A Study of Three Faith-based Programs for College Students and Recent Graduates

By

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Despite calls for higher education to help young adults explore issues of meaning, faith, and vocational calling, colleges and universities struggle to provide adequate contexts and settings for its students to wrestle with these questions and purposes. Within the last 25 years, a number of faith-based leadership programs have developed along the perimeter of higher education to help young adults address these issues. This qualitative, comparative case study explores the factors that have given rise to and the spread of three faith-based leadership programs, articulates what each program hopes to accomplish in the lives of their young adult participants, and describes the practices and philosophical components used to accomplish their programmatic goals. These three organizational histories were written from the point of view of the founders, current leaders, and volunteers who run the programs. The view of the participating college students and recent college graduates were not included. Although this study is comprised of only three case studies, it has the potential to become a useful heuristic tool to inform future research on other young adult faith-based programs.
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Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

What do you do with a B.A. in English?
What is my life going to be?
Four years of college and plenty of knowledge,
Have earned me this useless degree.

I can't pay the bills yet,
'Cause I have no skills yet,
The world is a big scary place.

But somehow I can't shake,
The feeling I might make,
A difference,
To the human race.

Lyrics from Avenue Q song, “What Do You Do with a B.A. in English?”

Background to the Study

T. S. Eliot, The Aims of Education

In his four lectures to the University of Chicago entitled The Aims of Education, T. S. Eliot sought to unsettle his generation’s understanding of education by focusing on its deeper purposes. Eliot acknowledged the danger of the topic when he recognizes that “education is a subject on which we all feel that we have something to say”\(^1\) (Eliot, 1965, p 61). He also recognized the challenges faced by the educational institutions of his day, which included pressures of government centralization, the daunting goal of universal education, growing enrollment, and student diversity. Far from imposing a theory of education for others to adopt, he challenged their assumed definitions by asking, “What is the purpose of education?” For Eliot, this line of questioning led him to caution:

\(^1\) Eliot seemed to have a wide audience in mind: be it the teacher, the administrator, the philosopher, the theologian, the legislator, the ordinary citizen, or the literary dabbler as he self-effacingly alludes to himself (Eliot, 1965, p 122).
In respect to the present subject matter, not to pretend that a theory of education can be complete which excludes the ultimate religious problems – and I have said that ‘What is Man?’ is one of these – and which attempts to delimit for the theory of education an area within which religion can be ignored. (Eliot, 1965, p 116)

In *The Aims of Education*, Eliot employed a list of three ends of education suggested by Dr. C. E. M. Joad in *About Education*2 “because they seem to me as good as any three that I have seen given” (Eliot, 1965, p 69):

1. To enable a boy or girl to make his or her living (professional).
2. To equip him to play his part as a citizen of a democracy (social).
3. To enable him to develop all the latent powers and faculties of his nature and so enjoy a good life (individual).

Eliot demonstrated how each one of these aims implicates and interferes with, compliments and contradicts the others, and yet cannot individually define the whole of education on its own.

Arguing that education is more than the sum of its pieces, Eliot quoted Professor Adolf Lowe who said, “. . . education always serves a social purpose” (Eliot, p 95). While conceding that democratic societies will have to compromise “short of the point beyond which religious difference cannot be ignored,” Eliot cautioned against pretending that a theory of education can be complete which excludes or ignores ultimate, religious purposes. In other words, one cannot talk about the aims of education without talking about the aims of life (Garber, Steve interview. March 25, 2015).

Eliot’s lectures spoke to the underlying teleological crisis of modern education, that is a disconnect between educational practices and purpose. Far from looking for agreement, his

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2 The usefulness of these different aims appears to have extended beyond Eliot’s time. In Andrew Deblanco’s *College* (2011), he answers the question “What is college for?” with three categories: economic/career (professional), political/democracy (social), and how to enjoy life/holistic development (individual). In *The Purposeful Graduate*, Clydesdale (2015) touches on all three categories by what he calls career-oriented professionalism, citizenship/democracy, and holistic development (p 53, 129, 203-204).
lectures pressed his readers to articulate their own “outside standard” for education:

... we cannot agree about this unless we find a common answer to the question ‘What is Man?’ Now we cannot expect to agree to one answer to this question; for with this question, our differences will turn out in the end to be religious differences; and it does not matter whether you are a ‘religious person’ or not, or whether you expressly repudiate everything that you call ‘a religion’; there will be some sort of religious attitude – even if you call it a nonreligious attitude – implied in your answer. (Eliot, 1965, p 109)

He pressed this lack of coherence by challenging each society and culture to make clear, to themselves and others, those moral judgments, decisions, and values that inform their social purpose(s) of education. Ultimately, Eliot sought to move his readers beyond merely stating what education has come to mean to asking what true education could be when purpose informs practice.

**Higher Education and Purpose**

Delblanco (2011) sought to describe what any college “should seek to do for its students.” Quoting the diary of a student from a small Methodist college in 1850, Delblanco confessed:

And yet I have never encountered a better formulation – “show me how to think and how to choose” – of what a college should strive to be; an aid to reflection, a place and process whereby young people take stock of their talents and passions and begin to sort out their lives in a way that is true to themselves and responsible for others.

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3 Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm (2006) - Our approach to strengthening authenticity and spirituality in higher education is rooted neither in a church or religious orientation, nor in the state or politics. We believe we need to move from the inside to the outside, to work out from the core of our experiences. It follows that the most central tenet of our orientation toward strengthening authenticity and spirituality in higher education is that each and every one of us must be as candid and open as we can about our own orientations, motives, prides and prejudices. We also recognize that we are all possessed by our own “mental models.” We recognize that there is no “objectivity.”
Stating that students have always been looking for purpose, Delblanco quoted Henry Lewis of Harvard who bemoaned how the most prestigious colleges fail to fulfill their obligations to students:

students attend college in the hopes of becoming financially successful, but . . . offer students neither a view of a coherent reasons for a college education nor any guidance on how they might discover for themselves some larger purpose in life.

Throughout his book, Delblanco continued to insist that college be more than just a place for “networking or credentialing but for learning in the broad and deep meaning of the word.”

Traditionally, colleges have attempted to prepare students for life after college through career development and counseling. Certainly, this approach provides helpful guidance and the practical tools necessary for finding their first job out of college, but it still leaves unresolved some of the more significant existential questions of meaning, purpose, and life direction. Damon (2008) found that focusing on the “surface features of vocation,” such as fame and money, to be the root problem explaining why many young people are drifting and lacking purpose (p 47). Likewise, he (2008) asserted, “young people are rarely encouraged to identify a life calling for themselves. Rather, in a misguided attempt to be realistic, [young people are often counseled] to seek a vocation that will merely secure them a living, leaving the ideal of a calling as a figment of romantic fantasy” (p 42).

A growing area of research has developed to address the exploration of meaning, purpose, spirituality, vocation, and calling. A number of studies have shown that most students wrestle with questions of meaning and purpose in college (Parks, 2000; Connor, 2008; Osipow, 1999), as well as demonstrate connections between religion and career development among college students (Duffy & Lent, 2008; Duffy & Blustein, 2004; Constantine, Miville, Warren & Gainor, 2006). College students need help to balance pragmatic concerns, such as how to
support oneself, with concerns of value – such as choosing a career that is fulfilling and congruent with their personal beliefs and values. Dalton (2006) noted, “there is a big difference between preparing for a job and preparing for a productive and satisfying career” (p 28).

As of yet, the question of how college students go about discovering their purpose and future career plans in light of their beliefs and values has not been systematically addressed. A number of authors have indicated that the role of spirituality, religion and faith in the career decision-making process for students is only beginning to be explored. Constantine et al. (2006) state, “few studies have explored the unique role of religion and spirituality in the career development process of the general college population” (p 227). Dalton (2006) argues that institutions need to do more than provide professional training, and the emphasis on “empirical rationality and on professional and vocational preparation indeed can work against encouraging authenticity and identity, integrity and spiritual growth” (p 29). Dalton (2006) lamented, “there are, sadly, too few occasions during their college years when students are intentionally helped in connecting their learning and development with their sense of spiritual calling” (p 17).

Bok (2006) stated that fundamental questions about personal values and priorities should be carefully considered in college “before making career decisions” (Bok, 2006). He also emphasized, “it is not an easy matter for many students to know their interests and values well enough to make a satisfying [career] match”. Lastly, he warned, “denying vocational concerns any place in the curriculum will diminish the chance to help undergraduates think about their careers in terms broader than simply making money”.

Love and Talbot (1999) stated that failing to address students’ spiritual development is inconsistent with the concept of holistic development, as it ignores an important aspect of their growth. They also argued that a failure to engage in discussions of spirituality and spiritual
development might impede critical thinking, and contribute to foreclosure on the exploration of value-related issues and matters of spirituality. Astin (2004) believed that higher education is out of balance, focusing too much on outer development (science, medicine, technology, commerce, and the pursuit of money) and neglecting inner development (values and beliefs, emotional maturity, moral development, spirituality, and self-understanding). Dalton, Eberhardt, Bracken & Echols (2006) asserted, “any serious educational effort to foster the holistic learning and development of students in college must include serious attention to the religious and spiritual lives of students”.

Astin, Astin, and Lindhom (2011b) repeated the claim about the educational imbalance between the exterior vs. interior aspects in students lives. They underscored the problem by noting that “four decades of national trends in college students’ life goals, which show that the value of ‘developing a meaningful philosophy of life’ has declined sharply while the value of ‘being very well off financially’ has been increasing dramatically.” They also pointed out that:

Although a number of different higher education scholars and practitioners have recently been advocating that colleges and universities pay more attention to students’ spiritual development (e.g., Chickering, Dalton, & Stamm, 2005; Collins, Hurst, & Jacobson, 1987; Kazanjian & Laurence, 2000; Laurence, 1999; Palmer, 1998; Rendón, 2000; Tisdell, 2003), little research on spiritual development has appeared so far in the higher education literature.

Produced over a weekend retreat in 2011, the HERI report Attending to Students’ Inner Lives A Call to Higher Education, presented “some of the major reasons why higher education institutions should consider giving greater priority to facilitating students’ spiritual development.” The report was a response to the attendees’ common reading, Cultivate the Spirit by Astin et al. (2011a) and acknowledged what it perceived as a significant lack of research focused on students’ spiritual development. First, the report stated that spirituality is
fundamental to students’ lives. Yet it asserted that even though “three entering college freshmen in four report that they are actively ‘searching for meaning and purpose in life,’ most of these students have to explore such questions on their own, with little or no help from faculty.” The authors of the report pledged:

We thus align ourselves with that growing number of educators who have been calling for a more holistic or integral education, pointing to the need to connect mind and spirit and to return to the true values of liberal education—an education that examines learning and knowledge in relation to an exploration of the self and one’s responsibility to self and others.

**Purpose of Study**

Within the last 25 years, a number of faith-based leadership programs have developed along the perimeter of higher education (Ream and Glanzer, 2007). Distinguishable from various campus-based religious organizations, semester or study abroad programs, pre-ministry internships, para-church staff positions, or seminary field placements, these programs focus primarily on college graduates exploring issues of faith, purpose, and vocation during the school to work transition. These programs are facilitated by local, independent 501c3 religious non-profits that are not directly connected with a college or university, yet provide a complimentary context for young adults to explore issues of faith, vocation, meaning, and purpose. While there are a growing number of programs that could be described as faith-based leadership programs in the United States, there has been virtually no research exploring these types of programs, their small but growing organizational field, and their relationship and impact within higher education. The purpose of this study is to look at three faith-based leadership programs for young adults from the point of view of the people who founded and currently run the programs. Due to its focus on the organizational histories of each program, this work does not include the view of the participating college students and recent college graduates or the outcomes they experienced.
This study will explore the factors that have given rise to and the spread of these programs, articulate what each program hopes to accomplish, and identify their practices and philosophical foundations, all with a view toward classifying and informing future research on young adult programs. The three programs that this study will compare and contrast are:

1. **The Fellows Initiative** (focus of 10-month gap-year experience hosted by individual local congregations prepares recent college graduates to integrate Christian formation and vocational discernment),

2. **John Jay Fellowship** (focus of 15-week “capstone” experience grounds recent college graduates in conservative Christian thought, worldview, and practices before pursuing careers in public service or politics), and

3. **Project Transformation** (focus of 10-week summer internship exposes undergraduate students to issues of Christian leadership, vocational formation, and issues of social justice and inequality while running summer reading programs for low SES elementary students in urban churches).

**Research Questions**

The study presented here is a first step in understanding and defining a larger organizational field that has developed along side higher education in the United States. The ultimate research questions that will guide the study are:

1. What are the factors that have given rise to and caused the spread of these emerging adult intervention programs?

2. What does each of the programs hope to accomplish in the lives of the emerging adult participants?
3. What are the philosophical components and practices used by each program to accomplish its goals?

4. What lessons and implications might be useful for other faith-based young adult programs?

Ultimately, the faith-based leadership programs explored in this study compliment the calls of a growing number of authors to introduce issues of faith, meaning, and purpose within higher education. Existing on the periphery of colleges and universities, they enjoy a freedom to explore these matters of ultimate concern not normally offered within most institutions of higher education. While only three case-studies, this study has the potential to become a heuristic tool for other faith-based programs connected to local church, colleges, and universities that wish to create a learning context that supports young adults in their integration of faith, meaning, purpose, and vocation.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction and Organization of the Literature Review

Steve Garber’s *The Fabric of Faithfulness* (*Fabric*) offered a clear and well-articulated response to Eliot’s question “What is the purpose of education?” in light of religious commitments. Originally written as his dissertation, *Fabric* proceeded from ideas about faith and learning that Garber first wrestled with during his college years at Berkeley in the 1960s, especially during his semester abroad at the L’Abri study center in Switzerland. He continued to work out these ideas while serving on staff with both the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship and the Coalition of Christian Outreach. Then in 1990, Dr. Richard Gathro and Dr. Jerry Herbert invited Garber to join the teaching faculty of Christian Council of Colleges and Universities’ American Studies Program in Washington, D.C. It was in this community of scholars and students where Garber wrote *The Fabric of Faithfulness*.

Garber researched how Christian college students begin to create a life of coherent religious belief and behavior in the fragmented world of late-modernity/post-modernity. In the context of higher education, where eighteen to twenty-five year olds are forming lasting commitments, Garber’s teaching explored the relationship between knowledge and responsibility and the connection between knowing and doing (Garber, 2007). Garber long understood that “truth cannot be something we hold to ‘theoretically’ with no real-life consequences” (Garber, 2007, p 190). But in his research, he discovered “that there are habits of heart that develop and

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1 *Learning to care: A study in the formation of moral meaning during the university years* Garber, Steven Gilchrist. The Pennsylvania State University, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 1996.

2 Started in 1975, the American Studies Program model has been replicated within member CCCU institutions as well as other institutions/organizations that encountered ideas in *Fabric*. Patterson’s *Shining Lights* offered a history of CCCU as well as the ASP program.
sustain coherent visions of faith (COHERENCE) and the vocations that grow out of them” (Garber, 2007, p 197). He summarized his thesis by stating:

During the critical years in which moral meaning is being formed in ways that last, students need to be people who:

- **(CONViction)** - develop a worldview that can make sense of life, facing the challenge of truth and coherence in an increasingly pluralistic world;
- **(CHARACTER)** - pursue a relationship with a teacher whose life incarnates the worldview the student is learning to embrace;
- **(COMMUNITY)** - commit themselves to others who have chosen to live their lives embedded in the same worldview, journeying together in truth after the vision of a coherent and meaningful life.

Garber concluded that all three strands of conviction, character, and community are fundamental to shaping an integrated life of belief (*telos*) that informs behavior (*praxis*) over one’s lifetime.³

³ Smith and Snell (2009, p 228) corroborate the necessity of multiple factors being necessary for high religious commitment.

For this study, the concepts of coherence, conviction, character, and community found in Garber’s *The Fabric of Faithfulness* (2007) will provide the framework to explore these three faith-based leadership development programs. These four organizing principles provide a common language to integrate insights from the growing research that indicates the positive benefits connected to the exploration of religion, spirituality, meaning and purpose within higher education, as well as the evolving, and problematic, research on emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2016, p. 6); in order to explore how these faith-based leadership development programs prepare emerging adults to face shifting cultural challenges, to navigate the transition from school to work, and to commit to adult roles and responsibilities. Finally, these four central ideas also provide functional categories to
compare and contrast the practices of each program, particularly in articulating each program’s philosophical components and organizational goals.

Lastly, the inclusion of emerging adulthood literature needs to be addressed here at the beginning. Since the term was first coined by Jefferey Arnett in 2000, there has been an on-going debate, some would even say controversy, about whether emerging adulthood can be said to describe a new stage of development or merely a social construction that speaks to the prolonged transition to adulthood in developed societies (Cote, 2014; Schulenberg & Schoon, 2012; Hendry & Kloep, 2011). This study was not designed to examine whether or not emerging adult is or is not a valid a theory or construct, but emerging adult literature was included because the programs being looked at focus on the young adult/emerging adult time period. For the purposes of this study, the term young adult will be used unless a specific article of book employs the term emerging adulthood.

**Cultivating Religious Commitment Among Young Adults**

A number of authors whose work explores the intersection of higher education and religion have either influenced or arrived at comparable conclusions to Garber’s classification structure, beginning with Sharon Parks. In her book *The Critical Years* (1986), Parks built upon the theory of faith development pioneered by James Fowler’s *Stages of Faith*. Parks has named the span of years between adolescence and adulthood as “the critical years” in human development, where basic beliefs about life and the world are settled as one begins to live in the adult world (Parks, 1986). In chapter four, “The Journey Toward Mature Adult Faith: A Model,” Parks expands upon William Perry’s *Forms of Intellectual and Ethical Development in the College Years: A Scheme* (1968) to include the development of truth, trust, and belonging as markers in the journey of faith:
The journey of faith can take us to new vistas of knowing, to deepened realms of trust, and to ever-widening circles of belonging. I wish to describe some of the perils and promises of this experiences as it may occur in adulthood by tracing three discrete strands of development: form of cognition, form of dependence, and form of community. Woven together, these strands from a descriptive model of the journey of faith in adulthood that is strong without being unnecessarily complex. This model is anchored in a description of intellectual development because it is this dimension of young adult development that is most unambiguously the focus of higher education.

While acknowledging his differences with Parks, Garber said that “our common effort to understand what she terms ‘the journey toward mature faith’ has resulted in remarkably similar conclusions” (Garber, 2007).

In *Souls in Transition*, Smith with Snell (2009) posed the questions:

What happens in the religious and spiritual lives of American teenagers when they start to grow up, end high school, and begin to leave home to launch their own new adult lives? What do the religious and spiritual lives of American 18- to 23-year-olds look like and why?”

In their book, they analyzed and interpreted data collected in the third wave of the National Study of Youth and Religion (NYSR) to study the religious and spiritual lives of emerging adults. A major finding of their research highlighted five life factors associated with the teenage years that are most strongly associated with the highest level of emerging adult religious commitment. Smith with Snell determined this measure by looking at high levels of religious service attendance, high professed importance of faith, and frequency of personal prayer. These life factors are frequent personal prayer, having seriously committed parents, engaging religious faith in a way that makes it very important in one’s daily life, having few religious doubts, and having many personal religious experiences (Smith with Snell, 2009).

Yet, Smith with Snell stress that “no single factor can produce high levels of emerging adult religiousness. Instead, multiple combinations of factors working together are necessary to more likely than not produce that outcome.” They found that the combination of the factors
almost always included “grouping of relational, personal-subjective, and devotional-practice factors.” They found that in a majority of cases of highly religious emerging adults, the necessary variables are “strong, personal relationships with adults who bond teenagers to faith communities (either parents or supportive non-parents), strong expressions of subjective teen personal faith commitment and experience (high importance of faith, few doubts, many religious experiences), and high frequencies of religious practice (prayer, scripture reading)” (Smith with Snell, p 227). While not exact, Smith with Snell’s categories of relational, personal-subjective, and devotional-practice echo Garber’s commitments of character, conviction, and community; particularly when religious practice is connected to the outcome of high levels of religious service attendance, i.e. participation with in worshipping community.

In Almost Christian, Dean (2010) further refined the problem when she stated, “What is missing from the National Study of Youth and Religion is the central interest of this book: how can the twenty-first-century church better prepare young people steeped in Moralistic Therapeutic Deism for the trust-walk of Christian faith?” Dean’s research began a conversation with Ann Swidler’s cultural toolkit theory and the characteristics of those teenagers who were ranked as highly devoted in the NYSR study. These are teenagers:

who seem to share a consistent set of cultural tools that make faith meaningful. Specifically, highly devoted teenagers have an articulated God-story (their stated or unstated “creed”), a deep sense of belonging in their faith communities, a clear sense that their lives have a God-given purpose, and an attitude of hope that the world is moving in a good direction because of God. (Dean, 2010, p 23)

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4 Moral Therapeutic Deism is the term coined in Smith with Denton (2005) Soul Searching to describe the “de facto dominant religion among contemporary U. S. teenagers” (p 162) as opposed to orthodox Christianity.
In chapter three, “Mormon Envy,” Dean (2010) highlighted the Church of Jesus Christ Latter-day Saints as the best example in the NYSR of “modeling the use of their cultural toolkits for teenagers” to form a coherent identity (Dean, 2010, p 51). Dean stated:

Mormons invest heavily in teaching young people to exemplify and promote Mormon belief and behaviors. By intentionally reinforcing the significance of Mormonism’s particular God-story, by immersing young people in a community of belonging, by preparing them for a vocation and by modeling a forward-looking hope, Mormons intentionally and consistently create the conditions for consequential faith – so much so that Mormon teenagers are more likely than teenagers from any other group to fall in the category of young people the NYSR called highly devoted. (Dean, 2010, p 51)

Dean’s language of her cultural toolkit – creed, community, purpose, and hope – is similar to Garber’s three commitments of conviction, character, and community; although they each have their own unique accent. Creed and conviction align the closest with both having to do with a governing ideology or worldview, though Garber’s concept subsumes both of Dean’s categories of purpose and hope as well. Conviction includes finding one’s purpose and calling in the larger meta-narrative of faith. Conviction also gives hope in that a coherent worldview makes sense of how the world really is. With regard to community, Dean and Garber differ in that Garber speaks about the impact of mentors (parents and non-parental adults) in his distinct commitment of character. While Dean enfolded her category for mentors into her understanding of community, she spent a considerable portion of the book arguing for the need for parents and other adults in faith communities to disciple (mentor) students.

In The Purposeful Graduate (2015), Clydesdale understood his research as adding to a growing chorus of scholars in higher education who have documented the value of engaging spirituality on campus and its effect on student achievement and engagement. His research examined the impact of the Lilly Foundation’s Program for Theological Exploration of Vocation (PTEV, 2000 – 2009) equipping 88 church-related college and universities to help and encourage
emerging adults\textsuperscript{5} on their campuses to explore deeper questions of meaning, purpose, vocation, and calling. In synthesizing the lessons from the PTEV study, Clydesdale discovered the schools that succeeded (re)engaged their organizational histories, theologies, traditions, and missions (conviction); invested in faculty and staff development in order to become caring mentors (character) and created dynamic communities compromised of positively engaged peers, intentional program design, and rich conversations (community). Clydesdale articulated that his research of the PTEV is not simply evaluative, but it is also intended to help other campuses design purposeful education interventions in their own context. Clydesdale’s three components connect with Garber’s three commitments, while at the same time offering illustrations of an emerging adult intervention within the context of higher education.

Diagram 1 provides a visual representation of how the various models from each study might converge with one another. It also highlights the idea, as all the studies suggest, that multiple practices or commitments are necessary to produce the desired developmental outcome in individuals’ lives. When it comes to the outcome, the various authors chose related terms such as coherence, purpose, vocation, consequential faith, or highly religious; terms that are complimentary more than they are contradictory. Finally, this comparison was intended to be gracious and expansive, but in no way was it meant to diminish or limit the unique contribution or focus of each author.

\textsuperscript{5} While Clydesdale incorporated emerging adult literature into his study, it is not clear that the use of or language of emerging adulthood was not a significant part of the individual campus programs.
Diagram 1: Cultivating Religious Commitment Among Young Adults

CONVICTION
- creed (purpose) (hope)
- form of cognition (truth)
- personal-subjective faith
- re-engage historic mission

COHERENCE
- consequential faith
- purpose/vocation
- highly religious
- purposeful
- form of community (belonging)

CHARACTER
- (need of parents & adult mentors)
- form of dependence (trust)
- relationships w adults
- develop caring mentors

COMMUNITY
- regular devotional practices
- create dynamic communities of engaged peers
Coherence

One hundred years ago students were the most effective agents of campus reform. Rudolph (1965), in making this point, suggested that earlier students were able to use colleges as an instrument of their maturation; now the university serves professors more effectively than students. Few issues have remained the same during the hundred-year span that Rudolph sought to understand; one of those unchanged issues is the yearning of students for a sense of purpose and fulfillment. (Korn, p 156)

In The Aims of Education, Eliot (1965) suggested:

If we see a new and mysterious machine, I think that the first question we ask is, ‘What is that machine for?’ and afterwards we ask, ‘How does it do it?’ But the moment we ask about the purpose of anything, we may be involving ourselves in asking about the purpose of everything. If we define education, we are led to ask ‘What is Man?’; and if we define the purpose of education, we are committed to the question ‘What is Man for?’ Every definition of the purpose of education, therefore, implies some concealed, or rather implicit philosophy or theology. (Eliot, 1965, p 75)

Echoing this line of questioning in Fabric, Garber (2007) asked, “If the Christian vision of life and the world is true, what ought learning to be like?” (p 18). Garber confessed:

How do we help students learn to connect what they believe about the world with how they live in the world? I was just beginning to see that it was not enough to give students good books and take them to great lectures. (Garber, 2007, p 45)

Not finding any satisfactory answers to his question, Garber began to interview people who he saw as being intentional about “connecting what they believed with how they lived, across the spectrum of their responsibilities as human beings, personally as well as publicly”

1 It was his quest to describe what strength and health looked like in normal patients that led Erikson to hold that “the autobiographies of extraordinary (and extraordinarily self-perceptive) individuals are a suggestive source of insight into the development of identity” (Erikson, Identity and the Life Cycle, p 118).
Garber (2007). Those interviewed were also at least twenty or more years beyond their college experience and “consciously cared about making the connections between belief and behavior” (Garber, 2007). Garber wrote that “in a variety of ways, this question was asked again and again: What is the relation between how you are living today – particularly your sense of what is most important, what you most care about – and the tapestry of influences on you during your university years?” (Garber, 2007). What Garber found among those he interviewed, these women and men of integrity who “connected belief and behavior, personally as well as publicly,” were the three strands of conviction, character, and community woven together to “live a coherent life over the course of life” (Garber).

