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Mission Enactment and Strategic Enrollment Management at Jesuit Universities

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The University of San Francisco

MISSION ENACTMENT AND STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT
AT JESUIT UNIVERSITIES

A Dissertation Presented
to
The Faculty of the School of Education
Department of Leadership Studies

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

The larger neoliberal environment that is driving all of higher education has left Jesuit universities and their leadership to face two problems. First, the ability for Jesuit universities to uphold their social justice inspired mission and offer an affordable and accessible liberal education is being threatened because they are pricing out those they seek to serve. Second, there is a growing disconnect between the espoused mission of Jesuit universities and the decisions that their leaders and administrators make to run the enterprise.

This explanatory case study seeks to understand the ways senior-level strategic enrollment officers at Jesuit universities experience and navigate tensions that exist between espoused mission and neoliberal pressures, which throughout this study is referred to as *the space between*. This study offers a descriptive analysis of recent IPEDS data exploring variables related to access and affordability at Jesuit universities. More substantially, data for this study was collected through semi-structured interviews with 11 vice presidents of enrollment from Jesuit universities.

Key findings emerged through participant reflections and were organized into three thematic sections. First, commitment to mission significantly impacts participants experience navigating the space between. Second, without sufficient resources to run the enterprise, Jesuit universities cannot enact their mission. Third, navigating the space between espoused mission and neoliberal pressure is a complex endeavor. Ultimately this study calls for a new paradigm that shifts the metrics by which Jesuit universities measure success away from financial outcomes that are rooted in neoliberalism to outcomes that are grounded in equity and thereby mission enactment.

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the faculty has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and the methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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Lin-Manuel Miranda's musical *Hamilton* will forever be the soundtrack to this work. The concluding remarks in the dissertation are introduced by a quote from Miranda: "What is a legacy? It's planting seeds in a garden you never get to see." This body of work is a seed that I have planted for my children **Gracie and Jackson**, whose bright light inspires me to contribute something meaningful to the world that their generation will inherit. At its core this work is my humble attempt to make a systemic contribution to a more just, equitable, and inclusive world.

This work has grown in a garden that has been nurtured by family, mentors, and friends who have planted seeds in my life and I am honored to thank here. First and foremost, **Krista Roberts**, my best friend and partner in life who has been a constant support through the highs and lows of this journey, and has made immeasurable sacrifice over the past five years to pursue this dream together. **Karen Roberts**, my mother and the first person to teach me that, *love is love is love is love is love is love is love*.

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CHAPTER I: THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

There are 28 Jesuit universities in the United States (Traub, 2008). The curriculum of these universities is rooted in the liberal arts (Traub, 2008) and collectively the Jesuit universities avow a shared mission and commitment to social justice (Traub, 2008). The Presidents of the 28 Jesuit universities have declared that they are “committed to continuing the historic mission of educating first generation students” (Presidents of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, 2010). Furthermore, they have pledged a commitment to students from diverse “economic, cultural, ethnic, religious, and geographic backgrounds” stating, “we prioritize the education of these often vulnerable and underserved students at great financial sacrifice to our institutions for the sake of their access to and success within our Jesuit colleges and universities” (Presidents of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, 2010).

This mission, with a focus on access to an affordable liberal arts education exists in tension, and often stark contrast to social, political, market, and economic forces that are influencing the way American colleges and universities conduct business (Slaughter, 2004; Giroux, 2014). These tensions, which, in this study, are positioned under the umbrella of neoliberalism, are inflating the cost of attending college at an unsustainable rate. Senior-level strategic enrollment management professionals are left with the daunting task of “integrating all of the university's program’s practices, policies, and planning related to achieving the optimal recruitment, retention and graduation of students” (Hossler, 2015, p 5). Jesuit universities and their senior leadership are part of this larger narrative and as the cost of attendance rises two clear problems emerge. First,

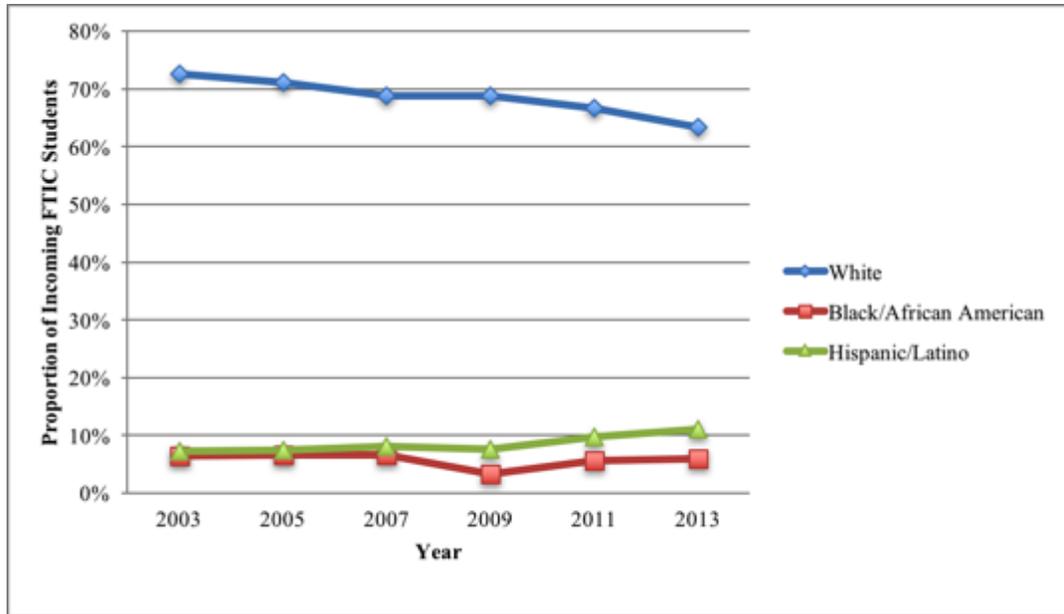
the ability for Jesuit universities to uphold their social justice inspired mission of an affordable and accessible liberal arts education is being threatened because they are pricing out those they seek to serve. Second, there is a growing disconnect between the espoused mission of Jesuit universities and the decisions that their leaders and administrators make to run the enterprise. In light of these problems, it is important to explore in more depth the ways in which senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities are actively working to uphold a social justice mission that is centered on an affordable and accessible liberal arts education.

Background and Need

As mentioned above, senior leadership at Jesuit universities have long advocated that Jesuit education must be accessible and affordable (Presidents of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, 2010). However, a recent review of Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data indicate that both access and affordability at Jesuit universities are being threatened (Roberts & Zerquera, 2016).

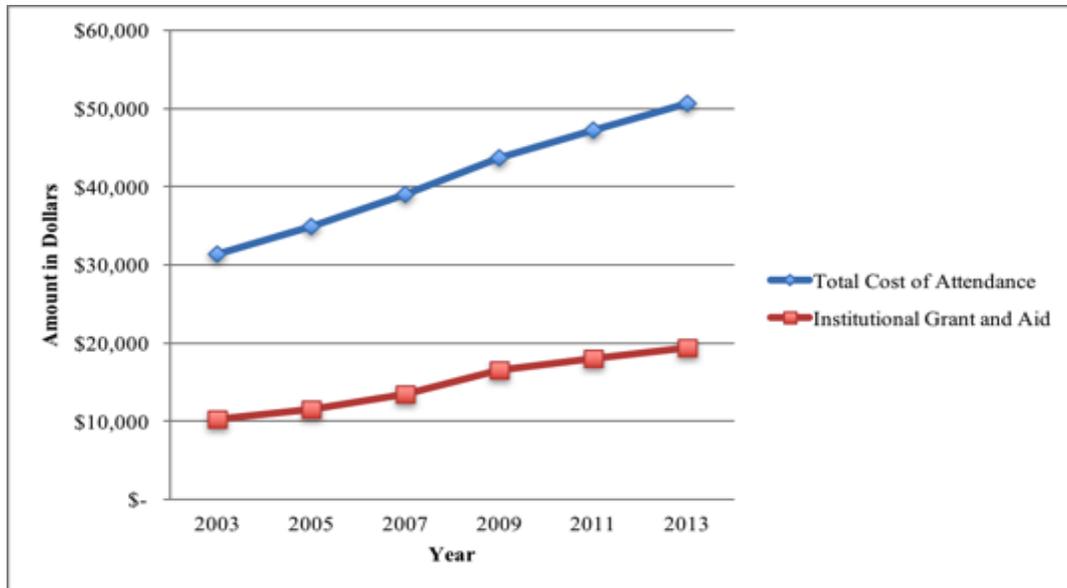
As previously mentioned, the Presidents of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (2010) stated that they are committed to educating a diverse group of students. While this statement is promising, Figure 1 (Roberts & Zerquera, 2016), indicates that more work is needed in order to do so. Specifically, Black / African American and Hispanic / Latino students have enrolled at Jesuit Universities at very low rates without much growth over the course of ten years. Most concerning, Black / African American students enrolled at the 28 Jesuit universities at a rate of approximately 5% in every year between 2003 and 2013.

Figure 1. Enrollment by Incoming Students at Jesuit Institutions by Select Racial Groups



When considering affordability, Figure 2 (Roberts & Zerquera, 2016) illustrates reason for similar concern. In 2003 the average cost of attending a Jesuit University was just over \$30,000 a year, ten years later, in 2013 the average cost had jumped to over \$50,000; meanwhile the institutional aid offered each year only rose from \$10,000 to \$20,000 (Roberts & Zerquera, 2016). The rising cost of attendance, and more notably, the gap between institutional aid distributed to the average student and cost of attendance, is making it increasingly difficult for students with financial need to attend Jesuit universities.

Figure 2. Average Cost of Attendance and Amount of Aid Awarded at Jesuit Institutions



If Jesuit universities are truly committed to upholding access and affordability as central to fulfilling their mission, action must be taken. This study will examine the role that senior-level strategic enrollment management officers play in upholding a mission of access and affordability.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this explanatory case study was two-fold. First, this study explored the ways tension in the broader neoliberal higher education environment is experienced by senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities in their efforts to fulfill their espoused university mission. Second, this study examined the ways in which senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities navigate the broader neoliberal higher education environment as they seek to uphold institutional mission.

Research Questions

This study was guided by two primary questions:

1. How are tensions between a social justice mission and neoliberal forces experienced by senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities?
2. How do senior-level strategic enrollment management officers navigate fulfilling a social justice mission within a neoliberal environment at Jesuit universities?

Conceptual Framework

To help frame this study a conceptual framework has been developed, that is presented in depth in Chapter II. The conceptual framework is divided into three main sections that broadly fall under the following headings: (1) mission, (2) neoliberalism, (3) the space between.

The mission section begins by exploring literature on mission statements and the role they play in organizations. Next, the section provides an overview of the liberal education, namely examining the purpose, structure, and need for an accessible and affordable liberal education. Finally, the section closes with an overview of both the apostolic Jesuit mission and the mission of Jesuit higher education.

The second section of the conceptual framework opens with an overview of neoliberalism and examines the ways that neoliberalism has impacted universities. The section introduces resource dependence theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), the enrollment economy (Clark, 1956), and explores the ways in which both have been applied to decision making at universities. Finally, the second section closes by examining the concept of mission drift, which is arguably a byproduct of succumbing to neoliberal and resource depend forces.

The final section of the conceptual framework, titled the space between, examines the intersection of mission and neoliberalism and the way decisions are made amid this

tension. The section opens by introducing the concept of interest convergence (Bell, 1980) and briefly explores critical race theory (Bell, 1980). Second, this section introduces strategic enrollment management (Hossler, 2015), which is both an academic framework and a guide for praxis, that plays a foundational role in this study. Next, the section introduces strategic response theory (Oliver, 1991). Finally, this section examines the role that leadership and individual actors play in organizations. More specifically, an introduction to agency (Battilana, 2011), institutional entrepreneurs (DiMaggio, 1988; Becker, 1999) and servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) is provided.

Limitations and Delimitations

When preparing to launch this study there were several limitations that were important to consider. First, it was possible that the interviews could be overly optimistic and tell the victory story as opposed to the entire story, including shortcomings. In order to account for this, the researcher, while conducting interviews, emphasized the valuable nature of lessons learned through both success and failure, and specifically asked questions about challenges that the subjects have faced. Additionally, because of the public nature of the role interview participants (senior-level strategic enrollment management officers) play at their institutions, and the scrutiny they are often under, it could have been challenging to gain access and convince them to agree to participate in the study. In order to respond to this limitation, the researcher emphasized the important scholarly contribution this study will make to the field of strategic enrollment management at Jesuit universities; furthermore, the researcher assured anonymity for all participants.

The major delimitation is the fact that the 28 Jesuit universities are located all across the United States, and as such, interviews were held via Zoom, a video conference platform. While Zoom provides a reasonable medium for interviews to occur, it is important to acknowledge the impersonal nature of video conferencing. The researcher accounted for this by intentionally creating a welcoming environment that encouraged participants to feel comfortable and reminded them how valuable this contribution is to the study and work of strategic enrollment managers at Jesuit universities.

Significance of the Study

There are 28 Jesuit universities in America, 26 of which have a senior-level strategic enrollment management officers, all of whom are seeking to uphold espoused mission in the face of neoliberal and resource dependent pressures. As such, this study aspired to contribute to both scholarship and praxis in two ways. First, this study sought to provide insight into the ways in which senior-level strategic enrollment management officers experience the tension between neoliberalism and mission enactment. Second, this study sought to understand how that population navigates those same tensions.

Definition of Terms

The following terms hold specific meaning within this study:

AJCU – AJCU is an acronym for the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities.

Officially, the AJCU is a consortium of the twenty-eight Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States.

Access - A student's admission enrollment, and matriculation through college. There are many barriers to access including: (1) admission processes that inherently favor students

of privilege, (2) cost of attendance that exceeds a student and their family's financial threshold, (3) inadequate student support services.

Affordability - The ability for a student to afford to attend college. Affordability can be supported in several ways including federal, state, and institutional financial aid.

Access and Affordability - Within higher education literature access and affordability are discussed independently, in this study, access and affordability will be thought of as a singular concept since schools cannot be truly accessible if they are not affordable.

Jesuit Higher Education - This study focuses on the 28 Jesuit Colleges and Universities in the United States, all of which are rooted in the liberal arts and have shared commitment to mission rooted in social justice.

Jesuit Mission - An apostolic mission, mindful of the needs of the poor and marginalized.

Liberal Education - A post-secondary education that is rooted in cultivating critical thought and cultivate students to be engaged citizens and participate in the democratic process. At times in this study liberal arts education is used pseudonymously with liberal education.

Mission Formation Activities – Activities that provide participants the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of institutional mission.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a conceptual framework that frames this study, and creates a lens, used to: (1) analyze the ways tension in the broader neoliberal higher education environment are experienced by Jesuit universities in their efforts to fulfill their espoused missions; (2) examine the ways in which individual actors at Jesuit universities can serve as agents of social change helping fulfill institutional mission. The conceptual framework developed in this chapter draws upon several existing theories and frameworks. The first section focuses on mission, more specifically, institutional mission, the mission and purpose of liberal education, Jesuit mission, and ultimately and most specifically, the mission of Jesuit higher education. The second section provides an overview of neoliberalism, resource dependence theory, enrollment economy and finally, mission drift. The third section explores the tensions between mission and neoliberalism, and the ways in which decisions are made in that space. Included in the third section are an exploration of interest convergence, strategic enrollment management, critical strategic response theory, resistance, agency, environmental factors, and servant leadership. Together these concepts and theories create a conceptual framework that shapes this study, which seeks to understand the complexity of mission fulfillment through strategic enrollment management at Jesuit universities within the current context of higher education.

Mission Matters

An understanding of espoused mission plays a foundational role in this study. As such, this section presents existing theories and literature that shape the understanding of espoused mission in this conceptual framework. Fundamentally, mission statements

describe an organization's purpose and act as a reflection of its members (Johnson, 2016). Some organizations demonstrate a deep commitment to their mission statement, while others drift away from it (Jones, 2007). While mission statements are viewed as an important form of corporate communication to organizations, they often fail to move beyond rhetoric (Swales & Rogers, 1995; Fairhurst, Jordan & Neuwirth, 1997). When considering higher education, Bess and Dee (2008) argue that universities are diverse and complex organizations that often have ambiguous missions.

In very few instances, organizations possess and cultivate *mission mystique* in which “[t]he act of carrying out the mission itself kindles passion. Men and women work hard and creatively because they want to make the most emphatic mark possible on the community and world with respect to their mission” (Goodsell, 2010, p. 2). Jesuit universities have long been organizations with clearly defined missions, many of which, arguably conjure up notions of mission mystique because of their commitment to social justice.

With mission in mind, this section will begin by drawing upon historical texts and existing literature to provide an overview of the purpose and structure of liberal education. Through emphasis on cultivating critical thinking skills and ultimately engaged citizens who contribute to the public good, this section then connects liberal education values to higher education more broadly and illustrates the ways in which higher education can be a space that challenges equity and society. Finally, by providing an examination of the history and mission of Jesuit universities, this section closes with the argument that Jesuit universities are uniquely positioned to be spaces of equity and justice.

On liberal education

For centuries scholars have worked to define and defend the value and purpose of the liberal education. This section will draw upon literature that illustrates common themes, which help fundamentally position the importance of liberal education within this study. The themes presented in this section are: (1) the purpose of liberal education; (2) the curriculum and functions of liberal education; (3) access to liberal education.

The purposes of liberal education

At its core, a liberal education should cultivate critical thinking and develop students who become engaged citizens (Yale Report of 1828; Rosovsky, 1991; Ortega y Gasset, 1946; Levin, 1993). Nearly 200 years ago *The Yale Report of 1828*, a summarizing document recounting a meeting between the President and Fellows of Yale University on September 11th, 1827, was published, providing the earliest guidance regarding the purpose of a liberal education. The authors describe this education as “broad, and deep, and solid” (Yale Report of 1828, 1828, p. 2). This is a lengthy process which requires students to both read classic books and attend lectures (Yale Report of 1828). Ultimately, the Yale Report argues that at its core, a liberal arts education must develop critical thinking skills.

