitt, 1988).

Culture affects an organization’s internal communication. Communication is a reflexive science in that the culture that is created determines the kind of communicative environment. Using a ritualistic view, communication is not merely passing on information, but is a representation of shared beliefs. The culture of an organization affects the group’s internal communication processes because it affects the group’s shared beliefs and likewise affects how communication is received and given. Communication issues can be linked to problems in a community or organization’s day-to-day activities or culture (Carey, 1989).

Carey (1989) contends communication is a symbolic process in which reality is produced, maintained, repaired, and transformed. Objects, events, and processes are brought into

existence and recognized using language and symbols. Communication allows what is produced to be maintained for future generations. It must also restore reality when changes occur that breakdown what is commonly known.

In previous research, organizational culture has been studied in relation to the social construction of reality (Jelinek et al., 1983; Riley, 1983; Kuh and Whitt, 1988). Social constructivists view reality as socially constructed based on human activity, and they often seek to discover ways social reality and phenomena are constructed. Reality is viewed as an interpretation of symbols and images negotiated through interactions (Herda-Rapp, 2003). Berger and Luckmann (1967) assert that everyday life is organized around a person's present and that social order is an ongoing human product, existing only as a product of human activity. Similarly, human activity is subject to habitual behavior, which narrows choices and frees humans from making the same decisions on a regular basis. Habits make it unnecessary to define each situation each time it is encountered (Berger and Luckmann, 1967).

An organization's culture is grounded in the shared assumptions of its members (Schein, 2004; Cameron and Quinn, 1999). Berger and Luckmann (1967) suggest institutions form when individuals share a mutual characterization of habitual actions, which result from a shared history. Institutions promote habitual behavior by promoting efficiency and process management. Habitual behavior and daily interactions among members create organizational norms. The institution's founders, early history, geographic location, local climate, size, success of the founding organization, and correspondence between the institution's offerings and its markets all contribute to the environment and character (Kotler and Fox, 1995).

Researchers contend that isolating organizational culture content is useful in understanding organizational action because culture ultimately influences actions (Cameron and Quinn, 1999; Obenchain, et al., 2004). Likewise, an organization's actions are a reflection of an



organization's culture, which involves the decisions, actions, and communication of an organization (Tierney, 1988). While an organization is often shaped by external forces such as economic, political, and demographic factors, internal factors also have a major influence on the organization (Tierney, 1988). Peters and Waterman (1982) analyzed successful companies and found that they all possess certain cultural qualities, such as customer service and innovation that guarantees their success.

The actions of an organization's members represent and shape the organization's cultural values, but members may not agree on an organization's culture even though they are shaping it. Since not everyone will see an institution in the same way, no single interpretation of culture can accurately represent all members (Smart, Kuh, and Tierney, 1997). However, it is possible to infer some general themes about an organization's culture about which most people can agree (Quinn and McGrath, 1985). Parker (2000) suggests that organizational culture is a constant struggle between collectivism and individualism of its members. He contends that organizational culture encompasses both the micro and macro levels.

Originally developed by Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983), the Competing Values Framework (CVF) categorizes organizational culture into four types: clan, adhocracy, hierarchy, and market. Clan cultures emphasize internal flexibility, show concern for people, and engender inclusive, mutually respectful decision-making styles with the leader serving as the motivator and mentor (Smart and Hamm, 1993). Adhocracy cultures utilize innovative strategies and individuality, emphasizing entrepreneurship and focusing on external positioning with the leader setting the vision (Smart and Hamm, 1993; Cameron and Ettington, 1988). Hierarchical cultures are strictly regulated by rules and regulations, and demonstrate reactive, defensive interactions with external groups. The leader serves as the organizer and administrator (Smart and Hamm (1993). Market cultures emphasize competition, customer service, and proactive measures with

the leader serving as a producer or technician (Smart and Hamm, 1993; Cameron and Ettington, 1988).

The CVF has been used in the cultural research of a variety of organizations (Smart and Hamm, 1993; Cameron and Ettington, 1988; Scott-Cawiezell, Jones, and Moore, 2005; Jones and Redman, 2000). In research on hospital culture, Jones and Redman (2000) examined three case studies that assessed organizational culture before and after work redesign initiatives. They found that hospitals with market and hierarchy cultures were more resistant to change. Scott-Cawiezell, Jones, Moore (2005) surveyed 31 nursing homes using the CVF organizational assessment to explore working conditions and quality improvement. They found that staff perceptions differed from those of organizational leaders in their research on the culture of nursing homes. Staff reported a dominant or hierarchical culture while leaders reported a clan approach emphasizing a family and team orientation (Scott-Cawiezell, et al., 2005).

## **ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

The culture of universities has been described as unique, with distinctive characteristics that are different from other organizations (Peterson and Spencer, 1990). Utilizing a multi-method approach of interviews and surveys, Sporn (1996) analyzed the ability of different university cultures to adapt to change. She proposed several characteristics of universities that have an impact on the institution's culture. These characteristics consist of unclear and immeasurable strategic goals, a continuous movement of people and ideas, the inherent conflict between faculty and administration, and a complex, ever-changing environment. Sporn (1996) also developed a typology of four categories of university culture to assess a university's ability to adapt to change. The four types of culture identified are (1) weak and internally oriented, (2) weak and externally oriented, (3) strong and internally oriented, and (4) strong and externally oriented. Sporn defines strength of culture (weak or strong) as the "fit between cultural values,

structural arrangements, and strategic plans within the whole university” (50). She argues that strong, externally oriented cultures are more capable of adapting to environmental changes. Externally oriented refers to an outward focus in planning strategies and actions. It takes into account factors like state and national government, accrediting bodies, and other agencies to determine needs and set college goals. Internally oriented cultures are more focused on immediate, domestic and management issues. Where an institution receives its resources is important in determining if it will have an external or internal focus (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978).

Bartell (2003) used Sporn’s typology to develop a framework to assist in the understanding of the internationalization of universities. He found that a university with a hierarchical dominant culture that focuses on internal maintenance, resource allocation, and control, makes only limited efforts toward internationalization. Whereas, a university that is adhocratic with an entrepreneurial orientation, is more successful in the internationalization process.

Studies examining effectiveness and culture in two-year and four-year institutions have found a strong correlation between the effectiveness of colleges and universities and their dominant culture type (Cameron and Ettington, 1988; Smart and Hamm, 1993; Smart et. al, 1997). Institutions with a dominant adhocracy culture were found to be the most effective followed by those with market and clan cultures. Smart and Hamm (1993) used a two-stage stratified random sample approach to determine the extent to which the effectiveness of two-year colleges differs based on their dominant type of organizational culture. Surveys were obtained from 662 faculty and administrators from 30 different community colleges. They concluded that adhocracy cultures are perceived to be the most effective in two-year colleges because this culture exhibits a strong external focus, meaning they are more concentrated on external positioning, long-term planning, and achievement-oriented activities. Adhocracies appear to

have greater success interacting and adapting to their external environments, outside of their respective college community. They are able to serve and secure resources from sources outside their institution. Because of their awareness and focus on external environments, adhocracy cultures, along with market cultures, have more proactive managerial strategies.

In their literature review of organizational culture and organizational effectiveness, Cameron and Ettington (1988) found that institutions with a clan culture were more effective in promoting morale while those with a market culture were the most effective at acquiring resources. Hierarchical cultures in both two and four-year institutions were found to be the least effective because of their internal orientation, meaning they are more structured with formal rules and policies (Cameron and Ettington, 1988; Smart and Hamm, 1993; Smart et. al, 1997). The concentration at these institutions is on internal management, short-term planning, and tension-reducing activities. Because they are focused on internal affairs, hierarchical cultures tend to be more reactive (Smart and Hamm, 1993).

Smart (2003) surveyed full-time faculty and administrators in a state-wide system of 14 community colleges to examine the extent to which perceptions of organizational effectiveness is related to perceptions of cognitive and behavioral complexity of the organizational culture and of leadership. He found a strong relationship between these factors and suggested that institutions seek a multifaceted combination of all four culture types rather than a single dominant culture. He proposed seeking a blended approach to institutional culture. A blended approach allows administrative leadership to respond to a variety of concerns in the best possible way rather than a single dominant culture type.