And yet Garber (2007) conceded, “The possibility of coherence across the concerns of life is discouraged – not as a plot against or for anyone, but by the very nature of the consciousness-shaping influences of modernity with its disintegrating dichotomies” (Garber, 2007). The “no-win nature of the facts/values polarization” has created “a cosmos without purpose which provides the validation for the division of our world into two – a world of fact without value and a world of values which have not basis in facts” (Garber, 2007). For Garber, this “cosmos without purpose” is at the core of the problem for anyone seeking to live a coherent and meaningful life. “Without a sufficient telos it is not possible to form a coherent vision for life, one that can meaningfully connect the personal with the political, the individual with the institution” (Garber, 2007, p 74). Quoting Bishop Leslie Newbigin’s *Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, Garber asserted:

> You cannot have hopeful and responsible action without some vision of a possible future. To put it another way, if there is no point in the story as a whole, there is no point in my own action.
Garber (2007) asserted that “the conditions of modern consciousness, especially as they are manifest in the modern university, make it increasingly difficult for young people to come through those years with habits of heart required to develop and sustain that kind of integrity.”

**Erikson and Integrity**

Garber’s concept of coherence, or *telos*, echoed Erikson’s psychosocial understanding of a functional unity, or an identity marked by a deepening integrity. In *Insight and Responsibility: Lectures on the Ethical Implications of Psychoanalytic Insight* (1964), he defines the developmental from adolescence to adulthood in terms of “crises”:

I must briefly define this ancient little word. In clinical work (as in economics and politics) crisis has increasingly taken on half of its meaning, the catastrophic half, while in medicine a crisis once meant a turning point for better or for worse, a crucial period in which a decisive turn one way or another is unavoidable. Such crises occur in man’s total development sometimes more noisily, as it were, when new instinctual needs meet abrupt prohibitions, sometimes more quietly when new capacities yearn to match new opportunities, and when new aspirations make it more obvious how limited one (as yet) is. We would have to talk of all these and more if we wanted to gain an impression of the difficult function – of functional unity.

Similarly, in *Identity and the Life Cycle* (1959), Erikson presented human growth as a results of inner and outer conflicts in which the “healthy personality weathers, emerging and re-emerging with an increased sense of inner unity, with an increase of good judgment, and an increase in the capacity to do well, according to the standards of those who are significant to him.”

Erikson further defined his concept of integrity as:

Somewhat generalized, this principle states that anything that grows has a *ground plan*, and that out of this ground plan the *parts* arise, each part having its *time* of special ascendancy, until all parts have arisen to form a *functioning whole*. At birth the baby leaves the chemical exchange of the womb for the social exchange system of his society, where his gradually increasing capacities meet the opportunities and limitations of his culture. (Erikson, 1959)

Erikson understood the integration taking place, or what he also called a sense of ego identity, developed out of “a gradual integration of all identifications” at the end of each major crisis,
across all stages, and that moved the individual toward a tangible future (Erikson, 1964). Lastly, Erikson asserted clearly that his stages of development are not an achievement scale with strengths acquired once and for all, but more akin to the struggle for health in how the “body’s metabolism copes with decay” (Erikson, 1950).

A second way that Erikson spoke about a functional unity or integrity was in the language of virtues. He held that “psychoanalysts, in listening to life-histories for more than half a century³, have developed an ‘unofficial’ image of the strengths inherent in the individual life cycle and in the sequence of generations” (Erikson, 1964). Erikson understood that each virtue depends on each other, the virtues themselves being an expression of the integration of the psychosexual and psychosocial schedules of development (Erikson, 1964). For Erikson, virtues were related “to that process by which ego strength may be developed from stage to stage and imparted from generation to generation” (Erikson, 1964). Expanding on his inheritance concept of virtue, he explained:

For man’s psychosocial survival is safeguarded only by vital virtues which develop in the interplay of successive and overlapping generations, living together in organized settings. Here, living together means more than incidental proximity. It means that the individual’s life-stages are ‘interliving,’ cogwheeling with the stages of other which move him along as he moves them. (Erikson, 1964)

In other words, the development of an individual’s virtues is interdependent on the order and virtues of his or her society.

A third way that Erikson (1964) spoke about functional unity or integrity was based on his understanding of wholeness as described in the chapter “Identity and Uprootedness in Our Time”:

Young people must become whole people in their own right, and this during a developmental stage characterized by a diversity of changes in physical growth, in

³ This lecture was written in 1960.
genital maturation, and in social awareness. The wholeness to be achieved at this stage I have called a sense of inner identity. The young person, in order to experience wholeness, must feel a progressive continuity between that which he has come to be during the long years of childhood and that which he promises to become in the anticipated future; between that which he conceives himself to be and that which he perceives others to see in him and to expect of him. Individually speaking identity includes, but is more than the sum of, all the successive identifications of those earlier years when the child wanted to be, and often was force to become, like the people he depended on. Identity is a unique product, which now meets a crisis to be solved only in new identifications with age-mates and with leader figures outside of the family. (Erikson, 1964)

For Erikson, this wholeness is not limited to the sum of past identifications, but an alignment of diverse parts of one’s identity – individually and culturally - into a “fruitful association and organization” (Erikson, 1964). Yet, for reasons that will be touched upon next, this stage has become drawn out into one’s late-twenties, disconnected from cultural structures of support, and defined by more individualistic markers.

**Emerging adults**

In 2000, Jeffrey Arnett proposed a new concept of development for late teens and mid-twenties that he calls emerging adulthood. Arnett stated that he had built his concept of emerging adulthood upon the foundational understanding that Erik Erikson offered for identity development for young people:

The prolonged adolescence typical of industrialized societies and on the psychosocial moratorium granted to young people in such societies “during which the young people through free role experimentation may find a niche in some section of his society.” (Erikson, 1968)

In Erikson’s time, the prolongation of the identity formation stage beyond adolescence was an exception. However, Erikson anticipated that an expansion of the crisis of the identity stage would prove to be a normative event in postindustrial societies. The emerging adult literature explores the “demographic shifts have taken place over the past half century that have made the late teens and early twenties not simply a brief period of transition into adult roles but an
extended period of the life course, characterized by change and exploration of possible life directions (Arnett, 2000, p 469). The following discussion will highlight the defining attributes of emerging adulthood, its view of the macro changes presumed to have prolonged this stage, and how commitments within developmental domains and the creation of life narratives aid in forming lives marked by coherence or integrity.

**Defining Features**

Quoting Arnett, Setran and Kiesling (2013) summarized the five interrelated characteristics of emerging adulthood to their readers in *Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood: A Practical Theology for College and Young Adult Ministry*:

First, they are engaged in identity formation, exploring personal meaning in love, work, and worldview. Second, they live lives marked by instability; regularly moving, changing jobs, and revising their life plans. Third, they tend to be very focused on themselves, free from parents’ oversight and yet also free from significant responsibilities to others. Fourth, they feel “in between” recognizing that they have transcended adolescence and yet unsure if they have achieved full adult status. Finally, they see this time period as an “age of possibilities,” optimistic about the future and desirous of keeping all of their options open. (Setran & Kiesling, 2013, Syed, 2016)

Setran and Kiesling asserted that adulthood as America knew it in the 1960’s has been put on hold. Echoing Arnett, they wrote that “the last fifty years have witnessed a gradual delaying of traditional adult milestones. Sociologists have marked this shift by monitoring five key historical sociological markers: leaving home, finishing school, becoming financially independent, getting married, and having children” (Setran and Kiesling, 2013; Syed, 2016). Yet these markers now rank at the bottom in importance compared to other more subjective or “individual qualities of character” (Arnett, 2000). The top three criteria marking the transition to adulthood are “accepting responsibility for one’s self, making independent decisions, and becoming financially independent” (Arnett, 2000; Setran and Kiesling, 2013). These latter
criteria reflect an emphasis on becoming self-sufficient as the character quality most important for the transition into adulthood (Arnett, 1998).

**Macro Changes**

Smith with Snell in *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults* (2009), Setran and Kiesling in *Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood* (2013), and Clydesdale in *The Purposeful Graduate* (2015) cited a number of macro social changes that have contributed to this extended transition to adulthood phase in the American life course. The first is the expansion and extension of higher education (Smith with Snell, p 5, Setran and Kiesling, p 2). A second and related change is the delay of marriage of this age group over the past decades. The third change is related to the American and global economies that have made financial independence elusive. Fourth is the willingness of parents to extend financial and other support to their children throughout their twenties and even beyond. Additionally, Smith (2011) included birth control and postmodernism to the list of changes. Smith with Snell (2009) cautioned:

> if emerging adults want in fact to pursue lives that are genuinely free and self-directed in ways that are worthy of their commitment and devotion, they will have to come to terms with many of the larger social and cultural forces to which their lives are now subject that do not obviously serve that end”.

In their article *Changes in the transition to adulthood in the UK and Canada: the role of structure and agency in emerging adulthood*, James Cote and John Bynner (2008) argued against defining emerging adulthood as a new developmental stage. Cote and Bynner agreed that the term emerging adulthood accurately depicts a delayed transition to adulthood in the twenties with respect to worldview, jobs, and marriage. However, they argue that this delay towards adulthood is produced by social, demographic, and economic conditions, rather than new
developmental issues. Cote and Bynner summarized their position by stating, “the simpler explanation is the structural one: as a cohort, young people are denied viable sources of financial independence until their late twenties and social anomie has created widespread identity confusion as a ‘new normal’ state of affairs.” Similarly, Clydesdale (2015) disagreed with the assumption that this “lengthening path to adulthood is primarily the product of young adult choices” (Clydesdale, 2015, p 201). Clydesdale assigned this delay to macroeconomic pressures, macrocultural shifts that “have replaced traditional family formation with a menu of lifestyle options,” and “insufficient socialization of youth by families, schools, and congregations for the altered economic and cultural landscapes that now exist” (Clydesdale, 2015).

**Identity-Status Approach Vs Narrative Approach**

A key concept for identity formation and emerging adult literature is developmental tasks, defined as “trying out various life possibilities and gradually moving toward making enduring decisions and commitments” (Arnett, 2000). Whether it is referred to as a crisis, a task, a role, or a domain, the definition indicates a developmental process of exploring and making long-term commitments. Erikson identified several developmental issues as loci of adolescent/young adult identity crises: vocation, ideological worldview (religious or political), and sex role/sexual orientation (Waterman, 1987). For Arnett (2000), a key characteristic of emerging adulthood was that it offers the most opportunity to engage in identity formation in the three main tasks or domains of love, work, and worldviews. Munro and Adams (1977) looked at the domains of occupation, religious, political, and ideological. In their study, Roisman et al. (2004) explored the links between salient tasks (friendship, academic, and conduct) and emerging tasks (work, romantic). Setran and Kiesling (2013), working from a Christian perspective, included spiritual formation/religion, identity, church involvement, vocation,
morality, relationships and sexuality, and mentoring. Lastly, Schwartz et al. (2016) noted that the extended transition of emerging adulthood provides “time and space for consideration of identity alternatives in areas such as career, relationships, sexuality, philosophy of life, and religion and spirituality.

In their study of how recent college graduates from two Christian colleges integrated their religious narratives during the school to work transition, Kimball et al. (2013) offered the narrative approach as a complimentary means to the identity-status approach in their article. Quoting McLean and Pratt (2006), they argued:

. . . the status model of identity, in which maturity is marked by commitment after exploration in circumscribed domains of life, differs in important ways from maturity understood as the degree to which a life story is coherent and integrative in its articulation of the whole of life experiences. They conclude that meaning making is associated with coherence among the domains of development, with themes that are of personal relevance, and with redemption as a story structure.

Employing McLean and Pratt’s (2006) qualitative coding system, Kimball et al. (2013) discovered that the themes that emerged from these faith narratives as most mature support an interpretation of exploration in depth vs breadth. Quoting the research of Luckx, Goosens, Soenens, and Beyers (2006), Kimball et al. offered that “developmentally, they argue, emerging adults may no longer be exploring alternative paths, but instead by living with certain commitments and exploring them more deeply.” Overall, they viewed these alumni stories of faith as glimpses into how these emerging adults live out the integration of their faith experiences in meaning ways.

McCLean and Breen (2016) took a narrative approach to argue that emerging adults “story their selves by engaging with cultural processes and stories. They noted that during emerging adulthood, a time of heightened disruptions and instability, that:
the task of constructing a coherent self is complicated by the additions of various roles, some of which are in competition with each other, meaning that the task for the emerging adult is not easy. And there are important consequences of failing to develop a coherent sense of self.

Developmentally speaking, McClean and Breen are interested in how various domains cohere, or become integrated. They noted Harter’s (2012) research that found “the main process that is critical for healthy self-concept development is the ability to reflect on the different aspects of self in order to find coherence across them.”

Schwartz et al. (2016) described narrative identity research as focusing:

on a person’s life story, how she or he has made sense of the various experiences and ‘turning points’ that comprise that life story and the overall coherence and valence that characterize the story.

Particularly, narrative research can complement the identity status approach in that it may be useful for understanding how a person has come to hold her or his identity commitments. By focusing on turning-point events, especially events involving loss or trauma, researchers have looked at a person’s self-maturity and quality of meaning-making as a type of identity exploration.

McAdams (2016) defined narrative identity as that process where by emerging adults develop personal narratives of the past, present, and future so as to provide life with purpose, meaning, and a sense of temporal coherence. Drawing upon Erikson’s concept of sameness and continuity, he understood that young men and women create an identity by deciding “what they believe to be true and good (ideology) and how they will function in the adult economy (vocation)” into a storied, self-understanding. McAdams noted that narrative identity is currently used to refer to “the internalized and evolving story of the self that a person begins to construct in the emerging adult years.” While narrative identity does not encompass all of the functions of identity that Erikson taught, it captures “the essential identity process of consolidating a sense of
temporal continuity in life and thereby affirming life meaning and purpose over time.” Lastly, although McAdams described this process of constructing individual life stories as self-authorship; he acknowledged:

Self-authorship is rarely experienced as an act of full authorial freedom, but rather as a matter of cobbling together a life narrative that works within a particular socio-historical context, given prevailing constraints and opportunities.

**Higher Education and Purpose.**

The term coherence is not typically used within the higher education literature included in this study, yet the term’s meaning and purpose could serve as possible translations and connections across academic fields. These terms are especially poignant with regards to the discussion of faith, religion, and spirituality. For example, Parks (2000) observed that young adults in college faced questions of meaning, purpose, and faith, which they must answer in a way that helps them to adequately make meaning of their world:

The (young adult) dream in its fullest and most spiritual sense is a sense of vocation. Vocation conveys "calling" and meaningful purpose. It is a relational sensibility in which I recognize that what I do with my time, talents, and treasure is most meaningfully conceived not as a matter of mere personal passion and preference but in relationship to the whole of life. Vocation arises from a deepening understanding of both self and world, which gives rise to moments of power when self and purpose become aligned with eternity. (Parks, 2000, p 148)

Dalton (2001) described that for most students, “the college years are a time of questioning and spiritual searching in which there is particular emphasis upon two dimensions of spirituality: making connection with ultimate life purpose and finding an inward home.” Speaking as an educator, he confessed:

Because of our inclination to treat spiritual matters as a private concern, educators often do not recognize the important role that spirituality has in the learning and development of college students. Students’ spiritual reflections and commitments are especially important in helping them to identify and commit to future goals and career choices;
this makes spirituality an important consideration when assessing the long-range outcomes of higher education.

Dalton classified spiritual development as a form of deeper learning and worthy of implementing within higher education. He urged his readers that “education that does not connect with and integrate these spiritual dimensions of learning and development” is ultimately less engaging and lasting for a student. He counseled that students’ spiritual commitments and reflections aid them “to identify and commit to future goals and career choices; this makes spirituality an important consideration when assessing the long-range outcomes of higher education.” As a panacea to self-centeredness, he described students’ spiritual development as leading to an integrity or an “undivided life.” Citing an unnamed business philosophy, he defined “character” as “a type of belief system and lifestyle that is based upon moral principles in which an individual achieves great consistency between belief and behavior.” Ultimately, he asserted that this spiritual deficit in higher education makes it “less likely that graduates will be engaged citizens willing to do the long and arduous work of creating a good society.”

Another prominent scholar who has explored meaning and purpose with higher is Alexander W. Astin, founder of the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at the University of California – Los Angeles. Speaking at the conference “Spirituality as a Legitimate Concern in Higher Education,” Astin (2002) described a disconnect between education and purpose:

Even a cursory look at the education system indicates that the amount of time devoted to the interior and the exterior aspects of our lives has gotten way out of balance… while we’ve made crucial advances in the fields of science, medicine, technology and commerce, we’ve come to neglect the inner world of values, beliefs, emotions, maturity, spirituality and self-understanding. (p 1)

HERI’s Spirituality in Higher Education (2003) reported that "three-fourths (of college students) say that they are searching for meaning and purpose in life." More recently, Astin et al.’s
argued that students know that they are missing something and are spiritually hungry. In their research, they used longitudinal data from a nationally representative study of college students to report the positive effects of students’ spiritual development on academic outcomes, satisfaction with college, leadership skills, and cross-cultural awareness and relationships.

One of the broadest research studies of spirituality’s impact on college students came from George D. Kuh and Robert M. Gonyea (2006). Having analyzed cross-sectional data from 150,000 plus student respondents to the National Study of Student Engagement (NSSE), they concluded that spirituality did not harm, but likely enhanced student engagement. They also noted that religiously active students interacted with “very different religious and political beliefs and personal values” at a higher rate than religiously inactive students, who they found were the most disengaged from “educationally purposeful activities.”

Smith with Snell (2009) in Souls in Transition underscored that “emerging adult religion – whatever its depth, character, and substance – correlates significantly” with positive outcomes in life. They elaborated their findings by stating:

Whether we focus on relationships with parents, giving and volunteering, participation in organized activities, substance abuse, risky behaviors, moral compassion, physical health, bodily self-image, mental and emotional well-being, locus of control, life satisfaction, life purpose, felling gratitude, educational achievement, resistance to consumerism, pornography use, or potentially problematic sexual activity, the more religious emerging adults are consistently doing better on these measures than the least religious emerging adults.

The differences hold up after controlling for the influence of age, sex, race, region of residence, parental education, individual income, and parental assistance with expenses. They also found “no major or consistent differences between life outcomes and major religious traditions” (Smith with Snell, 2009). Smith with Snell asserted:
Thus, even among emerging adults, it is not the case that religion does not matter for forming the shapes of their lives. It does. Emerging adults who are more religious are living developing lives that undeniably look, feel and produce results that are quantifiably different from those of the least religious emerging adults. And we have many good reasons to believe that religious faith and practice are at least partly the cause of those differences. Religion thus makes important differences in areas of life that matter to nearly everyone and have consequences for collective well-being and social and financial cost for society as a whole. Far from having dwindled into irrelevance, religion still matters and makes a positive difference in the lives of America’s emerging adults (Smith with Snell, 2009).

In their own way, these authors have advocated for higher education to look holistically at student development, particularly with regard to purpose, meaning, religion, and spirituality. While religion and spirituality are so vaguely defined that they almost fail to be instructive (DeHaan et al., 2011), the consensus among these writers is that they are associated with positive outcomes in the lives of students. Instead of telling students what to think, colleges and universities need to develop curriculum and cultures that help students integrate their beliefs and behaviors into a functional whole. The following sections build upon how the three commitments of conviction, character, and community offer a model for that type of integrative learning.

**Conviction (Worldview)**

Quoting Gustave Thibon, Eliot (1965) articulated why purpose and practice must be joined together:

Only imaginary goods imply no contradiction: the girl who desires a large family, the social reformer who dreams of the happiness of the people – such individuals do not encounter any obstacles so long as they refrain from action. They sail along happily in a good which is absolute, but fictitious: to stumble against reality is the signal for waking up. This contradiction, the mark of our wretchedness and our greatness, is something that we must accept in all its bitterness. (Eliot, 1965)
Resonating with this idea, the people that Garber interviewed in Fabric (2007) were women and men that had stumbled against reality. They were people that he viewed as living coherent lives that connected belief and behavior through substantial, or hard-earned, integrity. Integral to their persistence, they had what Garber identified in his interviews as conviction. Listening to their stories, Garber detected that “they were taught a worldview which was sufficient for the question and crises of the next twenty years, particularly the challenge of modern and postmodern consciousness with it implicit secularization and pluralization” (Garber, 2007). In other words, they were women and men who entered their post-graduate years wide-awake. For Garber, the challenge was:

For the contemporary person – especially the Christian student whose creedal commitments are rooted in the possibility and reality of truth – is to form a worldview that will be coherent across the whole of life because it addresses the whole of life: from sexuality to politics to economics to the arts, from local commitments to global responsibilities. In a word, it is the challenge of developing convictions which do not, by their own inner logic, require one to “blink” (Garber, 2007).

Garber understood Christian convictions as being rooted in a Hebrew worldview, particularly its understanding of knowing that includes both belief and behavior. For him, a worldview connects “what we believe with how we live. And so truth cannot be something we hold to “theoretically” with no real-life consequence” (Garber, 2007).

**Erickson and Ideology**

Garber’s definition of conviction, or worldview, mirrored Erikson’s view of a world image as essential for the development of the individual as well as the transmission of society between generations. In translating a quote from George Bernard Shaw, Erikson stressed “Man, to take his place in society, must acquire . . . an intelligible theory of the processes of life which the old atheist, eager to shock to the last, calls a religion” (Erikson, 1959). Erikson also claimed that identity and ideology were two aspects of the same process, “by which a group identity
harnesses in the service of its ideology the young individual’s aggressive and discriminative energies, and encompasses, as it completes it, the individual’s identity” (Erikson, 1959).

Overall, Erikson seemed to prefer the term ideology, which he defined as “a coherent body of shared images, ideas and ideals which . . . provides for the participants a coherent, if systematically simplified, over-all orientation in space and time, in means and ends” (Erikson, 1959).

Erikson (1959) articulated his most robust understanding of ideology in the section “Pathographic: The Clinical Picture of Identity Confusion” of his paper The Problem of Ego Identity. He understood that social institutions “support the ego needs and ego functions subsumed under the term ‘identity’.” Of these institutions, a society’s ideology is that which offers its youth:

(1) an overly clear perspective of the future, encompassing all foreseeable time, and thus counteracting individual “time diffusion”; (2) an opportunity for the exhibition of some uniformity of appearance and action counteracting individual identity consciousness; (3) inducement to collective role and work experimentation which can counteract a sense of inhibition and personal guilt; (4) submission to leaders who as “big brothers” escape the ambivalence of the parent-child relation; (5) introduction into the ethos of the prevailing technology, and thus into sanctioned and regulated competition; and (6) a seeming correspondence between the internal world of ideals and evils, on the one hand, and, on the other, the outer world with its organized goals and dangers in real space and time: a geographic-historical framework for the young individual’s budding identity (Erikson, 1959).

Erikson acknowledged that in this definition, he included “phenomena which are the domain of social science.” He justified his intrusion based upon his clinical work with individual patients and hope of arriving at workable generalities, which may speak into “matters institutional which the historical and economic approach has necessarily neglected.”

In light of his view of human development consisting of and ending in a final integrity (vs despair), Erikson (1964) offered a critique of Western culture during his time when he said,
“as we come to the last stage, we become aware of the fact that our civilization really does not harbor a concept of the whole of life, as do the civilizations of the East.” Understanding that the succession of generations cannot be passed on through synthetic values, he questioned whether “the weakened creeds of the West and the manufactured ideologies of the Communist world may meet a common obstacle” (Erikson, 1964). Additionally, he asserted that “any span of the cycle lived without vigorous meaning, at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end, endangers the sense of life and the meaning of death in all whose life stages are intertwined” (Erikson, 1964). While he used terms such as ideology, world image, political creed, and a “way of life” almost interchangeably to talk about guiding principles that provided meaning and purpose to both individuals and societies, Erikson was also too aware of their disastrous effects as witnessed in World War II. Yet Erikson admitted, “whatever else ideology is . . . and whatever transitory or lasting social forms it takes, we will tentatively view it here and discuss it later – as a necessity for the growing ego which is involved in the succession of generations, and in adolescences is committed to some new synthesis of past and future: a synthesis which must include but transcend the past, even as identity does” (Erikson, 1959).

Cote and Roberts (2014) suggested that “developing a coherent worldview in contemporary (individualized, late-modern) societies has become a significant impediment for many people in terms of developing an adult identity.” Quoting (Schwartz et al, 2013), they recognized that there is little available literature independent of university student samples upon which to assess how the prolonged transition to adulthood is affecting identity formation, or that capture the essential issues driving whatever identity development might be taking place. To overcome these issues, Cote (2006) introduced a new measure based on a continuum approach to measuring identity formation processes—the Identity Issues Inventory (I-3).
This instrument, the Identity Issues Inventory (I3) is based on Erikson’s writings about psychosocial identity formation in the areas of (1) self-identity, along with some recent elaborations of his work in terms of self-integration and self-differentiation, and (2) societal identity, as represented in the assumption of work roles and the acceptance of a functional worldview (Cotes and Roberts, 2014). Specifically, the I-3’s four tasks and their dystonic expressions are: integration (sense of wholeness vs. fragmentation), differentiation (sense of self from others, ability to choose, and self-sustaining vs. engulfment, lack of control, and excessive dependency), work roles (competence and recognition vs. incompetence and unrecognized), and worldview (meaning and purpose vs. uprooted and uncommitted). Their finding supported that the transition to adulthood was delayed, yet “the four tasks of identity formation are moderately to highly correlated, even for those in their early-20s, suggesting that most people are able to develop a unified sense of identity.” Cote and Roberts concluded:

If the postmodernist claims are valid, then most people should not be developing mature identities, but instead be arrested at lower levels of self-identity (e.g., poor integration) and societal identity (e.g., an absence of coherent worldview), and they should not show integrated resolutions (i.e., the levels and domains should not be even moderately correlated). The data from the current studies tentatively suggest that this is not the case.

Admitting the plausibility of a coherent life, Garber acknowledged “the nature of the pressures facing folk who seriously take up the challenge of life in the modern world,” particularly the challenge in discovering the “possibility of truth – even a certainty of faith – in a pluralist world” (Garber, 2007, p 137). Smith with Snell’s (2009) research asserted that emerging adults have been raised in a world that “has undergone a significant epistemic and axiological breakdown” (p 292). Whether they use the words or not, for emerging adults “it is all relative” (p 293). Based on their research, they explained:
Very many emerging adults simply don’t know how to think about things, what is right, or what is deserving for them to devote their lives to. On such matters, they are very often simply paralyzed, wishing they could be more definite, wanting to move forward, but simply not knowing how they might possibly know anything worthy of conviction and dedication. Instead, very many emerging adults exist in a state of basic indecision, confusion, and fuzziness. The world they have inherited, as best as they can make sense of it, has told them that real knowledge is impossible and genuine values are illusions (Smith with Snell, 2009, p 293).