In 1993 a second iteration the purpose of liberal education is provided by Yale University’s then-president, Richard Levin, in an address to the freshmen class titled *On Liberal Education*. He begins by stating that a liberal education differs from professional or vocational training and is “less obviously useful” (Levin, 1993). In the address Levin (1993) provides a historic perspective on liberal education and then goes on to share his perspective: “I believe that the essence of liberal education is to develop the freedom to

think critically and independently, to cultivate one's mind to its fullest potential, to liberate oneself from prejudice, superstition, and dogma” (p 15). While built on the same foundation, that the liberal education is designed to cultivate critical thinking, Levin (1993) takes this notion a step further when he speaks of liberating oneself from prejudice. Levin goes on to speak about the role liberal education plays in our democratic process and lives as citizens by arguing that a liberal education develops the ability to think critically, reason, reflect, and ultimately leads to a fruitful democracy (Levin, 1993). Furthermore, Levin (1993) discusses the role such academic training plays in addressing societal ills: “a liberally educated citizenry is the most reliable source of resistance to those forces of prejudice and intolerance that would undermine our nation's commitment to free inquiry and free expression” (p. 18). Levin builds a strong argument that liberal education can play an important role in social justice pursuits by cultivating citizens who embrace such values.

Rosovsky (1991) provides the following vision for a liberally educated student: First, “an educated person must be able to think and write clearly and effectively... To put it another way: students should be trained to think critically” (p. 105). Second, “an educated person should have a critical appreciation of the ways in which we gain knowledge and understanding of the universe, of society, and of ourselves” (p. 105). Third, “an educated American, in the last quarter of this century, cannot be provincial in the sense of being ignorant of other culture and other times. It is no longer possible to conduct our lives without reference to the wider world or to historical forces that have shaped the present and will shape the future” (p. 106-107). Fourth, “an educated person is expected to have some understanding of and experience in thinking about, moral and

ethical problems” (p. 107). “Finally, an educated individual should have achieved depth in some field of knowledge” (p. 107). This roadmap provides an enduring vision of what a liberal education should be, aiming to teach students to think critically, be engaged citizens, and wrestle with culture.

The curriculum and function of a liberal education

If the purpose of liberal education is to develop the ability to think critically and cultivate engaged citizens, it is important to explore how this functionally occurs. Ortega y Gasset (1946) concludes that the university teaching should incorporate three distinct functions: “(1) the transmission of culture; (2) the teaching of the professions; (3) scientific research and the training of new scientists” (p. 33). Such a perspective incorporates critical thinking and inquiry, as well as developing skills which can be applied to the workplace, both of which are cornerstones to Ortega y Gasset’s (1946) central thesis.

Rosovsky (1991) asserts in more detail, what this curriculum should look like, explaining that the four-year education can be divided into three parts: (1) a core curriculum, or general education; (2) electives, or special interest courses; (3) a major concentration or specialty. Thirty years later, this curriculum guides most university policies and remains the roadmap for most academic advisors helping undergraduates fulfill their degree requirements.

Access to liberal education

Authors of the Yale Report of 1828 warn of the dangers of not pursuing liberal education, stating that those who don’t face, “a narrowness in his habits of thinking, a peculiarity of character, which will be sure to mark him as a man of limited views and

attainments” (p. 6). While making the case that a liberal education is critical, the Yale Report of 1828 also goes on to explicitly state that such an education is a privilege, not accessible to all: “[w]e are aware that a thorough education is not within the reach of all. Many, for want of time and pecuniary resources, must be content with a partial course” (p. 7). Nearly 200 years ago, the authors wrote unapologetically about access and affordability, or rather, lack thereof, and create the perfect illustration of the ways in which universities are simultaneously sites of liberation and oppression.

When discussing who should have access to liberal education Rosovsky (1991) takes an actively inclusive stance, as opposed to the authors of *the Yale Report of 1828*, whom were explicitly exclusive. Rosovsky (1991) states:

“our universities have to search for accomplishment, ability, promise, and talent, taking into account the peculiar diversities -- geographical, ethnic, and economic - - in our society. We are tolerant at entry, recognizing that not all candidates start the race equally advantaged. Our concern is how the race ends” (Rosovsky, 1991, p. 111).

This understanding of the transformational nature of a liberal education and the importance of equity when it comes to accessibility and affordability for students who are often underserved and often marginalized is critically important, and represents the best of what a liberal education should be.

With equitable intentions in mind, Rosovsky (1991) provides a warning that change will be necessary to maintain the goals of a liberal education. Perhaps Rosovsky foreshadowed some of the tensions universities are now facing, and are calling upon strategic enrollment management officers to address, as they navigate fulfilling mission

in the midst of making decisions that are good for the bottom line. Ironically, or perhaps prophetically, this dilemma threatens Rosovsky's entire vision for an accessible and affordable liberal education.

In summary, this section opened by using foundational literature to provide an overview of the role of the liberal arts at American Universities and how the understanding of this role has evolved over time. The resounding theme that emerged is that a liberal education should cultivate critical thinkers, who have a breadth of knowledge that will allow them to be engaged citizens. (Yale Report of 1828; Ortega y Gasset, 1946; Rosovsky, 1991; Levin, 1993). Furthermore, a liberal education should be a vehicle for social justice, equipping students to stand against marginalization (Levin, 1993). Additionally, this section provided a review of the curriculum that has guided liberal education for centuries. Finally, this section argued that in order to fulfill the lofty pursuits of a liberal education, it must be accessible and thereby affordable (Rosovsky, 1991). It is important to note that while significant literature exists on the mission of public education and liberal education, relatively little has been written specifically about Jesuit universities in that light. With this in mind, the next section will examine the historic Jesuit mission, which is rooted in social justice intentions, and then the section will go on to examine Jesuit higher education.

Jesuit mission and higher education

There are 28 Jesuit universities in the United States that are rooted in the liberal arts and all share a commitment to social justice inspired missions (Kolvenbach, 2001). In 2001, Reverend Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., who was then the Superior General of the Society of Jesus and leader of all Jesuits worldwide gave a speech at Santa Clara

University titled, *The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education*. This address, which was given to leaders from all 28 Jesuit universities, describes the liberal education offered at Jesuit universities:

Students, in the course of their formation, must let the gritty reality of this world into their lives, so they can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering, and engage it constructively. They should learn to perceive, think, judge, choose, and act for the rights of others, especially the disadvantaged and the oppressed” (2001, p. 8).

Father Kolvenbach casts a clear vision for Jesuit universities, insisting that they must offer a liberal education that acts in resistance and opposition to the social, political, and economic forces that oppress and marginalize our nation’s most vulnerable.

This section, drawing on the limited existing literature, will begin by examining the foundational mission of the Society of Jesus, more commonly known as the Jesuits. It will go on to explore the mission of Jesuit higher education. Finally, this section will explore ways in which fulfilling Jesuit mission can be measured, but specifically focus on the role that access and affordability play in doing so.

Jesuit mission

Jesuit Mission existed long before American Jesuit Universities were born (Traub, 2008). At its core mission of the Society of Jesus is an apostolic one, “a justice-based mission mindful of the needs of the poor and marginalized, it seeks to understand different cultures on their own terms” (Traub, 2008, p. 3). This posture moves far beyond the liberal universities attempt to develop critical thinkers and citizens prepared to engage in the democratic practice. Rather it is an explicit statement that the mission of

this organization it to cultivate the *service of faith and the promotion of justice*, a colloquialism, well known by those associated with Jesuits. Father Kolvenbach (2001) further unpacked this foundational tagline describing *the service of faith* as “the counter-cultural gift of Christ” (p. 3). He went on to explain that St. Ignatius, the founder of the Jesuits, believed that love was expressed in deeds, not just words, and as such, the promotion of justice was to be “a concrete, radical but proportionate response to an unjustly suffering world” (Kolvenbach, 2003, p. 3). Clearly, the Jesuit mission is an apostolic one, focusing on social justice in an unjust world. The 34th General Congregation captured the importance of the apostolic nature of the Jesuit mission when they declared, “as we look to the future we need consciously to be on guard that both the noun “university” and the adjective “Jesuit” always remain fully honored” (Traub, 2008, p. 134-135). The next section will focus on the university as an expression of this mission.

Jesuit higher education

As illustrated in the previous section, the Jesuit mission is rooted in a commitment to social justice, and schools, universities in particular, provide grounding and a place for the Jesuits to enact these values (Traub, 2008). The founder of the Jesuits, St. Ignatius of Loyola, knew that universities had the ability to widely influence culture and therefore “chose to send Jesuits there, as places where a more universal good might be achieved” (Traub, 2008, p. 133). Universities, providing a liberal education, became a great place for the Jesuits to implement their apostolic mission.

Jesuit universities share a unique set of values and while each of them has their own unique mission statement, they all share a commitment to social justice (Traub,

2008). In 2010, the Association of Jesuit Colleges & Universities released a document titled *The Jesuit, Catholic Mission of U.S. Jesuit Colleges and Universities* (2010) issuing a “consensus reflection of the 28 presidents of U.S. Jesuit colleges and universities”. The document states “our primary mission is the education and formation of our students for the sake of the kind of persons they become and their wide influence for good in society in their lives, professions, and service.” This statement is a clear indicator that Jesuit universities intend to deliver a liberal education, cultivating engaged students who embrace social justice values, and ultimately enforces the apostolic mission described in the previous paragraph.

Measuring Jesuit mission

There are many ways that fulfilling Jesuit mission can be measured; Father Kolvenbach (2001) described two, which are critically important to this study. First, Father Kolvenbach (2001) stated clearly, “The real measure of our Jesuit universities lies in who our students become” (p. 8). This statement, particularly when taking into consideration his remarks that were previously presented in this chapter, makes it explicitly clear that a Jesuit education is a liberal education that is teaching students to be critical thinkers and engaged citizens who work for justice. Second, and more important for this study, Father Kolvenbach (2001) speaks explicitly about the critical role that creating a Jesuit education that is accessible and affordable plays in fulfilling the Jesuit mission: “The first way, historically, that our universities began living out their faith-justice commitment was through their admissions policies, affirmative action for minorities, and scholarships for disadvantaged students; and these continue to be effective means” (p. 11). Creating a Jesuit education, rooted in the liberal arts that is

accessible and affordable is challenging work, and this study explores mission enactment through the work of senior enrollment managers.

As previously mentioned, this study explores tensions between espoused mission and the neoliberal forces at Jesuit universities. This section presented existing theories and literature which inform the understanding of espoused mission that is used in the conceptual framework of this study. The next section of this literature review will explore the social, political, and economic forces that often cause universities to drift from their mission and threaten the ability of Jesuit universities to deliver an affordable and accessible liberal education.

Neoliberalism & Resource Dependence Theory

Universities are becoming increasingly susceptible to the social, political, and economic forces that are shaping the landscape of America (Giroux, 2014). In short, neoliberalism is a hyper expression of capitalism in which profitability influences and fuels all aspects of an organization. Jesuit Universities are no exception. In fact, Father Kolvenbach (2001) addressed these threats:

“We can no longer pretend that the inequalities and injustices of our world must be born as part of the inevitable order of things. It is now quite apparent that they are the result of what man himself, man in his selfishness. Despite the opportunities offered by an ever more serviceable technology, we are simply not willing to pay the price of a more just and more humane society” (Kolvenbach, 2001, p. 7).

This profound statement provides a sobering introduction to this section, which will present existing theories and literature that contribute to the conceptual framework used

to guide this study. Specifically, this section opens by defining and unpacking neoliberalism and resource dependence theory, useful frameworks for understanding these forces. Additionally, this section introduces the concept of an enrollment economy, which made way for the emergence of strategic enrollment management. Finally, this section expands upon the idea of mission drift, which this review argues can happen as a result of giving into pressures of neoliberalism and resource dependency.

Introduction to Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism provides a theory, which is foundational to this conceptual framework and the analysis that occurs in this study. Neoliberalism came to prominence in the 1980's during the Reagan and Thatcher era and nearly forty years later continues to be a useful lens that can help explain many of the economic, social and political realities our country faces (Giroux, 2014). This section will highlight four tenets that are central to understanding neoliberalism and will help shape this study: (1) the free market drives all and profit is the only measure for success (Giroux, 2004); (2) privatize everything possible (Giroux, 2004, Kumashiro, 2012); (3) the government is not responsible for the common good (Giroux, 2004); (4) America is a post-racial society (Dumas, 2013; Giroux, 2009).

Tenet one: the free market drives all

Aligning perfectly with capitalism and the Reagan mentality of trickle-down economics (more recently “Trumped up trickle down”), is the idea that the free market should drive all. Giroux (2004) illustrates this mentality, “wedded to the belief that the market should be the organizing principle for all political, social, and economic decisions, neoliberalism wages an incessant attack on democracy, public goods, the

welfare state, and non-commodified values” (p. 495). Such a mindset is in direct contrast with the mission and intentions of higher education, and more specifically, the liberal education, which were previously highlighted and focus on cultivating good and just citizens who will work towards an equitable society (Levin, 1993). Giroux (2014) points to the 2012 sexual abuse scandal at Penn State University to help illustrate this point. He reveals that Penn State University officials attempted to hide sexual abuse, compromising the values and integrity of the university, because public knowledge of the scandal would jeopardize the revenue generated by the football program, including over \$50,000,000 in profit in the year 2010 (Giroux, 2014). When profits are more important than ethical decision making and mission fulfillment, organizations are in trouble.

Tenet two: privatize everything possible

Not surprisingly, this sort of profit-driven mentality leads directly to the second tenet, privatize everything possible. Kumashiro (2012) explains privatization as “the restructuring of public services into a market-like industry that results in the shifting of funds, oversight, and accountability from the government to individuals and corporations” (p. 38). Notable examples of privatization included military defense contracts and the for-profit prison system. As Giroux (2004) reminds readers, “under neoliberalism, everything either is for sale or is plundered for profit: public lands are looted by logging companies and corporate ranchers; politicians willingly hand the public’s airwaves over to powerful broadcasters and large corporate interests without a dime going into the public trust” (p. 495). Universities have experienced this as food services, online courses, and even temporary faculty have been outsourced to private companies (Giroux, 2014). The rampant launch of online academic programs, threatens

the mission of a liberal education because students are sitting behind a computer screen as opposed to in a classroom with peers while being forced to think critically and wrestle with challenging cultural issues. Similarly, the launch of these programs, which are often viewed as profitable, is a move towards an enrollment economy based on generating revenue as opposed to investing in academic programs that are rooted in mission (Clark, 1956; Jaquette's, 2013). Outsourcing food services and temporary faculty marginalizing implications for those employees, who are often paid substantially lower wages and are not eligible for university benefits (Slaughter, 1997).

Tenet three: government is not responsible for the common good

The third pillar central to neoliberalism is the idea that *the government is not responsible for the common good*. This certainly connects to privatization; neoliberals would argue that churches and private citizens can worry about philanthropy: “Public services such as health care, child care, public assistance, education, and transportation are now subject to the rules of the market” (Giroux, 2004, p. 496). If the government doesn't take responsibility for the wellbeing of its citizens, who will? Giroux (2004) goes on to argue that, “neoliberal ideology produces, legitimates, and exacerbates the existence of persistent poverty, inadequate health care, racial apartheid in the inner cities, and the growing inequalities between the rich and the poor” (p. 496). This exploitation represent the marginalization that Jesuit universities espouse to stand against, but because of the larger landscape of higher education are susceptible to. Evidence of this tenet playing out in higher education can be seen in massive cuts to state funding for higher education including recent cuts of \$151 million in Georgia and \$135 million in Michigan (Groux, 2014). It is a prevalent belief that cutting state budgets won't impact private

universities, including the 28 Jesuit institutions, however this is a misconception since those schools rely heavily on both state and federal funds to create financial aid packages that make attending a private university more affordable.

Tenet four: post-racial society.

Neoliberal ideology argues that America is a post-racial society in which America has come to a point where race no longer matters and colorblindness is a worthy pursuit. Giroux (2009) explains that “while ‘post-racial’ may mean less overt racism, the idea that we have moved into a post-racial period in American history is not merely premature – it is an act of willful denial and ignorance” (p. 574). Neoliberals will often cite the election of Barack Obama as evidence that we have moved into a post-racial society, but Giroux (2009) recalls that in the 2008 election President Obama mobilized 95% of African-American voters and two-thirds of Latino voters. Furthermore, a majority of white Americans voted for John McCain, whose campaign was fueled by racism and ultimately led to the rise of white supremacist hate groups around the time of President Obama’s election (Giroux, 2009).

The misguided position that we live in a post-racial society welcomes and perpetuates a form of white supremacy that is sewn so deeply into the fabric of American culture that it becomes indistinguishable from the air we breathe. Evidence shows up on college campuses every year and university leadership struggles to adequately respond to these atrocities. For example, according to the Boston College student newspaper (2017), students recently defaced a Black Lives Matter poster writing the word *don’t* between Black Lives and Matter.

Giroux (2009) argues that if we are to truly address the problems facing young people in this country, which is arguably a fundamental pursuit of a liberal education, “the political, economic, and institutional conditions that both legitimate and sustain a shameful attack on poor minority youth have to be made visible, open to challenge, and transformed” (p. 575). Jesuit universities that explicitly espouse a commitment to social justice-oriented missions, rooted in a liberal education, must stand boldly against the dismissive post-racial narrative that is perpetuated by neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism offers a useful framework for understanding many of the social, economic, market, and political forces that are threatening liberal education, and specifically Jesuit Universities, and plays a foundational role in guiding this study. While it is important to highlight the structural ways in which neoliberalism plays out, the real dangers of this ideology are invisible and sewn into the fabric of American culture.

The next section will explore resource dependence theory, which offers additional insight into the role securing resources plays in running organizations (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). As universities, including Jesuit institutions, operate in a neoliberal context in which the free market drives all, organizations are left seeking resources that will allow them to be competitive in the free market. This review shines light on a perspective, in which students are often viewed as resources, who individually represent tuition dollars and collectively build multi-million dollar operating budgets. Such a mindset leads to resource dependence theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978), which is explored in the next section.

Resource dependence theory

In their seminal book *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective*, Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) tell readers “the key to organizational survival is the ability to acquire and maintain resources” (p. 2). They go on to argue that this becomes challenging because organizations are not self-contained, rather reliant on many different stakeholders which provide or limit resources. For example, “organizations are linked to environments by federations, associations, customer-supplier relationships, competitive relationships, and a social-legal apparatus defining and controlling the nature and limits of these relationships” (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978, p. 2). All organizations are forced to interact with a myriad of stakeholders in order to secure the resources needed to be successful. Resource dependence theory makes a significant contribution to the conceptual framework that is used to guide this study. Specifically, if neoliberalism explains forces that drive the larger landscape of higher education, resource dependence theory can be used to explain the resulting decision making and actions.