Previous research has shown that community colleges often have a hierarchical culture with administrators presiding over faculty (Seidman, 1985; Grubb and Worthern, 1999; Levin, 2006). Seidman (1985) argued that a rivalry exists between community college faculty and

administration with faculty being isolated and having diminished power because of the hierarchal governance structure. Similarly, Levin (2006) used a case-study approach to identify faculty behaviors and values in relation to institutional actions at their community college. Faculty were interviewed from seven different community colleges over a five-year period. Levin found that the values of community college faculty were at odds with the economic behaviors of the institution. He argues that the teaching and curriculum work of faculty is compromised because of the institution's economic goals. Grubb and Worthern (1999) examined institutional forces that influence teaching at community colleges through observations and interviews with more than 300 community college instructors and administrators. They attribute the hierarchical structure of many community colleges to authoritarian decision-making.

Most of the previous research has utilized either quantitative or multi-method approaches to determine an organization's culture. One survey instrument often used is the Institutional Performance Survey (IPS) instrument developed by the National Center for higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) (Smart and Hamm, 1993; Krakower and Niwa, 1985). The survey provides scenarios of various cultures, and participants select the scenario that best describes their environment.

The literature review reveals that organizational culture is constantly being created based on the interactions and assumptions of the organization's members. Numerous studies have utilized the CVF typology to examine the culture of various organizations, including institutions of higher education. The culture of colleges and universities has been shown to be unique and different from other organizations (Peterson and Spencer, 1990). Yet, little research has been conducted examining organizational culture in a four-year university or college, and even less has been done focusing on two-year community colleges. The research that has been conducted has used the CVF to compare college effectiveness with its dominant culture. Studies have

found adhocracy or clan cultures to be the most effective with hierarchical cultures being the least effective. Other research has looked at culture and the ability of universities to adapt to change. Findings suggest that strong, externally oriented cultures are the most capable of adapting to change.

The research does not address culture in a new and emerging community college. Most of the studies group colleges together and describe specific cultures or the effectiveness of cultures. The age and history of a particular institution has not been studied in depth. This information would provide a rich understanding of institutional culture from a unique perspective.

### **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

The present study seeks to describe the organizational culture emerging at Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC). Because of the exploratory nature of the research questions, this study used qualitative research methods. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) define qualitative research as:

Multimethod in its focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (2).

A qualitative approach allows for open-ended questions and gives respondents the ability to explain their answers in more detail than quantitative methods (Gall, Borg, and Gall, 1996).

While qualitative research examines the broad relationship between many categories, quantitative research looks at the relationship between a smaller set of categories (McCracken, 1988).

Due to the qualitative method of research, research questions were presented rather than formal hypotheses. Lindolf and Taylor (2002) said that because qualitative inquiry sets out to interpret the quality of social phenomena, it is not necessary to predict the relationship between the variables involved. Therefore, after reviewing pertinent literature and previous studies, the following research questions guided this study:

1. How do key administrators describe the emerging culture being formed at Baton Rouge Community College?
2. How do faculty members describe the emerging culture being formed at Baton Rouge Community College?

Because the researcher worked at BRCC during the time of this study, bracketing was utilized to prevent bias. Bracketing involves putting aside what a researcher already knows about a particular occurrence so that it does not influence the results. Munhall (1994) stated that the purpose of bracketing is to “set aside our own beliefs for a period of time so that we can ‘hear’ and ‘see,’ as undisturbed as possible by our own knowing.” To achieve bracketing, the researcher must first understand the basis for the study and then identify any presumptions based on previous experiences. Finally, the researcher must disclose assumptions about the phenomenology itself (Gearing, 2004).

The data collection method used was the long interview. The purpose of qualitative interviews is to discover the categories and assumptions that one particular culture interprets the world (McCracken, 1988). Phenomenological in-depth, interviews allow a researcher to understand a person’s perspective, retrieve experiences from the past, gain expert insight or information, obtain descriptions of events that are normally unavailable for observation, foster trust, understand sensitive relationships, and create a record of discourse that can later be analyzed (Lindolf and Taylor, 2002). In addition, long interviews allow interviewers to see and experience the world of their respondent (McCracken, 1988). Since the research questions in this study sought to discover BRCC’s emerging culture, interviews with BRCC administration and faculty provide a portrait of what key values the organization is developing. Students and staff members were not interviewed because this study focused on the emerging culture as developed by the college’s administrative leaders and faculty.

Seven administrators and ten faculty members were interviewed. This number represented saturation or the point of redundancy at which several reoccurring themes emerged. Saturation became apparent after several interviews when the same information was revealed and nothing new was learned. Purposeful sampling was used to determine the administrators to be



interviewed. The goal of purposeful sampling is to select cases that are likely to provide information relative to the purpose of the study (Gall, et al., 1996, p. 218). The intent is not to attain population validity as in quantitative research, but to gain an in-depth understanding of selected individuals and/or a particular case. Administrators were selected based on their position and included the college's four vice chancellors and three academic deans. To understand the faculty perspective of culture at BRCC, ten faculty members were interviewed using the snowball technique due to the large number of faculty members. Snowball sampling involves asking individuals pertinent to the study to recommend other participants to be interviewed (Lindolf and Taylor, 2002). The names of some individuals came up repeatedly as the interviews occurred. These individuals were then interviewed.

Interviews were conducted in person by the researcher, and participants were asked a series of questions (see Appendix B for consent form and Appendix C for interview guide). The interview guide focused on the daily practices at BRCC to reveal the institution's emerging culture. Interviews lasted approximately 25 minutes to one hour. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

The transcribed data collected from interviews was analyzed, reviewed, and sorted using the grounded theory process. Grounded theory contends that theory is grounded in the relationships between data and the categories into which they are coded (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Initially, open coding was used to build categories (Strauss, 1987). Categories were established by grouping information together based on similar findings. A coding scheme was developed and then the categories were analyzed. The researcher coded as many categories as possible and compared each incident to previous incidents to decide in which category it belonged. This "constant comparison" of incidents created "theoretical properties of the category" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 106).

## **DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS**

A total of seven administrators and ten faculty members were interviewed. Interviews were held in the participant's office at the college. The information that follows is a description of each participant (see Appendix D for Participant Demographics).

Administrator One is a white male in his mid-fifties who has been at BRCC for two years. His educational background includes a Ph.D., and all of his work experience has been at community colleges outside of Louisiana. He previously worked in academic affairs and in continuing education divisions at the other institutions.

Administrator Two is a white male in his early-fifties who has been at BRCC for two years. His background is in engineering, and he has a Ph.D. His work experience has been in both corporate settings and at community colleges in other states.

Administrator Three is a white male in his early-fifties who has been at BRCC for three years. His educational background includes an Ed.D. He has primarily worked at four-year institutions outside the state of Louisiana and has no previous experience working at a community college prior to BRCC.

Administrator Four is an African-American female in her mid-fifties who has worked at BRCC for seven years, a year before the college actually opened to students. She has a master's degree and has worked in corporate and government settings for most of her career. While she has worked at a four-year institution in Louisiana, she had never worked at a community college prior to BRCC.

Administrator Five is a white male in his late-fifties who has worked at the college for six years. He has a master's degree and 30 plus graduate hours. His work experience includes teaching at the high school level and working in textbook sales. He has no prior experience working in higher education other than BRCC.

Administrator Six is an African-American female in her late-fifties who has been at the college for four years. Her educational background includes a master's degree, and she has many years of community college experience having worked in finance at a community college in another southern state.

Administrator Seven is a white male in his late-forties who has worked at BRCC for two and a half years. His educational background includes a Ph.D. While he has taught and worked in administration at several four-year institutions in various states, BRCC is his first experience at a community college.

Faculty One is a white female in her mid-fifties who has worked at BRCC for four years. She is an assistant professor and holds a Ph.D. Her background includes teaching for several years at a private high school in Baton Rouge. Working at BRCC has been her first experience teaching at a community college and in higher education.

Faculty Two is a white female in her early-forties. She is an instructor and has worked at the college for three and a half years. Her educational background includes a master's degree and she has worked in a corporate setting for most of her career. She has never worked at a community college or in higher education prior to coming to BRCC.

Faculty Three is an African American female in her early-forties. She is an instructor and has worked at BRCC for five years. She has a master's degree and has taught for many years at a four-year institution in the state. She has never worked at a community college other than BRCC.

Faculty Four is a white female in her early-fifties. She is an instructor and has worked at the college for six years. Her educational background includes a master's degree. She previously taught at a private high school in Baton Rouge and at a four-year institution in another southern state. She has no experience working at a community college other than BRCC.