Behind this lack of conviction and direction, Smith and Snell point to cultural movements like deconstructive postmodernism, glut and fragmentation of knowledge on the Internet, social constructionism, and various multicultural movements taught in public schools. Recognizing that emerging adults seek “to establish themselves as autonomous and sovereign individuals,” Smith with Snell (2009) have seen that “they lack larger visions of what is true and real and good, in both the private and the public realms.” In this emerging adult worldview gap, “predefined default imperatives quickly rush in to fill that normative and moral vacuum” like mass consumerism, substance abuse, and participating in hook-up sex. “Giving this crisis of truth that has destabilized their culture,” Smith with Snell described the alternative as having to live without “a reliable basis for any particular conviction or direction by which to guides their lives” (Smith with Snell, 2009).

Glanzer (2013) built upon findings of Smith et al. (2011) when he cited that most emerging adults “do not appeal to a moral philosophy, tradition, or ethic as an external guide by which to think and live in moral terms. Few emerging adults even seem aware that such external, coherent approaches or resources for moral reasoning exist.” Glanzer (2013) realized that “these emerging adults either have not been educated about the historical range of moral philosophies and traditions, or they do not know how to draw upon them when actually asked to engage in moral reasoning.”
While Glanzer placed at least part of the blame on higher education for this moral deficit, he moves to talk about how moral education begins by helping students become aware of the moral elements that make up our multiple identities. He named ten moral elements that students need to consider: 1. What are the setting and characters? 2. What is the purpose(s)? 3. What are the rules? 4. What are the most important virtues or character qualities for the identity role’s successful practice? 5. Who knows it and does it well (wisdom)? 6. Who possesses that wisdom (coaches)? 7. What does one need to practice before beginning a role? 8. Does this increase one’s moral imagination? 9. Who are the heroes of this virtue and practice? 10. What is the story (meta-narrative) that holds it all together? By introducing all ten elements, he gave his students, especially those going into student affairs, a framework to develop and teach moral practices.

Glanzer (2013) described Harvard’s “Freshman Pledge” as an example of an institution offering a list of virtues, but with no guidance, no explanation, no concrete practices, and no “larger purpose and metanarrative that gives them meaning and significance. He continued:

Rules or definitions of virtue can only be effectively established by moral traditions or communities that conceptualize a specific human end derived from particular narratives. Based on this conception of human flourishing, communities then seek to establish certain rules and embody, prioritize, and exemplify particular virtues. Yet, many higher education programs appear to seek an intellectual community devoid of a guiding tradition or narrative, because such trappings prove restrictive.

In his conclusion, Glanzer proposed that these meta-narratives are crucial for moral education to help students:

... identify and map the moral elements of their different identities and the associated moral visions. Only then will they also understand the nature of moral dilemmas as it relates to their multiple identity roles. Without this undertaking, both our students and institutions will take shallow approaches to moral education that fail to properly engage the moral complexity associated with our various identities and their development and the rich traditions we have for approaching these matters.
Describing the interaction between the personal self and one’s cultural, McClean and Breen (2016) wrote about master narratives. They defined master narratives as:

> dominant cultural stories that inform our expectations, provide a structure for our life stories, and shape our understanding of how we may construct our stories and our selves in ways that are valued within a particular society.

They viewed these narratives as both reflecting particular sociocultural contexts as well as serving to shape them. In addition, they understood that master narratives articulated cultural values about what constitutes a good life, distinguished between what is valued and not valued, and established a cultural authority that validate certain narratives over others. Lastly, they suggested that emerging adulthood may reflect the time when individuals have “sufficient opportunity to test and question these ‘prescriptions’ for one’s life story,” especially as emerging adult’s social networks expand outside of their immediate families.

**Emerging Adulthood and Worldview**

Arnett (2000) asserted that for emerging adults, changes in worldview are seen as a central part of cognitive development and identity formation. Citing Will Perry (1970/1999), Arnett discussed how a worldview developed in childhood may become challenged when confronted with other worldviews in college. This often leads emerging adults to question the worldviews they entered college with while also considering a variety of possible others before graduation. Arnett noted that by the end of their college experience they have often committed themselves to a worldview different from the one they brought in, while remaining open to future adjustments.

In contrast to Arnett, Smith with Snell’s (2009) longitudinal research with the NYSR articulated a neo-Eriksonian interpretation of continuity in development. They concluded that “the forces of religious continuity are stronger than the forces of change” (Smith with Snell,
2009, p 224). They arrived at this conclusion by comparing teenage religion in Wave 1 of their research to the emerging adult religion of Wave 3, which they found was strongly predictive. Although they observed a “stronger downwardly-shifting tendency” among religious commitment, most emerging adults remained “generally the kind of religious people they were as teenagers” (Smith with Snell, 2009). This was in contrast to a societal expectation that the religious orientations of teenagers are random and characterized as being “thrown into the air” during the transition to emerging adulthood.

In Almost Christian, Dean (2010) made an argument for continuity in religious worldviews when she noted that teenagers have learned about religion from their parents and their congregations. A part of the interview team for Wave 1 in the NYSR, Dean echoed Smith and Denton’s premise that “parents get what they are religiously.” Dean stated this one recurrent theme from the NYSR was that “parents matter most when it comes to the religious formation of their children” (p 18). The rub for Dean is that the older generation lacks a confidence or understanding of its own spiritual narrative (worldview), let alone a competence to teach the next generation in it. Rather than being the problem, teenagers and emerging adults are symptomatic of the larger cultural changes, conflicts, and creeds that have effected all of American society.

One of these cultural creeds is the new de facto religion of a majority of American teenagers first described by Smith with Denton (2005) in Soul Searching: moralistic therapeutic deism (MTD). Based upon the research of Wave 1 of the NYSR, Soul Searching described five key beliefs held by followers of MTD:

First, a God exists who created and orders the world and watches over human life on earth. Second, God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions. Third, the central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about oneself. Fourth, God does not need to be particularly involved in one’s life except when God is needed to resolve a problem. Fifth, good people go to heaven when they die.
In the follow up study, *Souls in Transition*, Smith with Snell (2009) noted that while language and outlooks were more varied among 18 to 23-year old youth, they “expressed an MTD very close to the one they had articulated five years earlier.” They accounted for the difference between waves in the NYSR as being due to: 1. emerging adults having more life experience than their teenage selves, and 2. MTD was put to the test in confronting and addressing life’s harsh realities. For some, MTD proved sufficient for what life threw at them. For others:

MTD has simply proved too thin or weak to deal with life’s challenges. Confronted with real existential or material difficulties, some emerging adults appear to have backed away from the simple verities of MTD or perhaps have moved forward into somewhat more complex, grounded, or traditional versions of religious faith. In short, there seem to be certain test in life through which some youth find that MTD proves an unrealistic account or an unhelpful way to respond. (Smith with Snell, 2009)

Echoing Garber, they stated that a worldview had “to make sense of the world,” especially in difficult seasons and experiences.

Adding to this complexity, Smith with Snell (2009) stated that religious beliefs are “not what emerging adults organize their lives around.” Regardless of where emerging adults defined themselves with regard to religious practice and worldview, religious beliefs “do not particularly drive the majority’s priories, commitments, values, or goals.” Emerging adult priorities tend to focus on jobs, friends, fun, and financial security. Smith with Snell concluded “that emerging adults felt entirely comfortable describing various religious beliefs that they affirmed but that appeared to have no connection whatsoever to the living of their lives.”

Finally, tied to this question of worldview is the topic of authority, religious or otherwise, in the lives of emerging adults. According to Smith with Snell (2009), authority appears to be the emerging adults themselves and “what seems right to me.”
subjective for each person, based on the way that person was raised, and it has no basis in right or wrong as if someone could judge another’s experience. Smith with Snell observed:

Emerging adults are the authorities for themselves on what in religion is good and useful and relevant for them. They pick and choose what works. Everything else can just be left out and not worried about. No big deal.

**PTEV Intervention - Conviction**

A poignant example of one intervention addressing the creative power of a worldview or narrative within higher education could be seen in the Lilly Foundation’s Program for Theological Exploration of Vocation (PTEV). In *The Purposeful Graduate: Why College Must Talk to Their Students About Vocation* (2015), Clydesdale looks at the outcomes of this $225 million initiative to 88 church-related schools from 2000-2009. The PTEV initiative invited “church-affiliated colleges and universities to develop programming that would foster campus conversations about questions of meaning and purpose, and in particular their religious underpinnings, which is the theology of vocation.” The programming was meant to draw upon each campus’s theological tradition and practices in order to “foster students’ exploration of the idea of vocation, support pre-clergy students specifically, and strengthen student mentorship by faculty and staff.” Rather than dictate how each campus would address three foci, the PTEV encouraged campuses to reconnect with their faith heritages and theological roots and distinctiveness.

Clydesdale (2015) observed that theologies of vocation offered “navigational charts, weaving long-established (meta-) narratives of divine purpose” in a postmodern world filled with “ever-churning seas of meaning.” Theology came to be seen as a resource that “seeks to answer core questions of human existence, draws from powerful narratives, and links these with
contemporary contexts, it can assist readers in constructing a framework for engaged living in a
globalized and postmodern world.” Far from being prescriptive, Clydesdale concluded that
successful programs had (re-)claimed a descriptive spirituality of “theological ideas grounded in
denominational narratives and traditions” that offered “a robust starting place for conversations
about meaning and purpose” with students as well as among faculty and staff. At the very least,
the PTEV initiative inspired these colleges and universities to allow their religious traditions,
narratives, and worldview to inform their purpose and practice of education with emerging
adults.

**Character (Mentors)**

While Eliot (1965) does not explicitly mention mentoring in *The Aims of Education*, he
does imply it as he is defining what the purpose of education is:

> Men have been training their children ever since they were men, and indeed before it: I
do not know at what precise point in the scale of living creatures the training of the young may be said to begin. The content of education and its form have varied according to the organization of the society in and for which the young have been trained; a long tradition and many educational institutions preceded the time at which the question ‘What is education?’ needed to be asked. Or rather, we ask the question about the purpose of an activity at some time after we have begun to practice it; and we have found that the question has to be asked again and again, because the activity itself alters from generation to generation. (p 121)

For Eliot, teaching implies the training, and mentoring, of the next generation. Having delivered
these lectures from December 1950 through the fall of 1951 at the University of Chicago, Eliot
spoke into the changing landscape of American higher education as it experienced a phenomenal
enrollment growth after World War II. Today, his words are just as poignant, particularly as
American higher education continues to enroll larger and more diverse numbers of students who
are now struggling through this delayed transition called emerging adulthood. Yet regardless of
how educators answer his central question of “What is education?” or how vast “the machine of education” has become, Eliot understood that “it should be an aim of education to maintain the continuity of our culture” by one generation teaching the next “the knowledge of the best that has been thought and said in the world” (pp 119-120).

In his interviews with those who believed in the possibility of a coherent life, Garber (2007) defined the second strand as character. For true learning, good books were not enough. As Garber listened to their stories, he heard that “they met a teacher who incarnated the worldview which they were coming to consciously identify as their own, and in and through that relationship they saw that it was possible to reside within that worldview themselves.” Those interviewed found a mentor during their university years that “gave flesh and bone to the notion of ‘the good life’ which was developing in the student’s heart and mind.” These older friends were “professors, professionals, and pastors” who modeled the worldview that the students were “learning to embrace.”

Looking back to the likes of Cicero and Augustine, Garber (2007) stated that “for centuries, education was character formation.” Quoting Augustine in a letter to his student Dioscorus, Garber asserted that Augustine “understood what learning was all about: teachers opening their lives to students, allowing an apprenticeship into what is supremely important. It is nothing less than the formation of moral meaning.” Garber offered this insight about the generative nature of mentoring:

One thing is clear: for those who learn the deepest lessons – one in which visions of one’s world and of one’s place in it are transformed – there is always a teacher whose purposes and passions ignite a student’s moral imagination. But it is also clear that, in the end, it is the students who choose to learn from their teachers who experience this metamorphosis of moral meaning.
Garber’s insights concerning the role of mentors resonated with Erikson’s core themes of the “succession of generations,” “mutuality,” “generativity,” and “recognition” as they relate to healthy identity development. In *Insight and Responsibility* (1964), Erikson gave a lecture on responsibility and ethics at the University of Delhi by the title “The Golden Rule in Light of New Insight.” Erikson held that in order for ethics to develop in individuals, they must be “generated and regenerated in and by the sequence of generations”, as clinically explained:

At the same time, they (scientific methods) lead us to that borderline where we recognize that the scientific approach toward living beings must be with concepts and methods adequate to the study of ongoing life, not of selective extinction. I have put it this way: one can study the nature of things by doing something to them, but one can really learn something about the essential nature of living beings only by doing something with them or for them. This, of course, is the principle of clinical science. It does not deny that one can learn by dissecting the dead, or that animal or man can be motivated to lend circumscribed parts of themselves to an experimental procedure. But for the study of those central transactions which are the carriers of socio-genetic evolution, and for which we must take responsibility in the future, the chosen unit of observation must be the generation, not the individual. Whether an individual animal or human being has partaken of the stuff of life can only be tested by the kind of observation which includes his ability to transmit life – in some essential form – to the next generation (Erikson, 1964).

This transmission of life includes a generativity in all relationships, whether that be parent to child, man to women, or teacher to pupil. Lastly, Erikson’s understanding of ethics had its foundations in a mutuality that strengthens, develops, and seeks the good for all involved – not just the individual.

Erikson assumed that positive human development is contingent upon being responsible to “transmit life” to the next generation. In *Identity and the Life Cycle* (1959), Erikson expanded this idea in defining the term generativity:

Generativity is primarily the interest in establishing and guiding the next generation, although there are people who, from misfortune or because of special and genuine gifts in other directions, do not apply this drive to offspring but to other forms of altruistic
concern and of creativity, which may absorb their kind of parental responsibility. The principal thing is to realize that this is a stage of the growth of the healthy personality and that where such enrichment fails, together, regression from generativity to an obsessive need for pseudo intimacy takes place, often with a pervading sense of stagnation and interpersonal impoverishment. Individuals who do not develop generativity often begin to indulge themselves as if they were their own one and only child” (Erikson, 1964; Erikson).

Erikson further explained how the generations depended on each other when he stated:

The older generation thus needs the younger one as much as the young one depends on the older; and it would seem that it is in this mutuality of the development of the older and young generations that certain basic and universal values such as love, faith, truth, justice, order, work, etc., in all of their defensive strength, compensatory power, and independent creativity become and remain important joint achievements of individual ego development and of the social process (Erikson, 1964).

For Erikson, generativity encompassed that “youth need confirming adults” (Erikson, 1964), “mature man needs to be needed” (Erikson, 1950; Erikson, 1964), as well as “the evolutionary development which has made man the teaching and instituting as well as the learning animal” (Erikson, 1963; Erikson, 1964).

Erikson (1964) stated that parenthood is the first and primary arena for generativity, but also taught about man’s larger need to teach and to mentor:

And man needs to teach, not only for the sake of those who need to be taught, and not only for the fulfillment of his identity, but because facts are kept alive by being told, logic by being demonstrated, truth by being professed. Thus, the teaching passion is not restricted to the teaching profession. Every mature adult knows the satisfaction of explaining what is dear to him and of being understood by a groping mind.

Speaking of the generativity of multi-generational relationships, Erikson noted:

Where identity formation is relatively successful in youth, psychosocial development leads through the fulfillment of adult phases to a final integrity, the possession of a few principles which though gleaned from changing experience yet prove unchangeable in essence. Without old people in possession of such integrity, young people in need of an identity can neither rebel or obey.

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4 Erikson most consistently speaks of the older generation teaching the younger, yet I would argue that the way he defines “teaching” includes elements of apprenticing and mentoring.
Finally, Erikson alluded to the power of mentoring relationships when he reflected, “Again and again I have observed in the lives of especially gifted and inspired people that one teacher, somewhere, was able to kindle the flame of hidden talent” (Erikson, 1964).

In his writing, Erikson (1964) located this generative function in formal places of instruction, as well as informal ones like “fishing holes, workshops, and kitchens.” With regard to work, Erikson also spoke of an apprenticeship or discipleship context “potentially integrated with the hierarchies of expectable jobs and careers, castes and classes, guilds and unions.” Yet Erikson critiqued child training in industrialized cultures for not creating conditions of responsible social participation that are adapted to the growing capacities of children (Erikson, 1950). The positive, though limited, example he gave was of a Cheyenne Indian family “ceremoniously making a feast out of a little boy’s first snowbird” (Erikson, 1950). From the time the little boy was presented with a toy bow and arrow, through acquiring increasingly suited bows and arrows as he grew, till the time he finally killed his first buffalo, the child was conditioned to assume his role in his culture across his childhood. In contrast to Western society, a child does not typically make any contribution of labor until he or she has to suddenly compete with adults. For Erikson (1950), a source of neuroses pointed “to the significance of this lag between child training and social actuality.”

Emerging Adulthood and Mentors

A common concern among emerging adult scholars has to do with the growing lack of cultural guidance, support, and resources available to emerging adults. On the surface, emerging adulthood looks like a positive development, with late-modern societies giving adolescents and emerging adults a greater amount of choice and freedom. However, when the ideology of free choice, or individualism, is peeled away, an absence of guiding philosophies, structures, and
norms presents serious challenges and negative implications to some young adults (Syed, 2016). Additionally, there is a large spectrum of support that young adults may or may not receive from their families, leaving emerging adults to do this work of identity formation on their own (Arnett, 2005; Setran & Kiesling, 2013).

Cote (2006) described “the recent prolongation of youth in terms of (a) the changed education-to-work transition whereby large numbers of youth are now required to postpone aspects of their identity formation, and (b) the diminished normative structures governing the transition to adulthood” (p 86). Schwartz et al. (2005, p 202) acknowledged, “The array of life alternatives available to emerging adults (e.g. career path, romantic attachments, and worldviews) has expanded, but the collective support for identity formation has decreased.” Taken together, these authors provide a developmental picture of young adults taking longer to commit to the adult roles of work, family, and community, while also recognizing the lack of institutional structures to guide them in that journey.

Smith with Snell (2009) underscored this view when they wrote, “The steps through and to schooling, the first real job, marriage, and parenthood are simply less well organized and coherent today than they were in generations past.” Similarly, they noted that there are typically two unhelpful reactions in the culture to the issues and struggles facing emerging adults today. One reaction is to fear that emerging adults are hopelessly lost. The other reaction is to assume that emerging adults will simply “grow out of it.” They argue that neither reaction is helpful or fully accurate. One of their conclusions is that “if communities of other adults who care about youth wish to nurture emerging adult lives of purpose, meaning, and character – instead of confusion, drifting, and shallowness – they will need to do better jobs of seriously engaging
youth from early on and not cut them adrift as they move through their teenage years.” A means of engaging these emerging adults would be through mentoring relationships.

In particular, Smith with Snell (2009) highlighted three attributes that spoke to the need for mentoring relationships, both inside and outside of the home. First, their research revealed that no single factor in an emerging adult’s life equals the outcome of high religious commitment. What they did discover were six combinations of teenage-era factors that together tend to produce the highest emerging adult religion. While Smith with Snell reported that they were not the only combination of factors that led to high religious commitment, these six configurations are the ones that do so at a rate of 50 percent or higher. Most importantly, they noticed that five out of six pathways to high religious commitment included a key relational tie with parent(s) or some other adult (Smith and Snell, 2009).

Second, Smith with Snell (2009) found that the “parents of teenagers are irrelevant” myth not to be true, yet they observed the withdrawal of parental influence at exactly the time that emerging adults needed conversation partners. Connecting back to the first point, parents and their religious lives are hugely important and statistically significant to emerging adults (Padilla-Walker, 2016, p. 459; Barry and Abo-Zena, 2016, p. 468). By contrast, the influence of peers during the teenage years proved to be weaker on religious outcomes than that of their parents. They conclude that “in the long run, then, who and what parents were and are for their children when it comes to religious faith and practice are much more likely to ‘stick’ with them, even into emerging adulthood, than who and what their teenage friends were.”

In their study on how emerging adults make meaning, Kimball et al. (2013) reported the importance of parental relationships with emerging adult faith. They were surprised to discover no significant relationship between parental attachment and what they rated as a mature faith
narrative. With additional analysis, they did discover that parental attachment was related to intrinsic religious orientation, which was related to mature meaning-making rankings of mature faith. Specifically, the quality of the parental attachment relationships seemed to encourage the emerging adult’s internalized religious framework, not complexity in faith meaning-making. Referencing Granvist and Kilpatrick (2008), they surmised that the quality of the parental relationship, not the didactic teaching, engenders a more personal and deeper faith.

Finally, Smith with Snell (2009) determined that nonparent adults – whether they are extended family members, church members, or pastors – are important and can actually “substitute for parents as formative influences in the lives of youth.” They emphasized that it matters for emerging adult religious outcomes that they had other adults they could turn for help and support, that they belong to congregations they enjoyed, that they participated in adult-taught religious classes, and that they found role models for who they wanted to become. They observed that the principles of socialization hold true for emerging adult religious outcomes, where new members are inducted into a group by elder members through practices like “role modeling, teaching, taking-things-for-granted, sanctioning, training, practicing, and other means of inculcating and internalizing basic categories, assumptions, symbols, habits, beliefs, values, desires, norms, and practices.” For Smith and Snell, the question is not “whether adults are engaged in religious socialization, but only how and with what effect they are doing so.”

In *Spiritual Formation in Emerging Adulthood* (2013), Setran and Kiesling observed “that emerging adults are seeking mentors rather than heroes” in this transitory period. They poignantly stated the disappearance of “the academic, athletic, social, and religious venues” that once shaped daily life has left many emerging adults feeling stressed out and uprooted in their new environments. Specific groups like minorities, international students, and women face
unique challenges in which they could benefit from an older adult’s experience and wisdom. Confronted with worldviews and lifestyles that contradict their own, emerging adults struggle when “faced with new decisions about what to believe and how to live.” All of this occurs at a time when there is a “structural separation of emerging adults from the older adults around them,” especially parents and trusted non-parental adults in their local congregation.

Building strong implications upon what Smith with Snell (2009) have termed “structurally disconnected”, Setran and Kiesling (2013) fleshed out how emerging adult prospects for mentoring may not improve within the higher education context due to factors that include the increased scholarship pressures on faculty to publish and the relegation of character formation to the “peer-dominated world of the co-curriculum”. Additionally, they conveyed that post-college, emerging adults tend to become isolated among their peers in the hours outside of work. With greater mobility, emerging adults can also be geographically disconnected from family members. Lastly, they highlighted current trends in worship attendance that reflect a “generational segmentation in the church,” thus limiting relationships with older adults. Overall, Setran and Kiesling painted a portrait of emerging adult lives lived in the absence of older adults.

Setran and Kiesling (2013) described “the mentoring gap” as one of the most debilitating factors with regard to emerging adult spiritual formation. They argued for the development of “mentoring communities” made up of parents and a variety of older adults in order to “exert influence and provide diverse picture of faithfulness to furnish the emerging adult imagination.” Setran and Kiesling offered multiple characteristics of effective modeling for mentors including living out one’s faith in real-life contexts (vs formal contexts), developing out of friendship and mutual affection, entering and valuing the world of the other, and entrusting the younger generation to live out the historic faith in their own unique, culturally-relevant way
(Setran and Kiesling, 2013; Erikson, 1964). They stated that “the role of a mentor is certainly to communicate truth, but that truth also derives power, clarity, and credibility from the ‘way of life’ of its bearer.” Finally, they cautioned against older adults becoming fused with emerging adults and their peer-driven culture instead of providing a positive alternative and balance to emerging adult culture.

Higher Education and Mentoring

Rogers (2006) addresses the lack of institutional structure to explore meaning and purpose within higher education. She cites from two studies of student affairs professionals who, on the one hand, recognize students’ hunger to explore questions of meaning while, on the other hand, are concerned about infringing on students’ spiritual or religious freedom. Rogers acknowledged:

While recognizing the significant role of authenticity, meaning, and purpose in higher education, many of us [administrators and faculty] are unsure how to engage these issues in the academy. It is new territory for us; hence, it is uncomfortable, challenging, and risky. (Rogers, 2006, p 3)

Ultimately, Rogers suggests that faculty and administrators must come from a “place of congruence” and “lived examples” to help prepare students to grapple with life’s deep questions and search for authenticity, meaning and wholeness (Rogers, 2006, p 4-5).

Fitzpatrick’s (2011) study explored how to apply Kram’s (1985) mentorship principles to the development of a service learning assignment in an undergraduate course. She articulated Kram’s two specific functions of effective mentorship based on mentor-protégé relationships in the workplace. First, the career function focused on “providing protégés exposure to (a) real-world environments that they are likely to face in their professions and/or (b) colleagues who manage professional tasks successfully. This function included “inside knowledge” as well as types of issues/problems that they would face in their professions. Second, the psychosocial
mentoring function focuses on providing support which promotes the protégés’ sense of identity and self-efficacy (Kram, 1985; Ragins & Kram, 2007), but “does not need to be based on personal friendships.” Fitzpatrick (2011) noted that one role of a mentor is to foster “reflection so that protégés might gain insights from the experiences,” which was facilitated in this study by having participants write reflection papers. She concluded that the “value of good mentorship is that it helps protégés face the demands of their particular profession or workplace.”

In his research using the Wabash National Survey, Barber has come to a consistent conclusion; mentors matter. Barber (2012) investigated the process by which college students bring knowledge and experiences together in order to help educators better understand undergraduate the integration of learning. His study demonstrated that the “integration of learning is happening much more often than many educators may realize and frequently without the support of faculty or staff. This lack of involvement and feedback from adults (in academic affairs, student affairs, or outside of the university entirely) was surprising and represents an opportunity for educators to facilitate integration of learning more intentionally” (p 608).

Having noted that students were more likely to turn to their peers when seeking advice, he concluded the article with four recommendations for educational mentors to employ inside and outside the traditional classroom to foster a culture of integration for undergraduates (pp 610 – 612).

Barber (2014) observed that “increasing numbers of stakeholders have called for American college graduates to adeptly make connections among life experiences, academic curricula, and their accumulated knowledge (e.g., AAC&U, 2002; AAC&U & Carnegie Foundation, 2004; ACPA, 1994; Joint Task Force on Student Learning, 1998; Keeling, 2004)”.

Focusing on one of seven liberal arts outcomes, how college students integrate learning, Barber
employed Magolda’s concept of self-authorship to explore “how individuals grow and change in the ways they make meaning of knowledge, identity, and relationships with others” (Baxter Magolda, 1998, 2001; Kegan, 1994). By looking at the interviews of three students over their entire college career, Barber defined the integration of learning as the process by which individuals bring together experience, knowledge, and skills across contexts. His study demonstrated that a student’s progress in college increased one’s capacity to integrate learning, that curricular and co-curricular programs (including study abroad, discussion-based academic courses, undergraduate research opportunities, and conversations with peers in student residences) played a key role in fostering these abilities, and that faculty, staff, and administrators have an opportunity and a responsibility to guide student learning and development.