Enrollment economy

As previously mentioned, for many universities, students are highly sought-after resource. Clark (1956) argued that many universities become dependent upon an *enrollment economy*, in which “school income is largely set by student attendance” (p. 332). The concept of the enrollment economy will be revisited throughout this review and is closely aligned with resource dependence theory.

Scott and Davis (2007) advance that one of the key tenets of resource dependence theory is the role that power plays in explaining organizational behavior. They state,

“exchanges of resources create power / dependence relations that can leave organizations vulnerable to the demands of resource providers” (Scott & Davis, 2007). One specific example of what this looks like is the rapid growth of graduate programs and online degrees. Simmons College offers an interesting case study (Straumsheim, 2017). Simmons has long had more graduate students (4,000) than undergraduate students (1,700), but recently they have begun launching online graduate degrees that have generated significant revenue (Straumsheim, 2017). Straumsheim (2017) reports on the fiscal resources online education has generated, stating that during the 2014 fiscal year Simmons’s online graduate programs generated about \$5.4 million in total tuition revenue, three years later online programs generated \$45 million in tuition revenue, almost all of which comes from enrolling students in two high-demand programs, nursing and social work. With an emphasis solely on revenue generation, this model dismisses the importance of a liberal education that cultivates critical thinking and engaged citizens.

Thirty years after resource dependence theory was introduced, Hillman (2009) argues that organizations continue to be constrained by their environments and as such continue to attempt to manage their resource dependencies. The Simmons College case presented above validates Hillman’s claim and illustrates what an important role resource dependency plays in organizational change as well as the power of an enrollment economy.

Furthermore, the Simmons College case also illustrates how susceptible universities are to market forces, and begs the question, just because there is market demand for a degree program, does launching the program help fulfill mission, or cause mission drift? Resource dependence explains behaviors such as participation in an

enrollment economy while simultaneously minimizing the role that mission plays in shaping universities. As just mentioned, one outcome of succumbing to these forces is mission drift (Jones, 2007; Jaquette, 2013), which will be explored in the next section.

Mission drift

Jones (2007) writes about the troubling concept of mission drift, which occurs when, in the process of change, organizations lose track of their core missions. In particular, Jones (2007) defines mission drift as “a diversion of time, energy, and money away from a nonprofit’s mission” (p. 300). While mission drift can threaten all nonprofit organizations, certainly universities must be aware of the danger.

In 2013 Ozan Jaquette published a study titled *Why Do Colleges Become Universities? Mission Drift and the Enrollment Economy*, which directly connects the concepts of neoliberalism, resource dependence theory, and mission drift. To begin, Jaquette (2013) defines mission drift as “the transition from one organizational template to another” (p. 537). To explore mission drift, Jaquette’s (2013) study explores and analyzes colleges that changed their organizational name to become a university (e.g., Aurora College became Aurora University). Results of the study show that such changes occurred as colleges, which only granted baccalaureate degrees were struggling with enrollment and thus wanted to become universities and begin awarding graduate degrees and expand their enrollment economy into new markets to capitalize on untapped resources (Jaquette, 2013). Rather than reflecting a commitment to values of serving their regional populations and providing access to graduate education, this rationalization reflects the sort of mission drift that is the direct result of succumbing neoliberal pressures of resource dependency.

Neoliberalism, resource dependence and mission drift are theoretical frameworks that are rooted in existing literature and directly contribute to the conceptual framework used to guide this study. Furthermore, they are direct threats to fulfilling the apostolic Jesuit mission defined in the previous section. Jesuit universities must be aware of these threats and intentionally navigate them in order to fulfill their social-justice inspired missions. The next section of this review will explore the decision-making process that occurs in the midst of tension between mission and neoliberalism and the role that leadership and individual actors play in this process.

The Space Between

The previous sections titled *Mission Matters* and *Neoliberalism & Resource Depended Theory* present existing theories and literature that guide this study and illustrate an active friction between espoused mission and neoliberalism. This section will add to the conceptual framework guiding this study by drawing on existing theories and literature to further illustrate and define the tensions that exist, both organizationally and for individual actors who are working at Jesuit universities and striving to uphold espoused mission while resisting neoliberal and resource dependent pressures. For the duration of this study, the aforementioned will be referred to as *the space between*. This section begins by introducing the concept of interest convergence, which provides a troubling insight into the way perceived justice is often enacted. Second, this section will introduce strategic enrollment management, which is a useful framework for navigating the enrollment economy. Third, an overview of critical response theory and specific strategies used to make strategic decisions will be provided.

Finally, this section will explore leadership and the role that individual actors play in being change agents.

Interest Convergence

Interest convergence was born out of Derrick Bell's (1980) critical race theory, which offers an important understanding of racism and marginalization in America and calls for a commitment to social justice. Milner, Pearman & McGee (2013) state "the interest convergence principle stresses that racial equality and equity for people of color will be pursued and advanced when they converge with the interests, needs, expectations, benefits, and ideologies of White people" (p. 342). Within education, this concept is clearly illustrated by Dudziak (1988) in an article that argues that desegregation occurred, not because policy makers were invested in creating equitable access to education for people of color, but rather, because it alleviated social and political pressure being put on the United States government. In the article Dudziak (1988, p. 399) recalls Bell's (1980) argument that *Brown v. Board* only passed because of Interest Convergence listing three critical reasons: first, to advance American Cold war objectives as the United States was looking for international loyalty (Dudziak, 1988; Bell, 1980). Second, to appease the concerns of Black veterans who continued to see racial discrimination after serving in World War (Dudziak, 1988; Bell, 1980). Finally, segregation was beginning to be viewed as an economic barrier for the south and the government realized that desegregation would lead to a positive financial path forward for white people in the region (Dudziak, 1988; Bell, 1980). In essence, interest convergence suggests that positive change for people of color, only occurs if it meets the interests of the powerful.

Interest convergence is introduced first in this section, because one of the aims of this study is to understand if such practices also occur at Jesuit schools. Is the explicit mission to educate the marginalized only fulfilled when it also meets the financial interests of the university? Is interest convergence a strategy, or a response?

Strategic enrollment management

Within the context of higher education, strategic enrollment management (SEM) can be described as a structural framework that is “simultaneously a set of processes and policies associated with the recruitment and admission of college students, as well as the retention, academic success, and graduation of students enrolled in postsecondary education” (Hossler, et al., 2015, p. 4).

Hossler (2015) explicitly affirms the role neoliberalism played in the emergence of SEM, citing public policy makers aligning themselves with virtues of the market and competition. As a result, “colleges and universities, including public institutions, began to recruit students— and their tuition dollars— more actively as a way of recovering revenue lost from government appropriations (Hossler, et al., 2015, p. 9). Furthermore, Hossler (2015) also states that resource dependence theory is often used to explain the rise of SEM.

There are several principles, which Hossler (2015) identifies as central to SEM. While a bit lengthy, his description of these principles deserves to be shared in full:

(They) include a marketing orientation toward admissions recruitment, an understanding that student retention is as important a part of enrollment efforts as student recruitment, a realization that campus-based financial aid could be used in a systematic fashion to achieve multiple enrollment goals and that SEM depends

heavily upon empirical research and data analysis to guide its efforts, and finally an understanding that SEM is a process that has organizational implications and often requires structural change in how various university functions are integrated and organized around efforts to enroll and retain a student body with a desired set of characteristics. (Hossler, et al., 2015, p. 8).

When examining organizational structure, admissions, financial aid, and registration and records are almost always housed within strategic enrollment management divisions, and often student affairs departments are also included in that group (Hossler, et al., 2015). These functions have become critically important to running universities and their necessity and prominence on university campuses will continue to grow (Hossler, 2015).

Strategic enrollment management also plays a crucial role when considering access and affordability. Hossler acknowledges that, “colleges and universities face serious challenges as they seek to meet the needs of aspiring students who are increasingly diverse on a range of geographic, ethnic, economic, and educational variables while simultaneously achieving the enrollment goals of the institutions they serve” (p. 22). These challenges required skilled enrollment managers who are committed to pursuits of equitable access and financial models.

Jesuit universities have a long history with SEM; in 1976 Jack Maguire was the first to use the term enrollment management when describing his efforts to attract and retain students at Boston College (Hossler, et al., 2015). A few years later Loyola University Chicago partnered with the College Board to sponsor the first national conferences on enrollment management (Hossler, et al., 2015). The fact that Jesuit

universities were so early to adopt strategic enrollment models sends two messages.

First, this indicates that Jesuit institutions have long been committed to trying to respond to the challenges Hossler described in the previous paragraph and find strategic ways to offer a more accessible and affordable education. At the same time, this early pursuit of strategic enrollment management models also signals an acquiescence to the market and resource dependent forces that have become so prevalent in neoliberalism. As such, this may serve as an illustration of interest convergence, in which access and affordability may become possible as the result of tapping into market forces which generate new revenue.

Critical Strategic Response Theory

Oliver (1991) provides a useful framework for understanding the ways universities make strategic decisions. More specifically, she presents five different types of strategic responses to intuitional process (Oliver, 1991): (1) acquiescence, (2) compromise, (3) avoidance, (3) defiance, (5) manipulation. The first strategic response is acquiescence, which is illustrated through habit, imitation and compliance. Examples could include “following invisible, taken-for granted norms,” mimicking institutional models,” and obeying rules and accepting norms” (Oliver, 1991, p. 152). In summary, to acquiesce, is to go with the flow and accept the status quo.

Compromise is also a strategic response that includes three specific tactics: (1) balance, (2) pacify, and (3) bargain (Oliver, 1991). All three of these tactics are meant to conform to and accommodate institutional norms and values (Oliver, 1991). Oliver (1991) also notes that these balancing tactics are often activated in response to the demands and pressures amongst multiple constituents within an institution. While many

would view this response as strategic, the logic Oliver (1991) provides to describe compromise is similar to interest convergence in that both rely on a certain level of acquiescence in order to achieve an alternative agenda.

Oliver (1991) explains that avoidance is “the organizational attempt to preclude the necessity of conformity; organizations achieve this by concealing their nonconformity, buffering themselves from institutional pressures, or escaping from institutional rules or expectations” (p. 154). While avoidance may provide short term benefits, there are inherent risks associated with this tactic, such as damaging relationships, and losing trust or respect.

At times, organizational actors move beyond avoidance into outright defiance, which is another strategic response that is often enacted. Defiance is the act of intentionally dismissing, challenging, or attacking institutional processes. Oliver (1991) gives the example of intentionally ignoring affirmative action requirements in when recruiting and hiring personnel.

The final strategic response, manipulation, can be defined as “the purposeful and opportunistic attempt to co-opt, influence, or control institutional pressures and evaluations” (Oliver, 1991, p. 157). This is the most active response to institutional pressure and an active attempt to exert power to change outcomes (Oliver, 1991).

It is important to understand all five strategic responses and consider the ways in which leaders and individual actors can use these tools to influence their organizations. This is particularly true at Jesuit universities in spaces where tension exists between upholding espoused mission and neoliberal and resource dependence forces that often drive decision making. Different scenarios call for different responses and there is a time

and place for each of the strategic responses. When thinking about mission enactment, the role of individual actors and leadership is just as important as strategic response, which will be explored in the next section.

Leadership

It is important to highlight the role leadership and individual agents play in navigating the active tension between social justice inspired mission and neoliberal and resource dependence pressures. Of particular interest is the way that leaders respond to environmental pressures and the strategies they chose to enact in an effort to uphold mission. The following paragraphs will explore the concepts of resistance and agency as demonstrated by individual actors.

Agency and individual actors

In 2011 Battilana published a study that revealed social position within organizations and the field influences the likelihood that individual actors are able to activate change that deviates from institutional norms. While Battilana's (2011) study looked at clinical managers at the National Health Service in the United Kingdom, arguably, the same premise holds true within American higher education, and more specific Jesuit Universities. It is important to note that the power that comes with social position could be used both to help fulfill institutional mission and to advance neoliberal pursuits, and at times, both things could occur simultaneously. Battilana's (2011) findings demonstrate that in order to uphold and enact Jesuit mission, Jesuit universities need leaders with organizational and industry credibility and power who will advance the mission as opposed to institutional leaders who are susceptible to neoliberal pressures.

In order to fulfill institutional mission and resist neoliberal forces, universities need leaders and agents who will stand on the side of mission. DiMaggio (1988) introduced the concept of institutional entrepreneurs, who act as agents “with an interest in specific institutional structures and who command resources which can be applied to influence institutional rules” (Becker, 1999, p. 780). Becker (1999) goes on to explain that institutional entrepreneurs have the ability to support processes of socialization and the mobilization of actors who can be advocates of institutional change. Furthermore, DiMaggio (1988) and Becker (1999) also note that institutional entrepreneurs rely on securing resources to successfully influence change. To further illustrate this point, “DiMaggio, in his introduction of the institutional entrepreneur, turns to a resource-mobilization argument which states that institutions are changed by actors who command the resources necessary to successfully influence institutional designs in their interest” (Becker, 1999, p. 780). This provides an important illustration of Pfeffer and Salancik’s (1978) resource dependence theory and is a powerful reminder that advocacy and resistance require a nuanced interplay between mission and neoliberal forces.

Clegg (2010) acknowledges these tensions and describes the nuances needed to navigate the mission and neoliberalism: “social activists are always confronted with the dilemma of structuring, thus legitimating, the existing order of things, or of destructuring, thus, hopefully, trying to change the order of things” (Clegg, 2010, p. 6). This implies intentional decision making is needed to fulfill mission. Furthermore, to resist powers with superior resources actors need the ability to think strategically, engage in skillful analysis and ultimately deploy a series of coordination of efforts (Clegg, 2010). Furthermore, within higher education organizations in particular, strong leadership is

needed. Servant leadership offers a fitting framework that aligns with the Jesuit mission, and will be explored in the next section.

Servant leadership

In an environment where actors struggle for resources and ultimately power to advance their agenda, it is critically important to examine agents' motivations. Servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) provides a useful framework that perfectly aligns with Jesuit mission and tradition. Greenleaf (1977) argues, "the essential quality that sets servant-leaders apart from others is that they live by their conscience-the inward moral sense of what is right and what is wrong" (location 94 of 4357). A commitment to ethical decision-making is in line with the social justice pursuits of Jesuit mission. Additionally, Sipe and Frick (2015) argue that servant leaders put the needs of those they serve in front of all else, including profits. Such a mentality is in direct opposition to neoliberalism, but certainly aligns with the social justice values promoted by Jesuit mission. Furthermore, Sipe and Frick (2015) argue that servant leaders are committed to diversity, which is important to combatting the post-racial narrative that is promoted in neoliberalism.

In addition to the character traits and values that were outlined in the previous paragraph, servant leaders also possess specific skill sets that are important to consider. First, servant leaders are compassionate collaborators, "positive contacts with a leader increase credibility, trust, influence, loyalty, and authority" (Sipe & Frick, 2015, loc 485 of 5551). This idea lends credibility to the fact that building relationships and trust is an important part of making positive change. A second important skill that servant leaders possess is great foresight (Sipe & Frick, 2015; Greenleaf, 1977). Spears and Lawrence (2004) explain that foresight, "enables the servant-leader to understand lessons from the

past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequences of a decision in the future” (location 464 of 3467). Both collaboration and foresight are important skills for leaders to possess who are seeking to uphold mission in the midst of neoliberal and resource dependent tendencies.

This section adds to the conceptual framework by explicitly highlighting the active tensions between espoused mission and neoliberalism and naming that tension *the space between*. Specifically, this section explored the tensions that exist organizationally and for individual actors who are working at Jesuit universities and striving to uphold espoused mission while facing neoliberal and resource dependent pressures. The section opened with an introduction to interest convergence and illustrated troubling ways perceived justice is often enacted. Second, this section introduced critical response theory and five specific strategies used to make strategic decisions. Finally, this section examined leadership and the role that individual actors play in being agents of change.

Summary

This chapter presents the comprehensive conceptual framework that is used to guide this study, and is rooted in existing theoretical frameworks and literature that explore espoused mission, neoliberalism, and the space between. Jesuit Universities share a unique social justice inspired mission, which can be measured by successfully offering a liberal education that is both accessible and affordable. There are many threats to this mission, namely neoliberalism and resource dependency, which can lead to mission drift. However, how these tensions play out within the Jesuit context lacks attention from the scholarly literature. As mentioned throughout this chapter, there is a gap in literature that

studies the role individual actors play in upholding Jesuit mission. This study is a response to that gap.

This study develops an understanding of the way senior-level strategic enrollment manager officers experience these tensions. Furthermore, this study explores the ways senior-level strategic enrollment management officers navigate these tensions to implement mission-aligned initiatives. This study also contributes to the existing gap in knowledge and literature in ways that will inform scholarship and praxis at Jesuit universities across the country.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology used in this study. This was a qualitative study using the case study method (Yin, 2014). More specifically, it was an explanatory, single-case study that uses a holistic design and focused on a single-unit of analysis: the experiences of senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities.

It is important to explain the decisions regarding the case study design. First, following Yin's (2014) guidance the researcher chose to use an explanatory design as opposed exploratory or descriptive approach, because the research questions are generally *how* questions, seeking to gain a deepened understanding of a phenomenon, specifically the ways that tensions between mission and neoliberalism are experienced and navigated by senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities. Yin (2014) explains that *how* questions "deal with operational links needing to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies or occurrences" (p. 10). Yin (2014) also provides rationale for choosing a single-case study design: the phenomenon being studied is common. In this instance, the single-case being studied will be strategic enrollment management at Jesuit universities, which all share common missions, rooted in social justice and are being threatened by neoliberal forces. Finally, because of the complexity of the phenomena being studied, and the many nuances that will be explored in this study, all within a single unit of analysis, a holistic design was chosen (Yin, 2014).

This chapter begins by outlining the research design of the study and defining the unit of analysis. It also provides an overview of data collection procedures and the instrumentation utilized and identifies the case study participants and research sites. The

chapter goes on to discuss the method of analysis. Finally, this chapter provides an overview of the ethical considerations related to the study.