Faculty Five is a white male in his mid-fifties. He is an assistant professor and has been at the college for seven years. He has a Ph.D. and his background includes serving in the military for more than thirty years. He also has worked as an adjunct professor at two four-year institutions in other states. Working at BRCC is his first experience at a community college.

Faculty Six is a white male in his early-thirties. He is an instructor and has worked at BRCC for four and a half years. He has a Ph.D., and his job at BRCC was his first in higher education after he completed his degree. He does not have any other work experience at another community college.

Faculty Seven is a white male in his early-fifties and has worked at the college for three years. He is an instructor with a master's degree. While he has worked at another four-year university in the state, this faculty member was recruited to BRCC after serving on an advisory committee. He has never worked at a community college before BRCC.

Faculty Eight is an African-American female in her mid-forties. She is an assistant professor and has worked at the college for six years. She has a master's degree and has experience at two other four-year institutions in the state. She has never worked at a community college before BRCC.

Faculty Nine is a white female in her early-thirties who has worked at BRCC for six years. She is an instructor with a master's degree. Prior to BRCC, she worked at two different four-year institutions in the state, both private and public. She also has experience working at another community college in state.

Faculty Ten is a white female in her mid-fifties. She is an assistant professor with a Ph.D. She has worked at the college for seven years and has served in various capacities including academic dean and faculty senate president. While she has no other community college experience, she has worked at another four-year institution in the state.

## **CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS**

The research questions in this study asked how key administrators and faculty members describe the institution's culture. As discussed in the literature review, culture is the pattern of basic assumptions developed by an organization's members (Schein, 1983; Cameron and Quinn, 1999). Likewise, to understand BRCC's culture, it is necessary to find out what basic assumptions its faculty and administration share rather than simply asking them to describe the college's culture. Questions were asked relating to the daily interactions and how the college operates in an effort to discover their basic assumptions. The data was analyzed using the grounded theory process. Open coding was utilized to build categories, which were established by grouping information together based on similar findings.

Several common categories and themes emerged in the coding process. These reoccurring themes that describe the college's culture focus on the acceptance of creative ideas, shared goals, conflict resolution, resource allocation, and opportunities for individual growth. Other themes that emerged revealed issues of concern such as communication, decision making, the youth of the institution, and the college's processes and infrastructure. The analysis that follows examines these common themes discovered in the coding process.

Because this study seeks to discover the college's culture as described by both administration and faculty, the responses of both groups are listed together according to common topics.

### **COMMUNICATION**

Both the administrators and faculty members said that the college has many methods for communicating college-wide changes, but they disagree as to whether these methods are sufficient. Most of the administrators said that communication between faculty and

administration is adequate while some faculty members conversely said that communication is not always adequate.

### **Communication: Administrative Responses**

Administrators said that changes are communicated throughout the college by various approaches such as email, the chancellor's weekend memo to all faculty and staff, quarterly open forums, monthly academic council meetings, monthly cabinet meetings, faculty senate and administration monthly meetings, and daily e-news, which is a daily email sent to all employees updating them on important issues going on at the college. The majority of administrators said that the e-news is the most helpful tool for them to receive communication and that they read it.

Most of the administrators said that they think they do a good job of communicating to their faculty and staff. Administrator Three stated, "I don't see any reason in being secretive...I want my staff to know about [changes] early so that it doesn't just hit them. I don't like to be surprised." He added he tries to let his staff know about changes as early as possible to "give them a chance to have input in the process." He communicates changes using email and with monthly staff meetings.

### **Communication: Faculty Responses**

Answers varied regarding college-wide changes and how they are communicated to faculty. Faculty members said that they are aware of the college's methods and frequency of communication, but not all of them agree that they are adequate. Faculty Six said that his involvement in faculty senate and various committees helps him to be aware of college-wide changes, usually before they are announced. He said that policy changes and faculty issues are communicated to his satisfaction through the college's daily e-news and emails. Faculty Seven said that the chancellor's open forums and use of e-mail allowed him to know when changes were occurring and to have input in the process. For example, the college created a new

semester to serve displaced students after Hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana in the fall of 2005. He said the new semester was conveyed to faculty in a very organized and expeditious manner through emails, written correspondence, and phone calls.

Faculty Four said that she finds out about most administrative changes through email. However, she feels the information communicated is not always correct, which causes confusion. She stated that it can be “crazy because we get an email that says do this and then sometimes within a day or within hours, we’ll get another email that says, ‘Oops, don’t do that.’” She gave the example of an email received from Student Affairs about the academic calendar that was sent out and then changed within a day or so.

Faculty Two stated that because she had worked in administration in the corporate world, she understood that not everyone can be included on everything. However, she felt the college does a good job of communicating major changes. She said that she has never been blindsided by a major change that she did not know about in advance.

Other faculty view communication from administration as problematic and needing improvement. For example, Faculty One stated communication affects her work performance. She said:

The biggest [impediment] would be lack of communication because I work with all departments and staff from all over. Sometimes there is not a well-designed plan for how to do simple things...every little step, we go two steps forward, and one step backward because maybe we’re talking to the wrong person.

Rather than simply asking one person in a department and finding out the answer, she may be sent to two or three different people. She also said that changes in policies and procedures are sometimes communicated to faculty at the last minute, which fosters resentment. She went on to add, “Faculty is sometimes left out of the loop in things that directly affect their performance” because information is not communicated to them. However, she stated that last minute changes

usually come from lower level, front-line staff. She gave the example of when the computer program Blackboard went down so that the IT department could upgrade the software. She said that no one informed the faculty who had planned an orientation that very day for online students. On the other hand, she said that when changes are made at the higher levels, such as the Executive Cabinet, faculty are given advanced notice and it is not last minute.

Faculty Five had a similar opinion. He stated, “We’ve gotten big enough that we’re in the mid-level stage where the communication isn’t coming down and when it does, it is misunderstood.” However, he said the lack of communication is more of a departmental issue, rather than college-wide.

Only one faculty member expressed the opinion that changes are made without faculty input. While this faculty member said the administrative leadership definitely tries to communicate changes to faculty, this does not always happen. Faculty Ten said, “There’s a gap...a disconnect because my sense is that the chancellor would like for us know, but for some reason we don’t get the information.”

## **FACULTY ISSUES**

Faculty said three main issues impeded their work performance at BRCC. They were a lack of internal processes, a lack of support for technology, and the lack of rank, promotion, and tenure policies.

Faculty One stated the lack of processes and infrastructure is both a positive and a negative about BRCC’s environment. She said that one of the things she liked most about BRCC is the fact that everything is not well defined. She enjoys helping to define and shape the institution. However, she said that the college does not always have a well-defined plan for how to do things.



Other faculty members said the lack of infrastructure, in terms of college-wide processes and procedures, hinders their work. Faculty Four said that while processes are improving, it is not always a smooth progression. She stated that the overall infrastructure is getting better, but it takes time and continuous improvement to see a difference. Faculty Nine said her biggest impediment is the growth. She said that the college has grown so rapidly in facilities and in enrollment. As a result, many of the areas such as computing services and registration have not caught up yet and have problems yet to be worked out.

A few faculty members mentioned the college's lack of rank, promotion, and tenure policies as a major issue for them. Because BRCC does not have these policies, faculty have never been able to move up in rank. Faculty members have remained in the same rank as they were first hired. BRCC's ranking of faculty includes instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor, but all the current faculty members are either at the instructor or assistant professor level and are unable to move into a higher rank until policies are approved by the LCTCS. Faculty Four, who is an instructor, stated, "I think the only thing that bothers my morale is the fact that I want my professorship. I want my title. I think I've earned that." Faculty Six repeated this sentiment saying he thought it is more of a long-term problem. He said that it is not something that hits faculty right away, but that as they work over time, it becomes important to them.

A lack of support for technology was the third main impediment identified by faculty. While the college has new, state-of-the-art facilities and technology, faculty said the equipment does not always work and technical assistance is not adequate. For example, Faculty Two said there are some technology issues that affect her ability to teach, which causes her to not rely on the technology because she never knows if it will work. She said that she must have a back up plan for the times when she is unable to use the technology in the classrooms.

Faculty Four said that it is very frustrating when she goes into class prepared to give a PowerPoint lecture and she is unable to use the computer. She has requested assistance from the college's helpdesk system and emailed Information Technology personnel.