In light of his findings, Barber (2014) offered three recommendations of practices for educators and administrators based on the shared experiences of the subjects: study away, engage with diverse others, and prioritize mentoring. Lastly, while it is not clear where mentors fit into the self-authoring continuum, Barber found that lack of sustained mentoring relationships in his research distressing. For Barber, mentors and mentoring are at least implicitly involved in the process of students’ integration of learning.

Lastly, Dalton and Crosby (2014) described the recent phenomena of student coaching programs in higher education settings. They stated that the goal is at the core of student affairs’ educational philosophy of student learning and development, particularly connected to students developing purpose (Chickering & Reisser, 1993). Albeit a twist on student engagement literature, student coaching prioritizes “the importance of active and supportive campus environments that engage students personally and proactively (Kuh, 2009).” Dalton and Crosby
(2014) added, “What student coaching offers, however, is a different educational strategy for engaging students more effectively in defining and committing to purposeful planning in their lives.” Students are supported through “meaningful personal relationships with knowledgeable and proactive adults.” They acknowledged that in this age of “high tech” in higher education, the positive outcomes of student coaching are a reminder of the importance of “high touch” in the lives of students.

**PTEV Intervention - Character**

As an intervention, the research and practices in *The Purposeful Graduate* (2015) elaborated many of the themes related to Garber’s commitment of character. Clydesdale stated that one of the three foci of the Lilly Foundation’s Program for Theological Exploration was strengthening student mentorship by faculty and staff. He also noted that the grant initiative was not designed to impact or involve the faculty or staff beyond what was necessary to deliver the programs. Yet, Clydesdale described how most grant committees viewed “wide faculty and staff participation as essential if student exploration was to be as robust as it ought to be, and if purpose exploration was to persist after grant funds expired.” Clydesdale claimed that not only do the results from his study suggest that the programs succeeded, but they also indicate a substantial positive spill-over effect for those faculty and staff who participated in the programs. Lastly, Clydesdale indicated that the programs that had an on-going impact were those colleges or universities where “pro-purpose exploration” faculty and staff not only incorporated mentoring practices into their overall work with students, but were themselves personally impacted by the initiative.

**Community**

To have a conversion experience is nothing much. The real thing is to be able to keep taking it seriously; to retain a sense of its plausibility.
This is where the religious community comes in.
Peter Berger, Social Construction of Reality, p 158

The final strand needed to live a coherent life is that of community. At the end of Fabric (2007), Garber asserted that:

Teachers and mentors, on their own, are insufficient models. As crucial as they are, their role is to act as a bridge into a large, more communal embodiment of the convictions the student is learning to live with. For those who take their university-framed ideas about what is real and true and right and deepen rather than discard them as they move into the responsibilities of adulthood, they have seen a social construction of their beliefs in the life of communities along the way. Often more stumbling than strategic, they have time and again found themselves among like-minded people whose own deepest beliefs are incarnated in a common life.

For those who demonstrate this commitment, Garber described them as those who:

made choices over the years to live out their worldview in the company of mutually committed folk who provided a network of stimulation and support which showed that the ideas could be coherent across the whole of life.

Lastly, in Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in the American Life, Bellah et al. (1991) wrote about the power of community. Whether talking about society at large or local communities close at hand, they described the need for reviving community:

We believe that much of the thinking about the self of educated Americans, thinking that has become almost hegemonic in our universities and much of the middle class, is based on inadequate social science, impoverished philosophy, and vacuous theology. There are truths we do not see when we adopt the language of radical individualism. We find ourselves not independently of other people and institutions but through them. We never get to the bottom of ourselves on our own. We discover who we are face to face and side by side with others in work, love, and learning. We are parts of a larger whole that we can neither forget nor imagine in our own image without paying a high price.

Garber (2007) referred to Bellah et al. (1991) when he emphasized what type of community he was referring to. Not a theoretical abstraction, community is a commitment that is lived out in real time, in real place, among people with real names. In his interviews, Garber recounted story after story of the power of friendships to nurture, encourage, challenge, and
sustain one another throughout the years. Garber overheard that for “those who keep on pursuing the vision of a coherent life – one that meaningfully connects the disparate strands of one’s existence – are people who have made the choice to live their lives out among folk who share their vision of the good life.” In fact, he referred to the decision to become a part of the lives of others as a “moral imperative” for those who would live out a vibrant Christian orthodoxy. These faith-based leadership development programs provide particular contexts for ultimate problems and concerns to be worked out. Specifically, they seek to create an intentional context for young adults to explore issues of purpose, vocation, worldview, and faith through a widening social radius of relationships with their peers and with older adults; i.e. community.

**Erikson on Roots, Fidelity, and Intimacy**

For many, the concept of community is overrated, overused, and begs a more precise definition. For Garber, community is connected to how relationships and practices encourage emerging adults to make lasting commitments and put down “roots.” This language of roots was employed widely by Erikson (1963) to describe the virtues of fidelity and intimacy. He defined intimacy as “the capacity to commit himself to concrete affiliations and partnerships and to develop the ethical strength to abide by such commitments, even though they may call for significant sacrifices and compromises” (Erikson, 1950). Erikson described fidelity as “the ability to sustain loyalties freely pledged in spite of the inevitable contradictions of value systems. It is the cornerstone of identity and receives inspiration from confirming ideologies and affirming companions” (Erikson, 1964). More broadly, he held that “mental health calls for roots” in the industrialized, technological, mobile, and alienating American culture. For Erikson, one’s culture or society provided the context for these roots.
Erikson (1964) chose the word “psychosocial” to “serve as an emergency bridge between
the so-called ‘biological formulations of psychoanalysis and newer ones which take the cultural
environment into more systematic consideration.” This psychosocial view was particularly
salient with regard to the stage of adolescence, which he described as a natural period of
uprootedness in human life. He likened it to a trapeze artist who must “let go of his safe hold on
childhood and reach out for a firm grasp on adulthood.” It is why a society will “confirm an
individual during this time in all kinds of ideological frameworks and assign roles and tasks to
him in which he can recognize himself and feel recognized.” This process includes “ritual
confirmation, initiations, and indoctrinations” by which societies “bestow traditional strength on
the new generations and thereby bind to themselves the strength of youth” (Erikson, 1964;
Erikson, 1963). Yet Erikson (1964) stated that “while the end of adolescence thus is the stage of
an overt identity crisis, identity formation neither begins nor ends with adolescence; it is a
lifelong development largely unconscious to the individual and to his society.”

Garber (2007) stated, “Community is the context for the growth of convictions and
character.” Erikson (1959) stated a similar understanding of the relationship between the
biological organism and cultural ecology as he explained in *Identity and the Life Cycle*:

Personality can be said to develop according to steps predetermined in the human
organism’s readiness to be driven toward, to be aware of, and to interact with, a
widening social radius, beginning with the dim image of a mother and ending with
making, or at any rate that segment of mankind which “counts” in the particular
individual’s life.

Erikson (1959) further expanded his understanding of this interplay:

The community supports such development to the extent to which it permits the child,
at each step, to orient himself toward a complete “life plan” with a hierarchical order of
roles as represented by individuals of different age grades. Family, neighborhood, and
school provide contact and experimental identification with young and older children
and with young and old adults. A child, in the multiplicity of successive and tentative
identifications, thus begins early to build up expectations of what it will be like to be
older and what it will feel like to have been younger – expectations which become part
of an identity as they are, step by step, verified in decisive experiences of psychosocial ‘fittedness.’”

Erikson called societies “the second womb” that allows the individual to develop his or her capacities in distinct steps across a series of psychosocial crises. For Erikson, community, or an individual’s society or culture, was integral, not peripheral, to development.

**Emerging Adulthood and Individualism**

Although some view emerging adulthood as a new and distinct life stage, emerging adult beliefs and practices “do not exist in compartmentalized isolation from their larger cultural worldviews and lived experiences but are often related to and powerfully shaped by them” (Smith with Snell, 2009). One of the most prevalent and power cultural themes that emerging adults face is individualism. As part of the NYSR longitudinal study, Smith with Snell (2009) provided an overview of these larger cultural themes that emerged in their study’s 230 personal interviews. While Smith with Snell qualify their findings that were presented in *Souls in Transition* by acknowledging the diversity of the estimated 46 million emerging adults in America alone, their longitudinal study has provided a snapshot of the most common viewpoints and experiences of emerging adults. For this study, a number of themes connected to individualism, and consequently their impact on community, will be highlighted as they relate to emerging adulthood.

The first theme is, “It’s Up to the Individual” (Smith with Snell, 2009). They found that emerging adults hold that the absolute authority for one’s beliefs and actions is “his or her sovereign self.” They reported the belief that “nobody is bound to any course of action by virtue of belonging to a group or because of a common good.” Those interviewed expressed that when it came to moral beliefs and what they think was right and wrong, it’s everybody’s own call.
A related theme to, “It’s Up to the Individual,” was, “Helping Others Is an Optional Personal Choice” (Smith with Snell, 2009). While a minority of those interviewed stated that people had a real responsibility to help others, the majority believed the opposite. Even when pressed about natural disasters, political oppression, or others who suffer from poverty or disabilities that was not their fault, the majority of those interviewed said they were not responsible. Smith with Snell summarized this sentiment:

Again, any notion of the responsibilities of a common humanity, a transcendent call to protect the life and dignity of one’s neighbor, or a moral responsibility to seek the common good was almost entirely absent among the respondents. In the end, each individual does what he or she wants and nobody has any moral leverage to persuade or compel him or her to do otherwise.

A third theme in this vein of individualism was titled, “Submerge in Interpersonal Relationships” (Smith with Snell, 2009). Emerging adults are heavily invested in their social lives and absorbed with family and friends. This is in contrast to what Smith with Snell have observed that, as a whole, emerging adults are not engaged in public life, politics, community organizations, social change-oriented groups or movements, and almost none have a vision of the common good. They observed:

Thus the apparent move of Americans away from civic participation in public life and toward the enjoyment of “lifestyle enclaves” – previously noted by various cultural observers – may for emerging adults be progressing yet further toward the nearly total submersion of self into fluidly constructed, private networks of technologically managed intimates and associates. (Smith with Snell, 2009)

Fourth, Smith and Snell (2009) connected emerging adults’ relational way of engaging their worlds with the “technologies of communication that preoccupy their lives.” They witnessed that for emerging adults, managing personal relationships turns out to be a 24/7 activity via cell phones and social media. “The instant feedback and stimulation from friends and family about every choice and action and emotion they make and feel seems to be very
satisfying to them, sometimes perhaps addictive.” They noted that these relationship-managing activities are constant distractions, make it difficult for emerging adults to pursue tasks that require their full concentration, and potentially fill-up the void that was once a place of civic participation.

Fifth, Smith with Snell (2009) wrote that his trend of emerging adults belonging to fewer institutional organizations, associations, and activities included religious affiliations. This was underscored in their study when they compared the religiousness of U. S. adults of different ages from the General Social Surveys (1972-2006). Their study showed that emerging adults where less religiously committed and involved than older adults, particularly in the measure of “attends services weekly.” Yet, Smith with Snell restated the emerging adults were less committed and involved in nonreligious affiliations than older adults as well. What their study highlighted was that:

Emerging adults are not less interested and involved in religious matters only – they are relatively less interested and involved in a wide array of social associations and activities generally. Their relatively lower degrees of religiousness are only one part of a larger package of lower levels of social and institutional concerns and involvements generally.

Confirming this development, Cote and Roberts (2014) noted:

current cohorts are at historical low levels of involvement in organized religion and the mainstream political process (e.g., Gidengil et al. 2003); although many of those young people take an interest in these traditional institutions, involvements tend to be more individualized, based on a cafeteria-style, picking-and-choosing of various elements that they find personally appealing. (Cote, 2000)

Lastly, Smith and Snell offered this summary of emerging adult religiousness since 1972:

On the other hand, however, most emerging adults have since 1972 either remained stable in their measured levels of religiousness or have actually increased somewhat. We see little evidence here of massive secularization among America’s emerging adults in the last quarter century – the exception being regular church attendance declines
among Catholics and mainline Protestants – at least the kind that survey questions are able to detect. (Smith with Snell)

Sixth, when it comes to belonging, emerging adults have viewed religious services as “Not a Place of Real Belonging” (Smith with Snell, 2009). They will go, usually feel comfortable enough, and even have positive feelings about the experience; yet, emerging adults have turned to a variety of nonreligious groups and activities to find belonging and community. Smith and Snell reported, “They belong when they hang out with friends, at college, at a job, maybe visiting family” (p 152). Two groups mentioned where emerging adults felt like they belonged were a sports team and a fraternity.

Lastly, Smith with Snell (2009) addressed the “internal-without-external religion” myth assumed in both the popular imagination and in some scholarly works (Dalton, 2011):

. . . as teenagers grow into emerging adults, they tend to drop out of public, external expressions of faith – like religious service attendance and other religious group participation – but that their religious faith nevertheless remains highly valued and vital in their private, subject, internal lives, as might be expressed in a high importance of faith or high frequency of personal prayer.

Yet, contrary to this assumption, their data portrayed that public, external religious expression (church attendance) requires matching levels of inward, subjective religious expressions (importance of faith and personal prayer). As Smith with Snell summarized it:

For most emerging adults, religious life appears to be an all-or-nothing proposition. Only small percentages of emerging adults maintain highly inconsistent levels of religious expression between the internal and external dimensions of their religious lives.

According to Smith with Snell (2009), religious expression and practice were shown to come in a fairly coherent package.
Residential Component

Despite the challenging characteristics of individualism associated with findings in emerging adult research, all three programs in this study have a residential component. These faith-based leadership programs were designed to have participants living with either host families, shared housing facilities, or college residence halls and fraternity houses. From a programmatic standpoint, these residential experiences are most similar to living-learning communities in higher education (Kuh, 2008).

Stassen (2003) provided an historical perspective on learning communities (LC) dating back to the 1920s when Alexander Meiklejohn of the University of Wisconsin created the “Experimental College” to counter the increased specialization and fragmentation of the undergraduate curriculum. Additionally, she noted that educators such as Astin (1993) and Tinto (1993) began to recognize the potential of LCs to address criticisms of the undergraduate experience and aid in student retention and persistence. She studied three model programs representing the full range of LCs on her university campus. Her study not only explored the primary student success outcomes (academic performance and persistence) but also explored the experiential outcomes often associated with LC involvement. Key results from her study supported Tinto et al.’s (1994) assertion that residence hall life may not support the integration of social and academic life. Compared to that environment, LCs (even modest ones) can offer a valuable service to students' academic life (p 607). These positive effects are not limited to those models that are highly coordinated, are not dependent on selective student enrollments, nor necessitate an extensive faculty involvement.

Stassen (2003) quoted extensively from Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) who reviewed the literature on college impact from 1967 to 1990. Most pointedly, she quoted Pascarella and
Terenzini (1991) who suggested that living-learning communities exert their positive effects "through the interpersonal relationship they foster or facilitate between major socializing agents - other students [and] faculty members.” Interestingly, Stassen’s research determined that while students in LCs reported more positive outcomes than student not in LCs, they did not report a significantly higher amount of faculty contact. In fact, her research determined that for LC to produce positive outcomes for students, they do not necessitate an extensive faculty involvement. While affirming the positive effects of adult-student relationships, Nelson et al. (2012) contrasted the Harvard Houses residential college model with other living-learning community models primarily because of the interactions between students and faculty. Nelson et al. asserted that what sets residential colleges apart from other types of living-learning communities is that faculty members live, eat, and socialize with students in a college residential setting. Nelson et al. claimed that the faculty interaction forged closer relationship between teacher and student that is characteristic of a liberal arts education.

Brower and Inkelas (2010) wrote about living-learning programs (LLP) based on the National Survey of Living-Learning Programs; which has been cited as “a recommended resource in studying collegiate interventions designed to facilitate students’ educational outcomes” (Hurtado, 2009; Brower and Swaner, 2009). First administered in 2004 and repeated in 2007, the survey included students in LLPs and in traditional residence halls. Their study arrived at seventeen programmatic themes and a number of interesting structural trends. For instance; the typical size was around fifty students, over half did not offer any academic component, faculty involvement was quite low, anywhere from 11 to 23 percent required some type of community service, and the most popular co-curricular programming included cultural outings, multicultural programming, and study groups.
Brower and Inkelas (2010) identified three components of the strongest LLP communities in their study. First, strong outcomes are produced by comprehensive LLPs that have thought through every detail. Second, strong LLPs are those that “anticipate, nurture, and value learning experiences in and out of the classroom”; especially ones that practice integrative learning skills. Third, strong outcomes are formed when faculty, staff, and students collaborate in fulfilling a variety of leadership roles. Overall, they asserted that successful LLPs, or those that achieve the LEAP essential learning outcomes, can be seen as microcosms of what colleges can and should be.

Delblanco (2011) challenged an individualist approach to education when he wrote that “the Socratic idea of learning is a collaborative rather than a solitary process.” As he traced the history of higher education, Delblanco recounts how the idea of the monastery shifted into the idea of the college as a place where students live and learn together. Delblanco called attention to the idea of lateral learning, or “the proposition that students have something to learn from each other.” He noted that for this kind of deep learning to take place, class sizes need to be small despite the impact on the budget.

Community and High Impact Educational Practices

Brownell and Swaner (2009) investigated the AAC&U’s National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) 2007 report that identified a number of innovative, “high-impact” practices gaining attention in higher education. The authors noted that Kuh (2008) describes strong positive effects of participating in high-impact activities as measured by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). According to Kuh (2008), these high-impact activities cultivated “deep approaches” to learning that fosters retaining, integrating, and transferring information at higher rates. Finally, the high-impact activities could
correlate well with the programmatic practices employed by the programs in this study. These nine practices are: 1. First-Year Seminars and Experiences, 2. Common Intellectual Experiences, 3. Learning Communities, 4. Writing-Intensive Courses, 5. Collaborative Assignments and Projects, 6. Diversity/Global Learning, 7. Service Learning, Community-Based Learning, 8. Internships and 9. Capstone Courses and Projects (Kuh, 2008). Browen and Swaner (2010) included a tenth, undergraduate research

Reporting on lessons from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education, Pascarella and Blaich (2013) “hypothesized that the most consistent cognitive impacts of liberal arts colleges, might be indirect, transmitted through their instructional and learning environments.” Further, they suggested that the quality of instruction and deep approaches to learning may improve undergraduate learning at all types of institutions. Additionally, they found that the impact of individual high-impact practices has different effects on students. They caution that there is “no single silver bullet that works for all students, all the time.”

Goodman et al. (2011) explored ways faculty and student affairs educators could impact student learning through good practices. These practices included courses that are academically challenging and set high expectations, create spaces and opportunities for conversations and skills needed in a diverse world, and good teaching/high-quality interactions with educators. Additionally, they noted student gains on four areas associated with socially responsible leadership: congruence between who they are and how they act, commitment to social and community causes, a sense of sharing a common purpose with peers, and the ability to handle controversial situations with civility. This outcome created a connection to explore the relationship of high impact practices to leadership development, a connection that this study did not originally anticipate.
One avenue for future research to explore this connection is by looking at leadership theories in higher education, particularly socially responsibility leadership. For example, Soria et al. (2013) research recognized the pressure colleges and universities are under “to develop college students as future citizens who are interested in—and capable of—creating positive social change and improving their communities (The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, 2012).” Quoting Hartley and Harkavy (2011), Soria et al. (2013) affirmed that the priority of developing civic and religious leadership were founding principles of America’s earliest colleges and universities. Soria et al. (2013) build their study around the social change model of leadership that they describe as “a developmental, collaborative process leading ultimately toward civic engagement and social change (Komives & Wagner, 2012).” Soria et al. (2013) described this model of leadership as collaborative (vs. hierarchical or individual), a process of development, and based on shared values. They concluded there is a link between students’ positional leadership and roles as social change agents, both during and college and beyond. They further discovered that students who participated as positional leaders in advocacy groups, Greek fraternities or sororities, political groups, religious groups, and service groups, were more likely to engage in social change. This was not the case for recreational groups, academic groups, campus sports and varsity teams, academic and honor societies, and media and performing groups. They suggested the need for future research to understand “why” students become involved (e.g., internal motivation, incentives, etc.), as well as what specific characteristics and activities may be common to advocacy groups, Greek fraternities or sororities, political groups, religious groups, and service groups that make them more effective at promoting engagement in social change.
Miller et al. (2015) used the data from the 2015 Senior Transitions module of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in their study looking at the connection between high-impact practices and post-graduation pathways. Their findings suggest that the high impact practice(s) students choose can matter depending on the desired post-graduation pathway. In particular, participating in internships, capstones, or service learning increases students’ likelihood of having a job when graduating. Conversely, leadership experiences or research with faculty has a positive effect on students’ plans to continue their education by going to graduate school. Returning to the narrative theme, they added:

A student might generate several “stories” to share in their search for a job or application to graduate school, explaining how their passion for a certain topic was ignited through a theme-based learning community or the process and results of conducting research under the guidance of a faculty member.

They posited that “greater understanding of these differences gives faculty, advisors, and administrators support for encouraging student high impact practices participation for those that most closely align with their future career and educational goals.”

**PTEV Intervention - Community**

*The Purposeful Graduate* (2015) provided a look at the way different colleges and universities designed, implemented, and evaluated interventions of purpose on their campuses. Clydesdale asserted that near universal outcomes of higher education to nurture productive citizens, raise future leaders, and contribute to the social good are found in most institution’s mission statement. Yet his critique is that “most college and universities give scant attention to the process by which they accomplish” these outcomes (p 224). He described the most common model for achieving these goals as “supply-side osmosis,” or the equivalent to opening a deluxe grocery store in order to teaching cooking. Clydesdale asserted “supply-side osmosis is an
ineffective way to nurture citizens or leaders; campuses must challenge individualistic and
traditionalist default trajectories, invite students to calibrate interdependent trajectories of their
own, and supply resources to permanently embed their recalibrations” (p 224).

For Clydesdale (2015), qualities like citizenship and leadership “are more likely to be
discovered in communities than stumbled upon by inquisitive individuals” (p 224). Calling them
pro-exploration communities, he described his research exploring what could happen “when
colleges and universities infuse undergraduate education with exploration of meaning and
purpose” (p 2). Clydesdale discovered eleven programmatic tools that were based on studying
twenty-six campuses and reviewing all eighty-eight program proposals and reports. Of the ways
that programs drew members of their campuses into purpose exploration, six focused on students
(curriculum, internships, service-learning, themed residence halls, mentorship programs, and
seminary semesters), one focused on employees (faculty and staff development programs), and
four were deployed equally with students or employees (retreats, personality assessments,
minigrants, and campus events) (pp 80 – 82, 289 – 296).

In order to study these concepts in depth, a comparative case study will be conducted
with three faith-based leadership programs. The following chapter will outline the methodology
that was used to explore these cases focusing on their history, philosophical components,
practices, and goals in working with emerging adults.
Chapter 3: Methodology

The study used a historical, neo-institutional, matching case-study approach (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2009; Fitsgerald and Dopson, 2009) in studying these faith-based leadership development programs. According to Suddaby and Greenwood (2009), this approach takes a view of institutional change over time and place, assumes a path-dependency that limits strategic choices from past events (i.e. imprinting), and views present taken-for-granted organizational arrangements as historically contingent and socially constructed. By focusing on archival documentation collected during site visits (print, web-based, and electronic), survey data collected from program staff, volunteer and board members, and retrospective interviews with key leaders and founders from each program, this study will explore these faith-based leadership programs from the point of view of the people who run them. It does not include the perspective of the young adult participants.

Institutional researchers have studied how organizational fields take shape and stabilize, how isomorphic pressures affect organizational fields, and how organizations respond to institutional demands (David and Bitektine, 2009). The key examples of studies in the emergence of organizational fields that David and Bitekine provide are in DiMaggio’s (1991) study of the acceptance of modern art museums, Rao’s (1994) study of the emergence of the automobile industry, and Rao’s (1998) study of the establishment of consumer watchdog organizations. With regard to isomorphism, exemplars are DiMaggio and Powell (1983), Tolbert and Zucker (1983) who found coercive forces at work in state mandated structures being adopted in local municipalities. Galaskiewicz and Wasserman (1989) showed how mimetic forces affected the charitable giving of 75 corporations. And lastly, D’Aunno, Sutton, and Price (1991)
revealed how normative forces of professional standardization spread among drug abuse centers. Concerning organizational conduct to institutional demands, Tobler (1985) demonstrated how structural differentiation of colleges and universities was limited by institutionalized patterns of dependence, and Oliver (1991) described a theoretical framework with which to view strategic responses to institutional pressures.

A qualitative case study approach fits the design of this research because it involves clearly identifiable cases and seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of them or a comparison of several cases (Creswell, 2007). According to Yin (2003), “...case studies are the preferred strategy when ‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a —contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (p 1). In addition, Merriam (2009) stated that qualitative case study research “is an ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena,” particularly educational programs and “innovations” that can improve practice and inform policy. For these reasons, a multi-case study was chosen as the design for this research study. Multi-case studies are often preferred over single-case studies because they have the potential to lead to more robust findings or replication of findings (Yin, 1993). Creswell (2007) recommended no more than 4 or 5 cases for multiple case study research. For purposes of this project, it will involve three programs.

**Criteria for Selecting from Faith-Based Leadership Programs**

Initially, a list of potential programs to include in the study was developed by asking pastors, campus ministers, undergraduate and seminary professors, foundation executives, and leaders in various Christian educational associations to recommend programs they saw as preparing students both spiritually and vocationally for life post graduation. Next, initial
research was conducted on each of the suggested programs by studying each program’s website, through on-line searches for articles, and by exploring charitable giving databases. This exercise led to the creation of a table of developing attributes from which to contrast and compare the programs. From there, the initial list was narrowed down to seven programs in order to conduct brief phone interviews, if granted to the researcher, with individual program leadership for two reasons: 1. gain a clear understanding of the mission, goals and participants of each program to determine fit with the study objectives, and 2. gauge the various leaders’ receptivity to participating in the research. During the phone interviews, the list of key criteria was further honed as natural connections between the various programs began to surface across the conversations. The seven programs that were vetted for this study were:

- The Fellows Initiative – Falls Church, VA
- John Jay Institute – Philadelphia, PA
- Project Transformation – Dallas, TX
- J Murdock Foundation Vision and Call Initiative – Vancouver, WA
- The Heritage Foundation Young Leaders Program – Washington, DC
- Jesuit Volunteer Core – Portland, OR
- United Methodists Church US2 - GBGM – New York, NY

For this study, the three programs ultimately selected needed to share similar qualities in order to broadly describe this emerging adult program model, yet also have their own distinct characteristics and unique emphases. From early on, a driving concern was to avoid narrowly-focused programs, whether denominational, ideological, or geographical, and thus limit the implications of the study. Rather, a foundational theory for this study is that this programmatic model and its practices could be adapted to any purposeful or mission-driven organization or
institution that seeks to connect with young adults. The task was to find the criteria, and ultimately the three programs, that could offer the best footing upon which to build future research.