Restatement of the Purpose

The purpose of this explanatory case study was two-fold. First, this study explored the ways tension in the broader neoliberal higher education environment is experienced by senior-level strategic enrollment managers at Jesuit universities in their efforts to fulfill their espoused university missions. Second, this study examined the ways in which senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities navigate the broader neoliberal higher education environment as they seek to uphold can serve as agents of social change helping fulfill institutional mission.

Research Design

This study employed case-study methodology to examine the ways senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities experience and navigate tensions between upholding their espoused mission and the neoliberal forces influencing higher education. Yin (2014) explains that case-study methodology is suited for studying “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). Furthermore, Yin (2014) offers several suggestions to create “rigorous” and “methodologically sound” case studies (p. 27). Specifically, he lists five components that are to be included in the case study design: “(1) a case study’s questions; (2) its propositions, if any; (3) its unit(s) of analysis; (4) the logic linking the data to the propositions; (5) and the criteria for interpreting the findings” (Yin, 2014, p. 29). A description of each of these five components as applied to the study at hand follows.

Research Questions

Yin (2014) explains that asking the right questions is critical to the success of case-study design. Furthermore, he states that explanatory case studies are particularly successful when they seek to answer “how” questions. As such, this study was guided by two primary questions:

1. How are tensions between social justice mission and neoliberal forces experienced by senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities?
2. How do senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities navigate fulfilling a social justice mission within a neoliberal environment?

Propositions

Yin (2014) explains that propositions “direct attention to something that should be examined within the scope of the study” (p. 30). At its core, this study sought to examine two things. First, this study examined the ways in which senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities *experience* the tension between neoliberalism and mission enactment. Second, this study sought to understand how that population *navigates* those same tensions.

Unit of analysis

When considering the unit of analysis, Yin (2014) directs researchers to both “define the case” and “bound the case” (p. 31). As such, the unit of analysis being studied was senior-level strategic enrollment managers at Jesuit universities. Further detail and rationale are provided in Appendix A. In regards to setting boundaries: there

are 28 Jesuit universities, 26 of which have a senior-level strategic management officer; this study studied the experiences of senior-level strategic enrollment officers at eleven of those institutions. Furthermore, the researcher intentionally included representation from universities that are both seemingly successfully and unsuccessfully upholding access and affordability in their enrollment trends. Criteria for selection will be included in the next section.

Linking data to analysis

Yin (2014) provides several options for linking data to analysis after data has been collected: “pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and cross-case synthesis” (p. 36). This study relied on pattern matching and explanation building. Such an approach allowed the researcher to develop themes and ultimately explanations that are generalizable.

Criteria for interpreting findings

Yin (2014) offers several strategies for interpreting findings, including relying on theoretical propositions. He argues that the entire purpose and design of the study is rooted in these theoretical propositions, and therefore using these propositions to shape the analytical priorities makes sense (Yin, 2014). As such, the theoretical framework developed in Chapter II helped guide the criteria for interpreting findings. This will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Data Collection

This study collected data using two of the major sources of evidence that Yin (2014) recommends in case studies: documentation and interviews. This section will provide an overview of the instrumentation and will briefly identify the case site.

Instrumentation

Descriptive IPEDS data

In order to properly position and understand the institutional landscape that participants in this study are facing, and working within, a descriptive analysis of several variables related to access and affordability is offered. Additionally, this analysis was used to ensure that the sample of interview participants is reflective of the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities. Data for this analysis comes from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) which has been established as the core postsecondary education data collection program for the National Center of Educational Statistics. Specifically, the data reflects the 2016-2017 academic year, which, at the time of this study provided the most recent data available that integrated all of the variables used.

The variables included were:

- (1) Percent admitted: reported by IPEDS as dividing the total number of undergraduate students that were admitted by the total number of students that applied.
- (2) Percent of undergraduate students that yield: reported by IPEDS as dividing the total number of students who enroll by the total number of students who were admitted.
- (3) Discount rate: derived by using two variables reported by IPEDS: average institutional grant divided by published tuition. It is important to note this only reflects full-time students who are enrolling in college for the first time.
- (4) Pell-eligible: reported by IPEDS as the percentage of full-time students who are enrolling in college for the first time that receive the Pell Grant.
- (5) African American enrollment: reported by IPEDS as the percent of the total student body that reports being African American.

(6) Hispanic / Latino enrollment: reported by IPEDS as the percent of the total student body that reports being Hispanic or Latino.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with eleven senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at select Jesuit universities. The interview protocol was semi-structured in order to provide focus, and allow interviewees the flexibility to respond as they see fit. All interviews were digitally recorded using the platform Zoom, and the data was transcribed in order to ensure an accurate representation of the interviewee's response. A full case protocol can be found in Appendix A and a protocol for the interviews can be found in Appendix B.

Selection criteria & recruitment

As previously mentioned, the senior-level strategic enrollment management officer at all of the American Jesuit universities were invited to participate in an interview. Of the 28 Jesuit universities, 26 of them have a senior-level enrollment management officer that was eligible to participate. Intentional efforts were made to secure interviews with administrators that were representative of the institutional characteristics of all 28 Jesuit colleges and universities. The researcher drew upon the previously described descriptive analysis of IPEDS data to insure an accurate representation.

In an effort to recruit participants the researcher sent a formal email to all of the senior-level strategic enrollment management officer at each of the American Jesuit universities inviting them to participate. Furthermore, the researcher followed-up with subsequent emails encouraging participation. Additionally, the researcher utilized

existing professional networks within the Jesuit community to recruit participants. Table 1 provides organizes details about the participants. It is important to note that because of the small sample and population size sharing certain demographic data that could reveal the identity of the participants in the study. For the sake of maintaining anonymity and upholding the ethical treatment of participants some demographic data has been excluded.

Table 1: Participants

Total number of participants	11
Eligible number of participants	26
Females that participated	2
Males that participated	9

Research sites

This single-case study focused broadly on strategic enrollment management at Jesuit universities. Furthermore, the unit of analysis for this case was senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at those institutions. Senior-level strategic enrollment management officers from 26 Jesuit universities were invited to participate, two of the universities do not have a senior-level strategic enrollment officer. Data collection, specifically interviews, occurred remotely using Zoom video conferencing technology.

Method of Analysis

The previous section provided an outline of the instrumentation that was used to collect data in this study, namely descriptive data reporting and semi-structured interviews. This section will provide an overview of how the researcher analyzed that

data. Furthermore, this section will give guidance so that, per Yin's suggestion the researcher will be able to "deliberately triangulate the evidence" in order to "confirm and corroborate the findings" (Yin, 2014, p. 220).

Descriptive analysis of IPEDS data

Using publicly available data from IPEDS, the researcher provided a descriptive analysis of variables related to access and affordability. This data was primarily used to position the sample within the overall population of Jesuit universities. It is also offered a useful context for analyzing the interview data.

Analysis of Interview Data

Creswell (2009) provides a six-step approach to data analysis, which was used to guide this study. Incorporating coding techniques borrowed from grounded theory methodologies, generally the analysis of interview data proceeded the following steps:

Step 1 - Organize and Prepare Data for Analysis: To begin the researcher visually scanned material, compiled all field notes, and sorted the data based on type of information (Creswell, 2009). Simultaneously the researcher had all interviews transcribed using the online service rev.com.

Step 2 - Read Through All Data: Reading through the data provided the opportunity to reflect on its overall meaning (Creswell, 2009). Furthermore, it helped give a general impression of the depth, credibility, and usefulness of the information (Creswell, 2009).

Step 3 - Code the Data: Coding was the process, by which data is categorically assigned and given a word representing its meaning (Creswell, 2009). Strauss & Corbin (1990) recommended beginning this process through open coding, in

which high-level codes are identified. Creswell (2009) identifies the following three categories of codes which were used in this study. First, this study used codes based on past literature and common sense. Chapter II of this work provides a useful review of the themes, and ultimately codes that will emerge in this study. Strauss & Corbin (1990) align this process with theoretical coding, in which specific codes are identified that are in line with the established theories that this study draws upon. In order to use theoretical coding, it was imperative that the code emerged from the data, not just be applied by the researcher (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Second, this study used codes to capture data that is surprising or unexpected at the beginning of this study (Creswell, 2009). Finally, this study used codes to capture data that are unusual and conceptually of interest to the audience (Creswell, 2009). The coding process was implemented and managed using the online qualitative analysis software Dedoose.

Step 4 - Identify Themes and Descriptions: At Creswell's (2009) suggestion, this study seeks generated three themes, with several sub-themes, which ultimately appeared as the major findings. Each of these themes display multiple perspectives and are supported by both specific evidence and direct quotations (Creswell, 2009).

Step 5 - Determine How the Themes and Descriptions Will be Represented in the Study: After coding the data the researcher determined how it will be represented. Creswell (2009) provided several popular approaches that were considered in this study including providing: (1) a chronology of events, (2) a

detailed discussion of themes, or (3) a discussion of multiple interconnected themes. Primarily this study drew upon a detailed discussion of themes.

Step 6 - Interpret the Meaning of the Themes and Descriptions: The final step of analysis was to interpret the meaning of the themes and descriptions.

Creswell (2009) explains that this process seeks to answer the question “what were the lessons learned” (p. 200). This study derived meaning from the literature and theories presented in Chapter II.

Trustworthiness & Validity

Yin (2014) explains that there are four tests, which help ensure validity and trustworthiness in case study design: (1) construct validity, (2) internal validity, (3) external validity, (4) reliability. Yin (2014) created the following table naming specific tactics that guided this case study in order to ensure validity and trustworthiness.

Table 2: Yin’s (2014) guide to validity

Tests	Case study tactic	Phase of research in which tactic occurs
Construct validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● use multiple sources of evidence ● establish chain of evidence ● have key informants review draft case study report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● data collection ● data collection ● composition
Internal validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● do pattern matching ● do explanation building ● address rival explanations ● use logic models 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● data analysis ● data analysis ● data analysis ● data analysis
External validity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● use replication logic in multiple-case studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● research design
Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● use case study protocol ● develop case study database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● data collection ● data collection

Ethical Considerations

There are several ethical considerations that were important to keep in mind. First and foremost, the community of Jesuit higher education is a small community and the individual universities being studied within the larger case and the senior-level strategic enrollment management officers who participated in interviews could be recognized. As such, the researcher used pseudonyms for all individual participants and individual institutions (e.g. Institution 1, Admin 1). Furthermore, it was necessary to be completely transparent with participants in the study and gain full support of the study.

Summary

This chapter provided an outline of the research design of the single holistic case study and defined the unit of analysis. It went on to identify the research site and provide an overview of data collection procedures and the instrumentation and method of analysis that will be utilized. Finally, this chapter provided an overview of the ethical considerations related to the study.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

The purpose of this case study was two-fold. First, this study explored the ways tension in the broader neoliberal higher education environment is *experienced* by senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities in their efforts to fulfill their espoused university missions. Second, this study examined the ways in which senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities *navigate* the broader neoliberal higher education environment as they seek to uphold institutional mission. Semi-structured interviews with eleven of the 26 vice presidents of enrollment management at Jesuit universities (two of the 28 do not have a vice president) yielded key categories of meaning that provide important insights into how cabinet-level enrollment managers experience and navigate the space between.

This chapter will open by providing context for the case study, positioning the sample within the overall landscape of the Jesuit higher education in the United States. The chapter will go on to present the key findings, which are organized in thematic sections. The thematic sections are: (1) commitment to mission; (2) no money, no mission; (3) complexity of navigating the space between. In some instances, findings will speak to the way participants experience the space between, in other instances findings will speak to the way participants navigate the space between, and at times experience and navigation will be indistinguishable. In all cases, the key findings will be illuminated by direct quotes from interview participants. These quotes provide nuanced insights into the way participants in the study navigate and experience the space between.

Throughout this chapter participants and their institutions are referred to by numbers (e.g. Admin 1 and Institution 1) to distinguish each participant's comments from

one another while also maintaining their anonymity. A complete participant description was provided in Chapter III (see Table 1). This study focused on capturing both the individual and shared experience amongst these administrators and their institutional contexts. The study does not focus on the differences amongst participants, and as such the following themes do not account for potential patterns of difference amongst participants.

Case Context: The Landscape of Jesuit Colleges and Universities

In order to properly position and understand the institutional landscape that participants in this study are facing and working within, a descriptive analysis is provided. Data were derived from the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Set (IPEDS) for the year 2016-2017, the latest year for which data were available at the time of this study. Variables related to access and affordability were gathered and derived, based on reflection's offered in Donald E. Heller's (2001) essay, *The Changing Dynamics of Affordability, Access, and Accountability in Public Education*. The variables examined include:

- (1) Percent admitted: reported by IPEDS as dividing the total number of undergraduate students that were admitted by the total number of students that applied.
- (2) Percent of undergraduate students that yield: reported by IPEDS as dividing the total number of students who enroll by the total number of students who were admitted.
- (3) Discount rate: derived by using two variables reported by IPEDS: average institutional grant divided by published tuition. It is important to note this only reflects full-time students who are enrolling in college for the first time.

(4) Pell-eligible: reported by IPEDS as the percentage of full-time students who are enrolling in college for the first time that receive the Pell Grant.

(5) African American enrollment: reported by IPEDS as the percent of the total student body that reports being African American.

(6) Hispanic / Latino enrollment: reported by IPEDS as the percent of the total student body that reports being Hispanic or Latino.

The analysis, presented in Table 3 below, examines means and ranges across both: (1) an overview of all 28 Jesuit colleges and universities; and (2) an overview of the eleven colleges and universities from which study participants come. Analyses show that differences in averages between both groups across six out of seven measures are minimal, reflecting the representativeness of the sample.

Table 3: AJCU characteristics: All institutions and participants' institutions

	All AJCU Institutions			Participant's Institutions		
	Average	Min	Max	Average	Min	Max
Percent Admitted*	63%	17%	90%	66%	41%	90%
Admission Yield*	18%	11%	47%	16%	12%	20%
Discount Rate*	58%	40%	82%	55%	40%	82%
Pell-Eligible*	22%	9%	66%	24%	9%	66%
African American Enrollment	7%	2%	21%	8%	3%	21%
Hispanic / Latino Enrollment	10%	2%	34%	14%	3%	34%

The figures reported in Table 3 provide important insights that help give context to the environments that participants in this study are working in. One variable of note is the discount rate: the average Jesuit university offered undergraduates a 58% discount rate during the 2016-2017 academic year. The remainder of this chapter will make many references to discount rate and the role it plays in participants experience navigating upholding espoused mission and neoliberal pressures. More specifically, discount rate both impacts individual students' ability to afford to enroll at an institution, and the universities financial aid strategy, budget allocation, and overall financial health. The second variable of note is pell eligibility, which is commonly used to measure institutional commitment to access and affordability (Delisle, 2017). Because this variable is widely accepted in the industry as a proxy for measuring access and affordability, in this study it will serve the same function. However, it is important to acknowledge that using this variable to measure access and affordability presumes a color-blind posture, which is absolutely an insufficient way to understand the complexity of access and affordability. Finally, the variables related to African-American and Hispanic / Latino enrollment highlight two things. First, as an aggregate, the enrollment of these populations (African American, 7% and Hispanic / Latino, 10%) across the 28 Jesuit universities is lower than national averages. A National Center For Education Statistics report titled Fast Facts (2018) stated that African American students comprised 15% and Hispanic / Latino students accounted for 17% of the total enrollment at degree granting post-secondary institutions in the United States. Second, the data presented above illustrates a remarkable range between institutions with drastically low enrollment

(2% African American and Hispanic /Latino), and enrollment that surpasses national averages (21% African American and 34% Hispanic / Latino).

The descriptive analysis of recent IPEDS data was included to position participants within the eligible sample. Furthermore, it was presented to help understand the environment that participants in this study are working. With this context in mind the following sections will present the key findings as organized in thematic sections. The first of these sections will explore commitment to mission.

Theme 1: Commitment to Mission

The first theme that will be explored, which emerged as a key finding, is the important role commitment to mission plays in the way participants experience and navigate the space between. A shared understanding of, and commitment to, espoused institutional mission creates a pathway for mission enactment to occur. Similarly, lack of understanding and commitment to espoused mission can lead to mission drift. Examples of both mission enactment and mission drift will be provide throughout this section. To position mission in the field of enrollment management at Jesuit universities, this section will open by positioning access and affordability as central to fulfilling Jesuit mission. The section then examines commitment to mission from two perspectives: individual commitment to mission; and institutional commitment to mission. Finally, this section reveals the important role that participation in formation activities plays in cultivating a commitment to mission.

Access and affordability

In the area of enrollment management at Jesuit universities, mission enactment occurs through the delivery of an accessible and affordable education. Nearly all of the

participants in this study offered reflections that positioned access and affordability as central to upholding institutional mission. For instance, Admin 4 articulated the importance of access:

We're really looking at opportunities to provide access to cultures, to ethnic groups, to socioeconomic groups that we haven't necessarily or won't necessarily be able to serve unless we become more cognizant of our actions today, whether that is in providing a sustainable environment or an accessible environment here at the University.

Admin 4 acknowledges the importance of creating opportunities that lead to access in order to uphold institutional mission. Simultaneously, Admin 4 also acknowledges that if the university is to serve groups who have previously been excluded, improvement is needed, which can only be accomplished through intentional action. They¹ say that such intentional action includes creating a “sustainable” and “accessible” environment, which can be interpreted to include both policies and practices that support enrollment and persistence. Such action would be an illustration of commitment to mission.

As noted in Chapter I, this study defines access as a student's admission, enrollment, and matriculation through college. Similarly, the study defines affordability as the ability for a student to afford to attend college. While Admin 4 highlighted the importance of an intentional commitment to access, Admin 1 spoke about the role affordability plays in access:

¹ In order to maintain the anonymity of participants gender neutral pronouns such as they/their will be used.

Mission is a big tenet. Part of that absolutely for us means that we want to be a space where someone who has modest means, or has difficulty financially, can still afford to come to school. That is absolutely part of what we want to do.