### **IS INPUT WELL RECEIVED?**

Overall, most of the administrators and faculty members agreed that creative ideas are well received at the college. They also agree that the college's leadership supports innovation and is open to creative ways of doing things. Administrators described innovation as new and original ways of doing things that are outside of the norm. Administrator Six stated that since the institution received accreditation in December of 2004, the college has the basics in place and is "at the point now that innovation is important to keep us on the edge and to keep us growing." Administrator Seven expressed that "innovative ideas have been well received. People seem to be very eager to see what we might be thinking about doing and getting to explore those possibilities." Examples of innovative ideas described by the administrators were hosting various discipline-specific conferences, offering classes at unique times and locations to accommodate students, and streamlining financial processes to provide numerous payment options for students.

Administrator One expressed his view of how the college's leadership strongly supports creativity and innovation. "I found that the [chancellor's] leadership is one that encourages innovation and change and development. She is a leader that pushes for that." For example, Administrator Four discussed a speaker's series focusing on successful women that was held at the college and open to students, faculty, administration, and the community. The series was the idea of several staff members and was supported by administration. Administrator Six noted that creative ideas often come from the bottom-up. Her front-line staff provides ideas at staff

meetings that she later puts into action such as the idea to provided deferred payment options to students online.

One administrator said that the amount of work affects creativity and innovation. Administrator Four stated, “I encourage innovative ideas all the time...but we’re still in the start-up phase in a lot of areas and there is just so much to do that it takes people away from being creative and innovative.”

Administrator Two thought that the way ideas are received “depends on where they come from.” He said, “A lot of it has to do with politics,” meaning that the way ideas are received depends on how they are presented to administration. Administrator One echoed this sentiment in the way ideas are received depends on the individual. He stated:

Others might not be willing to jump into change, so sometimes there is a personality piece to that, and it can be the person or the workload the individual feels they are doing, but you just have to work with that. That’s part of life. It is largely a culture that has to be built when you are hiring new people. You want to try and hire the folks that you think will be receptive to change.

Some faculty members are not always comfortable making changes due to their personality or because they may think that it will just add to their workload. The administrator explained that he tries to hire people that are innovative in their teaching styles and open-minded when it comes to change.

Similar to the administrators, all of the faculty members agreed that creative and innovative ideas are well received at the college. Faculty One stated, “I will tell you what is different [at BRCC] is the freedom...there is a lot of freedom to be creative and innovative and usually people are receptive to new ideas, so that gives you a lot of leeway.”

Faculty members also expressed the view that the college’s leadership supports innovation and creativity. Faculty Nine stated:

That's been one of the nicest things about working here...ideas are well received, encouraged. To give you an example, the mentor program was a faculty retention idea and [the chancellor] backed it all the way...that is why I do all the stuff that I do outside of my classroom because [the environment] allows for a lot of good ideas to come to fruition.

The faculty member explained that she had an idea to establish a mentor program that would pair up newly hired faculty with those already at the institution. She attributes the program's success to the fact that administration is so encouraging and open to new ideas.

Faculty Ten stated the administration is "really open to us trying to do creative and innovative things and [the chancellor] is good about rewarding people when she knows about it." Several faculty members said they found support and encouragement for innovative teaching techniques. Faculty Three talked about an idea she had to begin an international culture day, which was well received by both faculty and administration and has been quite successful with students. Faculty Seven voiced the same opinion about taking students to various locations for his courses. He said that he had received a lot of support and encouragement for his field studies, which is not the traditional way of teaching.

Several administrators stated the necessity of data and documentation to implement new ideas, make decisions, and obtain resources. Administrator Four said, "Creative ideas are certainly encouraged, however, there has to be good documentation of what is the impact of the innovative idea" meaning "what resources the college will have to put forth and what is the end result." Administrator Five described the chancellor as being "extremely receptive to [new ideas] and she will bend over backwards for them ... if you give her data. She wants to make sure that this is just not a fly by night thing."

Administrator Three said that he uses past experience as evidence of what he thinks will work. He said, "We try a lot of innovative ideas, and most of us operate from we have learned

from our past.” He went on to say, “I don’t want to make a mistake for everybody else, so I’m going to do something that I know about already, whether I’ve experienced it someplace else or I want to think about it a little bit.”

## **SHARED GOALS**

The goals of both the administrators and faculty members are closely aligned and focus on student success. They also agree on the importance of meeting the needs of the community by providing an educated workforce. The administrators emphasized student success and providing a quality education to all students. Administrator Four said that one of the college’s most important goals is to create and enhance the quality of life in the Baton Rouge area through education. Administrator Three said that the college’s most important goals are to provide access to students and then to ensure their success. He said that he knows not all students will get a degree, but they can learn something. He went on to say that it is the college’s job to provide students the tools they need to reach the level of education they desire. Administrator Two said that the college’s and his own mission is simply “to graduate students and put them into a job.” Many administrators also discussed the college’s goal of workforce development. Administrator Seven said that by meeting the community’s needs in terms of offering a particular degree or program, the college is also helping students succeed because they are able to find a viable, well-paying job.

Faculty members had very similar comments about the college’s goals and their reason for wanting to work at the college. They focused on the teaching and learning process and the responsibility they had as leaders in the classroom. Faculty Two said that the college’s main goal is to provide an opportunity for students to receive an education and to help students succeed once they are at BRCC. Similarly, Faculty Six stated, “First and foremost, our goal is to provide a quality education to the students. They come first. They are priority number one.”

Faculty Ten said that her most important goal is to help students rise to the level that they need to be at because so many of her students face obstacles in their personal lives that impact their ability to be successful in the classroom.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIVIDUAL GROWTH**

Several administrators and faculty members said that the college promotes and supports individual growth and improvement. Administrator Five stated that there is always a push to become better. He said the college provides many opportunities for faculty and staff to increase their knowledge through professional development and participation in national conferences. Administrator One reiterated this sentiment. The “[chancellor’s] leadership is one that encourages innovation and change and development.” He stated the environment provides individuals with opportunities to do new things, which is not always the case in higher education. Faculty are motivated to do more than teach because of the administrative support they receive. “[Faculty] initiate projects of change and activities that take place and it’s nice to have them do that,” he said.

Administrator Four stated BRCC’s team atmosphere has provided her the opportunity to grow as a leader because of the interactions with colleagues in other college departments. “I found that the close interaction of the decision makers allows me to learn...to think outside the box. It has definitely been a growing experience for me.”

Faculty One described BRCC’s environment as one that allows individuals the freedom to grow and the latitude to be involved in diverse projects. She said that she likes to try new things a little bit, and BRCC’s environment gives her the latitude to work in different areas that interest her. Faculty Nine said that out of all places she has worked, BRCC has been the best in encouraging growth and freedom among its faculty.

Faculty Three feels the administration sets high expectations, but empowers faculty to help them reach goals. She stated:

Each year I grow...I get better and much of it comes from the empowerment, the encouragement you receive from administrators, especially if you are doing a good job. That means a lot when you can boost up morale... and I've been pushing ever since to be the best.

Faculty Nine said that the leeway given to faculty in the teaching process and course development helps and challenges him uniquely as a professor.

### **YOUTH OF INSTITUTION IS A PROBLEM**

Four of the seven administrators expressed the view that the college does not have well-established processes and infrastructure. Infrastructure was defined as having clear policies and procedures for all aspects of the organization. Many attributed this lack of infrastructure to the institution's relatively young age.

Administrator Three said some changes occur out of necessity rather than proactive planning. He stated, "[Changes are] knee jerk, especially with a new institution. Most changes you'd like to do by planning ahead and looking out into the future...to make changes in a proactive posture so that you don't have to have those crises come up." He stated that as the institution's infrastructure becomes more established and processes are more defined, administrators will make less reactive decisions. Administrator One stated, "We have to keep working on the infrastructure so that it supports all that we're doing and sometimes that is just a little bit of a struggle" because of the lack of policies and procedures in all areas.

Administrator Two said that until the institution is older and more established, systems will continue to have problems and need improvement. He said that the college does not really do many things well because it is so new. He explained that he was not referring to the quality

of instruction or teaching, but internal processes such as those in student affairs and admissions where issues are still being worked out.

Administrator Seven said the youth of the institution has contributed to an overall positive culture. He stated:

It's a new institution, so there's a lot of strong energy. There's not a lot of preconceived ideas about what has to be done... and the culture's being built, rather than people saying, 'We've done this for many years, so why change it?' I don't hear that."