The following set of criteria offers both redundancy and variety in the cases, both of which are important in choosing sites in a multi case study (Stake, 2005). The initial criterion focused on programs that were developed to address both vocationally and spiritually. The next attribute dealt with each program’s understanding of Christian ecumenicalism and how open each program was to choosing participants from multiple denominations. The third criterion considered the broad geographical, ideological, vocational contexts in which the participants were placed. A fourth criterion was to find programs with unique missions and goals, yet with recognizable similarities in and with each other (family resemblance). One key programmatic aspect of this factor had to do with the overall curriculum and the demands the program placed on the fellows’ weekly schedules. Fifth, selection was also limited to programs that include a residential component. Sixth, programs were selected based upon their on-going relationships with local worshiping communities. Seventh, programs were selected that began around the same time frame as the others, in this case the mid to late 1990s. Additionally, the original creators and key leaders of each program were alive and could be interviewed for the research. Eighth, programs were chosen that had begun to birth new chapters outside of the original context and were wrestling with the complexities of running a national organization. Finally, Stake (2005) recommended choosing programs from which one can learn the most stating, “that may mean taking the one most accessible or the one we can spend the most time with.” Based on these criteria, the three programs selected were The Fellows Initiative, Project Transformation, and the John Jay Institute.
**Brief Programs Descriptions and Recent Snapshot**

The following are brief program descriptions for The Fellows Initiative, the John Jay Institute, and Project Transformation. They are followed by one table comparing the overall programs to each other, Table 1, and another table comparing the weekly schedules of the three programs, Table 2. These tables were started in the selection process and further refined over the course of the study. All descriptions are built from each program’s website, marketing material, internal documents (budgets, grant requests, fundraising letters, and annual reports), newspaper articles, interviews, and research observations.

**The Fellows Initiative, Founded 1993**

**Mission:** The Fellows Initiative works to foster a community of flourishing church-based Fellows Programs that equip the rising generation of Christian leaders to live their faith seamlessly in all areas, recognizing that all of life is ministry, resulting in personal and cultural transformation. (The Fellows Initiative, 2015a)

The Fellows Initiative consists of a nine or ten month Christian leadership development program that brings together a cohort of recent college graduates and places them into the life and networks of a local congregation. Morna Comeau, National Director for The Fellows Initiative, wrote, “while the curriculum includes seminary courses in Apologetics and Engaging the Culture, The Fellows Curriculum (note the capital C) includes living with host families, professional work experience, mentoring youth, discipleship training, mentoring by ‘more mature’ Christian men and women, Bible study, and weekly seminars. All this learning takes place first in the small Fellows community, and within the concentric circles of the life of [the local church], the city, and the world” (Comment Magazine, November 2009). “These Christian leadership development programs guide each Fellow to explore an all-encompassing faith, nurture a heart for the Church, and awaken a hunger to shape and engage the culture” (The Fellows Initiative, 2015c). Overall, the program hopes to create a gap-year experience that “will
help a Fellow starts his or her post-college years with a strong foundation for a cohesive life of faith, a full life that seamlessly weaves together one’s personal life, one’s career, and one’s place in God’s grand story” (The Fellows Initiative, 2015c).

Since 2005, The Fellows Initiative has been instrumental in the establishment of Fellows programs throughout the country. While these programs are modeled after the original Falls Church Fellows Program (founded in 1993), each program is distinctive and contextualized to reflect its unique church home and local community. Through these programs, The Fellows Initiative seeks to facilitate a nationwide network that prepares the next generation of Christian leaders for the marketplace, the arts, and other areas of society. Affirming the sacredness of all of life, The Fellows Initiative is partnering with churches that desire to equip a generation of leaders devoted to lives of faithfulness and influence within their families, churches, vocations, and communities.

The first core component of a Fellows program (The Fellows Initiative, 2015c, 2015f) is a “workplace internship” that combines practical experience with exploration of day-to-day issues of faith, helping Fellows develop relationships within their vocational field. Most internships are three days a week and pay the Fellow around $15 an hour. The second component of “theological training” involves seminary-level classes, required reading, seminars, and guest speakers that help Fellows understand how to faithfully apply Biblical truth and engage the culture. The typical program includes six hours of graduate level work that the Fellow can take for credit through an accredited seminary. The third component of “spiritual formation” includes the Fellows participating in weekly Bible study, accountability groups, and one-on-one mentoring relationships with older adults in the local congregation. The fourth
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>The Fellows Initiative</th>
<th>John Jay Institute</th>
<th>Project Transformation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>original start date</strong></td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>initial sources of programmatic income</strong></td>
<td>Fellows' tuition, in-kind donations, fundraising, local church contributions</td>
<td>local church contributions, post Arlington donations, fundraising in-kind donations, local church contributions</td>
<td>fundraising in-kind donations, local church contributions, Fellows' tuition, fundraising, in-kind donations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>leadership costs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>local church affiliation</strong></td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>ecumenical</td>
<td>United Methodist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>connection to local church</strong></td>
<td>imbedded</td>
<td></td>
<td>partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>demographic affiliation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>estimated # of Fellows/Interns</strong></td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>average cohort size per year</strong></td>
<td>750/Year</td>
<td>45-60/Year</td>
<td>250/Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>length of program</strong></td>
<td>9 - 12 months/academic year</td>
<td>15 weeks/semester</td>
<td>10 weeks/summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>23</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mission statement</strong></td>
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</table>
### TABLE 2: Weekly Schedule Comparison

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<tr>
<th>WEEKLY SCHEDULE COMPARISON</th>
<th>The Fellows Initiative</th>
<th>Project Transformation</th>
<th>John Jay Institute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MONDAY</strong></td>
<td>Seminary Class (3 hrs), Mentor Meetings (1 hr), Roundtable (3.5 hours)</td>
<td>Summer Day Camp (9.5 hours), Site Church Pastor meeting (.5 hr), Community Dinner (1 hr), Bible Study (1 hr)</td>
<td>Morning Vespers (.5 hr), Class (3 hours), Study Time (5 hours), Evening Vespers (.5 hr)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TUESDAY</strong></td>
<td>Work (8 hours), Youth Ministry Leadership Team (2 hours)</td>
<td>Summer Day Camp (9.5 hours), Community Dinner (1 hr), Worship (1 hr)</td>
<td>Morning Vespers (.5 hr), Class (3 hours), Study Time (5 hours), Evening Vespers (.5 hr)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WEDNESDAY</strong></td>
<td>Work (8 hours)</td>
<td>Summer Day Camp (9.5 hours), Home Visits (1 hour), Community Dinner (1 hr)</td>
<td>Morning Vespers (.5 hr), Class (3 hours), Study Time (4 hours), Afternoon Tea (1 hour), Evening Vespers (.5 hr)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THURSDAY</strong></td>
<td>Work (8 hours)</td>
<td>Summer Day Camp (9.5 hours), Curricular Meeting (1 hour), Community Dinner (1 hr)</td>
<td>Morning Vespers (.5 hr), Class (3 hours), Study Time (5 hours), Evening Vespers (.5 hr), Dinner with Guests (3 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRIDAY</strong></td>
<td>Bible Study (2 hours), Seminar (3 hours)</td>
<td>Friday Experience/ministry exploration (3 hours)</td>
<td>Friday Field Studies (6 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SATURDAY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>study (3 hours)/free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUNDAY</strong></td>
<td>Church (3 hours), Youth Ministry (3 hours)</td>
<td>Team Meetings (1 hour), Community Dinner (1 hour)</td>
<td>study (3 hours)/free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS</strong></td>
<td>Study hours (9 hours), Youth contact (4 hours)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL WEEKLY HOURS</strong></td>
<td>58+ hours</td>
<td>53+ hours</td>
<td>50+ hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
component of “church and community service” provides many opportunities to serve within the church and in other community ministries. The final component of “fellowship and community” revolves around a shared weekly meal and a roundtable-style discussion reflecting on the principles and practice of Christian community and cultural engagement. The Fellows community is committed to encouragement, accountability, prayer, and fellowship.

The program essentials include an “affiliation with a local church” that provides the Fellow program with local accountability and opportunities for worship and service (The Fellows Initiative, 2015c, 2015f). The second essential involves the “inclusion of core components” common to all TFI Fellows Programs. The third essential of “affirmation of beliefs” affirms a commitment to historic Christianity as revealed in the Scriptures, summarized in the Apostles and Nicene Creeds, and reiterated in the TFI Statement of Beliefs. The final essential of “support for The Fellows Initiative” includes supporting TFI and its programs through prayer, participation in TFI conferences and programs, a commitment to two-way communication, and financial contributions.

**John Jay Institute, Founded 2006.**

**Mission:** Preparing principled leaders for public service (John Jay Institute, 2015c).

The John Jay Institute believes that leaders are made, not born (John Jay Institute, 2015c). Consequently, its three fellowship programs are designed to inspire men and women with a Christian vision for society and to equip them with the spiritual, intellectual, and professional disciplines necessary for effective faith formed public service. The foundational program is the John Jay Fellows program that begins with an intensive, semester long academic

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1 http://www.johnjayfellows.com/our-mission
residency in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Like similar prestigious postgraduate programs, the Institute's Fellowship is merit based and offers a competitive stipend and housing benefit for its academic residency. The Fellows all live together at the John Jay Institute campus for the fifteen-week semester. The Fellowship's academic residency consists of a core curriculum of interdisciplinary studies in theology, philosophy, ethics, history, politics, and jurisprudence. The Institute uses a "block course" system with 3-week long sequential courses that build upon one another. Thus, students are able to focus their attention on one course at a time. Classes are conducted Monday through Thursday in the Socratic teaching method. Each class day is framed by morning and evening chapel services using the Book of Common Prayer that encourage prayer, Scripture meditation, spiritual reflection, and service. Fridays are typically reserved for field studies and other co-curricular activities relating to leadership development.

A semester long "externship" follows the residency with field placement in a national or international governmental agency or non-governmental organization. Externships are tailored to each fellow's vocational interests. Placements vary widely and have included the U.S. Congress, Heritage Foundation, Ethics and Public Policy Center, Institute on Religion and Democracy, International Justice Mission, Opportunity International, and CARE in London, England. Upon successful completion of the academic residency and externship, the Fellowship Program offers life-long membership in a professional fraternity that includes graduate school and job placement assistance, mentoring, career coaching, networking, and continuing education opportunities. As a highly competitive and selective program, the John Jay Institute looked to “highly successful secular models like the Rhodes, Fulbright, Truman, and Marshall Scholarship programs” as

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2 http://www.johnjayfellows.com/jji-fellows
3 http://www.johnjayfellows.com/jji-fellows
examples of what a powerful alumni network could accomplish. Since its beginning in 2005, the John Jay Institute boasts an alumni network, or self-described fraternity, of over 693 members committed to influencing the public square DEFINE (John Jay Institute, 2015n).

Additionally, the John Jay Institute also conducts two summer seminars (John Jay Institute, 2015b, 2015c, 2015d). The first is the Saratoga Fellows Program, a summer program tailored for junior officers in the armed forces of the United States to augment their military training. Named for the famous New York State battle and strategic turning point in America’s War for Independence (1777), the Saratoga Fellows Program is intended to prepare and equip young military leaders with the spiritual, intellectual, and professional fortitude for faith-informed military and public service. Designed as a six week long intensive academic residency that is tailored to be completed shortly after commissioning and prior to one’s first duty station, the Saratoga Fellows Program consists of a core curriculum of interdisciplinary studies in theology, philosophy, ethics, history, politics, and jurisprudence. According to the brochure, “The Saratoga Fellows Program challenges officers to think more critically and deeply about the good society and the civic and martial virtues necessary for sustaining the American republic that they are sworn to defend. Our proven method of text-based Socratic dialogue offers participants a forum in which to reflect upon the classical and Christian virtues, cultivate a deeper understanding of the human condition, and be equipped to provide the moral and intellectual leadership requisite of the modern professional warrior” (John Jay Institute, 2015b, 2015c) The first class of eleven officers met in the summer of 2011, and since that time there have been three additional classes with a total of 48 fellows being commissioned as Saratoga Fellows.

4 This number includes both the Witherspoon Fellows, John Jay Fellows, and Saratoga Fellows.
The second summer seminar is the Executive Seminar Programs, a continuing education experience for working professionals that explores classic and contemporary texts on an array of topics relevant for leaders and decision makers in the modern world (John Jay Institute, 2015c; http://www.johnjayfellows.com/executive). Adapted from the broader curriculum of the John Jay Fellows program and taught in the Socratic teaching method, “the Institute recruits top leaders from all walks of life who are looking for a leadership development program that focuses on questions rather than on answers; successful leaders who want to clarify their core values as they strive to live more significant professional and personal lives.” Hosted on the John Jay Institute campus in Philadelphia, each seminar gathers 15 – 20 leaders for roundtable discussion led by a skilled moderator, study, personal reflection, conversation, and fellowship.

**Project Transformation, Founded 1997**

**Mission:** The mission of Project Transformation (PT) is to engage young adults in leadership and ministry, we support these children in our program and help them reach their potential, and we help connect the churches to their communities in these urban areas. (Project Transformation, 2015c, 2015d)

Project Transformation is a Christian-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit founded in 1998 under the auspices of the North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church. The original focus was to provide two primary services (Project Transformation, 2015a, 2015c): 1) Socially-conscious leadership training and ministry exploration for college-aged young adults, and 2) Academic, health, spiritual, and recreational programming for children and youth in the North Texas area. Subsequently, Project Transformation embraced a third interrelated issue. The neighborhoods of the children it was seeking to serve were also the homes of churches that had experienced significant transition or decline over the years as the neighborhood demographics changed. These churches have become the hosts for Project Transformation, and through a renewed engagement with those who lived around them they can bring new life to the churches.
“The program has been molded out of a search for the right answers to these questions (Project Transformation, 2015c):

1) How do we meet the academic, physical, social emotional, and spiritual needs of children from low-income communities?

2) How do we provide meaningful ways for college students to explore ministry opportunities and develop as young adult leaders for the church and the world? and

3) How do we help revitalize churches located in the heart of low-income communities?"\(^5\)

In the first summer of operation, Project Transformation’s 22 interns served 250 children, grades 1-5, at five summer day camps in inner-city Dallas (Project Transformation, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2015d). Today, annually the Dallas program alone has over 100 college-age young adults and over 1,500 volunteers serving 1,100 children and youth, grades 1-9, and providing a leadership development program to high school youth, grades 10-12, at ten summer sites and seven after-school sites. In its 17-year history, Project Transformation has involved over 1,500 college-age young adults in their development for future leadership and has served over 7,500 children and youth (Project Transformation, 2015c).

At present, there are four Chapters of Project Transformation: Greater Dallas, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Rio Texas. Greater Dallas is the most developed of the programs. PT-Oklahoma opened its doors in Oklahoma City in 2001, after intern alumni from Dallas saw a need in their home community. Today, PT-Oklahoma has eight program sites, with 50 interns serving over 500 children in a summer program. PT-Tennessee, based in Nashville, launched in the summer of 2012 – again led by two alumni of the Dallas program. PT-Tennessee has six program sites,

with 46 interns serving 460 children and youth as a summer and one-year program. PT-Rio Texas, based in San Antonio, launched in the summer of 2015, led by two alumni of the Dallas program. PT-Rio Texas has three program sites, with 24 college interns serving 150 children as a summer program. Thus, across four chapters, 240 college-age young adults served over 2,200 children and youth last year (Project Transformation, 2015c). Additionally, in the summer of 2015, Eric Lindh, the director of Project Transformation from 2006-2015, was tapped to become the Chief Executive Officer of the new national effort “to identify best practices and support efforts to create and develop new Project Transformation chapters in other annual conferences” of the United Methodist Church (Project Transformation, 2015j). With two new chapters slated to start by the summer of 2017, Project Transformation stands well-poised to begin its third decade of ministry.

The summer day-camp program led by college-age interns is the foundation program of Project Transformation (Project Transformation, 2015d). For ten weeks, young adults live in community and have the opportunity to explore ministry through direct service with children and youth, weekly career exploration experiences, and interaction with their peers. The interns begin their day with breakfast and morning devotion or *Muevete* (Spanish imperative for “move”) where they share inspirational stories or reflections to start the day. They travel in teams to their various site churches to lead programming for the children and youth. After their day at the site is over, they return to their community housing to have dinner together. One night a week, the interns have Bible study and worship together. On Fridays, the interns explore ministry

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6 The following programmatic descriptions are found in Project Transformation, “Project Transformation Manual” (October 2015), pp 9-10. These examples are meant to describe how the programs should be adapted in new contexts.
opportunities by visiting various agencies and churches to talk with people to learn about their spiritual and vocational journeys.

The summer day-camp offers programming Monday through Thursday led by college interns at participating site churches. Participants for the children’s day camp are in grades 1-9. There are two distinct programs: one for elementary and one for youth. A third component for high school students can also be added as youth age out of the program over time. This L.I.T.E. (Leaders In Training Experience) program gives high school youth opportunities to serve as reading volunteers with the elementary children each morning and participate in a leadership curriculum each afternoon. The churches that host the program are called site churches. The churches are located in low-income, transitional communities in which the congregation or staff is interested in reconnecting with the community. Project Transformation then becomes the bridge between the site and the community. The primary component of the elementary program is reading. Each child is paired with a volunteer to read one-to-one each morning. Project Transformation - Dallas boasts over 1,200 volunteers each year, many donating their time specifically to read with a child. In the morning the children also have Harambee (gathering time), arts and crafts, Bible lesson, and recreation. After the children have lunch, the afternoon is filled with fitness activities, computers, music, and theater.

The youth, grades 6-9, follow a different schedule which includes a book club (group reading with age-appropriate material), training in team-building, mountain bike excursions, leadership development, and service learning. The youth may also participate in service projects such as a car wash to benefit a community need they select or a neighborhood clean-up project. In addition, they assist the interns with activities for the younger children, including arts, crafts, games, and reading.
The after-school programs have grown out of the summer program. They do not serve as many children or as many sites as the summer program. The young adults who provide leadership for the after-school program also participate in the summer program. Currently, about 165 children in grades 1-6 participate in the after-school programs under the leadership of the college-aged interns. Activities are geared toward reading and academic enrichment and health improvement. Interns provide the PT after-school children with a safe, constructive environment from 3-6 p.m. PT interns and volunteers offer academic assistance by helping with homework or tutoring on specific subjects. The children are served a hot, balanced meal prepared by a cook recruited from the neighborhood. They also participate in educational games, Bible lessons, playground and computer activities, and guest presentations.

**Pre-Site Visits, Document Analysis and Field Observations**

The next step was to schedule and conduct pre-site visits with each program. To collect data for this study, site visits were conducted at all three national headquarters, spending two to three days at each location. The rationale for conducting field observations was to provide me with direct experience either as an observer, or, a "participant observer" (Glesne, 2006). Data collection for a case study must involve multiple sources of information, therefore the program websites were reviewed, and written data such as annual reports, brochures, participant and site evaluations, and other documents were collected before the site visit (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2003). The documents used in this research included but were not limited to: grant proposals, past program reviews, assessment studies, and articles. This step utilized multiple methods of data collection including but not limited to document analysis, conversations with staff and key volunteers, and some level of direct observation, depending upon the access granted at the research sites.
Preparing and Administering Survey

The next step in the research consisted of compiling the notes from the site visits in order to prepare a questionnaire that would be broadly administered to staff, volunteers, and board members in all three programs. The purpose of the survey was to provide an additional source of information to triangulate with both the printed and published documents from each program and the qualitative interviews. Additionally, the questionnaire would allow additional voices beyond each program’s leadership to describe the individual organizational realities. Lastly, the survey was “administered before the ‘in depth’ interviewing phase” in order to help shape the interview schedule (Fitzgerald and Dopson, 2009).

The questionnaire’s categories evolved to reflect a combined list of all of the programs’ practices and philosophical components. Throughout the design process, various leaders from each program were involved in editing the questions in the survey in order to make sure that it spoke to their individual constituencies. Specifically, the programmatic practices were stated in descriptive, program-neutral terms that were informed by definitions of high-impact educational practices. While the questionnaire asked the same questions to all respondents, it was individually tailored for each of the three programs.

After obtaining approval from each program, the questionnaire was sent out through the various national and local leaders to staff, volunteer, and board members. No current participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire, though alumni of each program who were currently serving as volunteers or staff members did participate. The questionnaire ultimately served four purposes: 1) to test the initial knowledge of the research after the initial phase; 2) to gain a more nuanced and deeper understanding of the practices, philosophical components, and goals of each programs by testing across a variety of levels of involvement; 3) to create a
conceptual framework from which to compare and contrast the programs; and 4) to select the participants and shape the protocol for the qualitative interviews. The questionnaire was left open for a month and then closed to any additional responses.

**Follow-Up Interviews**

When the initial coding and analysis of the survey was complete, I consulted with each program staff to choose participants to be a part of thirteen in-depth, follow up interviews. These qualitative semi-structured interviews (Merriam and Associates, 2002) were conducted for a total of thirteen members from the three program’s staff, board of directors, and core volunteers produced a more robust description of the case studies (Geertz, 1973). The process and logic of those selected for in-depth interviews focused on individuals involved from the creation of each program and/or the programs’ spread to other locations (Fitzgerald and Dopson, 2009). Noting that data on the history of an organization is often less readily available, Gummesson (2000) and Fitzgerald and Dospon (2009) suggest interviewing a small number of stakeholders with longer service and to include leading questions (i.e. What do you see as the critical events that have occurred in the organization over the last ten years?). For each EAFS, the goal was to interview two to five persons for a total of twelve interviews. All interviews were conducted by phone, recorded and transcribed. Visual observations, program marketing materials, procedural manuals, and implementation of a limited, multiple stakeholder’s perspective survey were employed to triangulate the data with the qualitative interviews (Fitzgerald and Dopson, 2009).

The interviews followed an interview protocol using a conversational approach as described by Patton (2002). The interview protocol derived from the study's primary research questions focusing on the history and spread of each organization and the field as a whole. The
interview protocol directed the conversation, yet it proved flexible enough to "go with the flow" (Patton, 2002).

Suddaby and Greenwood (2009) allude to the flaws inherent in retrospective interviews that may be dependent upon faulty or self-serving memories of participants. Common remedies for these problems include researchers focusing on verifiable actions and facts rather than beliefs and intentions, triangulating data sources, and being aware that interview subjects may be constrained by emotions and interests (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2009). Data collection for each interview included providing interviewees with a written transcript of the questions before hand and using the Handsfreely.ly recording app in order to transcribe interviews. Hence, the recordings were uploaded to the web service TranscribeMe.com that produced transcriptions for reference and fact checking. The accuracy of both the recordings and the transcriptions were supplemented by copious notes taken during the interviews.

**Interview Questions**

**Historical Questions**

1. How did you become involved in your program?
2. Where did the idea for your program come from? What problem was it meant to address?
3. When you first designed the program, what ideas, programs, organizations and/or experiences did you adapt or borrow from?
4. What, if any, are the key changes or turning points in the organization's history and development?
5. What are the organizations your program competes with in recruiting students? What do participants receive from your program that they might not get in
your competitor's programs?

6. What are the principle sources of funding (Do the sources have input or interest in the program? Do they have specific requests or concerns? Are they involved in the recruitment of participants)?

**Follow up Questions to Survey Questions 9 & 10**

7. In the survey, I asked respondents to rank the top five most significant practices used to shape the young adults who participate in your program?

8. Do any of these results surprise you? Is it consistent with how you think about your program? What's missing?

9. When you started the program, what practices did you start with? What practices were added later and why?

10. What reasons explain the differences of the program from its beginning to today?

**Follow up Questions to Survey Question 11**

11. In the survey, I ask respondents to rank the broad category of ideas, theories, principles, models, and/or practices that have informed and shaped the work of your program (see table of results).

12. Does anything surprise you? Is it consistent with how you think about your program? What's missing?

13. Have these principles remained the same over the history of your program? If not, please explain how they have changed.

**Spread of Program**

14. What can you tell me about the chapters that tried but failed to adapt your model to their specific location? What do you see as the reasons they didn’t survive?

**Success and Benchmarking**
15. How do you measure success? What are your benchmarks?

16. What, if any, are the areas that need to be addressed in order to keep the program viable and growing?

17. Where do you see your program being in 10 years? What will have to happen for your program to realize that goal?

18. What am I missing? What else do I need to understand your program?

**Data Analysis and Triangulation**

This study engaged three sources of data in order to create a well-grounded picture of each organization: published and printed resources from each program, the questionnaire data, and the qualitative interviews. The triangulation of these three data sources were necessary because the study relied solely on the point of view and perspective of each program’s leadership. Specifically, the program histories in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 were completed using the archival documents and the qualitative interviews. In Chapter 8, the analysis of data from the open-ended survey responses will be used to validate the interview data, particularly in light of each program’s stated outcomes for the young adults it works with (Fitzgerald & Dopson, 2009).

Over the course of the study, all research data was compiled, saved, and organized using the ATLAS.ti qualitative software program. The study’s documents were sorted into document groups (i.e. The Fellows Initiative, John Jay Institute, and Project Transformation) in order to contrast and compare the data by individual programs. Additionally, ATLAS.ti provided a format to highlight connections across questionnaire responses, archival documents, program websites, video, marketing materials, grant applications, training manuals, newspaper and magazine articles, email communications, site visit observation notes, interview notes, and interview transcriptions. Additionally, ATLAT.ti provided a system for codifying themes,
identifying relationships between themes, and organizing theme groups based upon the structure of the literature review (i.e. coherence, conviction, character, and community). Ultimately, ATLAS.ti enhanced the process of analyzing the raw data through the key stages of familiarization, reflection, conceptualization, cataloguing concepts, recoding, linking, and re-evaluation (Fitzgerald and Dopson, 2009, p 480).