Liberal arts education, and more specifically, a Jesuit education, can only be accessible if it is affordable. Admin 4 articulates a desire to offer an affordable, and therefore accessible education, which is a sentiment that was shared by almost all of the participants. It is important to consider the desire to uphold espoused mission in this way with the current realities at Jesuit universities. As mentioned previously in this chapter, a NCES report (2018) stated that African American students comprised 15% and Hispanic / Latino students accounted for 17% of the total enrollment at degree granting post-secondary institutions in the United States. IPEDS data from 2016-2017 reveal that at Jesuit universities African American students comprised 7% and Hispanic / Latino students account for 10% of students. It is important to shine light on the reality that Jesuit universities are enrolling African American and Hispanic / Latino students at a significantly lower percentage than the national average for four-year institutions.

Despite the fact that African American and Hispanic / Latino students are enrolling at Jesuit universities at a lower percentage than the national average vice presidents who participated in this study largely articulated the belief that access and affordability are central to upholding Jesuit mission. As cabinet-level leaders at Jesuit universities, participants in this study play a critical role in upholding this part of the Jesuit mission, or perhaps, the failure to do so. Participants articulated that their experience working to uphold a mission of access and affordability is deeply influenced

by their personal commitment to this mission, as well as their institutions commitment to the mission. The next section will discuss individual commitment to mission.

Individual commitment to mission

An individual's enduring commitment to mission enactment is often rooted in an intrinsic connection to the Jesuit mission. Participants in this study spent significant time discussing the important role that individual commitment to mission played in making sense of the way they experience and navigate the space between. In many cases the leaders who participated in the study articulated a deep intrinsic commitment to the mission. This affinity was attributed explicitly to several factors that spanned across participants: having studied at a Jesuit university, having family members whose life was positively impacted by the Jesuits, and having foundational-personal beliefs and values that align with the Jesuit charism.

Admin 5 discussed studying and working at Jesuit universities:

I'm a double Jesuit grad myself, Bachelor's [and], Ph. D. I also had been the vice president for enrollment and student life at [another Jesuit university] a little over 12 years ago... My [partner] is a Jesuit grad. My kids went to Jesuit high schools.

It is noteworthy that after graduating from Jesuit universities Admin 5 chose to send their children to Jesuit schools. Admin 5's reflection captures a long history with Jesuit education and subtly illustrates the way intrinsic commitment to and appreciation for Jesuit education is cultivated over time and exposure to the Jesuits.

Similarly, Admin 9 described their connection to the Jesuit mission and a long family history with the Jesuits:

There are lots and lots of connections. Yeah, it was just one of those things where I felt like it was meant to be. You know, I'm first-generation Irish Catholic and come from a family where virtually everyone was Jesuit educated. So even though I had not had that opportunity, my sister went to [a Jesuit university], my [partner] had Jesuit high school. And, depending upon where they were, it was either [one of the local Jesuit universities]. So, I immediately was drawn to [Institution 9] because of the Jesuit connection, the mission.

Jesuit education is a small and tight-knit community. The experience of studying at a Jesuit school leaves a lasting impact on one's life. So-much-so that those who are Jesuit educated likely talk about this proudly with their family and friends, particularly highlighting the best of what Jesuit education can be. This was the case for Admin 9, whose loved one's passion for Jesuit education played a role in their own commitment the Jesuit mission.

Admin 10 talked about the Jesuit values aligning with their own personal faith and values.

My faith is very important to me, and you can't have those conversations at a public university to the depth that you can at a faith-based campus... I'm not Catholic, I didn't grow up in this tradition, but I studied up on the Jesuit values quite a bit, and they live it out here. That's something that appealed to me, and it just seemed like the right fit.

It is common for discussions about Jesuit mission to revolve around a commitment to social justice. While this is certainly an important pillar, the reality, which was established in Chapter 2, is that for the Jesuits, social justice does not occur simply for the

sake of social justice, rather it is a lived expression of their faith. For Admin 10, this expression of faith aligned with their own personal values, which fostered their internal commitment to the Jesuit mission.

Additionally, Admin 10 articulates the transformational value of a liberal education offered at Jesuit universities.

I believe education can transform lives, and generations thereafter. I'm a first gen. My dad didn't graduate high school, he got a job in a textile mill at 15 pushing a broom. He lied about his age to get the job. And yet, he and my mom realized that education was important, and told us, 'You're going to go. You're going to go to college no matter what,' and I was very fortunate of that. And going to college opened up the window to a world that I didn't know existed, and it changed my life, and I want to help other students have that experience.

Admin 10's statement is a powerful declaration about the potential that the Jesuit liberal arts education has to transform a student's life. In this case, the participant articulated the generational change that occurred in their life, which cultivated a life-long commitment education that now aligns with the espoused Jesuit values. This experience plays an important role in their commitment to mission and furthermore the way they experience and navigate the space between.

Equally important to highlight is a case in which intrinsic commitment did not exist. Participant 3 reflected on being hired to lead enrollment efforts: "I didn't honestly know much about Jesuit schools at that point. I was really naïve about everything quite frankly." Participant 3 offered other reflections throughout their interview, which are captured throughout this chapter, and highlight the challenges they had upholding a

mission that they didn't fully understand and appreciate when they were hired. Furthermore, in Participant 3's interview, they disclosed that they had recently accepted a new position and would be leaving the Jesuit university soon. Admin 3's departure will continue to be referenced throughout this chapter.

While the genesis of each individual's commitment can be traced to different points, the previous examples illustrate the ways that participants' understanding of and commitment to mission were formed by deeply personal ties to the Jesuit mission. Participants' illustrations demonstrate, at a foundational level, the ways that intrinsic commitment to mission influences how they experience and navigate the space between.

These reflections make it clear that individual commitment to mission is important. Participants also reflected that their institution's commitment to the mission plays a critical role in the way they experience and navigate mission enactment. The next section will explore institutional commitment to mission.

Institutional commitment to mission

The shared mission of Jesuit universities is a carefully-crafted, internationally-recognized brand that is built upon popular colloquialisms such as: "cura personalis," "the education of the whole person," and "the service of faith and promotion of justice." This study presents evidence of times that the espoused Jesuit mission is successfully upheld and evidence of instances in which espoused mission falls short and is merely corporate rhetoric.

The vice presidents interviewed shared common language when describing their institution's mission, specifically highlighting the taglines offered above. Many of them highlighted social justice initiatives that occur at their universities. Others spoke of a

commitment to developing compassionate leaders, for instance as captured by Admin 3 who described their institutional mission as, “forming leaders engaged in faith, service, justice for life.” While all of the vice presidents interviewed articulated a shared mission that upholds the Jesuit values, it is important to consider whether institutions are truly committed to enacting their mission, or if the familiar colloquialism is merely corporate rhetoric.

While this is an important question, many of the participants described a tangible commitment to cultivating mission, which is central to the way they experience and navigate upholding mission. The next section will explore in detail the role that these formation events play in cultivating commitment to mission as they seek to navigate the space between.

Formation opportunities

A shared understanding of, and commitment to, institutional mission can be cultivated and nurtured through participation in mission formation activities. Many of the participants in the study discussed the important role that participating in such formation activities played in developing their own understanding and commitment to the Jesuit mission. When discussing formation opportunities, participants highlighted events sponsored by an office of mission and identity, service in the community, the importance of prayer and reflection groups, and more.

Admin 4 described the breadth of these opportunities on their campus, and the important role that they play: “I just think there's so many formation programs here that if you participate in some of the formation activities, you can't not think about mission every day.” Participating in these formation programs has indelibly impacted the way

Admin 4 experiences and navigates mission at their institution. While they state it as a given, what this demonstrates is the role these mission formation activities socialized them into the Jesuit mission, compelling them to consider mission at all times. One such way this mission consideration was enacted within their practices was demonstrated by Admin 4 who went on describe specific opportunities to “live our mission”:

We have Project Homeless Connect. Any homeless person in [our city] can come and get basic care, whether that be mental health, dental, physical, emotional support, food, you know, any of the basic needs. We pick one day out of the year where we live our mission and then we're able to, the other 364 days, [live our mission] in community where [these types of opportunities] aren't necessarily here.

This opportunity is an example of what was embedded within others' comments and examples of the formation opportunities. It is also important to note that investing in mission can be a costly proposition. In addition to the cost of offering specific services to the community, this university also pays for all of its employees to take a day off of work to “live out the mission.” This tangible expression of mission speaks volumes about the institution's commitment to mission. Furthermore, Admin 4's comments above describe the experience of formation events as a medium that compels employees to enact the mission in their day-to-day work and therefore cultivates a commitment to mission.

Admin 4's sentiments were echoed by many of the other participants who spoke about the important role formation events play in their experience of institutional commitment to mission. Specifically, Admin 6 articulated the impact a reflection group has had on their life and how that impacts commitment to mission:

I was at [another Jesuit university] for 17 years and we had a reflection group that met monthly. It was a Jesuit and a sister who ran the reflection group for all those years. It was a collection of various people, not anyone that would necessarily you'd cross paths with at the university. We met monthly and it was incredibly important for me personally, but also in terms of my understanding for what this education can and should do.

As shared in these comments, Admin 6 developed a deeper understanding of and commitment to the Jesuit mission by participating in this reflection group. Specifically, Admin 6 refers to the transformational power of a liberal arts education that is rooted in the Jesuit tradition and becomes a vehicle for social change. Admin 5's articulation of their understanding of the transformational value of Jesuit education serves as a specific example of the ways in which formation events can cultivate an understanding of and commitment to upholding mission.

In addition to formation opportunities on individual campuses, the AJCU sponsors a particularly robust and intentional formation opportunity called the Ignatian Colleagues Program (ICP). According to the AJCU website, the goal of the ICP is to: "provide a solid intellectual foundation as well as opportunities for participants to personally experience and appropriate their significance so they may better articulate, adapt, and advance the Jesuit & Catholic mission of their campuses" (AJCU, 2018). Several of the vice presidents who participated in this study completed the ICP and articulated the profound impact the program had on their work and their personal lives. Admin 7 described the impact this experience had on their life and specifically how they

were inspired to use his position in life to advocate for the marginalized, a hallmark of the espoused Jesuit mission:

When I came back from the Ignatian Colleagues immersion experience, I did my immersion experience on the US, Mexico Border in Nogales. When I came back the President gave me some time to talk about my experience. I really went deep with what I experienced on the border, the heartbreak that I saw when I was there and really spoke about, you know, and this was the January prior to the presidential election. You know, I asked people at the table to keep these things in mind as they make decisions about how they vote later in the year. I mean, I take advantage of the opportunity that when I have a voice, I'm going to go with it and make sure my convictions are known.

This statement powerfully illustrates the transformational experience that the Ignatian Colleagues Program had on this participant; a transformation that aligns seamlessly with the outcomes Jesuit institutions hope their liberal arts curriculum will also yield. Moreover, it illustrates the important role that individuals have in advocating for social justice when given the platform. The ICP, like the other formation activities offered, prepares participants to champion the Jesuit mission.

While it is clear that offering formation events is extremely important, participants in this study offer the caveat that investment in mission is related to and often dependent upon resources. Admin 3, who left their Jesuit university before ever developing a deep connection to the mission, talked about funding challenges preventing them from participating in a conference that was sponsored by the AJCU and could have been an opportunity for mission formation within the field:

I have never been to an AJCU Vice President meeting. Every year, there's a meeting where all the Vice Presidents get together... Not that we couldn't afford it, but for the office's sake, I didn't feel like I could get away from the office for something that was a professional development opportunity, when no other people and nobody else on campus really had that opportunity so.

In this case, investment in mission is a luxury that is dependent upon available resources. Institutions with limited resource, be that dollars or human capital, are less likely to invest in mission formation activities that might pull staff members away. This is likely not for lack of desire to do so, rather a conflicting bottom line that is prohibitive.

This section established that a shared understanding of, and commitment to, espoused institutional mission creates a pathway for mission enactment to occur. Similarly, lack of understanding and commitment to espoused mission can lead to mission drift. Notably this section established access and affordability as central to mission enactment at Jesuit universities. Furthermore, this section explored the role both individual commitment and institutional commitment play in mission enactment. Furthermore, this section highlighted how important formation activities are in cultivating a commitment to mission. Commitment to mission can be nurtured, and as a result, opportunity exists to create change makers who are committed to advocating for social justice through their work. This section closed with the reminder that investing in mission is a costly endeavor, and one not afforded by all institutions. The next section will introduce the second theme: no money, no mission. This perspective presents a significant threat to institutional and individual commitment to mission.

Theme 2: No Money, No Mission

Participants in this study believe that espoused institutional mission cannot be enacted unless adequate funding exists to run the enterprise. Several participants reflected a popular mantra that exists at Jesuit universities: no money, no mission. Admin 7 brings this to life, stating, “the first sentence in every mission statement is: keep the lights on.” While this statement is a bit cheeky, it illustrates an important point that the majority of participants made: universities need to be financially healthy in order to operate and fulfill their mission. Admin 1 describes this in more detail: “It’s arguing for the mission as a whole, and balancing margin and mission in that conversation, because we have to be margin advocates to be mission advocates in some of the discussions that we have.” The remarks by Admin 7 and Admin 1 are a powerful reminder of the neoliberal environment that universities are operating within, in which profit and bottom line are of supreme importance. Jesuit universities have a mission that is rooted in social justice, which in the world of enrollment revolves around access and affordability. These are costly endeavors and upholding this mission means finding ways to fund it and requires administrators to enter into and navigate spaces driven by neoliberalism.

This section will begin by examining the role that an institution’s financial health plays in the way participants experience and navigate the space between. Next, this section will discuss how navigating the space between leads to tough choices the vice presidents who participated in this study must make. Finally, this section examines the ways universities are seeking to acquire and leverage resources to fund the enterprise.

Financial health

The constant pursuit of institutional financial health, which is the standard by which all else is measured, impacts employee morale, decision making, and ultimately mission enactment, or lack thereof. Participants in this study described institutional financial health as playing a significant role in the way that they experience and navigate the space between. Some of the vice presidents discussed hardships that they faced because their institutions were not financial healthy. Admin 3 described this hardship:

It's been tough around here the past couple of years. We've had our budgets cut.

We've lost positions. Honestly, right now, it drives every conversation in terms of what we can and can't do. Can we go make that one extra recruiting trip?

Admin 8 offered a similar perspective:

There are no good financial days at [Institution 8] over the last 25 years. They've taken on significant debt, and kicked the can down the road quite a bit. And it has nothing to do with the people who are left standing here now. It has a lot to do with how higher education responds to adversity. And that it would be dealt with later. And right now, later has come true.

The comments offered above represent the challenges of working in an environment with significant financial restraint, which impact the experience of the participants as they seek to navigate the space between. Notably, in the previous section on mission enactment and formation opportunities, Admin 3 also described not being able to attend the AJCU meetings. Admin 3's reflections illustrate the challenge to prioritize upholding mission when funding doesn't exist to perform fundamental job functions, such as taking recruiting trips. Furthermore, such a bleak environment is bad for employee morale and

makes it challenging to work on behalf of the mission. Evidence of this is demonstrated by the fact that Admin 3 reported in their interview that they would be leaving Institution 3 shortly thereafter.

Not all of the vice presidents interviewed described their institution's financial health in such bleak terms. Admin 10 talked about their institution having a healthy endowment, but also acknowledged the role financial health plays in success.

[Institution 10] is a strong institution, it's in a great location, and we've got a good endowment. It could be bigger, it could always be better, but we've got a good endowment. Yet, we still feel that pressure... we've got a net revenue goal that we have to hit, and it's just business. That's really the only way to say it. And yet, I think if I had said that starting out in my career, I probably would've been tarred and feathered by my friends on the academic side of the house. 'It's not a business, that's a dirty word.'

Admin 10's comments represent a reality that many of the participants in this study articulated: generating enough net tuition revenue to run a balanced budget or better yet, profit, is of paramount importance. Admin 10 eludes to how their thinking has changed on this over the years and sees enrollment being run like a business. This reality is an experience shared by most of the participants in this study. The fact that others at the university, often faculty, are resistant to universities being run like business, makes navigating the tension between market and mission extremely challenging.

Admin 9 offers remarks that affirm the importance of meeting revenue goals, and acknowledges that goals of expanding access can only be fulfilled if the revenue goals are met first:

The way I describe it to my team and to my staff is that the first obligation we have to the university is to bring in the class and meet our revenue goals, so that the university can continue and can be healthy moving into the future financially. Within that context is lots and lots of things that we want to accomplish, but the first thing we have to do is make the class, and we have to position ourselves in a place to be able to do that... We always have to be growing applications, because we have to grow the applications to make sure that we're able to admit a large enough pool that with a yield of less than 20% we can bring in the class that meets the diversity goals, the access goals, and the academic goals of the university.

These words perpetuate the belief that even if an institution believes that mission is enacted by offering an affordable and accessible education, that goal can only be actualized if there is a funding model in place to support those goals. In this case, the participant reflects the need to bring in a class that meets revenue goals in order to meet diversity and access goals, which illustrates a major challenge in navigating the space between. As administrators described their efforts to navigate the tensions in the space between in order to pursue financial health at their universities, they also pointed to the difficult decisions that need to be made to do so.

Tough choices

Individuals that are tasked with upholding mission in a neoliberal environment are faced with tough choices, which inevitably lead to the exclusion of deserving students for whom the institution is not affordable, and therefore not accessible. For enrollment

managers these tough choices are often materialized in decisions regarding institutional financial aid allocation. Admin 6 describes this:

We constantly have to make decisions and probably say no a lot more than we say yes in terms of opportunities that come up... I just got two letters. They actually were sent to the president, but then forwarded to me from two different religious sisters who are saying, 'I want to come to [Institution 6], I want to get a degree that's going to help me in a mission and help my constituents, but I need a full scholarship.' Both of those answers are going to have to be no and that happens regularly that the request for really worthy enterprises or worthy opportunities we just have to say no to.

Admin 6's comments capture a few important insights that several of the participants reflected. First, participants in this study, and the staff they supervise, are often put in a position where they need to make decisions about how they will allocate financial resources. Specifically, they will determine who will receive institutional aid and who will not, and in the process sometimes determine the fate of potential students seeking enrollment. This is a large responsibility and it is worth considering the process by which these decisions are made and the way institutional mission is considered. Second, this is a deeply personal experience and the potential student receiving the decision is more than just a number—in this case it is religious sisters—who would benefit greatly from a liberal arts education from a Jesuit university. Personalizing these decisions is a reminder of their significance. Similarly, personalizing the decision maker is also important. Determining the fate of deserving student's enrollment status, often times having to reject those students, presents an emotional burden that is worth noting.