Two administrators said the role and mission of a community college versus that of a four-year university is not clearly understood by everyone because the institution is still so new. Administrator Three stated, "[Students] haven't been exposed much to higher education and the faculty come in with a four-year background, and there's no in between. The state...doesn't have the history of a tiered system of education" which leads to a lack of understanding about the differences between technical schools, two-year colleges, and four-year universities.

## **NO CONFLICTS HERE**

A discrepancy arose in the responses of both administrators and faculty when discussing conflicts at the college. Both administrators and faculty said that conflicts do not affect their working environment and do not affect them in a major way. However, when asked about how conflicts are handled on the rare occasions that they do arise, both groups said they are handled one-on-one.

## **Conflicts: Administrative Responses**

Administrators said that conflicts do not affect their working environment because they are relatively minor issues that are more of theoretical disagreements than conflicts. When they discussed conflicts, administrators were referring to differences of opinions among their colleagues rather than conflicts between administration and faculty. Administrator Six stated,



“We’ve had differences of opinion, but because we will talk, I think reason prevails.” She further stated that conflicts do not affect her environment “because I don’t hold grudges and it’s not personal. It’s professional.” Administrator Five expressed the view that “sometimes what is perceived to be a conflict [with others], is a conflict within myself for not having the time to do everything I need to do.”

All of the administrators said that when they are faced with a difference of opinion, they handle them one-on-one. Administrator Four stated, “If I disagree with [another administrator], I come right out to him and tell him. I feel very comfortable with [them], very comfortable to approach them and say, ‘Hey, let me suggest this way because I’m not sure this is going to work.’ ”

Administrator Seven stated, “I don’t think I’ve had any real disagreements since I’ve been here.” He further stated that he has “never had to go outside of the person [he’s] dealing with or had a conflict with” to handle a situation. Administrator Five reiterated this idea, saying, “If I have a conflict with my colleague, we will talk it out...I have never had the occasion to have a conflict where I had to have someone, like [my supervisor] intercede or referee or anything like that.”

In dealing with concerns between faculty and administration, Administrator One said that he brings “together the deans, the faculty senate president, and together we try to look at what are the issues we have to deal with.” For example, when a change was needed in the faculty advising process, he met with the group to discuss possible solutions. The group jointly agreed on establishing a satellite advising station for faculty.

Three administrators expressed the opinion that faculty and staff lack teamwork and accountability at times. Administrator Three said:

It was interesting to come in and see that all the areas were just built and brand new areas that are on their way and every area needs attention rather than just one or two areas. Coordinating those areas and getting them to work internally well and then work together well in a team concept is the biggest challenge. I think that's what Baton Rouge Community College needs more than anything else right now is a sense of teamwork, working together, and making sure that one hand knows what the other hand is doing because sometimes we inadvertently let things slip through the cracks or we inadvertently step on each other's toes.

When discussing teamwork, the administrator was referring to the need for both faculty members, front-line support staff, and administrators to all work together. The administrator said that departments should collaborate more when issues arise so that everyone is aware of problems and the identified solutions rather than individual departments all trying to work out the same problem on their own.

Administrator One said that a lack of teamwork at the college is more of a personality issue with some faculty and staff rather than an overarching attitude. He stated, "Sometimes an impediment is just that not everyone has a positive attitude ... some people have the attitude that if something is just a little difficult or seems difficult, then it won't work" while others have the attitude of how can we find a way to make it happen.

### **Conflicts: Faculty Responses**

Similar to the administrators, the faculty said that conflicts do not affect their particular working environment. Faculty Four said that were is that everybody is warm and friendly, and I don't have any problems." Faculty One stated about her division, "We don't have any conflicts. We have a pretty tight group...there's no blaming, yelling, and screaming, but rather listening to both sides and working out a compromise." Faculty Six summed up the general consensus:

I think people have the proper perspective that they are here to work and although no one is shut down or censored or anything, they also behave admirably with restraint, generally speaking. They keep their focus and so you don't see those kind of personal animosities.

A few faculty expressed the opinion that while conflicts exist in other divisions of the college, they do not affect them personally. Referring to office gossip, Faculty Two said, “There is conflict everywhere you go, you know, and I’m just not going to be part of that foolishness.” She said that she chooses not to spend her time engaging in conflicts because she would rather focus on serving students. Another faculty member said that workload prevents her department from engaging in conflicts. As Faculty One stated:

When a conflict arises, I know there are some other departments where the first thing they would do is run to faculty senate [to spread gossip]... and then that gets the wheel turning or they constantly spread rumors, but our department doesn’t really get into that because we are too busy.

All the faculty said that when disagreements arise, they are handled one-on-one. Faculty Four said that she does not hesitate to say if something bothers her because she said conflicts should be identified and resolved rather than letting them become personal. Faculty Ten said that the faculty as a whole are pretty good about working things out among themselves without having to go to a dean.

## **DECISION-MAKING**

Both administrators and faculty members said that college-wide decisions are made collectively or top-down. College-wide decisions were defined as policy or procedural decisions that impact all faculty and administration. Collective decisions were described as those that are based on a consensus from faculty and staff input. Conversely, top-down decisions were described as those made by administrators without any input from faculty and staff.

Decisions can be initiated at various levels within the organization, but for this study, participants were asked about decisions made at the college-wide level and those made at the departmental level because these types of decisions affect either the entire college or a major division of the college. College-wide decisions must be approved by the Executive Cabinet,

which consists of the chancellor, the four vice chancellors, and the executive assistant to the chancellor. These decisions are policy-based and affect the entire college community.

At the departmental-level, both administrators and faculty members agreed that decisions are made collectively. Departmental decisions would be those that are made by a vice chancellor or academic dean and would only affect his or her particular area. For example, an academic dean is responsible for presenting a budget for each of the disciplines within his or her division. To do so, the dean meets with faculty and they collectively decide on the group's priorities and budget requests.

Administrators said that decisions are made both collective and top-down depending on the decision to be made and the amount of time given to make the decision. Administrator Six stated it simply, "it works both ways." At the Executive Cabinet level, decisions seem to be made both collectively and top-down depending on the situation. For example, the Executive Cabinet uses a collective approach when approving college-wide policies by receiving input from faculty and staff. In other circumstances, decisions made by the Executive Cabinet are made from a top-down approach such as in emergency situations. When Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit the community in the fall of 2005, the Executive Cabinet did not have time to ask for input on the best way to respond to the disasters. Rather, they swiftly made a decision to add a new semester for displaced students.

Administrator Six, who is a member of the Executive Cabinet, stated:

We are all encouraged to make sure we have included our constituents, be it internal or external customers, before we bring [something] to the Executive Cabinet because the assumption is that all affected parties and stakeholders have been involved in making that decision.

Administrator One, who is also a part of the Executive Cabinet, said that he always tries to make collective decisions because faculty are independent thinkers who want and deserve a say in their

future. He also stated that involving faculty in the decision-making process is best for everyone because people are more willing to support a decision that they had a part in making. However, as Administrator Three stated, “Input is not decision-making. Not everybody is going to feel the same way...sometimes you just have to make a decision because it’s the right thing to do.”

Only Administrator Two said that college-wide decision-making is strictly top-down. He stated that he “doesn’t really make any decisions” or have input, but merely “recommends.” He explained that many of the policy-making decisions are made by the Executive Cabinet, and he does not think adequate input is received for these types of decisions. No other administrator expressed this opinion.

Nearly half of the administrators said that faculty members are involved in the decision-making process. Administrator Seven stated that he and his faculty members make collective decisions. Administrator Four expressed the general consensus as follows:

I’m one who believes in participative management wherever that’s possible, but I also understand that the college makes strategic plans and goals that have to be trickled down...There will be opportunities in which things will be mandated, but you hope that those are not the majority.

Administrator Five reasoned that “the best decisions are made when the people you are deciding things for have ownership in making that decision.” He also said that he always tries to involve his faculty in decisions when possible, but sometimes he simply does not have enough time to get input.

Administrator Five said that as an administrator, he is ultimately responsible for the decisions made in his area. He also said that he will be held accountable for his decision-making regardless if he received input from his faculty members or not.