**A Final Comment on Methodology**

Over the past seventeen years, I have served as an ordained, United Methodist campus pastor at the Southern Methodist University, The University of Kansas, University of Missouri – Kansas City, and The University of Alabama. This potentially limits the study due to my own biases and preconceived notions about the programs selected for this study. Recognizing that all perceptions are inherently subjective, I have attempted to conduct the research as a critical advocate, tempered by being “meaningfully attentive to [my] own subjectivity” (Peskin, 1988) throughout the study; by conducting a thorough search for disconfirming evidence (Miles & Huberman, 1994); and by seeking constructive criticism from mentors and advisers who do not have the same biases.
Chapter 4: History of The Fellows Initiative

Mission: The Fellows Initiative works to foster a community of flourishing church-based Fellows Programs that equip the rising generation of Christian leaders to live their faith seamlessly in all areas, recognizing that all of life is ministry, resulting in personal and cultural transformation. (The Fellows Initiative 2015a)

The Fellows Initiative / “Come and See Fellows” Founded 1993

In an interview with Becca Chapman, first national director for The Fellows Initiative and founding director of the Pittsburgh Fellows program, she told how Doug Holladay originally got the idea for the Fellows program:

Doug Halladay was friends with Mitt Romney Sr., and he was very impressed with the way Mr. Romney carried himself on Capitol Hill. He had a lot of integrity, was ethical, and really was as good as his word every time, and Doug thought that was unique. He asked him one day, "What do you think was the single most formative time of your life? How did you get to be this way?" And Mr. Romney said, "It was the two years that I was required to do a church mission after college. I learned a lot through those two years and it was hard, but I had two years of formation by some very valuable mentors. Doug Halladay apparently said at that moment, "Why don't we do this in the Christian Church, like they do it in the Mormon Church?" That was sort of the germ of the conception of the program. So Doug Halladay went to John and said, "Why don't we do this?" (Chapman, Becca interview. January 26, 2016)

It’s here that Dr. Steve Garber, long-time faculty for The Falls Church Fellows and Capitol Fellows programs, picked up the story in the Falls Church Newsletter:

After their undergraduate years at the University of North Carolina where they made commitments to common loves, 25 years later two good friends lived within a few miles of each other in northern Virginia, in the Washington, DC area, one a businessman and the other a pastor. Believing that there was something for everyone everywhere in the incarnational pedagogy of Jesus, Doug Holladay and John Yates decided to try something. They wondered what might happen if they invited recent college graduates to “come and see” the meaning of vocation within the life of a congregation of Christ’s people. (Comment Magazine, September 2009)
In February of 1993 (The Fellows Initiative, 2015c), Mr. Halladay and Rev. Yates invited Steve Skancke (The Current, September 2009), then Senior Warden to Falls Church Episcopal Church, to implement the Falls Church Fellows. Twenty-three years later, Skancke has continuously served as the Falls Church Fellows board chair. In the interview with Skancke, he articulated that the program’s unique emphasis was created by: 1. harnessing the constructive tension between Rev. Yates’s desire to raise up new leaders in the church and Mr. Halladay’s passion to equip young business leaders in the marketplace, and 2. designing a Fellows program to teach the mission and values of the Falls Church congregation.

Concerning the tension between ministry and marketplace, Stancke elaborated on the competing, if not opposing goals. He recounted how, on one hand, ‘We had a very active youth ministry program and what we would find is we were getting calls regularly from people who were looking for young men and women who can be youth leaders in their church’ (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015). On the other hand, Stancke understood Doug's vision was to help young men and woman, who were not called to vocational ministry in the church, to live out their faith and calling in the marketplace. Stancke’s role was to find a third path between the two.

The idea that emerged was to create a program where emerging adults were serving in internships both in the church and in secular fields (Comment Magazine, September 2009). This would be achieved each year by having two or three Fellows who “would be trained up to go be student ministry directors at a church that needed someone” (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015). The other nine Fellows would be placed in marketplace internships during the week, but “would be trained up in ministering to students by discipling young men and women” in the youth program (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015). Designed in this way, it provided
what Stancke described as “a healthy tension between marketplace and vocational ministry.”

Because the Fellows in both the ministry and the marketplace internships were constantly interacting with each other, the program gave emerging adults a wider perspective and understanding to discern their individual callings.

With regard to informing the overall programmatic components, Stancke saw that the Fellows program should be a “projection of what The Falls Church was about” (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015). Stancke said:

We had the vision for The Falls Church then. As it is now, they're maybe articulated a little bit differently now, is build Christ-centered family lives, bring others to a new life in Christ, raise up the future leaders for the world and the church, and proclaim Christ in the world. Mission, evangelism, youth, family, and that's what we've been about.

Defining “mission, evangelism, youth, and family” as the four pillars of The Falls Church, these values were connected to components and practices within the overall leadership curriculum (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015). In addition to the three-days-a-week internships (The Fellows Initiative, 2015b, 2015c), Skancke described how the Fellows live with a host family in the church in order to model what a Christian home could look like, though he is also quick to add that there are no perfect families (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015). All the Fellows learn how to lead others spiritually by serving as small group leaders within the youth ministry. Each fellow is matched with a mentor and exposed to speakers through weekly leadership seminars. Together, the Fellows participate in community service work in and around the church. The Fellows form a close community among themselves by coming together for a weekly roundtable and a Bible study. The Fellows take a seminary class one day a week. In the fall, the class is a blend of Systematic Theology and Christian Apologetics. In the spring, the class is Christ & Culture which focuses on how, as Christians, they can “know the world so you
can love the world because otherwise, it's hard to love the world because it is so much about what Christ is not.” Skancke concluded, “That's a lot of touch points for folks that you don't even know who apply and you interview, some you don't even meet in person until they show up after Labor Day.” While the core pieces have remained relatively unchanged over its history, they have been adjusted due to financial necessity, trial and error, and the input of the Fellows themselves.

Looking Back Over Twenty-three Years

When asked to describe the idea behind the Fellows program, Steve Skancke said, “it was created out of a concept of helping young men and women as they come out of college make that transition from college life to life after college” (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015). First, Skancke talked about helping graduates move from a life of independence in college to the real world that works through relational interdependence. Second, he talked about getting these young adults’ faith out of the church box in order to help them integrate it seamlessly in their homes, workplaces, and neighborhoods. Third, he wants each Fellow to have a 100% confidence that they are loved by God and that God has a plan to flourish them. Finally, he hopes that each Fellow will be equipped to be spiritual leaders in their homes, churches, and communities.

When asked what changes he has seen over more than two decades working with young adults, Skancke first observed that young adults are less mature than twenty-two years ago (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015). He believes it has to do with how society has sheltered them, removing levels of accountability that would naturally arise in a society where you have to work to survive. Second, he sees the fact that no matter win or lose, “everyone gets a trophy,” as an indicator of entitlement. Finally, Skancke asks:
Can a Fellows program undo the cultural and generational changes? No, but to the extent that it points people back to God, it certainly helps reset this phenomenon of supremely independent, accountable to no one, entitled to all that I have, and more to all belongs to God and accountable to a higher being. And in community, I'm interdependent, not independent. And we didn't set out to reset society norms. We set out to give this generation, these future leaders of the church and the world a paradigm that's biblically based not to counter what society was doing, but to give them the wonderful benefit and blessing of a paradigm that results from faith being seamlessly integrated into all aspects of your life. (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015)

**Putting It Together in 1993**

Thinking back to the beginning, Skancke acknowledged:

It was a big organizational lift when you think about starting something like this, when you've never had anything like it. So we organized committees and met. We had this idea in the middle of February, and had to get out and recruit, and have ten young men and women show up after Labor Day of the same year.” (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015)

Skancke developed a committee system of church volunteers who took responsibility for the various pieces of the Fellows program, including recruiting the inaugural class of Fellows, all within six months. Skancke added that they knew they had to have the Fellows recruited before June, but then had the summer months to finish organizing before the first class showed up in September. Ever since that first year, the Falls Church Fellows program has relied on a large, committed group of volunteers from the church who have kept the program running for over two decades.

**Anne Cregger – Director of Falls Church Fellows**

One of the original six board members recruited to serve as on the Falls Church Fellows board was Anne Cregger, who was in charge of finding each of the Fellows a mentor in the church. In her interview, she questioned how much of the early history she should bring up (Cregger, Anne interview. January 25, 2016). What she was referring to was the fact that the program did not start out as the Falls Church Fellows but as the Bennett Fellows program. This
was primarily due to the funding they received through the head of New Era Philanthropy, Jack Bennett. In 1995, Bennett was convicted of a Ponzi scheme that involved dozens of ministries across the nation who “had been invited to basically get a two-for-one sort of investment.” The Falls Church Fellows program had received start-up money from the Bennett deal and New Era Philanthropy, but it crashed the day after the first graduating class dinner. Cregger remembered that they were not just out of money, but they were going to have to pay money back. In addition, they had already recruited their next class of 13 Fellows who would be coming at the end of the summer.

She and the board found themselves asking hard questions about whether to continue the program (Cregger, Anne interview. January 25, 2016). Deciding to keep going, they knew that they had to make changes about how they secured funds for the program and what they would, and would not, spend money on moving forward. Ultimately, Cregger admits, “We changed some of those things that’s turned out to be really important, good changes to a program for sustainability purposes.”

The first of those changes had to do with how to fund the program (Cregger, Anne interview. January 25, 2016). What Cregger and the board ultimately decided was to charge the Fellows tuition that would cover the cost of the program’s fees (i.e. seminary course tuition, retreats, conferences, etc.). This adaptation led to a model of funding that would break even financially. However, the tuition did not cover the costs of in-kind support provided by the host families, mentors, or any other church volunteer associated with the program.

The second change had to do with program expenditures, which included cutting program cost by dropping down from two seminary classes per semester to one (twelve hours to six hours), eliminating the Fellows’ stipend, and securing paying internships for the Fellows
Cregger explained, “They were in free internships. They didn't need to be paid for their work in their workplace. So it was easy to get workplace sponsors when you have a free intern, who is smart, committed - all that.” But “when the bottom dropped out,” the board realized they needed to find paying internships for young adults the employers had never met. The board worked hard to line up those internships that second summer. All in all, they “learned some just really difficult lessons” that would ultimately prove crucial for the financial sustainability of the model. When asked about the crisis at the end of the first year, Morna Comeau, current national director for The Fellows Initiative, reflected on what those lessons had taught them:

I wasn't here the first year, so I don't know. I think that it was a great class. But I think the Fellows board realized at the end of the year, when everything kind of imploded as Anne explained to you, that we really wanted the Fellows to be invested anyway. So I think it does make for a much better balance. They're not being handed anything on a silver platter. They're having to work for it, pay for it, just like they're going to have to start to do in the next year. It's the real world. (Comeau, Morna interview. January 28, 2016)

In addition, Cregger said that The Falls Church was unhappy because “they had to bail us out at the tune of, what I learned, was something like $78,000” (Cregger, Anne interview. January 25, 2016). Even though the church knew what the program was doing, the incident hurt the program’s relationship with the vestry and caused them to lose a number of host families. What Cregger did see as working in their favor was the rector, Rev. John Yates, who helped come up with the idea (The Current, September 2009), remained supportive as they figured out how to keep the program running. One major change that they made was to rename it The Falls Church Fellows program in order to separate themselves from the scandal. When asked what
kept her on the board, Cregger replied, “The vision was right. We knew it was” (Cregger, Anne interview. January 25, 2016).

One of the strengths of the Fellows program was the small, working board recruited from the church membership. Initially made up of six people, it included Cregger, Skancke, Halladay, Amy Nelson, and the youth pastor and first executive director of the Fellows program, Jeff Taylor. During the first year of the program, Taylor stepped down from executive director position because “he couldn’t do both Youth and Fellows” (Cregger, Anne interview. January 25, 2016). At that point, Amy Nelson and Cregger shared the role for the rest of the first year. Then Nelson stepped away from role, and Cregger served as the executive director from 1995 – 2001. During her tenure, Cregger and the board had to rebuild trust with host families and work places for internships, which is now in direct contrast with the waiting list the program has for both.

Three programmatic components (The Fellows Initiative, 2015c) developed under Cregger’s tenure as The Falls Church Fellows director have been replicated in all of The Fellows Initiative locations (Comeau, Morna interview. January 28, 2016). The first is the Monday night roundtable Cregger implemented where Fellows took turns preparing a meal for the cohort, talked through their week, and shared their life stories with one another. Cregger called the roundtable the “secret sauce” of the Fellows program (Cregger, Anne interview. January 25, 2016). The second is the weekly Bible study, which did not happen until the fourth or fifth year of the program (The Fellows Initiative, 2015d). At that time, the Fellows asked if they could do a Bible study and a former Fellow helped them put it together. It was so successful that the alumnus has now been leading the same study, an overview of the Bible, for the last nineteen years. Finally, the third component has to do with the “no dating clause” of the Fellows program.
Cregger said they wrestled with establishing a policy on dating until a messy break up nearly destroyed a cohort’s experience. Adapting a Young Life policy that excluded people on the same team to date, Cregger instituted the rule that Fellows cannot date during their year together. She noted that some Fellows immediately began dating after their graduation. The no dating rule has been adopted by each new Fellows program.

**The Launch of The Fellows Initiative**

In 2005, The Fellows Initiative was launched as a separate national organization (The Fellows Initiative, 2015c). Based upon the original Falls Church Fellows program, the model has currently been adopted by twenty-one other local church communities across 13 states (Reformed Theological Seminary, *Ministry and Leadership*, Winter 2009). Under the leadership of Dr. Peter Moore, Rebecca Chapman, and Steve Skancke, The Fellows Initiative formalized existing efforts to shepherd the emerging Fellows movement into a confederation of independent churches. “While there is theological diversity, ecclesiastical diversity, and geographical diversity among the different locations, each program shares at its core a commitment to helping young adults live out a coherent faith” (Comment Magazine, September 2009). While sharing basic programmatic essentials, each site is distinctive and contextualized to reflect its unique church home, community and city (The Fellows Initiative, 2015c).

According to Steve Skancke, the idea of the Fellows program was always “something we'd like to be able make available to other churches” (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015). Skancke elaborated,

We wanted to do it out of a local church because we felt that the value of building it out of the local church allowed for better sustainability, and we built those connections which even 22 years ago, the relationship between young men and women coming out of college in the local church was a little bit frayed. What we've discovered, just on that
point, these programs have been remarkable in restoring the relevance along local church to this post-college age.

Anne Cregger remembered when Doug Halladay stated that they could take the program nationwide shortly after the Bennett scandal had nearly ended it, and Amy Nelson threatened to throw him out of the meeting (Cregger, Anne interview. January 25, 2016). Yet, Cregger recalled that they had inquiries about the Fellows program as early as 1997. They held their first “Come and See” event in 2002, but there was no formal organization around replicating the Falls Church Fellows model. Skancke conceded, “What happens invariably in things like this is that you just become so subsumed in your own program that that part of it to go out and promote it with other churches just isn't second, third, fourth, fifth level priority” (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015). Though they had help several churches start a Fellows program on what Skancke called a “one off basis,” it was not until Dr. Peter Moore’s involvement that the model was catalyzed it into a movement.

At that time, Dr. Moore was the President and Dean of Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry in Pittsburgh. Dennis Doran recalled how Moore had begun connecting that some of the seminary’s better-prepared students were graduates of the Falls Church Fellows program (Doran, Dennis interview. January 27, 2016). As Skancke described it, Moore “had seen the fruits of these Fellows programs coming through Trinity, and he could see that they were different, that there was just something different. They were the star students” (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2016). After announcing his retirement, Moore received a significant grant from an anonymous donor to do with whatever he would like to do. So, Moore came down to see Rev. John Yates, visited with Skancke, and he said, "I'd like to use this money to create a
National Fellows Initiative that will have an organized approach to helping other churches start Fellows programs.”

Becca Chapman, first national director for The Fellows Initiative, summed up Moore’s interest in and impact on The Fellows Initiative as being connected to his own experiences of being mentored and mentoring others (Chapman, Becca interview. January 26, 2016). While at Oxford, Moore was mentored by Rev. John Stott at All Souls Church in London. Each year, Stott would take on a small group of six young men, whom he saw had tremendous leadership skills; he would pour his life into them. For Chapman, both models (the Fellows model and the All Souls model) were in stark contrast to the models of Young Life, Campus Crusade, or Navigators, which all had a broader and shallower focus. She explained the difference as being that the “Fellows really is, like I said, grassroots, pay attention to each individual for the entire nine months. It really turns out to be a year that you're with these young men and women, and you just do everything, so I would say that was a really important influence on the way we started.”

And so The Fellows Initiative was birthed in 2005 (Chapman, Becca interview. January 26, 2016). The initial leadership for this new initiative was provided by Dr. Moore, who served as the chair of the board for the first year. Skancke agreed to serve on the national board, in the second year, he became the board chair after Moore’s resigned. Moore had hired Rebecca Chapman, wife of the rector at St. Stephen’s of Sewickley, as the half-time executive director. Chapman’s son had been a Fellow at The Falls Church, and she had seen first-hand the effect it had on his life. Six months into her role with The Fellows Initiative, Chapman helped to start and was hired as the part-time director of the Pittsburgh Fellows program.
Dennis Doran, director of the Trinity Fellows in Charlottesville, was working with their second class of students when he was invited to serve with the new enterprise (Doran, Dennis interview. January 27, 2016). As the first director to successfully transplant The Falls Church Fellows model to another church, Dennis agreed to join because he felt he offered a unique and more recent perspective on what it takes to get the program off the ground. Additionally, Doran saw that he and the Trinity Fellows program offered an administrative model that was different from the top-down, committee driven model of the Falls Church Fellows program. In particular, Doran advocated that new programs should hire a full-time director in contrast to what he referred to as the part-time “soccer mom who's retired, who's not working anymore.” While articulate and passionate about this point, Doran shared a common commitment to seeing the Fellows model take hold and become “a household name.”

In the spring of 2005, Doran hosted the first convening of The Fellows Initiative at a mountain cabin near Charlottesville, overlooking the Blue Ridge Parkway (Doran, Dennis interview. January 27, 2016). Those present were Dr. Moore, Becca Chapman, Dennis Doran, a pastor from Trinity Presbyterian Church, Amy Hartman (then director of the Falls Church Fellows Program), Steve Garber and Art Lindsley. Initially, Moore had suggested calling the new organization the Widening Horizons Initiative, but the name did not have any traction due to lack of brand recognition. Ultimately, those gathered at the meeting chose to call it The Fellows Initiative.

During the same meeting, Doran described how the group “hashed out what are our core beliefs? What are the non-negotiables for us? We scratched those things out on a piece of paper and began to write out a vision statement, a mission statement, core values and then, how we were going to move forward” (Doran, Dennis interview. January 27, 2016). The group also
fleshed out their “Come and See” events. These regular gatherings, mostly held in Northern Virginia, would serve as the center piece of the discernment process for churches who were exploring developing a Fellows program. The Fellows Initiative hosted its first “Come and See” event that fall of 2005.

Chapman, the first Fellows Initiative national director, saw herself as the practical one who would “get out there and make things happen” (Chapman, Becca interview. January 26, 2016). Skancke credits her with having developed the promotional material and the national website. They both flew all over the country to visit local churches that wanted to start programs. Chapman designed a process of the interested church representatives coming to one of The Fellows Initiative’s semi-annual “Come and See” conferences, the first ones being at The Falls, where the volunteer chairs (the head of host families, the head of mentors, the head of academics, the head of admissions, the head of seminars) would come speak at various sessions, lead workshops, and present a clearer understanding of what a Fellows program is and is not.

Chapman served in the national role for the first four years during, which time they planted 15 programs across the country (Chapman, Becca interview. January 26, 2016). Around 2007, the original grant money ran out, and Chapman stepped away from The Fellows Initiative. At the same time, the Pittsburgh Fellows program that she had helped to start, began to demand more of her time. With no national director and no monies, Doran and Hugh Whelchel, a board member for The Fellows Initiative, led the board in hosting “Come and See” events and helping to start other programs. Doran described that season as one where, “We just pieced it together, it was gritty” (Doran, Dennis interview. January 27, 2016).

It was in 2012 and 2013 that The Fellows Initiative board began to raise funding to hire a full-time director (Doran, Dennis interview. January 27, 2016). Doran said they got enough
money together to hire someone, but then that person would have to quickly raise additional funds to support his salary and the work of expanding The Fellows Initiative. As Doran described what happened next, it became clear to the board that the person they hired did not have the fundraising experience or drive needed for the position. After less than a year, they ran out of money and had to let him go.

Since that time, Morna Comeau, having become the then part-time director of the Falls Church Fellows since 2010, took on the additional role of part-time national director for The Fellows Initiative. Doran said,

She was doing part-time fellows at the Falls Church, and part-time Fellows Initiative and realized really quickly that she was working two full-time jobs. So, she resigned last year from the Falls Church fellows program in June of 2015, and now has devoted her energy to the Fellows Initiative. (Doran, Dennis interview. January 27, 2016)

From Doran’s perspective, they “basically just floated there for a few years. We kept everything afloat, but it wasn't like we were sailing or anything like that.” He is more hopeful now that Comeau has come on board. Doran summed up The Fellows Initiative when he said

I think we've slowly, as you can tell, grown incrementally and organically, but we haven't grown what I would call institutionally. We haven't gotten that big grant, we haven't gotten the full-time director, a secretary, and an office. We're still a mom and pop organization with a lot of potential, ready to explode, I think, but just on the verge.

**The Essentials of The Fellows Initiative**

With five years of experience running The Falls Church Fellows program as its director, Morna Comeau stepped into the national coordinator’s role in June of 2015 (Comeau, Morna interview. January 28, 2016). She believes a strong understanding of the overall program and directors’ responsibilities is essential to fulfilling her role of coaching existing programs or
helping to start new ones. Over the past 3 years as she has served both a local and national role, she has provided a consistency to the role through monthly directors’ coaching calls and tracking with new churches who are exploring the Fellows model. Her efforts have been greatly multiplied due to the fact that she is building from a clarity about the programmatic essentials needed to run a successful Fellows program. In addition, this program-level familiarity enhances her and the national board’s ability to train new church teams as well as provide a language for existing programs.

When a handful of people first met to define the model in the spring of 2005, The Fellows Initiative began to record the lessons it had learned from both its successes and failures over the years. For Becca Chapman, the first national coordinator, she realized that “it was very much the Falls church model at the beginning, which we modified a lot simply because I wanted people to be able to make the program their own” (Chapman, Becca interview. January 26, 2016). She considered one of her and Dr. Moore’s key contributions to the movement that of initiating the list of non-negotiables, a form of which is still in use today (The Fellows Initiative, 2015f). By clearly defining the essentials, it creates room for programs to know where they can improvise in the non-essentials. This aspect of The Fellows Initiative has provided a process and strategy for local churches to replicate the model, while still accounting for their unique contexts.

**Affiliation with a local church**

The first essential requires an “affiliation with a local church” that provides the Fellow program with local accountability and opportunities for worship and service (The Fellows Initiative, 2015c, 2015f). For The Fellows Initiative, Doran stated, “This holistic model of mentorship and discipleship was meant to come from the church, has always come from the church. It died for a time, or was dying and now we're trying to revive it with the Fellows
programs” (Doran, Dennis interview. January 27, 2016). Skancke mentioned that they have been approached by some para-church organizations, like campus ministries, that wanted to create a spin-off of their program (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015). “We don't see how that works, and we just tell them that,” Skancke said. To be a Fellows Initiative-related program and on the website, they have to be connected to a local congregation. Doran elaborates why this is an essential:

I think the local church is the lifeblood of the Fellows, because we were meant to live in that kind of community, where the 2-year-old and the 72-year-old are bound to one another. In para-church organizations or in a lot of churches where they're not doing this, what they're doing is just creating little ghettos of cohorts, of peers - an old persons' church, or a young persons' church, or the hipster church or whatever. We're saying, "No, the church is meant to reflect all of life in society, and the 2-year-old, the 72-year-old, the 16-year-old, the 32-year-old and a 22-year-old are all meant to learn from each other and serve each other. (Doran, Dennis interview. January 27, 2016)

Intentionally not joining itself to one denominational, The Fellows Initiative is committed to being an ecumenical organization (Comment Magazine, September 2009). At present, The Fellows Initiative programs are affiliated with Presbyterian, Anglican, Episcopal, and nondenominational churches.

The quality of the church affiliation is essential as well. One crucial marker of this is the sufficient buy-in and support of the senior pastor (The Fellows Initiative, 2015c, 2015f). Again, Skancke said,

Pastors send some very able staff person, but there was no evidence of a sufficient buy-in by the senior pastor or there were no volunteers there. These programs don't work, or I should say, we have never seen one succeed where it was just some energetic staff person. (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015)
Both Skancke and Cregger repeatedly referenced how critical the support of their rector, Rev. Yates, was for the Falls Church Fellows, especially after the Bennett scandal in the summer of 1995 (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015. Chapman, Becca interview. January 26, 2016). The senior pastor has to champion the Fellows program in order for the congregation to understand how it fits into the overall vision of their church (The Fellows Initiative, 2015a). Finally, the commitment of the senior pastor is key to ensure the longevity of the program at each congregation beyond the founding directors.

When it comes to how the local churches structure the Fellows program administratively, Morna Comeau sees two options used for hiring a Fellows director: part-time coordinator or and full-time director (Comeau, Morna interview. January 28, 2016). Comeau stated:

[The Falls Church] originally set it up to be a part-time job because we wanted it to be something that could be replicable in smaller churches that didn't require any salary support from the churches. Our program is 100% funded by the tuition that the Fellows put in to cover expenses. Some of the programs receive a significant kick from the churches themselves. So maybe the director's salary is halfway paid by the program, but then the church pays the rest.

Comeau’s perspective is that churches with part-time coordinators tend to have a stronger volunteer base that they rely heavily upon. And she added, “Some of them, like me and those that I mentioned are part-time people who see themselves much more as coordinators who connect the fellows to all the other folks that have more expertise in each area.” Skancke agreed, but cautioned, “We do it with a part-time paid staff. The challenge is to keep it a part-time job” (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015).

In contrast, Doran, director of the Trinity Fellows program has advocated strongly for full-time directors because of the time, energy, and focus needed for “startup venture or teaching
other programs to be franchises” (Doran, Dennis interview. January 27, 2016). In comparing The Falls Church Fellows (first program) to the Trinity Fellows (second program), Doran said, “They had a very top-down model, where they had committees, and a lot of heavy hitters pushing the ball forward and stuff. We had me, basically.” Doran has insisted:

You do need to hire someone full-time to do it and not just half it, if you will, because it's a full-time job of like running a startup. You can't just do it late at night. You've got to put your whole life into it, and it'll come back to you 100-fold.

Morna Comeau talked about the variety of ways congregations have utilized a full-time director (Comeau, Morna interview. January 28, 2016). For instance, that person may have other responsibilities at the church, some may teach one or all of the seminary courses, or any number of needs that congregation may have. She also mentioned that because the Pittsburgh Fellows program opted to have their Fellows live in community together, the program evolved from a part-time to a full-time position due to an increased need for fundraising. Comeau did indicate that full-time directors may do work that is taken on by volunteers in other congregations.