Many of the vice presidents that participated in this study expressed the desire to offer financial aid packages with adequate funding to make their institution affordable for every student who desires to attend, but the inability to do so. Admin 1 described this tension, highlighting needs of students from Cristo Rey high schools, Catholic high schools that serve low-income students:

I'd love to meet 100% need of all the students from Cristo Rey, and any student of Cristo Rey who applies you want to do 100% need. Sometimes tension before mission is to say you can't do that, and there are times when you have to make a case for why you can't do that. That's not pleasant. I'd love to meet 100% of need if everyone from a Cristo Rey school comes to the [Institution 1]. But if we did that, we wouldn't meet the class, and so our overall mission would be harmed by a decision to do something good versus our population, if you understand the challenge that faces that.

Admin 1's reflection illustrates the complexity and interdependence of navigating the space between. Funding 100% need for Cristo Rey students could prevent the institution from funding other students who also have financial need. Thus, these comments reflect the zero-sum game involved with funding individual students from the limited resources available to do so, and navigating the various needs of students and those of the institution.

Admin 9 illustrates tough choices that universities face within a financially minded environment:

The balance between making sure the institution is in a healthy financial position, so that it is able to provide the level of education and support that our students

deserve with the increasing questions of higher education, I think it's a string-can for all universities and campuses. But it's particularly difficult in a place where we do believe in social justice. There's an inherent feeling that no one should be turned away because they can't afford to come, but unfortunately, that is not the case. Not that we turn people away, I want to be careful about that, because we are totally need blind in our admissions process. But in essence, when we're not able to meet need fully, in some cases where we reject them in just a slightly different way.

This profound statement, which is representative of the individual experiences of participants, illustrates that if Jesuit universities are not affordable they are not accessible. Moreover, Admin 9 shines a bright light on the magnitude of decisions that functionally deny students access to their university. Rejecting students in this way stands in stark contrast to a social justice mission that is expressed through access and affordability and is a notable example of the ways that participants experience and navigate the space between.

Further, participants' reflection considered the ethical responsibility that universities have to not saddle incoming students with insurmountable debt. Admin 9 continued:

So, there's a lot of phone conversations, and a lot of meetings that my team have to have with disappointed families when they're not able to really address their concerns and address their goals. It can be wearing on people. We also make a point here of not encouraging families. We don't tell them not to come, but we don't encourage them to take out 40,000 dollar a year parent loans or to do

alternative loans. We're not in the practice of helping people figure it out no matter what. We make sure they get every dollar that they're entitled to, and that they understand all their options. If we can scramble and find them some more, find them a third-party scholarship, or whatever we can do to make it possible for them, we do. But if it gets down to the day that a student has a 30,000-dollar gap, we are not twisting their arms to enroll, because we know that that's not in the best interest of the student or their family.

This comment further highlights the ethical and professional dilemma these administrators are positioned within. The strategies captured here reflect the conflicts they encounter in simultaneously meeting institutional demands and navigating the responsibilities they feel to incoming students and their families. Thus, the affordability consideration also extends to the long-term financial costs of higher education that students may have to carry when the institution relegates financial support for students to loan sources. With an institution's financial health and the tough choices that vice presidents have to make in mind, the next section explores the different paths that institutions are taking to acquire and leverage resources to fund the enterprise.

Funding the enterprise

The constant pursuit of institutional financial health leads vice presidents of enrollment management and the institutions that they work for to pursue opportunities to acquire and leverage resources that can help fund the overall enterprise. The pursuit of these resources at times aligns with institutional mission, but in other instances, is quite simply, an exercise in margin. Admin 1 highlighted the importance of acquiring such resources in order to fund the institution's mission:

There is a tension there, and I'm not apologetic about it because you have to fund the mission. One of our trustees said it really well, "When there's no margin, there's no mission." You just can't do it. For us, with the discount rate that keeps climbing and tension and pressure to keep the discount rate down, with flat or negative revenue for student growth year over year because tuition increases have been kept so low, this has to give somewhere. The answer is to try to find areas around our core undergraduate market that can supplement and add revenue, and help to make the mission more possible across the board. So, we've had to devote some resources towards those areas.

Admin 1's poignant words capture a reality that almost all of the participants in this study described. In fact, almost all of the vice presidents that participated in this study discussed strategies that leverage resources by aligning multiple revenue streams in order to meet the overall net tuition revenue goals of the university and maintain financial health. The section will discuss the three most common resources that participants identified: (1) state and federal aid, (2) international students, (3) fundraising.

State and federal aid

The most common resource that these participants discussed reliance upon is state and federal financial aid. Admin 11 described the financial upside to leveraging state and federal aid:

If you're a Pell Grant student from our state and you get a State Grant and you get [other public money], you can be bringing \$20,000 in net tuition revenue to the table before [you are] asked to pay a dime.

Enrolling students who are eligible for Pell Grants and other state funding can be beneficial for universities because public funding becomes a revenue stream for the institution, which contributes to net tuition revenue and overall financial health. The challenge that often accompanies enrolling pell-eligible students is finding enough institutional aid to cover the gap in cost of attendance; however, combined support for students from federal and state aid, as captured by Admin 11, prove beneficial for the student but largely for the institution as well. Thus, students who may otherwise be considered a financial liability to the institution are positioned to be a resource. In discussions, several participants articulated concerns about state and federal funding being cut, which could have major implications on these universities leverage these resources to off-set the financial cost of serving students who have unmet financial need.

International students

Enrolling international students, the majority of whom pay full tuition, was described as an important and highly-leveraged revenue resource by many participants in this study. Admin 1 explicitly described this practice at their institution:

When we approach international recruiting I was explicit. I was explicit with the board, I've been explicit with the cabinet and with others on campus that our international recruiting enterprise, at this time, is a margin exercise, not a mission exercise. If you're looking at it from the standpoint of mission being defined in that sense, as we're trying to create an access point here for anyone regardless of need, that's not true in our international recruiting. We're actually going to places where we believe ability to pay is going to be less of a point, and where families

who can afford us are the ones likely to look and try to enroll. We're not going to places where that socio-economic equation is not going to work in our favor.

This reflection boldly highlights a phenomenon that is widely perceived on university campuses, but seldomly named in such explicit terms: international students, are being intentionally targeted to enroll at universities, specifically because of the significant financial contribution they make, separate from any consideration for upholding institutional mission. In an environment that is driven by the pursuit of financial health, these students are used as financial resources that are leveraged as part of an overall enrollment strategy, and ultimately contribute to net-tuition revenue goals. Such a practice, viewing students as resources upon which budgets are built as opposed to individuals that contribute to the life of the academic community and overall institutional mission, is a clear example of mission drift.

Fundraising

Nearly every vice president who participated in this study emphatically reported the role development, fundraising, and endowments play in the way that they experience and navigate the space between. Admin 9 specifically talked about the important role fundraising plays in upholding a mission of access and affordability:

The other thing is working with my colleagues in University Relations about fundraising, and trying to make sure that we focus our fundraising on as much, candidly, unrestricted scholarship dollars as possible, so that we can be as flexible and quick to be able to help students, and to address particular concerns. So that we don't find ourselves we can only give scholarships to engineering students with a 3.5, but that we have the resources to be able to help a wide group of

students. And that whatever we offer them when they come in as freshman, we're able to stay committed to all the way through their four years here. Accepted students and their families can plan and go forward. I think that's a real key part of it.

The critical role that fundraising plays in the way vice presidents experience and navigate the space between cannot be overstated. Successfully raising funding to offer new scholarships and therefore a more affordable education requires partnering with stakeholders across campus, most notably the advancement office.

In summary, theme 2: no money, no mission focuses on a belief advanced by participants in this study: espoused institutional mission cannot be enacted unless adequate funding exists to run the enterprise. Additionally, this section highlighted the experiences vice presidents have seeking to uphold institutional mission in environments that are driven by the constant pursuit of financial health. In this environment, the need to maintain or achieve financial health led many vice presidents to tough choices. Finally, this section also explored how the pursuit of financial health has led institutions and their leadership acquire and leverage resources, which may or may not uphold and advance institutional mission.

Theme 3: Complexity of Navigating the Space Between

Mission enactment in a neoliberal environment is full of complexity, and navigating this space takes agility and nuance. This section will highlight strategies for navigating this complex space, but will open by discussing the opportunities and challenges that exist in attempting to do so.

Opportunities

Vice presidents of enrollment have the opportunity to be champions for institutional mission and advocate for social justice-based practices, namely ones that will lead to a more accessible and affordable liberal education. This opportunity exists for two reasons. First, the espoused mission of Jesuit universities creates an environment where social justice pursuits and practices that lead to access and affordability can be upheld. Second, vice presidents of enrollment maintain the positionality to be advocates of their justice-centered missions. Admin 7 described their commitment to social justice:

I find myself in meetings...[being a] voice for a possible DACA student on campus, [and making] sure that our financial aid strategy is not simply looking to maximize net tuition revenue, that it's also trying to close gaps for those high need families...

This reflection illustrates a perspective shared by many participants in this study: that through their positions as individual actors, they have the opportunity to be change agents and social justice advocates. This excerpt highlights the positionality of this particular administrator, reflective of that of others as well, to intentionally reshift the dominant neoliberal climate that threatens undocumented students and where decision-making is driven by capitalism. Similarly, Admin 4 described the opportunity to advocate for mission, even when that mission is being threatened:

I've made decisions in my 15 years that were not popular in the finance area. I went with what I believed was living true to the mission, rather than to the ledger, and I've kept my job because I made the right decision. And we were still able to keep the lights on... I need to make decisions that allow me to go home each

night, put my head on the pillow, and know that I did right by the students I serve and the community in which I am a part of. If there has been any night where I have been sick to my stomach and not been able to lay my head down, I have changed the decision, I have gone back, and I have done things right...

Sometimes it's not always the most popular decision, but as a leader, especially of this type of a unit at this type of an institution, that's what you need to do.

These remarks by Admin 4 are full of wisdom that even the most seasoned enrollment manager can benefit from. First and foremost, Admin 4 positions students as central to everything that happens at the university, arguing that decisions must be of service to the student for whom the university exists. Positioning students as central to everything that happens at a university is important to highlight, because it stands in stark contrast to the example offered in the *No Money, No Mission* section above, of enrolling international students and viewing them merely as resources upon which financial goals are met. Second, Admin 4 articulates an unwavering commitment to the Jesuit mission of the institution, even when it is in conflict with institutional financial viability. These comments highlight the difficulty in maintaining this commitment, which will be explored more thoroughly in the next section. Finally, Admin 4's comments suggest a perspective of the infallibility of institutional leaders sometimes giving into neoliberal pressures at the cost of institutional mission, but points to leaders' ability to discern when they have done so and the courage to make a new choice. These comments underscore the significant role of vice presidents of enrollment who are cabinet-level leaders and, because of their positionality, have the opportunity to influence what mission enactment and social justice look like on their campuses.

Challenges

Vice presidents of enrollment face three major three major challenges when working to uphold institutional mission in a neoliberal environment: (1) conflict with the finance office; (2) pressures from the board of trustees; and (3) personal hardships. These challenges are magnified by the fact that the standard by which success is measured, financial outcomes, is itself also rooted in neoliberalism.

Conflict with the finance office

An overwhelming majority of participants spoke in great detail about challenges and conflicts they had with the finance office at their institution. The following statement, offered by Admin 5, provided the most compelling, and troubling insight:

I see a disagreement between the academic side of the house led by the provost, who's very mission focused, and what I see coming out of the [finance office], who are totally money focused...My sense is that [the CFO] could care less about our mission. And not to say that [they are] against our mission, but that [they are] focused on balancing the budget and making sure we don't fall into a deficit situation. A definite tension between the academic side and the financial side.

While not every participant reported conflict with the finance office, these comments highlight a perceived major challenge faced by vice presidents in navigating expectations from the finance office, which are often incongruent with expectations in the enrollment office. Thus, this underscores a perception of finance offices as being exclusively concerned about the finances of the university and ultimately about balanced budgets and bottom lines irrespective of institutional mission. Such expectations are reflective of neoliberal tendencies. Furthermore, participants described these challenges as a major

roadblock that they must navigate as they seek to uphold the Jesuit mission and offer an accessible and affordable education.

Pressure from the board of trustees

A second challenge that many of the participants in this study identified is the pressure they feel from the board of trustees. Admin 8 provides a striking insight into the space between, by describing a finance committee within a board meeting:

Going into a board meeting, for example, and giving a presentation on the success, and being a little whipsawed between finance committee members wanting to know why we have to give [discount rate] cents back on the dollar, which is their way of looking at it, for all of our students. To then having some of our board members who are much more mission focused, sometimes they're from religious orders but other times not, who are very, very concerned that we're not affordable and we're not fulfilling our mission with respect to bringing under-resourced students or underrepresented students to campus.

Admin 9's description captures the tension of the space between and the challenge to navigate an environment where both financial goals and a mission of access and affordability are trying to co-exist. This challenge is compounded by the fact that many board members are business men and women who have likely succeeded at very high levels, as measured by financial standards. As such, they are likely used to making decisions that are good for the bottom line, regardless of the cost. This highlights the ways these tensions in mission and institutional finances are positioned to be in conflict across various levels of the institution. This neoliberal tenant, which threatens the

fundamental mission of higher education, enters university from the very top of the power structure, through the board of trustees.

Personal hardship

Many of the participants in this study articulated facing significant personal hardships as they tried to navigate the space between. These hardships ranged from personal stress, to concern for staff members and their well-being, to losing their jobs because they did not meet enrollment projections. Admin 2 describes the latter:

We all learn of a couple of colleagues who lost their jobs because they missed the class. It's like basketball—you fire the coach, you don't fire the general manager, you don't fear the president, you don't fire the players. So that's one of things we all know going into it, but it's sad... I think we're all aware of that a little bit more and enjoy it, when we get an actual retirement or if somebody of their own volition has decided it's time to go.

This comment connects individual's success—their employment status, their ability to provide for their family—to meeting net tuition revenue goals, and enrollment projections, and the impact these imminent threats have had on the way they approach their work. These comments highlight the enterprise of their Jesuit university contexts, which encourages capitalistic and mission misaligned decision making. The fear of losing their jobs, as articulated by participants in this study, is a function of the neoliberal pressures influencing all of higher education. Even seemingly well-intentioned individuals who express genuine committed to an espoused mission of access and affordability are forced to work within a structural system that fundamentally operates on neoliberal principles which priorities financial health above all else. Look no further than

Admin 3, who left their role as a vice president of enrollment at a Jesuit university because this challenge was too great.

Navigating the space between is difficult work and participants in this study revealed common challenges that all have roots in neoliberalism and capitalism. These challenges are in direct conflict with Jesuit mission and social justice values, yet they are pervasive at the most fundamental levels of universities. Participants in this study experience this tension in very tangibles ways and struggle to navigate it.

Strategies

Vice presidents of enrollment identified two strategies that help navigate the space between: (1) develop allies; (2) commit to mission-based decision making. The first strategy, developing allies, explores the importance of relationship building, educating stakeholders, and managing expectations. The second strategy, commitment to mission-based explores the prioritization of mission in day-to-day operations.

Developing allies

Enrollment management is extremely complex, and while the majority of the day-to-day work goes unseen by the university community, the outcome is displayed in a very public way when the incoming class arrives on campus and enrollment statistics are announced. Stakeholders, which include faculty, staff, the president's cabinet, and the board of trustees often have strong opinions about enrollment outcomes without truly understanding the nuance that leads to these outcomes. Participants in this study largely share the belief that they will be better able to uphold mission if these stakeholders are allies who understand the aforementioned nuance. As such, investing in building

relationships, educating, and managing the expectations of these stakeholders is critical to navigating the space between.

This study highlights the importance of building relationships and collaborating with stakeholders. Admin 7 talks about this being successfully modeled on their campus:

The President has been excellent in bringing academic, financial leadership, and advancement, and myself to the table on a regular basis just to talk about enrollment so that we're all on the same page. I mean, that communication and that consistency has been a big part of being able to navigate issues... It's important to, from my standpoint, for key members of the leadership team to be on the same page... it requires a lot of communication. It requires a lot of sharing of data. It requires a lot of frank and open conversation. It requires spending time together, which we did.

As highlighted in Admin 7's remarks, building relationships takes time and intentional effort. Time is a limited resource and efforts spent building relationships may divert stakeholders from other, more tangible projects. However, participants in this study highlight the importance of investing in building relationships, and they report this as a key strategy to developing the agility that allows them to navigate the space between.

A second strategy that helps to develop allies is educating stakeholders. Admin 11 describes many of the nuances in the space between and their responsibility to help other stakeholders understand this complexity:

But, I think, for somebody in my role, it's really trying to, in a way that people can -- in an appropriate time -- and with the right steps, understand better the realities within this space. And, to understand, for example, it's not a simple trade-

off between Pell Grant and full-pays that there's all these gradations. I could just go on point-by-point. I mean, it's helping faculty members understand that if a student has a gap, it doesn't mean that they can't enroll or can't persist. Yes, we would all love to be in a world where we could cover that gap but that's not going to happen. And, it hasn't happened in places like Institution 11. And, students still do enroll, and still get a good education, and still go out in the world, and are successful.

Admin 11 highlights some of the nuances that they have experienced navigating with stakeholders, in this case faculty who have a limited understanding of the complexity of enrolling pell-eligible students. Admin 11 advocates for education which will help these stakeholders understand this nuance, but acknowledges that education must occur in a thoughtful way, mindful of timing and delivery.

Educating stakeholders also helps to manage their expectations, which participants shared is critical to the way they navigate the tension between espoused mission and neoliberal pressures. Admin 7's reflections center the important role of managing expectations.

I'm presenting leadership with options. I'm saying we could do this or we could do this. One of them is going to generate more money than the other. This one is staying true to what we set out to do this year. I'm happy to say that this leadership has not taken the easy path to the money and has instead chosen to pursue the path that is aligned with what we set out to do in the beginning of the year... I think nine out of 10 institutions would take the revenue. I think that we're making tough decisions on the expense of the university so that we can

continue to do these things we believe in and I'm really happy to be a part of that team. Some of it is just there's creativity that's involved. There is discipline that's involved. There is managing expectations.