Like the administrators, all the faculty members expressed the opinion that decision-making at the college is made both collectively and top-down by administration. The majority of

faculty said that decisions made at the department-level are made collectively with an effort to receive group input. However, they said that decisions made at the college-wide, administrative-level are more of a combination. Faculty One said:

Within our division, they're always made from the bottom up...most things that involve the classroom originates with the faculty and then goes up to the dean. The dean is very supportive, so everyone feels they have a say, which is important that they have ownership.

Faculty One echoed this sentiment. She said that her division makes decisions from a group consensus and there is always an open door to the dean and assistant dean. Faculty Three added that decisions are made half collectively and half top-down. She stated, however, that even when decisions are made top-down, administration communicates the reasoning behind the decision. Faculty Six said that there are more top-down decisions made at the executive-level of the college, but that this is exactly how it should be to run the college effectively.

Only one faculty member expressed the opinion that changes are made without faculty input. Faculty Ten stated faculty "are given the opportunity or input, but sometimes the [administration] goes ahead and does what they want to." She went on to say, "We kind of feel like changes get made and we just find out about it by showing up."

## **RESOURCES ARE OBTAINED THROUGH FORMAL PROCESSES**

All the administrators said college resources are obtained through formal processes. The college has a planning process cycle that links strategic planning with budget requests. The college plans its budget six months before the fiscal year actually begins, which is July 1 of each year. To accomplish this, hearings are held the previous November. Requests for new funds must be supported by data and requested during the scheduled hearings. Data for requests includes any documentation that would support additional funding. Administrator Five described the budgetary process as rigorous in that he has to assess his division's needs for an

entire year and then justify why funds are needed and how they will be used to help achieve the college's strategic plan.

Administrators said that requests for funds and other resources are handled in a fair and equitable manner because of the formal budget process. If a request comes up after the hearings, the administrator must justify the need and explain why he or she did not ask for funds during the hearings. Formal requests must involve research to support the request and the intended outcomes for the funds before a request will even be considered.

Administrator Three stated that he found it was difficult to plan his budget for the following year when the current year's budget had not yet been expended. If additional funds or resources are needed after the budget hearings, a formal request must be made to the chancellor. One administrator said that he would first make the request through his vice chancellor, who would then follow-up with the chancellor. Another administrator, who reports directly to the chancellor, said that she puts requests in writing by sending the chancellor memos and emails.

Like the administrators, all of the faculty interviewed said resources are obtained through formal processes. At the faculty level, they submit requests to their assistant dean and dean who then present a budget for each division at the annual budget hearings. All the faculty indicated that resources are obtained in a fair and equitable manner.

Faculty mentioned that the college provides academic enhancement grants for creative and innovative projects. A few said that they received funds through this process when there was not enough money in their department or division budgets.

## **CULTURE IN THEIR OWN WORDS**

Both administration and faculty used similar words to describe BRCC's culture. In the final comments of each interview, participants were asked if they had any comments regarding the culture at BRCC. Some administrators and faculty used the words "growth,"

“change,” “diversity,” and “exciting” in talking about the college’s culture, while others did not think BRCC had developed a culture yet. As Faculty Nine stated, “Things are always growing and people are always moving.”

Many of the administrators depicted BRCC’s culture as one of constant change. Administrator One said that the culture is one of transformation and change. He also said that the institution is growing and there are many opportunities for doing new things. Administrators also described BRCC’s culture as being exciting and positive. Administrator Seven said BRCC’s culture is highly energized from both faculty and staff. Administrator Four said BRCC promotes a culture of community and family.

Administrator Five described the culture as one that is constantly pushing you to become better and is focused on customer service. Administrator Six said BRCC’s culture is one of quality. She stated, “BRCC has built a reputation not only locally, but nationally.”

Administrator Six who has community college experience was surprised by the culture that has already developed. She stated:

Coming to BRCC as an emerging institution had its challenges and quite frankly, I was surprised by the entrenchment of ‘This is the way we’ve always done it’ in such a new campus. Newly established, with new policies, and so that was a surprise to me.

Administrator Two said the institution does not have a particular culture and “it has not found its voice yet.” Administrator Seven likewise said that the culture is not really defined yet because of the growth and constant changes. He said, “Once we get our systems more streamlined, we will be able to connect our history with our culture.”

Several faculty members described BRCC’s culture as diverse and as one that values diversity of cultures, races, and ideas. Faculty Ten said the culture is supportive. Faculty Nine said there is a great sense of comradely among faculty and an overall sense of teamwork.



## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The two research questions posed in this study asked how administrators and faculty members describe BRCC's culture. Given that the values, customs, rituals, and beliefs expressed by an organization's members create and shape culture, qualitative interviews with faculty members and administration discussing the college's daily activities provide insight into BRCC's unique culture (Jelinek et al., 1983; Kuh and Whitt, 1988). The daily interactions between organizational members described by the participants in this study highlight the values and beliefs important to the college as a whole. Schein (1983) states that culture is the pattern of basic assumptions which a group has invented, discovered, or developed. BRCC's culture is unique because of the distinctive assumptions that have emerged from the college's faculty and administration. As these basic assumptions change and evolve each day, so does the culture.

One interesting finding from this study is the similar descriptions about BRCC's culture expressed by both faculty and administration. Contrary to Grubb and Worthen (1999) and Seidman's (2006) research, this study found that both of these diverse groups share many of the same priorities and goals. While the two groups had differing opinions on topics, several themes were consistent. Based on responses from administrators and faculty, BRCC's dynamic culture is one of constant growth and change. The environment is energetic and exciting. The majority of faculty members and administrators are proud of the institution's accomplishments and enjoy working at the college. Both groups described the college's culture as supportive of creative ideas and encouraging of self-growth. Concerning decision-making, both groups agreed that college-wide decisions are made using both collective and top-down approaches and departmental decisions are made using a collective approach and involving all the faculty or staff in a department. Administration and faculty also agreed on areas that need improvement such as the college's internal processes, infrastructure, and communication.

An inconsistency emerged between the administrators and faculty when they discussed conflicts at the college. On the surface, both groups said that conflicts do not exist at the college and do not affect their working environment. However, it seems that conflicts do exist at the college. When participants were asked to elaborate about the conflicts that ‘do not exist’, they explained that they ‘don’t hold grudges’ and disagreements are ‘not personal’. Both groups also said that conflicts are handled one-on-one. In addition, a few administrators discussed the idea that there was a lack of accountability and teamwork among faculty and administration. Perhaps faculty and administration focus more on the positive rather than on issues where disagreements have occurred. Most of the participants had an optimistic view of the college, which is a possible reason why they do not really think conflicts exist. Another potential reason for this discrepancy may be that everyone is so busy working that they do not have time to notice conflicts that may exist with others. Several faculty members discussed having a heavy workload, but when probed further, their workload is the same or very similar to their colleagues at other community colleges.

Since communication issues can be linked to problems in a community or organization’s day-to-day activities or culture, it is important to note that this study found that communication between administration and faculty is not always adequate. While administrators said that communication of college-wide changes is sufficient, not all faculty members held the same viewpoint. Some faculty members indicated that they were not always informed about decisions and new processes and that this affected their work performance. Both a lack of communication and the communication of incorrect information seems to be a source of confusion for some faculty members.

Unlike previous research that has shown community colleges often have a hierarchical culture, this study found that both the administration and faculty describe BRCC’s culture as

having many qualities of an adhocracy (Seidman, 1985; Grubb and Worthern, 1999; Levin, 2006). Adhocracy cultures assume that change is inevitable and emphasize creativity, entrepreneurship, growth, and adaptability (Cameron and Freeman, 1991; Smart and Hamm, 1993). Many administrators and faculty members discussed the constant changes faced at the college because of BRCC's age and rapid growth. Another characteristic of adhocracies is innovation (Smart, et al., 1997). Both the administrators and faculty repeatedly said that innovative and creative ideas are encouraged and well received. In addition, BRCC has a number of innovative programs, such as academic enhancement grants and professional development opportunities that encourage faculty and staff to be entrepreneurial and creative. Leaders in adhocracy cultures are entrepreneurs, innovators, and risk takers (Cameron and Freeman, 1991). Several administrators and faculty members specifically mentioned the chancellor's leadership style as being inclusive and innovative.