Regardless of whether a church hires a coordinator or a director, a key role of this position depends on developing committees (The Fellows Initiative, 2015a, 2015e, 2015l) and the large volunteer base that is needed to sustain the Fellows program (Comeau, Morna interview. January 28, 2016). From the first time that a congregation begins to explore starting a Fellows program, they get to “look under the hood” at the committee-based engine that makes the model run. At each “Come and See” event, a large amount of time is given to committee chairs to walk participants through their particular roles, while also connecting it back to the overall structure. As far as size, Comeau indicated that, for an average Fellows program, to be successful could require anywhere between 8 to 10 volunteers per Fellow per year. While not all volunteers give
equal amounts of time or services, they collectively contribute a significant amount of in-kind and relational resources that would otherwise make the model cost prohibitive. Finally, this reliance on multiple levels of volunteers naturally spreads the level of ownership and impact of the program throughout the congregation.

A variation to this essential of church affiliation in The Fellows Initiative universe is the development of programs run by multiple churches in a city as opposed to a single congregation (Comeau, Morna interview. January 28, 2016). Beginning in 2010 with the Boston Fellows, this trend was continued with the Charlotte Fellows (2010), the Nashville Fellows (2013), and the Chattanooga Fellows (2014). On the one hand, Morna Comeau described the positive aspects of this development as:

Programs are popping up that rather than being rooted in one church like ours is rooted in a city where they might have three smaller churches in their community. They are working together to support the Fellows Program. Those are really-- the good thing about that is it usually brings together three different maybe denominations, three different groups of people. The fellows get a wide range of exposure to different traditions, because they might worship for six weeks in one church, six in another, six in another, or something like that.

On the other hand, Comeau expressed concerned that “the difficult thing is that they are not rooted and grounded in one” church (Comeau, Morna interview. January 28, 2016). By not having a common worship experience on Sunday morning, they would have a “little less common experience to share.” Currently, Comeau is working with a group of churches in Winston-Salem, NC that will be launching what she referred to as a community-wide Fellows program. In this process, Comeau stressed that the model “looks different when they're all not going to the same church.” When asked if she thought the community-wide approach was viable, Comeau pushed back. She responded:
I think it's viable. That's kind of a loaded question, because it's not what I am used to, and what I have experienced, which I love. I think it's viable and perhaps in some communities—Nashville, not really being one of them, but some where the churches, there's not-- like in Charlotte, apparently, the churches are not as-- there's not a big enough church for something like that, so it's worked out well for them down here. I feel like there are definite advantages and disadvantages and everybody just needs to be very, very aware of what those are.

**Inclusion of Core Components**

The second essential involves the “inclusion of core components” common to all TFI Fellows Programs. Initially, Anne Cregger, the second Falls Church Fellows director, told Morna Comeau and others how they built all of the core elements through trial and error (Comeau, Morna interview. January 28, 2016). These programmatic components, which Becca Chapman first described as non-negotiables in 2005, would be described as: a strong workplace component, a strong Christian formation (weekly round table), a strong academic component (seminary-level courses), a strong missional component (impacting world around you), and a strong mentoring component (both a spiritual and a business mentor) (Chapman, Becca interview. January 26, 2016). The language used today in The Fellows Initiative’s promotional material (The Fellows Initiative, 2015c, 2015f) is that of core components: workplace internship, theological training (seminary courses), spiritual formation (Bible study and one-on-one mentoring), church and community service, and fellowship and community (weekly roundtable that discusses Christian community and cultural engagement). As stated in the Fellows Brochure (2015c), “while there is room for many programmatic variations among local Fellow programs, the core components are common (i.e. required) to all TFI Fellows Programs.”

Yet even with the required components, the local programs have discovered a variety of ways to implement them in their own unique contexts. The Fellows Initiative remains clear on what makes a Fellows program and flexible in how each local program achieves it.
The first core component of a Fellows program is a “workplace internship” that combines practical experience with exploration of day-to-day issues of faith, helping Fellows develop relationships within their vocational field (The Fellows Initiative, 2015c, 2015f). Most internships are three days a week and pay the Fellow around $15 an hour (The Fellows Initiative, 20153, 2015g, 2015h, 2015i,). As Skancke has noted, for most programs this is a three day a week internship, but for others it is a four day a week internship. For example, Becca Chapman of Pittsburgh Fellows moved to a four-day, forty-hour a week internship model in order to meet the needs of the companies they work with as well as to ensure a higher quality of jobs for their Fellows (Chapman, Becca interview. January 26, 2016).

The second component of “theological training” involves seminary-level classes, required reading, seminars, and guest speakers that help Fellows understand how to faithfully apply Biblical truth and engage the culture (The Fellows Initiative, 2015c, 2015e, 2015f). For the Falls Church Fellows program, they initially started the first year with requiring twelve hours a year or six hours each for the fall and spring (Cregger, Anne interview. January 25, 2016). Having to cut costs after the Bennett scandal, their board decided to drop down to six hours per year or three hours each for the fall and spring. One exception is the Pittsburgh Fellows program that requires twelve hours a year or six hours each fall and spring (Chapman, Becca interview. January 26, 2016). With most sites, the Fellows can apply the courses for credit through an arrangement individual programs have made with an accredited seminary (Reformed Theological Seminary, *Ministry and Leadership*, Winter 2009).

The third component of “spiritual formation” includes the Fellows participating in weekly Bible study, accountability groups, and one-on-one mentoring relationships with older adults in the local congregation (The Fellows Initiative, 2015c, 2015d, 2015e, 2015f). Within
these broad guidelines, each program has shaped the requirements to fit around their own academic courses and internships. Whatever the arrangement, the intended purpose is to create an intentional rhythm of spiritual practices that can be sustained throughout the Fellow’s life. The goal is to model what a realistic commitment to spiritual growth can look like in light of one’s other priorities and responsibilities.

The fourth component of “church and community service” provides many opportunities to serve within the church and in other community ministries (The Fellows Initiative, 2015c, 2015e, 2015f). A majority of the programs involve the Fellows in the congregation’s youth ministry by leading discipleship or small groups (The Fellows Initiative, 2015j, 2015k). For some others, Fellows are involved in a variety of ministries within the church ranging from the children’s ministry, worship, leading small groups, or missions. Outside of the church, Fellows invest up to an afternoon a week and/or one Saturday per month involved in community service and social justice work in their cities. The variety of activities are chosen based on church relationships and involvement in the community, issues of social justice in their specific city, and passions of the Fellows.

The final component of “fellowship and community” revolves around a shared weekly meal together and a roundtable-style discussion reflecting on the principles and practice of Christian community and cultural engagement (The Fellows Initiative, 2015c, 2015e). Normally a three to four-hour commitment on Monday nights, the roundtables were first started by Anne Cregger to build community among the Fellows. Yet, as Cregger described it, the roundtables are the “secret sauce” of a Fellows program (Cregger, Anne interview. January 25, 2016). An average Monday night would consist of two or three Fellows preparing and serving a meal for everyone at the director’s house, one person sharing their spiritual journey, guided discussion
and reflection on the past week, and individual accountability groups for men and women.

Overall, the time has been described as family night among the Fellows.

Beyond the core components, Becca Chapman, former national director for The Fellows Initiative and director of the Pittsburgh Fellows, began to encourage each Fellows program to be “slightly unique and fit the place where they were” (Chapman, Becca interview. January 26, 2016). She remembered:

Memphis was just starting. I can remember we encouraged them to do something along racial-wise. El Paso is starting, and we encourage them to do something with border control. I think all of us were slightly unique. Trinity in Charlottesville was very academic - academically oriented, I thought. They did more of academics. And then obviously in Washington, there was politics and there were nonprofits. So each of the programs that we started, we try to say, "Now who's God made you to be here, and how can you best impact the culture around you, as well as prepare this young men and women to be the salt and light in the world, whatever they're called?"

During her time as national coordinator, Chapman encouraged this by helping “new Fellows programs to think carefully about who they were as a city, as a place, and to begin a program accordingly.” She used the Pittsburgh Fellows as an example:

So for us in Pittsburgh, we're a corporate city. We're a business corporate city, and so we just did business fellows. Early days, we tried to actually combine business fellows with ministry fellows, but we discovered those two things are just so wildly opposite [laughter] in everything, including the schedules that we went ahead and just changed it to business fellows, and that is really what has helped us to succeed - is to be unique and kind of specialized in that area at the time.

Chapman recalled a number of reasons for this emphasis (Chapman, Becca interview. January 26, 2016). First of all, it was because she didn’t want there to be competition between the programs in trying to recruit the same individuals. Second, it was because she believed the location of each Fellows program mattered (The Fellows Initiative, 2015c). Chapman explained:
I always felt like there was a reason why you're there and place is important if you figure out what your place is all about, and you really can touch the heartbeat of the place where you are.

Overall, she thought it would be counterproductive to offer “exactly the same thing” at each program. She and the Pittsburgh Fellows board decided, “Well, business is our deal here, so let's just do it.”

Another major component where individual Fellows programs can choose between two set options is housing for the Fellows (The Fellows Initiative, 2015b, 2015c, 2015f). Skancke describe the two options of living with host families or the Fellows living in community together (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015):

The majority of them live with families. Some don't for reasons that they hold special to their programs, and we're okay with that. We think that the local church and the fellows miss out on something, but it's okay. You don't have to be a clone of The Falls Church Fellows Program to be a recognized fellows program.

Morna Comeau elaborated:

Well, they either live in community with one another, like they do in only two places: Knoxville and Pittsburgh. Or they live in host families like they do in all the other programs. So they are in community. But in other words, they're not living with their parents or-- not that that wouldn't be in community, but that wouldn't be growing up very much [chuckles]. And they don't live in apartments by themselves, or with roommates, or something that aren't aware of the program. (Comeau, Morna interview. January 28, 2015)

Comeau admitted that getting host families can be hard work, especially at the beginning of a program (Comeau, Morna interview. January 28, 2015). But for her, getting host-families versus Fellows living together in community is connected to her argument for part-time coordinators versus full-time directors. She explained it in terms of who benefits:
When you have a part-time director, what that means is you have ten other people on your community, each one taking actual real life hard responsibility in getting work done. So that means those people are invested in the program. When you have host families and you have 12 fellows, that means you have 12 couples and their children. Sometimes there are as many as 50 other people in your church that are personally invested in your Fellows Program. (Comeau, Morna interview. January 28, 2015)

Serving as a host family for five years before becoming the Falls Church Fellows coordinator, Comeau can personally attest to how both the host-family and the Fellow benefit from the experience (Comeau, Morna interview. January 28, 2015):

It's beneficial to the parents in helping them to have a perspective of a young adult who they can trust at their dinner table when they're raising children. It's beneficial to the fellows when you hear remarks like, "I learned there was more than one way to run a good Christian family. And the idea that I might marry somebody who was raised in the exact same kind of family as mine are pretty remote. So this has been a wonderful experience." I've heard remarks like, "I've never lived in a Christian family. I didn't know what it looked like for parents to pray before the meal together or to have the kinds of conversations that I've been privy to."

Additionally, Comeau says that it becomes a visible representation of “what we call radical hospitality - this idea that a family would actually invite a young adult who they'd never met until the day they showed up at their door step to come live with them for nine months.” Comeau knows the experience of living with another family will be reciprocated to others as acts of hospitality into the future.

Lastly, cohort size is also adaptable to the specific programs, yet this is not a model that is meant to incorporate large numbers of participants. When asked why The Falls Church Fellows settled on twelve to thirteen Fellows a year, Skancke replied, “very simple, how many people will fit in one van? How many people can you put around a table? How many people can you reasonably engage in a conversation?” (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015). Skancke
mentioned articles about group dynamics, particularly how “with twelve or thirteen in a round table setting, no one can really hide’. Becca Chapman suggested that for this model, “it's important not to grow too large because we will lose the individual impact we need to have on each Fellow” (Chapman, Becca interview. January 26, 2015). For The Falls Church Fellows, they set it at 12. For programs like Trinity or Pittsburgh that has set their cohort sizes at 15 or 18 Fellows, he acknowledged that they would need to rent a bigger bus. Finally, Morna Comeau offered a pragmatic concern involving cohort size: breaking even financially (Comeau, Morna interview. January 28, 2016). Particularly, this impacts the minimum number of Fellows each program needs to take each year to cover the programmatic costs.

**Affirmation of Beliefs**

The third essential of “affirmation of beliefs” affirms a commitment to historic Christianity as revealed in the Scriptures, summarized in the Apostles and Nicene Creeds, and reiterated in the TFI Statement of Beliefs (The Fellows Initiative, 2015b, 2015c, 2015f).

Skancke, national board chair for The Fellows Initiative, confessed

If they come and don't have just the basic principles of faith, it doesn't work for us for them to be part of who we are. If you look at our statement of beliefs and things like that, it's not very restrictive, but in our business, you believe in Jesus or you don't. And if you don't, you're not going to be a Fellows program in our mix which is okay. (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015)

**Support for The Fellows Initiative**

The final essential of “support for The Fellows Initiative” includes supporting TFI and its programs through prayer, participation in TFI conferences and programs, a commitment to two-way communication, and financial contributions (The Fellows Initiative, 2015b, 2015c, 2015f). Each year, The Fellows Initiative plans two national gatherings that all of the Fellows programs
are invited to attend (Comeau, Morna interview. January 28, 2016). These gatherings have helped to foster relationships among the Fellows and directors of this growing network. The first gathering is the Micah 6:8 Retreat in the fall that focuses on engaging culture and working for social justice. The second gathering is The Fellows Initiative national conference held in the D.C. area in late April. This conference is created as an end-of-year experience with time for learning, fellowship, and networking. For the coordinators and directors, Comeau leads a monthly conference call that is designed to keep the directors connected to one another, talk through issues, and plan for upcoming events. Finally, each program pays $100 per Fellow per year to help cover The Fellows Initiative budget.

**Spread of The Fellows Initiative**

Drawing on his twenty-three years as board chair of The Falls Church Fellows and ten years as board chair of The Fellows Initiative, Steve Skancke points out a couple of thing that are needed for a local church to successfully begin and sustain a Fellows program (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015). First of all, he has connected the spread of the Fellows model to the development of setup materials available and the overall organization provided through Morna’s leadership. Second, Skancke reiterated the need for the senior pastor and a core of volunteers to come to one of these “Come and See” event (The Fellows Initiative, 2015a). Third, they then need to figure out who's going to be the day-to-day manager of the new program, a volunteer or paid staff (The Fellows Initiative, 2015m, 2015n). Fourth, it has to be something that just has broad-based volunteer support to overcome the enthusiasm, jealousy, and hiccups that eventually arise with a program of this scope. Fifth, Skancke indicated that it takes time to put the pieces in place, particularly the recruitment strategy and practices needed to land the first cohort (The Fellows Initiative, 2015a, 2015n). Typically, The Fellows Initiative encourages new churches to
take eighteen months to launch a new program. Skancke circled back as he closed, “but to get those components-- you've got to have the senior pastor buy-in because these things even if they don't take any financial resources from the church, they are a huge emotional commitment from the church.”

What followed in the interviews with key leadership served to elaborate on and provide examples of Skancke’s observations. Anne Cregger, second director of the Falls Church Fellows, touched upon how no top-down support and promotion from the senior pastor contributed to the lack of understanding from the people in the pews (Cregger, Anne interview. January 25, 2016). Cregger also stated that a program has to have the right number of volunteers to help support the program as well as to gather attention of the congregation. Next, programs have to pay attention to the number of Fellows they first bring on so as to make a positive impact, cover the expenses of the program, but not overwhelm the support network needed.

Becca Chapman, first national director of The Fellows Initiative and founding director of the Pittsburgh Fellows, spoke about leadership issues (Chapman, Becca interview. January 26, 2016). In a couple of examples, she talked about a senior pastor or key staff member who moved churches before they were able to raise up a strong volunteer team of laity. In others, she mentioned that the churches did not pay adequate attention to their recruitment strategies and practices, and consequently were not able to attract graduates to their program. Related to recruitment, some churches were not able to capitalize or create attractive opportunities for the internship component. Chapman eventually got to the place where she said, "You need a church that is a program-level church that could cover a lot of ground and open a lot of doors for these young people.”
For Dennis Doran, founding director of the Trinity Fellows, one of the main things a program needs is an entrepreneurial leader (Doran, Dennis interview. January 27, 2016). He elaborated by talking about the chapter in Malcolm Gladwell’s book *The Tipping Point* which discussed why Paul Revere, not some other guy, was successful in rallying the Continental Army at the Battle of Lexington and Concord. Summarizing, Doran said:

All these other hamlets that these other gentlemen who history's name has forgotten didn't have the ability to cast the vision in a very entrepreneurial way, convince these men that they needed to get up out of bed, get their guns and get radioactive for the sake of their country. What I've seen is, these Fellows programs failed because it's like that first question that was answered to me on the session floor. Why should we hire you, Dennis? You're not a theologian. A lot of them will be like, "Let's get some well-spoken person, stick him in as a figurehead and then people who come." Well, that's not true. It's like any good venture, it needs some grit behind it. I think people have failed because they've said, "If we build it, they will come." For example, Covenant Seminary, Dr. Chapel, who was the president of Covenant Seminary helped to recruit a former seminary grad who was very likable, very sociable, very talkative, but not an entrepreneur. He built the program there in St. Louis - a great city in the shadow of Covenant Seminary - and he couldn't get two, three, five people to come. It's because they lacked the entrepreneurial vision, they weren't willing to burn the midnight oil and put in the hard work and the grit that you do if you were building a company, because that's what you're doing. You're building a startup.

Doran then pointed out it’s not a money issue, but they all have seen very wealthy churches not be able to “get off the ground” (Doran, Dennis interview. January 27, 2016). He knows of another church that failed because the pastor wanted to boost up his youth program. Doran unapologetically said:

Well, that's just using people. Our fellows have an integral part of our youth ministry, but we're not using them. We're giving back to them so much that they want to give back to our youth ministry that when they finish the fellows program, they're invested in our youth ministry.

Doran’s final example was about a program in Houston being run “on the side” by a woman in a big consulting firm. He repeated:
And I remember her thinking like, "Hey, when we get this thing of the ground - because we're in this hot market of Houston and everything - we're going to totally kick butt on this thing." You can't run a Fellows program on the side, you can't half it. You can't just say, "We're a cool program, we're in a cool city." People aren't just going to show up. You have to be able to lay down your life and show them that you care.

**Future Success and Growth**

A perspective that is shared among those involved with The Fellows Initiative is that they are poised for something big to happen. When asked what needs to happen for The Fellows Initiative to keep growing, Anne Cregger suggested that need to develop a “fairly robust system of admission” that would diminish competition between the Fellows programs (Cregger, Anne interview. January 25, 2016). She believes this could be accomplished by matching the potential Fellows interest with the unique offerings of the local host church and program. For this to happen, she says there would need to better collaboration between programs. Cregger believes in the model, stating that there are “tons of people who need this sort of program.

Having served in the national director’s role, Becca Chapman said that Morna Comeau deserves to have a strong board team around her (Chapman, Becca interview. January 26, 2016). Next, she believes that a priority of The Fellows Initiative needs to be “helping people to get on their feet with the new program wisely and with enough leadership team to be able to sustain a program over time.” Third, she is aware that recruitment of students is an important issue, but she disagrees with others who believe recruitment should be addressed on the national level. For Chapman, the “key to the sustainability of the national program is to have strong individual programs, very strong individual programs doing the work of keeping their programs alive, not expecting a national program to funnel people to them. I'm not sure that that's the best way to sustainability. I believe in the localized program.” Finally, Chapman restated The Fellows
Initiative’s success is dependent upon “the national program serving the local regional programs,” not vice versa.

For Dennis Doran, he is convinced that The Fellows Initiative is about to enter a season of unprecedented growth (Doran, Dennis interview. January 27, 2016). He declared:

I think we're right on the cusp. I really don't have anything bad to say about where we've been and where we're going. I think there's been some health to going slow and growing organically. Because we could have made some big mistakes if someone had given us a couple million dollars on the front end. But I think now we're about ready to run. We've crawled, we walked, we're jogging, we're ready to run now.

Likening it to Young Life before it went national, he sees The Fellows Initiative as a fledgling organization with a great model that is just waiting for someone to underwrite it in order to reach the next level. Doran recognizes that they have the organizational structures in place, administrative help and other things, and that they are now able to get the message out more broadly. In the meantime, Doran knows that they have to be faithful in coaching the new and existing programs.

By the year 2026, Doran anticipates that could they have a staff of four full-time people dedicated to serving 100 programs, or “maybe more, actually” (Doran, Dennis interview. January 27, 2016). Doran started calculating and dreaming out loud:

If we're starting three or four [new Fellows programs] a year [currently], I would imagine that we launch 10, 15, or 20 a year. Then beyond that, then it just gets to the next level. Let's call it 15, 20 years out you're talking almost-- I want it to be or I hope it would be the type of thing where it's like, "Oh yeah, I'm graduating from college. I'm either going to go to Main Street, Wall Street, or Fellows Program.
Doran connects the last thought to the Mormon Church and how they've got everybody thinking about their two-year mission. He wants to create a cultural milestone for young adults so that “on every 23-year-old's mind is, ‘I could go to your Fellows program.’”
Chapter 5: History of The John Jay Institute

Mission: Preparation of principled leaders for public service.

The John Jay Institute celebrated its tenth anniversary on November 11, 2015, in Philadelphia; but its origins and maturation started over twenty years ago, spans across three cities, and remains intimately connected to the vocational development of its founder and president, Alan R. Crippen II. As long-time friend and board member of the John Jay Institute, Dr. Claude Pressnell said, “It’s the fruit of someone who has spent his life with a long view strategy. Alan will never know, ultimately, the impact that he has had because he is investing in very youthful people” (Pressnell, Claude interview. March 3, 2016). Martin Luteran, Witherspoon alumni and Founder of the Collegium of Anton Neuwirth, Kosice, Slovakia, said about Crippen: “I truly admire the man, to me it's hard to believe that someone can put so much consistency and persistency in one project. He's been working on this one idea for 20 years or so, every single day” (Luteran, Martin interview. February 8, 2016).

Focus On the Family, 1993-1997

After serving with the U.S. Army Field Artillery and graduating from Westminster Theological Seminary (The Aquila Report, November 1, 2016), Crippen joined the staff of Focus on the Family in 1993. In 1995, Dr. Claude Pressnell, founding director for the newly established Focus Institute for Family Studies, hired Crippen to be Institute’s senior fellow “to teach the public square courses” (Pressnell, Claude interview. March 3, 2016). Dr. Pressnell noted that the impetus for the Institute for Family Studies stemmed from the success of the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities’ residential semester study programs that had developed out of the American Studies Program in Washington, D.C., in 1976. They were also
joined on the faculty by Dr. Greg Jenson, who had spent time studying with Francis Schafer at the L’Abri Community in the French Alps. Yet as Pressnell described it, it became clear soon after the first class arrived in the fall of 1995 that the trio’s shared vision for a rigorous academic program was at odds with the vision of Focus on the Family president, Dr. James Dobson.

Pressnell soon found himself pulled between tensions inside and outside the Institute (Pressnell, Claude interview. March 3, 2016). On one hand, Pressnell discovered that Dr. Dobson “was not overly interested in working the students very hard.” Dobson told him that they were asking the students to read and write too much. On the other hand, Pressnell was finding it had to convince top Christian universities, like Wheaton, Taylor, and Calvin, to allow their students to participate in the Institute for credit. He said, “I was told numerous times from their provosts, nothing intellectual comes out of Colorado Springs.” It was not until he shared the course syllabi that they became convinced of the program’s value and worked to find some equivalence in order to provide credit for their students to attend. Additionally, Pressnell disagreed about the number of students they should admit each semester. Dobson told him, “If you have 30 students you should have 500 students.” Pressnell repeatedly described the tension when he said, “Focus wanted the sizzle, not the steak.” In other words, “Dobson wanted the sound bite without the scholarship.” Due to these fundamental differences, Pressnell stayed at Focus for only 18 months before assuming the role he now holds as the president of the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association.

This early academically rigorous program at Focus was short-lived, yet two important events took place in that setting. First, it would be the friendship between Pressnell, Crippen, and Jenson, their combined experiences, and their shared frustrations with the direction of the Institute that would lead them to ask “Can we do this better and can we do it differently?”
Together, they began to shape a vision that took the form of a Christian study center that would work alongside an Ivy League university like Princeton or UVA. They even took the step to write a statement paper for the Acropolis Foundation entitled *An Institute for the Study of Christianity and Culture* (1995). And second, Pressnell said that Crippen “found his calling” that set him on a vocational journey that included developing the Witherspoon Institute in Washington, D.C., and ultimately, the John Jay Institute in Philadelphia (Pressnell, Claude interview. March 3, 2016). This seminal idea and their long friendships have only deepened since their time together in Colorado Springs.

**Witherspoon Institute, 1997 – 2005 (established January 1997)**

Pressnell, board member for the John Jay Institute, recounted, “It wasn’t long after I left the Institute that Gary Bauer at the Family Research Council became interested in doing something academic and started to talk to Alan about what could happen” (Pressnell, Claude interview. March 3, 2016). Crippen was told, "We want to do something with undergrads, we're not sure what. Come to D.C.” (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). Crippen joined the Family Research Council staff on January 6, 1997, to develop what would be called the Witherspoon Fellowship. Crippen recalled:

I had carte blanche. What a perfect situation to walk into. I was sensitive with the Family Research Council culture organizationally and philosophically. I'm sensitive to that, but it was carte blanche. It was, "Alan, we're not sure what we want to do, but we want to do something with young people." "Do it. You've got a $500,000 budget. Start." So, they were the conditions in which I was hired [chuckles].

The Witherspoon Fellowship is named after the Rev. John Witherspoon (1723-1794). Witherspoon was a member of the New Jersey Senate and Continental Congress, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and president of the College of New Jersey, now Princeton...
University. As described by an unquoted historian in a Witherspoon brochure, Witherspoon was “the man who shaped the men who shaped America” (John Jay Institute, 2015a). Crippen noted, “I thought Witherspoon was a great iconic name, because he's a man of faith, he's an ordained clergyman, he worked with undergraduates, and arguably the most influential teacher in the history of the U.S.” (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016).

Martin Luteran, founder of the Collegium of Anton Neuwirth in Kosice, Slovakia, was a Witherspoon Fellow in 2002 (Luteran, Martin interview. February 8, 2016). Luteran had been to U.S. during high school and was looking for a way to return. A fellow Slovakian student told him about the Witherspoon Fellowship, and he applied. Reflecting on the overall curriculum, Luteran said, “We had classes on Mondays, then internships on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays and field trips on Fridays. We had three classes, I think. Family and Political Thought, Christianity and Culture, and National Law and Ethics. So three classes and we read texts and discussed them on Mondays.” Luteran remembered that professional attire was acquired and that everyone was formally addressed by their surnames. Each Monday, they would participate in the Daily Office in the Book of Common Prayer around a conference table at 8 a.m. In the beginning, all the internships were internal to the Family Research Council, but that requirement was loosened in the later years of the program. On average, there were only fourteen Fellows active during either the fall, spring, or summer semesters. Each Fellow received a living stipend and was provided housing in apartments that created an intentional, Christian community. Luteran, who now serves as an Affiliated Scholar with the John Jay Institute, was one of 450 Fellows who went through the program over nine years.