Many of the participants shared sentiments, similar to Admin 7, and discussed the importance of managing the expectations. Most notably, participants talked about the importance of doing so with the finance office and the board of trustees. This is an important strategy, that speaks directly to the challenges, which are rooted in neoliberalism, that were described previously in this section. Admin 7's remarks above speak to more than simply managing expectations; they also illustrate an institutional commitment to mission in the face of neoliberal threats to that mission.

Commit to mission-based decision making

The second, and perhaps most compelling strategy that emerged in this study, is to demonstrate a fundamental commitment to mission-based decision making. Admin 1 describes what this looks like:

The first principle for me in mission is, don't make mission the last thing you talk about. You've got to make it part of the up-front discussion, and it has to be something that everyone understands is the lens through which we want to see the decisions we have to make.

Admin 1's reflection on the foundational principle that has helped them navigate the space between, offers unignorable guidance to all who seek to uphold mission in a neoliberal environment. Congruent with Admin 1's remarks, participants in this study widely discussed the importance of positioning mission at the center of all conversations. One tangible example includes incorporating mission into staffing decisions. However, it

is also important to note that Admin 1 is also the same participant that unapologetically declared recruiting international students is an exercise in margin, not mission. The juxtaposition between these two examples illustrate the active tension that exists in the space between espoused mission and the neoliberal forces driving the higher ed landscape and Jesuit institutions.

Several participants in this study discussed the critical importance of hiring employees who are committed to the institution's mission. Admin 2 captures this:

I think in terms of being responsible for staff, three different offices, it starts with hiring for mission, it starts with getting some people that understand that this is not your typical nine to five. It doesn't matter who walks in the door, you have to have a little bit more compassionate.

Earlier in this chapter, it was established that an intrinsic commitment to mission plays an important role in navigating the space between. This comment shows that participants also believe it is important to find employees who have an intrinsic commitment to the mission. As captured here, these vice presidents largely shared a perspective that employees who understand and believe in the mission are much more likely to advocate for the mission than those who do not have any connection to it.

Jesuit universities have a unique mission that has deep roots in social justice. While it may seem obvious, reflections offered in this study reveal the importance of making decisions that are rooted in institutional mission in order to navigate the space between. If Jesuit universities fall into neoliberal traps, and are unable to successfully deliver an affordable and accessible liberal arts education, it leaves little hope that other universities that are not guided by a mission that explicitly calls for social justice can do

so. Jesuit universities represent the best of what a liberal arts education can be, and leaders of these institutions must commit to mission-based decision making.

This section presented two strategies that vice presidents revealed using as they attempt to navigate the space between. After discussing the opportunities, challenges, and strategies that shared by participants in this study, this section will close with a brief look at the complexity of mission enactment, experienced by vice presidents of enrollment management at Jesuit universities as they navigate the space between. Admin 2 describes this complexity in no uncertain terms:

Our goal is not just get [1,400] students.... and generate \$52 million in net revenue... also make sure there are no more than [20% in college A, 30% in college B], gender balance within 1%, increase the number of students of color particularly African Americans. Make sure we get as many kids from Jesuit high schools as we can, pay attention to Pell Grant percentage... That's where it really gets dreamy in some people's eyes. So I think our role in terms of how much it affects our job, is to be a mirror and a sounding board saying, 'No, what you are asking for is not realistic.' If you really think that as a Jesuit institution, we should dedicate all of our resources to the neediest then we would be doing this differently, not only in terms of the admissions but in terms of the budget allocation, on the expense side of buildings and faculty and remuneration and benefits and the rest of that. So none of us can say it's not a factor, but none of us can say we could survive personally or institutionally, if we just ignored everything else... we could have a nice small class of unbelievably deserving kids and the place would close.”

Admin 2's sobering reflection offers important insights into the complexity of offering an affordable and accessible education and provides an appropriate conclusion to this section as it ties together many of the nuances revealed throughout the section. These remarks clearly illustrate one of the major challenges articulated in this section, conflicting interests between financial goals (i.e. headcount and net tuition revenue) and goals related to access and affordability (i.e. increasing the enrollment of African American students and pell-eligible students). Furthermore, Admin 2's suggestion that it is "dreamy" to think that a university can successfully enroll students who check all of the desired boxes, illustrates the importance of managing expectations, one of the key strategies offered earlier in this chapter. Finally, Admin 2 calls the entire enterprise to task, stating that if Jesuit universities are truly committed to serving people on the margins then they need to reconsider the entire business model. Such efforts would demonstrate a commitment to resisting the neoliberal forces that are driving the landscape of higher education. Because of their positionality and their seat at the tables, participants in this study have the opportunity to start these conversations and lead efforts to reimagine the paradigm in ways that will allow Jesuit universities to better uphold their mission and offer an affordable and accessible liberal arts education.

Summary of Findings

This chapter opened with a descriptive analysis of IPEDS data capturing the environment in which participants in this study are working. More substantially, this chapter presented the key findings that emerged in this study, which capture the experiences that participants shared in regards to their experience navigating the space

between. These findings were organized into three thematic sections: (1) commitment to mission; (2) no money, no mission; (3) complexity of navigating the space between.

The first thematic section, commitment to mission, declared that a shared understanding of, and commitment to, espoused institutional mission creates a pathway for mission enactment to occur. Similarly, lack of understanding and commitment to espoused mission can lead to mission drift. The first section opened by examining mission enactment in the field of enrollment management, noting that mission enactment occurs by delivering an accessible and affordable education. Furthermore, both individual and institutional commitment to mission were explored. An individual's enduring commitment to mission enactment is often rooted in an intrinsic connection to the Jesuit mission. Additionally, the shared mission of Jesuit universities is a carefully-crafted, internationally-recognized brand that is built upon popular colloquialisms such as: "cura personalis," "the education of the whole person," and "the service of faith and promotion of justice." This study presents evidence of times that espoused Jesuit mission is successfully upheld and evidence of instances in which espoused mission is at merely corporate rhetoric. Finally, the first section looked at the role mission formation activities played in participants experience, and advanced the idea that a shared understanding of, and commitment to, institutional mission can be cultivated and nurtured through participation in mission formation activities.

The second thematic section, no money, no mission, was grounded in the participant believe that espoused institutional mission cannot be enacted unless adequate funding exists to run the enterprise. The section opened by declaring the constant pursuit of institutional financial health, which is the standard by which all else is measured,

impacts employee morale, decision making, and ultimately mission enactment, or lack thereof. The second section went on to acknowledge that individuals that are tasked with upholding mission in a neoliberal environment are faced with tough choices, which inevitably lead to the exclusion of deserving students for whom the institution is not affordable, and therefore not accessible. Finally, the constant pursuit of institutional financial health leads vice presidents of enrollment management and the institutions that they work for to pursue opportunities to acquire and leverage resources that can help fund the overall enterprise. The pursuit of these resources at times aligns with institutional mission, but in other instances, is quite simply, an exercise in margin.

The third thematic section, complexity of navigating the space between, positioned mission enactment in a neoliberal environment as full of complexity, and stated that navigating this space takes agility and nuance. In doing so, the third thematic section explored the opportunities, challenges, and strategies that participants reported experiencing as they navigate upholding mission in a neoliberal environment. These findings should be considered in relation to the institutional context in which the participants work as well as the larger context of Jesuit higher education. Chapter V will offer a critical analysis of these findings, in conversation with the conceptual framework in Chapter II of this study.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Chapter V opens with a summary of the study and briefly presents the problem that was studied, the purpose of the study, the methodology used, and the major findings. The chapter then discusses the findings, highlighting three fundamental takeaways, and putting them in conversation with existing literature. Finally, this chapter presents implications for action, recommendations for further research and conclusions.

Summary of the Study

In order to provide a summary of this study this section will open by presenting an overview of the problem being studied. Second, this section will restate the purpose statement and research questions. Finally, this section will review the methodology used to guide the study.

Overview of the problem

There are 28 Jesuit universities in the United States, all of which have a curriculum rooted in the liberal arts and that collectively share an avowed mission and commitment to social justice (Traub, 2008). The Presidents of the 28 American Jesuits colleges and universities have pledged a commitment to students from diverse “economic, cultural, ethnic, religious, and geographic backgrounds” stating, “we prioritize the education of these often vulnerable and underserved students at great financial sacrifice to our institutions for the sake of their access to and success within our Jesuit colleges and universities” (Presidents of the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities, 2010).

This mission, with a focus on access to an affordable liberal arts education exists in tension, and often stark contrast to social, political, market, and economic forces that are influencing the way American colleges and universities conduct business (Slaughter, 2004; Giroux, 2014). These tensions, which in this study are positioned under the umbrella of neoliberalism, are inflating the cost of attending college at an unsustainable rate. Senior-level strategic enrollment management professionals are left with the daunting task of “integrating all of the university's program’s practices, policies, and planning related to achieving the optimal recruitment, retention and graduation of students” (Hossler, 2015, p 5). Jesuit universities and their senior leadership are part of this larger narrative and as the cost of attendance rises two clear problems emerge. First, the ability for Jesuit universities to uphold their social justice-inspired mission and deliver an affordable and accessible liberal arts education is being threatened because they are pricing out those they seek to serve. Second, there is a growing tension between the espoused mission of Jesuit universities and the decisions that their leaders and administrators make to run the enterprise. What is needed is a better understanding of the way senior-level leaders who are tasked with upholding access and affordability experience and navigate *the space between* espoused mission and neoliberalism.

Purpose statement and research questions

The purpose of this explanatory case study was two-fold. First, this study explored the ways tension in the broader neoliberal higher education environment is *experienced* by senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities in their efforts to fulfill their espoused university missions. Second, this study examined the ways in which senior-level strategic enrollment management officers

at Jesuit universities *navigate* the broader neoliberal higher education environment as they seek to uphold institutional mission. This study was guided by two primary research questions:

1. How are tensions between a social justice mission and neoliberal forces experienced by senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities?
2. How do senior-level strategic enrollment management officers navigate fulfilling a social justice mission within a neoliberal environment at Jesuit universities?

Review of methodology

This study used case study methodology. Specifically, it was an explanatory, single-case study that uses a holistic design and focused on a single-unit of analysis: the experiences of senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities. A descriptive analysis of recent IPEDS data was used to provide context for the institutional landscape that participants are working in, specifically, the larger landscape of Jesuit higher education in America. Data collection occurred through semi-structured interviews with eleven vice presidents of enrollment management at Jesuit universities. Creswell's (2009) six-step approach was used to analyze the data.

Major Findings

When analyzing the data and considering the ways that vice presidents of enrollment management at Jesuit universities experience and navigate the space between, three major themes emerged. The first theme that emerged from the reflections offered by participants is that commitment to mission significantly impacts their experience navigating the space between. Participants described their commitment to mission both

through an individual lens, which amongst other things, explored intrinsic commitment to mission, and an institutional lens, which highlights structural and corporate expressions of mission. Furthermore, this study found that commitment to mission can be cultivated through formation activities offered via the institution. The second theme that emerged is that without sufficient resources to run the enterprise, Jesuit universities cannot enact their mission. Senior-level enrollment officers experience, and are forced to navigate, an environment in which financial health is of paramount importance. This reality often leads vice presidents to tough choices and ultimately pursuit of resources to fund the mission. The third theme that emerged is that navigating the space between is a complex endeavor. In navigating the space between, participants experience both challenges and opportunities. Furthermore, participants revealed strategies they used to navigate the complexity of the space between. The next section offers a nuanced look at the findings, connecting the themes that emerged in the findings to the conceptual framework developed in Chapter II and existing literature.

Discussion of Findings

The major findings that emerged in this study, which were briefly highlighted in the previous section, are a reflection of the experiences described by participants. Taken at face value, they may offer interesting takeaways, perhaps lessons worth considering in the field of enrollment management. This section will move beyond a surface-level description and offer a nuanced analysis of the findings through the lens of the conceptual framework developed in Chapter II, and with great consideration for the breadth of existing relevant literature. In doing so, this section will answer the study's research questions: (1) How are tensions between a social justice mission and neoliberal forces

experienced by senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities? (2) How do senior-level strategic enrollment management officers navigate fulfilling a social justice mission within a neoliberal environment at Jesuit universities? To answer these questions, this section is broken into three subsections, which present the fundamental takeaways: (1) neoliberalism: a persistent threat to mission; (2) mission-based leadership; (3) redefining the metrics for success.

Neoliberalism: a persistent threat to mission

Neoliberalism is pervasive in all facets of American society. It is so deeply woven into the fabric of American culture that the evidence of neoliberalism has become an expected norm in the 24-hour news cycle and the operation of American universities. It is rooted in the following four principles: (1) the free market drives all and profit is the only measure for success (Giroux, 2004); (2) privatize everything possible (Giroux, 2004, Kumashiro, 2012); (3) the government is not responsible for the common good (Giroux, 2004); and (4) America is a post-racial society (Dumas, 2013; Giroux, 2009). These principles are in direct conflict with Jesuit mission, and furthermore are a threat to Jesuit institutions seeking to uphold a mission of access and affordability. Evidence of these principles emerged in the key findings of this study and cut across all of the themes discussed in Chapter IV.

Experiencing neoliberalism as a persistent threat to mission

Participants in this study shared several common experiences which emerged in the key findings and illustrate the ways neoliberalism is a persistent threat to espoused Jesuit mission. The first experience, which directly aligns with neoliberalism, is the emphasis that participants placed on the importance of institutional financial health as

central to their experience. Similarly, participants in the study revealed net tuition revenue as the outcome by which their success is measured. Additionally, the findings revealed that participants, who work in enrollment, often felt like goals of access and affordability are misaligned with the finance office and the board of trustees, whose goals are rooted in protecting the financial health of the institution. These experiences, which revolve around financial health and net-tuition revenue, illustrate that participants are being asked to navigate an environment that is grounded in the first neoliberal tenant: profit is the only measure of success.

Navigating neoliberalism as a persistent threat to mission

Participants discussed several ways in which they navigated neoliberal pressures. First, participants shared several specific strategies that they have for navigating this space. These strategies revolved around relationship building, managing expectations, and providing education to stakeholders. Second, participants revealed ways in which their institutions seek to acquire and leverage resources that fund the operation of the enterprise. Notably, these resources include state and federal funding, international student enrollment, and fundraising efforts. The strategies described above indicate that participants are seeking to operate within the established neoliberal paradigm as opposed to deconstruct it, and build a new paradigm that positions mission first.

Neoliberalism, resource dependency theory, and the enrollment economy

Harkening back to Chapter II, Giroux (2004) warns that, “wedded to the belief that the market should be the organizing principle for all political, social, and economic decisions, neoliberalism wages an incessant attack on democracy, public goods, the welfare state, and non-commodified values” (p. 495). The experiences outlined above

illustrate this is in fact happening at Jesuit universities. When financial health and net tuition revenue are the standards by which success is measured, our institutions have in fact commodified the value of a liberal arts education. Furthermore, the navigation strategies that were briefly highlighted above indicate that neoliberalism leads to a resource dependence perspective. In framing resource dependence theory, Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) state, “the key to organizational survival is the ability to acquire and maintain resources” (p. 2). Resource dependency theory also characterizes institutions as open systems that exist in interdependence with other organizations (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Consistent with Pfeffer and Salancik’s (1978) theory, one of the major findings of this study is that all of the participants in this study articulated engaging in activities that allowed them to acquire and leverage resources, specifically discussing the following: (1) leveraging state and federal aid, (2) enrolling international students (3) relying on fundraising and endowments to fund scholarships.

As illustrated above, many participants in this study view students and the tuition dollars that they contribute to multi-million-dollar operating budgets, as sought-after resource. Clark (1956) argued that many universities become dependent upon an enrollment economy, in which “school income is largely set by student attendance” (p. 332). Although Clark originally coined the term “enrollment economy” over sixty years ago, it is a concept that continues to be relevant today, and reflects the stronghold of neoliberalism on shaping the actions within the university itself and fostering a resource-dependent perspective that defines actions and possibilities. Referring to students as resources upon which an economy can be built is dangerous. Such a mindset

fundamentally threatens the espoused mission of Jesuit universities and commodifies education, while succumbing to neoliberal pressures.

Mission-based leadership

Mission drift occurs when organizations divert time, energy, or money away from their institutional mission (Jones 2007). Succumbing to the neoliberal pressures outlined above and engaging in resource dependent decision-making teeters on the border of mission drift, particularly here as it is enacted in ways that work against the social justice mission of Jesuit universities. In order for Jesuit universities to uphold their missions, those entrusted with doing so must commit to mission-based leadership. While an established academic definition of mission-based leadership does not currently exist in scholarly literature this study presents the following working definition: Mission-based leadership seeks to uphold institutional mission at all times. To do this, mission-based leadership demands all decision making be considered in light of impact on institutional mission; such decision making includes: (1) resource allocation, (2) human resource management including hiring and performance evaluation practices, (3) institutional policies, processes, and procedures. Additionally, mission-based leadership invests in cultivating an understanding of and commitment to institutional mission within members of the organization. This definition was born out of key findings that emerged from participant reflections in this study. This section will unpack the ways participants reported experiencing and navigating mission-based leadership, and then will close by grounding these reflections in existing literature.

Experiencing mission-based leadership

Jesuit universities are well known for being mission-driven institutions. As revealed in Chapter IV, when asked to describe mission, participants often referenced one of the popular Jesuit taglines: “cura personalis,” “service of faith and the promotion of justice,” “education of the whole person,” and “men and women for and with others”. This nomenclature is central to the experience of understanding Jesuit mission as reflecting a deep commitment to social justice and offering a well-rounded liberal arts education. Additionally, participants that champion the mission and integrate it into their leadership talked about a deep intrinsic commitment to the mission. For some, this was having attended a Jesuit university, for others it was some sort of a family tie to the Society of Jesus, or personal convictions that align with Jesuit values. Finally, participants discussed a constant consideration for institutional mission; it is something they are always thinking about. All of these experiences illustrate how powerful the espoused Jesuit mission can be and how deeply it is experienced on university campuses.