Using Sporn's (1996) cultural typology, BRCC's administration and faculty describe the college's culture as strong and externally oriented in that it is outward focused and supportive of creative ideas. A strong culture encourages diverse opinions and debate for the sake of improvement (Sporn, 1996). This study found that BRCC's faculty and administration are respectful and open to diverse ideas. The institution's youth and lack of formal processes provide opportunities for different opinions and debate about how procedures should be implemented. Based on the findings of this study, BRCC would be more capable of adapting to environmental changes than an internally oriented culture. Internally oriented cultures are focused more on immediate, institutional management issues (Sporn, 1996).

This study does not fully support Seidman's (1985) findings that faculty have diminished power. While a few faculty members said that administration makes decisions without getting faculty input, the majority of faculty members said decision-making is both collective and top-

down. Many faculty members said they feel that they are included in the decision-making process. They also said they enjoyed the team environment that exists at the college.

While this study provides useful information about the culture of a newly formed community college, it has limitations due to the nature of qualitative research. As with all qualitative research, the results of this study may not be generalized to other community colleges. Culture is as unique and distinctive as the individuals who are in it. Therefore, the results of this study are only applicable to BRCC. Nevertheless, the findings of this study have several implications for BRCC and for the field of communication in relation to community colleges.

As an emerging community college, BRCC exhibits the characteristics of an adhocracy culture, which has been shown to be the most effective dominant culture for a two-year institution (Smart and Hamm, 1993). Additional research should be conducted to further explore the institutional effectiveness of a community college with an adhocracy dominant culture. It would also be interesting to compare the institutional effectiveness of two institutions, both with adhocracy dominant cultures, but one that was well-established and the other a newly created, emerging two-year institution. It would seem that the institutional effectiveness would be greater for the older institution because it would already have well-defined policies, procedures, and infrastructure.

Since culture is ever-changing and evolving, administration and faculty should work together to continue to foster the strong and externally oriented culture described by BRCC's administration and faculty. Administration and faculty should jointly determine the values they want to promote and set goals on how to achieve them. Additional research could be done to explore ways that community college administration can reach out to faculty in areas where the two groups do not agree, such as communicating change and decision-making at the college-

wide level. Different approaches to communicate to faculty versus administration should also be explored. Further research could be done to study the different perceptions of conflict by faculty and administrators.

## REFERENCES

- Baker, G. (ed.) (1994). *A handbook on the community college in America: Its history, mission, and management*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Bartell, M. (2003). Internationalization of universities: a university culture-based framework. *Higher Education*, 45(1), 43-70.
- Baton Rouge Community College catalog* (2004-2006). Retrieved April 5, 2005 from <http://www.brcc.cc.la.us/catalog/Catalog2004-06.pdf>
- Baton Rouge Community College fact book* (2004). Retrieved April 5, 2005 from [http://brccweb.brcc.cc.la.us/irp/files/pdf/Fact\\_Book\\_2004.pdf](http://brccweb.brcc.cc.la.us/irp/files/pdf/Fact_Book_2004.pdf)
- Baton Rouge Community College institutional self-study* (2004). Retrieved April 5, 2005 from <http://www.brcc.cc.la.us/sacs/reports.php>
- Baton Rouge Community College student handbook* (2004). Retrieved April 5, 2005 from [http://www.brcc.cc.la.us/student\\_affairs/studenthandbooklowg.pdf](http://www.brcc.cc.la.us/student_affairs/studenthandbooklowg.pdf)
- Berger, P., and Luckmann, T. (1967). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.
- Cameron, K., and Ettington, D. (1988). The conceptual foundations of organizational culture. In J. C. Smart (ed.), *Higher education: Handbook of theory and research*, 4. New York: Agathon Press, 356-396.
- Cameron, K., and Freeman, D. (1991). Cultural congruence, strength, and type: Relationships to effectiveness. *Research in Organizational Change and Development*, 5(1), 23-58.
- Cameron, K., and Quinn, R. (1999). *Diagnosing and changing organization culture*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Carey, J. (1989). A cultural approach to communication. *Communication as Culture: Essay on Media and Society*. New York: Routledge, 13-36.
- Cohen, A., and Brawer, F. (1989). *The American community college* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Commission on Colleges. (2006). *Southern association of college and schools, member and candidate list*. Retrieved February 5, 2006, from <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/weblist0106alpha.pdf>
- Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (1994). Introduction: Entering the field of qualitative research. In N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1-117.

- Gall, M., Borg, W., and Gall, J. (1996). *Educational research: An introduction* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Gearing, R. (2004, December). Bracketing in research: A typology. *Qualitative Health Research*, 14(10), 1429-1452.
- Glaser, B., and Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago, IL: Aldine.
- Governor's Task Force on Technical and Community Colleges and Adult Education (1998, January 22). *Draft for discussion*. Baton Rouge, LA.
- Grubb, N., and Worther, H. (1999). *Honored, but invisible*. New York: Routledge.
- Hefferlin, J. (1969). *Dynamics of academic reform*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Herda-Rapp, A. (2003). The social construction of local school violence threats by the news media and professional organizations. *Sociological Inquiry*, 73(4), 545-74.
- Jelinek, M., Smircich, L., and Hirsch, P. (1983). Introduction: A code of many colors. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28(3), 331-38.
- Jones, K., and Redman, R. (2000). Organizational culture and work redesign: Experience in three organizations. *Journal of Nursing Administration*, 30, 604-610.
- Kotler, P., and Fox, K. (1995). *Strategic marketing for educational organizations* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Krawower, J., and Niwa, S. (1985). *An assessment of the validity and reliability of the institutional performance survey*. Boulder, CO: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems.
- Kuh, G., and Whitt, E. (1988). The invisible tapestry: Culture in American colleges and universities. *ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 1*. Association for the Study of Higher Education, New York.
- Levin, J. (2006). Faculty work: Tensions between educational and economic values. *The Journal for Higher Education*, 3,(1), 62-88.
- Lindolf, T., and Taylor, B. (2002). *Qualitative communication research methods* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Louisiana Board of Regents (2001). *Master plan for public postsecondary education*, 23-29. Baton Rouge, LA.

- Louisiana Board of Regents (2003, June 26). *Meeting minutes, academic and student affairs committee*. Retrieved May 20, 2005, from <http://www.regents.state.la.us/Board/Minutes/2003/mi062603.htm>
- Louisiana Board of Regents statewide student profile*. (1998, Fall). Retrieved November 11, 2005 from <http://www.regents.state.la.us/pdfs/fall1998-1999/sspsload298.pdf>
- Louisiana Board of Regents statewide student profile*. (2005, Fall). Retrieved August, 2006 from <http://www.regents.state.la.us/pdfs/fall05/sspsload205.pdf>
- Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) (2001, October). Board meeting minutes. Baton Rouge, LA.
- Louisiana State University National Flagship Agenda Preamble*. (n.d.). Retrieved June 1, 2005, from <http://appl003.lsu.edu/acadaff/flagship.nsf/index>
- McCracken, G. (1988). *The long interview*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Munhall, P. (1994). *Revisioning phenomenology: Nursing and health science research*. New York, NY: National League for Nursing.
- National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (2005, May 10). *A study of the governance structure of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS), report to the Louisiana Board of Regents*. Retrieved October 15, 2005 from <http://www.regents.state.la.us/pdfs/Planning/SCR%20163LTC%20report%2004252005New1.pdf>
- Obenchain, A., Johnson, W., and Dion, P. (2004). Institutional types, organizational cultures, and innovation in Christian colleges and universities. *Christian Higher Education*, 3(1), 15-39.
- Parker, M. (2000). *Organizational culture and identity*. London: Sage.
- Peters, T., and Waterman, R. (1982). *In search of excellence*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Peterson, M. and Spencer, M. (1990). Understanding academic culture and climate. In W. Tierney (ed.), *New directions for institutional research*, 17(68), 3-29. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Pfeffer, J., and Salancik, G. (1978). *The external control of organizations: A resource dependence perspective*. New York, NY: Harper and Row.
- Phillippe, K., and Patton, M. (2000). *National profile of community colleges: Trends and statistics* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Washington DC: Community College Press.
- Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana, Inc. (1997, August). *The community college question: Summary report* (PAR Analysis, No. 295). Baton Rouge, LA.



- Quigley, M., and Bailey, T. (2003). *Community college movement in perspective: Teachers college responds to the Truman Commission*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow.
- Quinn, R., and McGrath, M. (1985). The transformation of organizational cultures: a competing values perspective. In P. Frost, L. Moore, M. Louis, C. Lundberg, and J. Martin (eds.), *Organizational Culture*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 315-334.
- Quinn, R., and Rohrbaugh, J. (1983). A spatial model of effectiveness criteria: Toward a competing values approach to organizational analysis. *Management Science*, 29(3), 363-377.
- Riley, P. (1983). A structurationist account of political cultures. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28(3), 414-437.
- Schein, E. (1983, Summer). The role of the founder in creating organizational culture. *Organizational Dynamics*, 12(1), 13-28.
- Schein, E. (2004) *Organizational culture and leadership* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Scott-Cawiezell, J., Jones, K., and Moore, L. (2005). Nursing home culture: A critical component in sustained improvement. *Journal of Nursing Care Quality*, 20(4), 341-348.
- Seidman, R. (1985). *In the words of the faculty*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Smart, J., and Hamm, R. (1993). Organizational culture and effectiveness in two-year colleges. *Research in Higher Education*, 34(1), 95-106.
- Smart, J., Kuh, G., and Tierney, W. (1997). The roles of institutional culture and decision approaches in promoting organizational effectiveness in two-year colleges. *Journal of Higher Education*, 68(3), 256-281.
- Southern University undergraduate catalog*. (2004-2006). Retrieved April 7, 2005 from [http://www.subr.edu/pdf/06undergrad\\_%20catalog.pdf](http://www.subr.edu/pdf/06undergrad_%20catalog.pdf)
- Sporn, B. (1996). Managing university culture: An analysis of the relationship between institutional culture and management approaches. *Higher Education*, 32(1), 41-61.
- Strauss, A. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientist*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Tierney, W. (1988). Organizational culture in higher education: defining the essentials. *Journal of Higher Education*, 59(1), 219-241.
- United States v. Louisiana. No. 80-3300. District Ct. of the US. 4 Nov. 1994.

**APPENDIX A**  
**LIST OF LOUISIANA COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM**  
**(LCTCS) INSTITUTIONS**

Community Colleges:

1. Baton Rouge Community College - Baton Rouge
2. Bossier Parish Community College - Bossier City
3. Delgado Community College - New Orleans
4. Elaine P. Nunez Community College - Chalmette
5. Louisiana Delta Community College - Monroe
6. River Parishes Community College - Sorrento
7. South Louisiana Community College - Lafayette

Technical Community Colleges:

1. L.E. Fletcher Technical Community College - Houma
2. Sowela Technical Community College - Lake Charles

Technical College Campuses:

1. Acadian Campus - Crowley
2. Alexandria Campus - Alexandria
3. Ascension Campus - Sorrento
4. Avoyelles Campus - Cottonport
5. Bastrop Campus - Bastrop
6. Baton Rouge Campus - Baton Rouge
7. Charles B. Coreil Campus - Ville Platte
8. Delta-Ouachita Campus - West Monroe
9. Evangeline Campus - St. Martinville
10. Florida Parishes Campus - Greensburg
11. Folkes Campus - Jackson
12. Gulf Area Campus - Abbeville
13. Hammond Area Campus - Hammond
14. Huey P. Long Campus - Winnfield
15. Jefferson Campus - Metairie
16. Jumonville Campus - New Roads
17. Lafayette Campus - Lafayette
18. Lafourche Campus - Thibodeaux
19. Lamar Salter Campus - Leesville
20. Mansfield Campus - Mansfield
21. Morgan Smith Campus - Jennings
22. Natchitoches Campus - Natchitoches
23. North Central Campus - Farmerville
24. Northeast LA Campus - Winnsboro
25. Northwest LA Campus - Minden
26. Oakdale Campus - Oakdale
27. River Parishes Campus - Reserve
28. Ruston Campus - Ruston
29. Sabine Valley Campus - Many

30. Shelby M. Jackson Campus - Ferriday
31. Shreveport-Bossier Campus - Shreveport
32. Sidney N. Collier Campus - New Orleans
33. Slidell Campus - Slidell
34. Sullivan Campus - Bogalusa
35. Tallulah Campus - Tallulah
36. Teche Area Campus - New Iberia
37. T.H. Harris Campus - Opelousas
38. West Jefferson Campus - Harvey
39. Westside Campus - Plaquemine
40. Young Memorial Campus - Morgan City

## **APPENDIX B CONSENT FORM**

Study Title: The Emerging Culture of a Community College.

Performance Site: Interviews will be held at Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC).

Investigator: Misty O’Connell can be reached at 216-6950, M-F, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., for any questions regarding this study.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research project is to examine the organizational culture emerging at BRCC.

Subject Inclusion: Key administrative staff and faculty members currently working at Baton Rouge Community College

Number of Subjects: 17

Study Procedures: Participants will be interviewed and asked questions about the values, practices, and culture at BRCC.

Benefits: This study may provide useful information regarding organizational culture, specifically at a community college.

Risks: The only risk is the inadvertent release of sensitive information disclosed in the interview. However, every effort will be made to maintain the confidentiality of study records. Files will be kept in secure cabinets to which only the investigator has access.

Right to Refuse: Subjects may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or loss of any benefit to which they might otherwise be entitled.

Privacy: Results of this study may be published, but no names will be included in the publication. Subjects identity will remain confidential unless disclosure is required by law.

This study has been discussed with me and all my questions have been answered. I may direct additional questions regarding study specifics to the investigator. If I have questions about subject rights or other concerns, I can contact Robert C. Mathews, Institutional Review Board, (225) 578-8692. I agree to participate in the study described above and acknowledge the investigator’s obligation to provide me with a signed copy of this consent form.

---

Signature of Subject

---

Date

## **APPENDIX C**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Tell me about your job?
  - a. Job title (or role)
  - b. Brief description of job; what do you do?
  - c. How long have you worked at BRCC?
  - d. What is your educational background?
2. So how did you end up working at BRCC?
3. How does your experience at BRCC compare with other community colleges or four-year universities where you have worked?
4. What does BRCC's environment encourage you to do well? How does it help you to excel?
5. Is there anything about the work environment that may impede your performance? If so, what?
6. Tell me about how decisions are made. Are decisions made collectively or top-down?
7. How is change implemented in college-wide decisions? Give me an example.
8. How do you make informal and formal requests for resources?
9. How are creative and innovative ideas received? Give me an example.
10. Tell me about how conflicts with colleagues are handled and/or resolved. Give me an example.
11. How do conflicts affect your professional environment?
12. What are the college's two most important goals?

**APPENDIX D**  
**PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS**

	<b>ADMINISTRATORS</b>	<b>FACULTY</b>
<b>Total Interviewed</b>	7	10
<b>Gender</b>	2 Females 5 Males	7 Females 3 Males
<b>Race</b>	2 African American 5 Caucasian	8 African American 2 Caucasian
<b>Education—Highest Level Attained</b>	4 Doctoral Degree 3 Master's Degree	4 Doctoral Degree 6 Master's Degree
<b>Rank</b>	4 Vice Chancellors 3 Academic Deans	4 Assistant Professors 6 Instructors
<b>Number with Experience Working at a Community College</b>	3	1

## VITA

Misty Kyle O'Connell holds a Bachelors of Arts Degree from Louisiana College in Pineville. O'Connell has worked at Baton Rouge Community College (BRCC) since the fall of 2001. She currently serves as the Executive Assistant to the Chancellor. In this position, O'Connell oversees all college-wide professional and leadership development activities, best practices and continuous quality initiatives, and community development projects. She serves as a member of the Chancellor's Executive Cabinet and Extended Cabinet. O'Connell supervises and coordinates the college's annual commencement, annual fundraising gala, fall and spring convocations, and student recognition banquet. Her experience also includes helping the college achieve Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accreditation status by serving as a member of BRCC's SACS Steering committee and SACS Logistics team. O'Connell was selected to participate in the Louisiana Community and Technical College System (LCTCS) prestigious Leadership Development Institute during 2004-2005.

O'Connell currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Audubon Council Girl Scouts and is a member of the Louisiana Association of Women in Higher Education (LAWHE). She also represents the College for a number of organizations including the Louisiana American College Testing (ACT) Council and the Continuous Quality Improvement Network (CQIN).

Prior to coming to BRCC, O'Connell worked as Program Director at Gulf Coast Teaching Family Services in Alexandria. In this position, O'Connell managed three state programs that provided assistance to developmentally disabled clients and their caregivers.

She has been married to Phillip O'Connell since 2000. They are the proud parents of a son, Dylan Michael, who was born in March of 2006.