Navigating mission-based leadership

This study revealed several ways in which participants navigate mission-based leadership. First, participants stressed the importance of mission-based decision making. It is important to highlight the difference between constant consideration of mission, which was highlighted in the previous paragraph, and mission-based decision making. Mission-based decision-making asserts that all decisions must be considered through the lens of institutional mission. One example of mission-based decision making that was highlighted in this study is the consideration of hiring new employees. Hiring employees who understand and believe in the Jesuit mission makes it easier for senior leadership to advance an agenda that is rooted in institutional mission. Second, participants discussed

the critical role that participating in mission formation events plays in cultivating a commitment to the Jesuit mission. Participants provided first-hand examples of ways in which these formation events not only developed commitment to mission, but more tangibly, also prepare them to advocate for that mission in their daily work. Third, participants discussed in great detail the importance of building relationships with stakeholders around campus. Building these relationships develops credibility, provides opportunities to educate stakeholders about the nuances of enrollment management, and helps to manage expectations. All of which play an important role in the participants ability to advocate for mission enactment. The next sub-section will ground the experience and navigation of mission-based leadership, which has just been described, within existing literature.

The Jesuits, corporate rhetoric, and mission enactment

Jesuit universities share a unique set of values and commitment to social justice (Traub, 2008). As reflected above, the Jesuit mission is commonly articulated through the use of popular taglines. For many institutions, mission statements are viewed as an important form of corporate communication to organizations, but they often fail to move beyond rhetoric (Swales & Rogers, 1995; Fairhurst, Jordan & Neuwirth, 1997). While this is certainly possible at Jesuit universities, findings in this study reveal that Jesuit universities work actively to cultivate a genuine and tangible commitment to mission. Notably, mission formation opportunities are critical to moving mission beyond more than merely corporate rhetoric.

Mission mystique occurs when “[t]he act of carrying out the mission itself kindles passion. Men and women work hard and creatively because they want to make the most

emphatic mark possible on the community and world with respect to their mission” (Goodsell, 2010, p. 2). Participants in this study demonstrated mission mystique and revealed that this unique expression of mission can be cultivated by through participation in mission formation events. Furthermore, mission mystique also empowers leaders to make mission-based decisions. This commitment plays a fundamental role in developing mission-based leadership.

Additionally, it is also important to consider the role of individual leaders in cultivating mission-based leadership. Battilana (2011) revealed that institutions need leaders with organizational and industry credibility and power who will advance espoused mission. Developing relationships stakeholders, as described above, is far more useful than providing education and managing expectations, it also helps build the credibility necessary to advance mission while also developing allies who can help advocate for mission enactment.

Redefining the metrics for success

In Chapter IV, Admin 9 talked explicitly about the current standards used for measuring success at their institution: “The way I describe it to my team and to my staff is that the first obligation we have to the university is to bring in the class and meet our revenue goals, so that the university can continue and can be healthy moving into the future financially.” Admin 9’s remarks reflect the experience of many participants in this study; the current metric used for measuring success is meeting financial objectives. Such standards are a reflection of neoliberalism and directly threaten the espoused Jesuit mission. In order to better uphold a mission of access and affordability a paradigm shift is required, which establishes tangible metrics for success that are rooted in mission

enactment. In the context of the leaders spoken to in this study, these metrics might be related to metrics that measure access and affordability, such as the IPEDS variables presented in Chapter IV, including: (1) African-American enrollment, (1) Hispanic / Latino enrollment, (3) pell-eligible enrollment. This section will explore the ways participants experience and navigate the existing metrics for success and then position those metrics within existing literature.

Experiencing the metrics for success

Participants in this study largely share the belief that offering an affordable and accessible liberal arts education is central to fulfilling the Jesuit mission. While nearly all of the participants articulated this sentiment, their reflections offered only vague descriptions of what successfully doing so looks like. With the exception of one participant that stated their institution established a goal of enrolling a specific percentage of pell-eligible students, no other participants discussed tangible goals related to access and affordability. This is not to say that such goals do not exist; perhaps they do, but their notable absence in responses from participants stands in stark contrast to the clearly articulated financial aspirations and net tuition revenue goals that participants described throughout the study.

Navigating the metrics for success

Participants offered important reflections that illuminate the ways they navigate the current metrics for success, which are rooted in neoliberalism and financial goals. Under the current standard, participants described being faced with tough choices, often because their institutions cannot afford to subsidize every deserving student with the discount necessary to make their university affordable. Admin 9's description of this

challenge was captured in Chapter IV, and is worthy of being repeated here: “Not that we turn people away, I want to be careful about that, because we are totally need blind in our admissions process. But in essence, when we're not able to meet need fully, in some cases we reject them in just a slightly different way.” If Jesuit universities are not affordable they are not accessible. As long as financial goals are the metric by which success is measured, universities will make decisions that prioritize financial outcomes, while simultaneously, even if unintentionally, perpetuating existing power structures, educating primarily the privileged who have the means to pay the bill.

Capitalism and interest convergence

As previously established, neoliberalism is built upon a hyper expression of capitalism (Giroux, 2004). Institutional goals that are rooted in neoliberalism implicitly communicate that students are only as valuable as the money they bring to the table. Although the espoused Jesuit mission completely contradicts the notion that a person's inherent worth is measured by their fiscal contribution, the structures and systems upon which these universities are advancing tell another story. This is affirmed by the fact that the success of participants in this study, who are cabinet level leaders, is measured by achieving financial goals.

Neoliberalism also perpetuates the myth that America is a post-racial society (Giroux, 2009). This false assertion argues that it is unnecessary to consider racial equity and equality in decision making and policy development. While none of the participants expressed this belief, subtle evidence of this form of neoliberalism was revealed by the lack of tangible outcomes and goals related to expanding access, particularly for historically underrepresented and underserved ethnic and racial groups. Although

participants in this study highlighted ways in which equity and inclusion is expanding on their campuses, such instances seemingly occur when they align with the financial priorities of the universities. This reality is akin to Derrick Bell's (1980) concept of interest convergence. Using interest convergence as a theoretical lens, Milner, Pearman & McGee (2013) argue that equity and equality for people of color is only advanced when it meets the interests of those in power. Under the existing neoliberal paradigm, metrics for success are based on achieving outcomes that are rooted in capitalism and do not demonstrate an explicit commitment to racial inclusion or equity. Even this study, which highlights the need to resist neoliberalism, uses such metrics, having presented the color-blind variable of pell eligibility as a metric to measure access and affordability.

In order to successfully uphold espoused Jesuit mission, a new paradigm must be created that redefines the metrics for success and positions the pursuit of equity as the fundamental standard by which all else is measured. In this new paradigm, outcomes that are rooted in equity and expand access to an affordable liberal education must become the first obligation, from there, all other decisions can be made, including how to pay for the desired outcome. The fundamental shift from an approach that positions acquiring resources first, to an approach that positions mission enactment first, is the only way to truly fulfill the Jesuit mission and offer an accessible and affordable liberal education.

This section offered a nuanced analysis of the key findings through the lens of the conceptual framework developed in Chapter II. From this analysis, several implications for action and recommendations for further research have emerged. These will be discussed in the next section.

Recommendations

Rooted in the fundamental takeaways discussed in the previous section, this study led to several important recommendations, which are useful when considering mission enactment and strategic enrollment management at Jesuit universities. This section will present recommendations for praxis and recommendations for further research.

Recommendations for praxis

This study has inspired three specific recommendations for tangible action: (1) invest in mission formation; (2) practice mission-based decision making; (3) build bridges with stakeholders. Each of these conclusions will be briefly described below.

Invest in mission formation

Participation in mission formation activities has a profound impact on the way participants in the study understand, articulate, and live the espoused Jesuit mission. Notably the Ignatian Colleagues Program had an indelible impact on those who participated in the year-long program. This researcher makes the strong argument that investing in mission formation is critical, and should occur throughout universities, amongst both faculty and staff, in all of the different academic and administrative units, and offered to entry-level, mid-level, and senior-level employees. This investment in mission formation should go much deeper than the typical onboarding that occurs when new employees go through the orientation process managed by human resource offices. For example, what would it look like for entry level employees at Jesuit universities nationwide to have the opportunity to participate in a boot camp, similar to the Ignatian Colleagues Program, providing a deep dive into Jesuit mission?

Investing in mission formation, is important for two reasons. First, if employees and stakeholders are to work towards mission enactment, they must have a deep understanding of, and appreciation for the mission they are being asked to uphold. Second, investing in mission formation cultivates a pipeline of potential leaders who have an understanding for and appreciation of the Jesuit mission. The 28 Jesuit universities are a small network whose future leadership would benefit from such a pipeline.

Practice mission-based decision making

Mission must be the lens through which all decisions are considered and ultimately made. Participants in this study provided two specific examples of mission-based decision making. First, when hiring new staff members, it is important that they need to demonstrate, at minimum, an appreciation for the institutional mission and the willingness to commit to upholding it. Second, in an environment where institutions are constantly working actively to secure new and existing resources, decisions about these sources of revenue must be considered with mission in mind. When making decisions, administrators must consider all of options and implications through the lens of mission. Furthermore, they must be conscious of any unintended consequences and the ways decisions contribute to the larger neoliberal landscape of higher education. To help guide this process, I recommend that leaders take the time to develop a mission-based decision-making rubric. This rubric would be specific to outcomes related to mission enactment within the specific unit or division. Within enrollment management the rubric would consider mission enactment through the lens of access and affordability and would likely use the IPEDS variables previously mentioned. In all cases the rubric would be a guide

to help position mission enactment or mission drift that occurs as an outcome of the decision-making process.

Build bridges with stakeholders

Building bridges with stakeholders is critical to mission enactment and facilitates the shared-pursuit of mission-based outcomes. There are many different strategies that can help build these bridges. First and foremost, it is important to invest in developing relationships with stakeholders throughout the university. Additionally, it is important to develop a shared sense of understanding and expectations by educating stakeholders about the work of different units. Educating stakeholders also helps manage expectations, which plays an important role in building bridges. If stakeholders have realistic expectations they are less likely to be disappointed by outcomes that do not align with expectation and as a result trust and good-will can be developed.

Recommendations for Further Research

Through this study several areas that would benefit from additional research have emerged. First and foremost, it would be recommended that this study be replicated with other cabinet-level leaders at Jesuit universities. Specifically, this study should be implemented with vice presidents of finance, provosts and vice presidents of academics, vice presidents of student affairs, vice presidents of development, and athletic directors. Such studies could provide insights into the active tensions that exist between espoused mission and neoliberal forces, such as the ones that emerged in this study. Furthermore such a study would provide interesting insights into the way a variety of cabinet-level stakeholders experience and navigate the space between at Jesuit universities, both individually and also collectively. Potential findings could help allow different cabinet

level leaders to understand the experience of their colleagues, a shared understanding that could perhaps allow institutions to better enact the Jesuit mission.

Second, the researcher recommends a future quantitative study that examines the effectiveness and impact of mission formation activities at Jesuit universities. This study makes the strong argument that formation opportunities play an important role in cultivating individual commitment to mission. These formation events come at a cost to the university and it would be beneficial to study specific outcomes related to formation events. Such a study could be grounded in the mission mystique theoretical framework.

Third, the researcher recommends a study that specifically examines the impact that international enrollment has on upholding institutional mission, and on the student experience. When examining the student experience specific attention should be paid both to the experience of the overall student body and the individual international student who enrolls at the institution. Examining student experience lends to a theoretical framework rooted in student development. The recommended study is an important response to this study, which highlights the participants reporting that they are using international students as financial resources. Furthermore, this recommended study, grounded in student development theories, would position the student experience as central to fulfilling institutional mission, which would be an important perspective to add to the fullness of this study.

Fourth, this researcher recommends a study that can advance the concept of mission-based leadership. Because this is not yet an established leadership framework within scholarly leadership literature an important opportunity exists to contribute to the field. This would be particularly worthwhile to the Jesuit universities who share an

espoused mission rooted in social justice. Such a study would be an important addition to this study because it would centralize the role that individual stakeholders play in fulfilling espoused mission, with less focus on institutional environment and the social, political, and economic landscapes.

Finally, within the conceptual framework developed for this study, this researcher recommends studying the proposed new paradigm, which positions equity and mission enactment as the outcome by which success is measured. Are there existing models that are already implementing this proposed paradigm? If so, how did this shift happen and how is it working? Many of the participants in this study referred to Arrupe College as an innovative new initiative that is upholding a mission of access and affordability. As such, included in this recommendation would be an analysis of Arrupe College that considers whether it is an example of the proposed paradigm? What could American higher education, Jesuit education, or even the world we live in look like if we prioritized mission and the common good?

Conclusion

What is a legacy? It's planting seeds in a garden you never get to see.
-Lin Manuel Miranda, Hamilton

Jesuit universities have a prophetic mission that is fundamentally rooted in being with and for our most vulnerable brothers and sisters who are being pushed closer to the margins with each passing day. One of the ways this mission is enacted is by providing an affordable and accessible liberal education. The larger social, political, and economic landscape of higher education, framed in this study within neoliberalism, is threatening the espoused mission of Jesuit universities. Navigating *the space between* espoused mission and neoliberal pressures is extremely complex and takes agility and nuance. This

researcher dares to dream of a new paradigm, in which equity becomes the outcome by which success is measured and decisions are made. Employees at Jesuit universities are uniquely positioned to champion their institution's social justice inspired mission and use their positionality to shift the paradigm, and make a positive and lasting mark on the world. This researcher invites all such employees to reflect upon the question: what is your legacy?

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APPENDIX

Appendix A: Case Protocol***Section A: overview of the case study***

This will be a qualitative study using the case study method (Yin, 2014). More specifically, this will be an explanatory single case study that uses a holistic design and focuses on a single-unit of analysis: the experiences of senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities.

The purpose of this explanatory case study is two-fold. First, this study will explore the ways tension in the broader neoliberal higher education environment is experienced senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities in their efforts to fulfill their espoused missions. Second, this study will examine the ways in which individual actors at Jesuit universities can serve as agents of social change helping fulfill institutional mission.

Yin (2014) explains that propositions “direct attention to something that should be examined within the scope of the study” (p. 30). At its core, this study seeks to examine two things. First, the ways in which senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities *experience* the tension between neoliberalism and mission enactment. Second, this study seeks to understand how that population *navigates* those same tensions.

To help frame this study a conceptual framework has been developed, is divided into three main sections that broadly fall under the following headings: (1) mission, (2) neoliberalism, (3) the space between.

The mission section begins by exploring literature on mission statements and the role they play in organizations. Next, the section provides an overview of the liberal education, namely examining the purpose, structure, and need for an accessible and affordable liberal education. Finally, the section closes with an overview of both the apostolic Jesuit mission and the mission of Jesuit higher education.

The second section of the conceptual framework opens with an overview of neoliberalism and examines the ways that neoliberalism has impacted universities. The section introduces resource dependence theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) and explores the ways in which this theory can be applied to decision making at universities. Finally, the second section closes by examining the concept of mission drift, which is arguably a byproduct of succumbing to neoliberal and resource depend forces.

The final section of the conceptual framework, titled the space between, examines the intersection of mission and neoliberalism and the way decisions are made amid this tension. The section opens by introducing the concept of interest convergence (Bell, 1980) and briefly explores critical race theory (Bell, 1980). Next, the section introduces strategic response theory (Oliver, 1991). Finally, this section examines the role that leadership and individual actors play in organizations. More specifically, an introduction to agency (Battilana, 2011), institutional entrepreneurs (DiMaggio, 1988; Becker, 1999) and servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) is provided.

This case study is being implemented to fulfill partial degree requirements for the degree Doctor of Education at University of San Francisco. As such the primary audience for this study is the researcher's dissertation committee.

Section B: data collection procedures

This case study will draw upon two sources of evidence: (1) description of IPEDS data, (2) interviews. Regarding documentation: the researcher will provide a descriptive analysis of publicly available data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) to help provide an understanding of the current landscape participants are working in. Similarly, the analysis will be used to insure that the participants in the study come from institutions that are reflective of the eligible sample. Regarding interviews: to secure interview participants the researcher will email the senior enrollment management professional at each of the 28 Jesuit universities requesting they participate in the study. The primary resource needed to implement this study will be a computer with access to the video-conference platform *Zoom*. The interviewer will use *Zoom* to host the interviews, and with participant consent record the interaction for later transcription. Additionally, notepad with a pen and a stopwatch will be necessary in order to take notes throughout the process and r make time stamps to denote important comments during interviews. Finally, the researcher will need a quiet space to compile notes at the conclusion of each interview.

Yin (2014) recommends creating a clear timeline of when data will be collected, but also acknowledges that the researcher is subject to the availability of the participants. Generally speaking, data will be collected at some point between January 15, 2018 and March 15, 2018.

Finally, Yin (2014) advocates that this section will include the rationale for IRB approval. In this case the IRB chair at University of San Francisco found this study not

to require further IRB review or oversight as it is a standard program review with no foreseeable risks involved and has granted permission to move forward with the study.

Section C: data collection questions

Yin (2014) distinguishes case study questions from those in a protocol instrument by stating that the case study questions are, “posed to you the researcher not to an interviewee” (p. 89). More specifically, these questions direct the researcher towards what needs to be answered and why (Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) also suggests that each question is accompanied with a list of likely sources of evidence. As such, the researcher will be focusing on the following research questions and likely sources of evidence:

1. How are tensions between social justice mission and neoliberal forces experienced by senior-level strategic enrollment management officers at Jesuit universities?
Sources of evidence: (1) documentation, (2) interviews
2. How do senior-level strategic enrollment management officers navigate fulfilling a social justice mission within a neoliberal environment at Jesuit universities?
Sources of evidence: (1) documentation, (2) interviews

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Prior to interview

- Informed consent
- Start recording and chronograph
- Thank you and purpose of the project
- Provide brief description of neoliberalism, resource dependence theory, and the enrollment economy

Ice breaker & intro questions

- How long have you been at INSTITUTION and what drew you here?
- Tell me about your work at INSTITUTION.
- How would you describe INSTITUTION'S mission?
- What role do access and affordability play in fulfilling INSTITUTION'S mission?

Domain 1: How are tensions between social justice mission and neoliberal forces experienced by senior-level strategic enrollment management officers?

- In what ways does institutional mission influence your work?
- In what ways do neoliberal and resource dependent forces (the enrollment economy) influence your work?
 - In what ways does your work depend on financial resources?
- In what ways do you experience tension between institutional mission and neoliberal and resource dependent forces?

Domain 2: How do senior-level strategic enrollment management officers navigate fulfilling a social justice mission within a neoliberal environment?

- How do you navigate tensions between money and mission?
- What strategies have you used to advocate for mission?
- What challenges have you faced when advocating for mission?

- **Closing:** Thank you for taking the time to speak with me.