During his time at Family Research Council, Crippen served through various changes in administration. Dr. Pressnell, who Crippen invited to serve on the Advisory Committee for the
Witherspoon Fellowship, remembered that “[Family Research Council administration] started to take money away from the Witherspoon program” to the point that Crippen went from having a $500,000 budget provided to having to raise the entire budget himself (Pressnell, Claude interview. March 3, 2016). Encouraged by Pressnell and others, Crippen began to consider bringing the Witherspoon Fellowship out from under the Family Research Council to stand on its own. Crippen thought,

Well, Witherspoon probably would be more successful if it were now a standalone entity." And I'd been present for groups spinning off entities, so I approached the leadership of FRC saying, "I'd like to spin off Witherspoon and become independent." And the CEO didn't want to do that. So I thought, "Well, I still have more that I want to do and I think there's some limitations to being affiliated with a parent company. So then I had the idea, "Well, if I've got to leave Witherspoon behind, I'll leave it behind. I need a new idea and I need to do something and I want the parting to be amicable and positive, so I don't want to create anything that competes.” (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016)

Crippen remembered when the idea for the John Jay Institute came to him (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). He was in the strategic planning process for the Family Resource Council in 1999 when:

John Jay caught my attention. He was also [like Witherspoon] a committed Christian, First Chief Justice of the United States, against slavery, a friend of William Wilberforce. There's clearly a story here, and there's just lots of other offices: member of Congress, President of Congress . . . If we have a program for post-grads, we should call it John Jay.

And so leaving the Witherspoon name behind, Crippen left the Family Research Council “under the most positive circumstances and launched John Jay.” Starting off with a shoe string budget in December of 2005, Crippen asked Pressnell to chair the board of the nascent organization.
John Jay Institute, Dec 10th, 2005 – present

Crippen always envisaged the John Jay Institute on the East Coast, and particularly in the Northeast (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). Yet in the process of sharing this idea with Rev. Don Armstrong, a friend, an advisor to the Witherspoon Fellowship, and an Episcopal priest in Colorado, Armstrong made an invitation to bring the John Jay Institute to Colorado Springs. Crippen recalled Armstrong saying, “Well, we just sort of renovated this beautiful space in Colorado. Do the program in Colorado. It's cheaper to operate. You can do anything you want. You can have it all for free.” The new board agreed but also indicated to Crippen that “we don't really want to put down permanent roots, because we think there may be a time when we want to bring it back to the East Coast.” And so, the John Jay Institute was birthed in Colorado Springs in May 2006.

Crippen recounted how within hours of moving across the country and arriving in Colorado Springs, Rev. Armstrong revealed to him that he was under investigation for financial malfeasance¹ (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). Pressnell, then chair of the John Jay Institute board, remembered that the John Jay board took action by beginning to separate itself from Grace Episcopal, including removing Armstrong as treasurer of the board (Pressnell, Claude interview. March 3, 2016). Pressnell said Crippen wrestled the most with wanting to “believe the best about Don” while at the same time protecting John Jay. As the church investigation turned into a police investigation, Crippen and the board decided to move off the church campus and began renting space in Colorado Springs. Crippen found temporary lease

space to house the program at Fuller Seminary’s campus as a temporary solution. At the 2009 board meeting in New York, the board commissioned Crippen to look for a new home for John Jay back on the East Coast.

The 2008 recession compounded the issues connected to Grace Episcopal. Crippen joked that he did not plan for a major recession in their business plan. In those early days, Crippen pointed to the fact that they “would always have one semester a year at least, but we had to cancel some semesters. There just wasn't money to operate” (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). When you look at the early years, there are gaps in the calendar. In fact, there was not a spring class for 2009, 2010, and 2011. As Crippen pointed out, these were the days when they were funding not just their academic semester but also the externships as well.

*John Jay Board Meeting, Philadelphia, May 2010*

By the time of the May 2010 board meeting in Philadelphia, Crippen and his staff were to present a lease agreement in Colorado Springs that would meet the program’s housing needs over the next couple of years (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). Additionally, Crippen summarized his recommendation about moving John Jay back to the East coast as, “I think we should move to the East Coast. This is not the year to move, but when we do it should be Philadelphia.” During this time, the board was meeting at the Union League Philip’s Sheraton, having dinner at the City Tavern and getting to walk around Old City. Crippen specifically remembers walking with two board members by the Old City Hall, which served as the first location of the Supreme Court of the United States. Pointing to a commemorative plaque, Crippen mentioned that John Jay presided over the Supreme Court in that very building. Immediately, one of the board members said, “Alan, this is great. This is where the John Jay Institute needs to be. It needs to be in Philadelphia.” Crippen said he smiled and walked the two
board members back to the hotel.

Crippen recounted that by the time he got up in the morning, the board had caucused and decided that the program was going to move to Philadelphia (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). Crippen was not prepared for this turn of events at all. Crippen and his COO were scheduled to present a lease, detailed budget, floor plans, and pictures of the facility back in Colorado Springs. Yet in a surprising move, the board voted to relocate the John Jay Institute to Philadelphia within the next two years. Crippen admitted, “I had always been a fan of moving to Philadelphia, but I was shocked that we were doing it.”

After the meeting adjourned, Dr. Claude Pressnell, who was chairing the John Jay Institute board, pulled Crippen aside to talk about the decision (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). Crippen said, “Sure, but can I go upstairs and tell my wife that we are moving to Philadelphia?” They met up about an hour later for coffee at the Bellevue to talk through the decision. During that conversation, Pressnell asked Crippen to announce that the John Jay Institute would be moving to Philadelphia at the lecture later that same evening. The lecture was to include guest speakers Peter Loebeck of Westminster Seminary and Walter Stahr, John Jay’s biographer, as well as an unveiling of a bust of John Jay. Crippen agreed and made the announcement during his introductory remarks, which was followed by a standing ovation from those gathered.

For Pressnell, he described his perspective as very providential (Pressnell, Claude interview. March 3, 2016). Not only does Pressnell believe that Crippen grew in his ability to lead the John Jay Institute by navigating those difficult times in Colorado, but also believes the program now has far more impact in Philadelphia because of the historic connections to John Jay’s life. Pressnell wrapped up his part of the story by saying, “So honestly, if Colorado would not have happened, I think that Philadelphia would have never have happened.” Crippen concluded by
stating, “For philosophical, marketing, and operational reasons we came to Philadelphia. It was the right decision” (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). The John Jay Institute moved to Philadelphia in February of 2011 and its first class of Fellows arrived in August of that same year (The Aquila Report, November 1, 2011).

**June 2012 – First Saratoga Class**

While in Philadelphia, the John Jay Institute launched the Saratoga Fellows program (John Jay Institute, 2015b). The impetus for the program came from Crippen’s son:

> My son, Zachary, is an Air Force intelligence officer and graduate of the United States Air Force Academy. While a student Zachary expressed a desire to be a John Jay Fellow. He could not figure out how to accomplish that after graduation given service requirements. He asked if a program of shorter duration could be tailored for military officers and suggested a six-week summer period when newly commissioned officers might take permissive leave or temporary duty to do such a program. This was the genesis of the Saratoga Fellows Program. (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016)

The first Saratoga Fellows class arrived at the Philadelphia campus on June 2012. It was named for the famous New York State battle and strategic turning point in America’s War for Independence (John Jay Institute, 2015b, 2015c). The Saratoga Fellows Program is intended to prepare and equip young military leaders with the spiritual, intellectual, and professional fortitude for faith-informed military and public service (John Jay Institute, 2015b, 2015c). Designed as a six-week intensive academic residency tailored to be completed shortly after commissioning and prior to one’s first duty station, the Saratoga Fellows Program consists of a core curriculum of interdisciplinary studies in theology, philosophy, ethics, history, politics, and jurisprudence. According to the brochure (John Jay Institute, 2015b):

> The Saratoga Fellows Program challenges officers to think more critically and deeply about the good society and the civic and martial virtues necessary for sustaining the American republic that they are sworn to defend. Our proven method of text-based
Socratic dialogue offers participants a forum in which to reflect upon the classical and Christian virtues, cultivate a deeper understanding of the human condition, and be equipped to provide the moral and intellectual leadership requisite of the modern professional warrior.

The first class of eleven officers met in the summer of 2011. In total, there have been four classes with a combined 48 Saratoga Fellows who have been commissioned into the John Jay Institute network (John Jay Institute, 2015d).

**John Jay Fellows Core Principles**

When asked to compare and contrast the Witherspoon Fellowship with the John Jay Institute programmatically, Martin Luteran, Witherspoon Fellow alumni, said, “I sense that the vision and the mission is still the same. It's just the form is slightly different” (Luteran, Martin interview. February 8, 2016). According to Luteran, Crippen has continued to work on the same idea for the past twenty years. Luteran believes the shift from undergraduate to post-graduate allows John Jay:

- to impact people's lives more deeply and broadly than the Witherspoon Fellowship, since it's a much more intense full-time, four-month program, which Witherspoon wasn't. Academically, Witherspoon, we only had a one day a week, now they have four days a week, so I think Alan now can-- the space he created is much more beneficial for academic formation and-- not even academic, even more of formation, character formation. And that's partly because it's now they have to take a gap year.

Pressnell understood Crippen as continuing and maturing the vision he, Crippen, and Jenson shared over 20 years ago; ultimately taking the form of this post-graduate, capstone experience where the Fellows go through a rigorous and intensive curriculum on public square issues that prepares them for graduate school or the work place (Pressnell, Claude interview. March 3, 2016). Over its history, the John Jay Institute has developed a number of core elements that it
shares with the other programs in this study, and yet which also make it unique.

Coming to age in the 1980s, Crippen was embarrassed by the state of evangelical research and the evangelical presence in the public life, much of which he considered unsophisticated and naïve (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016; The Aquila Report, November 1, 2011). Crippen thought he could do better than the current standard by intentional formation, a finishing school if you will. He continued:

We can do better than that by making sure that our successors - these young people - know their heritage; know this great great heritage of Christian concern and Christian engagement, be fortified in it, know that there's actually a tradition that they need to-- that they want a part of - whether they know it or not - that they need to have interaction with, that they need to lean into for direction about where to take things.

It was this frustration, turned calling, that animated the overall purpose of the program, especially the academic curriculum.

Crippen became aware of how critical the transition was between one’s undergraduate education and postgraduate experience while at Witherspoon. Crippen said, “The seniors - and maybe we get a junior now and then - they're thinking about next steps, but they're needing a little more direction” (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). He wrestled with a concept that could take high-potential students and help speed up their transition. In order to launch them faster, Crippen believed they needed to introduce the students to real-world networks and complement their standard education with one that was seriously Christian and worldview forming.

Unlike the Witherspoon Fellowship or programs like The Fellows Initiative, the John Jay Institute is built around a professional calling into the public square (Huffington Post, November 1, 2011). Defined broadly around the term public service, Crippen understands this as their
niche as modeled after the life of their namesake, John Jay. Crippen asked rhetorically:

So John Jay, who is he? He was a practicing lawyer. He got into politics early as a member of the Continental Congress. He was in the pre-runner of the Foreign Service Corps. He was a diplomat. He was an elected member of Congress. He was a diplomat. He was Chief Justice of New York. He was Chief Justice of the United States. He negotiated the Treaty of Paris. He was involved in the war, in counter-intelligence. He was very much party of Washington's counter-spy ring. He was a farmer, so he had a business to run; he had to gain retirement. He was a writer, he had a solid family background, a wonderful family. He was a very active lay person in the church. He was one of the founders of the American Bible Society, second president of the American Bible Society. So there are all these sort of public facets to Jay. Philanthropist, he gave a lot of his money away. He was from a wealthy family. He had to make money; he wasn't completely independently wealthy. So, I think we want our alumni to hold him up and be what he was. (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016)

Defined broadly, Crippen relies on the three references and four essays of each applicant to identify leaders with a calling on their lives (John Jay Institute, 2015e). Because they do not aggressively market, Crippen interprets someone even learning about John Jay as a type of referral from “someone we know” (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). Crippen emphasized, “that’s the kind of network we have out there we have with faculty, so the recommendations mean a lot: what they're saying, what they have done. What have they done in college that would mark them as standing out among their peers?” Those accepted as Fellows do not have a common set of characteristics, but all are connected through a growing web of relationships that consist of alumni, affiliated faculty, and organizations like the Intercollegiate Studies Institute and the Christian Study Center movement.

One way that Pressnell, long-time board member for the John Jay Institute, has continued to describe Crippen is as someone who is working with a long view (Pressnell, Claude interview. March 3, 2016). This perspective is most clearly articulated in Crippen’s desire to build a professional fraternity of Christians who are called to work in the public square. Crippen was
pointedly clear when he stated, “We have been doing this not just to provide an episodic, hopefully life-changing, post-graduate experience, but to really build a fraternity” (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). Having cooled to the idea of community because of how overused and abused the term has become, Crippen uses fraternity because “there’s just a sense of ownership in fraternity though, that in community it's more something that you happen to participate in, but with fraternity there's an ownership over the future and taking people under your wing.” For Crippen, the term fraternity is informed with more of a Medieval meaning – brotherhood, sisterhood. His hope was to create “something purposeful, something Christian, something that's been modeled before that would have a degree of professionalization in addition to the community aspect.”

This idea is subtly expressed with a shield of St. George on the wall of the John Jay chapel. When asked about it, Crippen noted that St. George is the patron saint of the John Jay Institute (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). At the end of each semester, the Fellows class gathers at the Episcopal chapel at Valley Forge to be commissioned into the John Jay Order of St. George, The Dragon Slayer. Crippen said, “We commission them to be dragon slayers.” Crippen emphasized that the Fellows do not graduate but take their place among a professional, Christian organization committed to working toward a common good. This good is expressed in the state vision of the John Jay Institute, “the renewal of American civilization.” Alumni come back to participate, family and friends are invited, and the whole event is open to the public.

As Crippen was talking about the type of students they are looking for, he said:

So, we like to get folks that have this sort of state think-tank work experience, state policy experience. If a student has that, I gravitate right towards that. I think, "Wow, this is good." National's good too, but I think state's better. We want to encourage them to think about working in the States. (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016)
When asked why he looks for and encourages that, he said, “We believe in federalism.” One donor recently spoke with Crippen about how his son, now commissioned with the John Jay Fellows, talked about the importance of bringing his experience back to the state of Texas. With that in mind, he told Crippen how his son expressed a calling to return back home to serve at the state level. Crippen remarked that he has been encouraged to see that theme was now emerging in the narratives of the Fellows’ lives. In fact, one of the field studies that goes to Harrisburg is designed around this idea of federalism. Crippen describes the day like this:

They get briefings from a number of Christians who are working in Think Tanks, religiously motivated folks, Pennsylvania Family Institute, Pennsylvania CALI Conference, The Commonwealth Foundation, which is secular. They meet with former members, people of faith who can talk about the realities of politics at the state level, and it's typically one of our favorite field studies.

With regard to number of Fellows accepted each year into the John Jay Institute, Crippen said, “We sense a call to be small” (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). Logistically speaking, given the size of their facility, sixteen Fellows a semester is all they have beds and space for around the conference table. More importantly, that number is informed by the model of transformative learning that John Jay has adopted. Crippen noted, “If we get more than sixteen in that classroom, sixteen is already pushing the upper limits of effectiveness.” Finally, the number has to do with their aspiration “to be in the Christian world what the Rhodes Scholarship is to the secular world or the Truman Scholarship or the Marshall Scholarship. Crippen’s thinking is that if the Rhodes and the Truman and the Marshall can have the cultural leverage that they have with small numbers, why can’t they (John Jay Institute, 2015c, 2015d)?

Those accepted into the John Jay Fellows program are provided a living stipend of $600 a
month, housing, and all books included in the coursework (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). According to GuideStar², donations totaling over $950,000 in 2013 were raised from individual donors, family foundations, and charitable trusts to provide the funding for the John Jay Institute to carry out its unique mission. During their orientation, Crippen tells the Fellows, "This is probably the only time in your life where you will be paid to just read.” Crippen defines their job and responsibility as devoting themselves to books and to conversations because “there are individual families and foundations who are paying them for just that.” While he recognized that some Fellows may take it lightly before coming into the program, Crippen noted that misconception has a way of clearing itself up once the semester begins.

Not wanting to perpetuate a consumer mentality, Crippen has joked at orientation that “your satisfactions is guaranteed, or you get your money back [laughter]. The John Jay is not a pay-as-you-go model where a student is paying $6,500 for this experience or $20,000 for this tuition” (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). Crippen understands how that can create “some hardcore expectations” that are not productive in an intense program like the John Jay Fellowship. With John Jay, everything that the Fellows are getting is being provided for them. This leads to one of Crippen’s favorite axioms, “You're sitting here because someone cares about you and believes enough in you to invest enough money to keep you here.”

**John Jay Institute Experience³**

**Mentoring**

New John Jay Fellows are assigned an alumni mentor before they even arrive on campus.

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³ The most succinct description of the overall program can be found here: [http://www.johnjayfellows.com/jji-fellows](http://www.johnjayfellows.com/jji-fellows)
Crippen described it as a very personal touch to the program. The alumnus and the Fellow begin connecting through social media or e-mail. Throughout their fellowship, the mentor is someone else with whom they can discuss ideas. Crippen anticipates, “There's always going to be conflict and stress when you're living in a house with that many people, and being able to talk to someone who is removed from it, but has been through that before can be very helpful.” The Fellows are normally paired up by common interests or locations with the hope that the alumni could be seen as long-term mentors.

**The Residential Mansion**

Now located on a large estate in the Bala Cynwyd neighborhood of Philadelphia, the John Jay Institute campus includes an administrative office space and a large mansion in which the Fellows live and study. They have leased this estate from Crossroad Ministries since moving to Philadelphia in June of 2011. At the 10th Anniversary held on November 11, 2015, the John Jay Institute has been raising funds to purchase and renovate an 11,000 square foot mansion in Elkins Park community on the northern city limits of Philadelphia as a permanent location. 4 Crippen has hired architect Daniel Lee to help with the renovations (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). Friends for over 18 years, Crippen believes there is no one better to help with the project than Lee because of his personal experience with the L’Abri Christian community led by Francis Schafer. Crippen noted that Lee would “understand the community relationship and dynamic, and how every single square inch of that mansion needs to be used for formal programming, community living, for conversations, and for study. Crippen never studied at L’Abri, but he is acquainted with the books and alumni associated with it. Crippen has been captivated by the model of both L’Abri and the Intercollegiate Studies Institutes, both of which

4 [http://www.johnjayfellows.com/campus](http://www.johnjayfellows.com/campus)
he drew from to create the hybrid program of the John Jay Institute.

**Academic Robes**

The first thing a guest at the John Jay Institute would notice during the school week would be the fact that Crippen and the Fellows wear academic robes. While older generations may think back to movies set in Oxford or Cambridge, younger generations have to immediately think of Hogwarts. They wear the robes to morning prayer at 8 a.m., during class from 9 a.m. – noon, and again for vespers prayer at 5 p.m.

When asked about the robes, Crippen remembered asking himself, “What would I have liked to have done that I was constrained by the cultural limitations or just the culture of Family Research Council?” (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). Helping this idea along was the fact the early years of John Jay were spent on the campus of a “gorgeous, Gothic, Episcopal church.” Crippen described that setting:

> We had beautiful classroom space up in-- we have a beautiful conference room, we had beautiful library space in an attic with exposed beams. Martin had been on the campus. We had a real chapel, Gothic. And it's Colorado, where you're tempted to come to work in blue jeans and cowboy boots, but I wanted to say at least, "Wear whatever you want, but over that stuff in class, you're going to wear robes." That created a culture of learning, scholarship, seriousness.

This was the original context for the robes, and when the John Jay moved to Philadelphia, they continued that practice.

**The Daily Office**

The second element of the John Jay experience has to do with fact that the academic day, Monday through Thursday, begins and ends with The Daily Office as found in *The Book of Common Prayer*. An Episcopal layman when he instituted morning prayer at The Witherspoon
Fellowship, Crippen was ordained as a deacon in 2007 and a priest in 2008 in the New Anglican Territory (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). With the start of John Jay, he now leads each class in morning and vesper prayers. Pressnell stated, “Alan is all about the experience. That's why they're wearing the robes, that's why they do morning prayers, that's why-- so to have it, it's the habits of life and the habits of the heart, if you will” (Pressnell, Claude interview. March 3, 2016).

The Classroom

The third element involves the classroom experience, which is foundational to what is being modeled throughout the semester (John Jay Institute, 2015f, 2015g, 2015h, 2015i, 2015j). During the three-hour, text-based Socratic classroom discussions, there is no formal lecture, and everyone is addressed by their surname (John Jay Institute, 2015b, 2015c). For each class, the Fellows are responsible for 100 to 150 pages of reading of original texts, as well as writing a 500-word response paper based upon one of the discussion questions in the syllabus (John Jay Institute, 2015f, 2015g, 2015h, 2015i, 2015j). In total, each Fellow writes 60 response papers over the fifteen weeks. Three Fellows are chosen at random to read their responses and start the discussion with the rest of the class. The instructor guides the class by asking follow-up questions and ordering the flow of discussions. When Fellows wish to respond, they raise their hand until the instructor indicates that the Fellow’s name has been added to the list used to order the evolving discussion. The discussion is passionate, laced with humor, at times heated, and yet remains civil.

The Academic Courses

The fourth element has to do with the five, three-week block courses that make up the academic curriculum (John Jay Institute, 2015f, 2015g, 2015h, 2015i, 2015j). Crippen noted that
he borrowed the idea of block classes from Colorado College (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). Over the fifteen-week semester for John Jay Fellows, they work through courses on Theology and Culture, Survey of Political Theology, Political Philosophy, American Constitutionalism, and Natural Law. These courses were designed to explore the Judaic and Christian roots of Western civilization with specific attention focused on the Bible's contribution to the formation of Western cultural ideals, mores, and customs and their attendant social, political, and military institutions” (John Jay Institute, 2015f). The Saratoga Fellows have an abbreviated six-week class where they would work through a theology in culture course, a constitution course, and a virtue ethics course. Having three continuous classes with the Witherspoon Fellowship, Crippen switched to the block format to help focus and deepen the learning experience.

**Residential Community**

The fifth element has to do with the residential aspect of the program. In particular, Martin Luteran made the connection between “how important community life is for moral formation and leadership formation, what it means to be a leader” (Luteran, Martin interview. February 8, 2016). For Luteran, what he tried to copy as the founding director of the Collegium of Anton Neuwirth in Slovakia was “the unique combination of the community life and the academic discussions.” Luteran perceives that there is “a wave where more and more people realize that the best way to form young people is to put them together and have them read and discuss issues.” Finally, one expression of the residential community that Luteran believes does not always get communicated deals with lateral mentoring going on among the students which is facilitated by living in community.
**Ecumenical Commitment**

The ecumenical commitment\(^5\) of the John Jay is a sixth defining element (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). Though Crippen is an ordained Anglican priest with Reformed theological commitments, he has been intentional in recruiting students from all the traditions of Christianity: Protestant, Catholic, Evangelical, and Eastern Orthodox (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). For Crippen, he believed an ecumenical approach was necessary in order not to ignore the distinctions connected to various Christian faith traditions. Crippen continued:

These fellows feel comfortable and safe to engage each other on substantive issues about their faith traditions if it's relevant to the curriculum around the table. It's not relevant, Martin and I will call them out of bounds, "Hey, that's a porch conversation, but do have that conversation.

Pressnell reflected on the precarious nature of this commitment in light of one board member resigning when he learned that they had accepted a Catholic student (Pressnell, Claude interview. March 3, 2016).

**Local Church**

The seventh element is tied to the sixth, which is a commitment and high valuation of the local church. Crippen said, “They're only here for 15 weeks, so some have plugged in regularly to some congregations, and others have used the opportunity to see what's out there and outside of their comfort zone” (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). While Crippen does not require that they attend a local church, he noted that there is an expectation for it. While John Jay was in Colorado, they had an integration with the life of the local congregation that was never required, yet developed naturally through relationships. Upon moving to Philadelphia, Crippen

noted the contrast having to do with geography. The John Jay Institute, situated in a mansion on the east of the main line in a historically Jewish neighborhood, did not naturally connect in terms of proximity or organizationally. Crippen summarized the connection this way:

I have often fantasized about an arrangement similar to the one that we had in Colorado that would hold up, whether we're renting space from a large church that would be theologically and philosophically sympathetic; to just hold up the institutional church as the most culturally formative institution that there is. One, if you're really serious about changing culture, you ought to be involved with it. I think that message is built into the curriculum, but I think when we were partnering with this church in Colorado, it was just sort of there. You walk under the bell tower every morning and there's this sort of institution that has a vertical axis, that's sort of there subtly, subconsciously saying, "This is the place. This is the organization that's going to do that, the church."

**Wednesday Teas**

Outside of the academic experience, the Fellows host a weekly tea on Wednesdays (John Jay Institute, 2015c). Upon arrival at John Jay, they are all given business cards to network with and invite new acquaintances over for tea. This practice opens up the John Jay to the communities the Fellows are forming outside of the campus. Typically, the gentlemen wear a bow-tie during this event, hence the Fellows referring to the day as Bowtie Wednesdays.

**Thursday Dinner Parties**

Another weekly event that is part of the Fellow’s experience are the Thursday dinner parties (John Jay Institute, 2015c). Crippen said,

Every Thursday night we require them to pay for, host, prepare, serve a full course, multi-course dinner every Thursday evening with special guests of our choosing. In the past, we brought in military officers; retired and active. We've brought in state legislators, federal congressmen, former US senators, CEO's, prominent ministers, prominent think tank people; so that they have to actually greet them, offer them an hors d'oeuvres, do a wine pairing, serve a dinner, have a dessert and have a conversation. (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016)
Most surprising of all, Crippen and his staff are intentionally not present because “we don’t want to hold their hands.” As part of the leadership curriculum, these young adults get real world experience in hosting multiple dinner parties. Crippen does break them in with board members at the first dinner, who know that this is also a training exercise, and he saves the special guests for later in the semester once they have been “tuned up.”

*Friday Field Studies*

During all semesters, Crippen arranges field studies in and around Philadelphia (John Jay Institute, 2015k). Crippen described a number of the field studies “of historic and cultural interest to the American narrative, the Christian narrative, the Christian narrative within the American narrative, to be sure. And this is Philadelphia; what better place?” (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). Other field studies are more professionally focused, where Fellows meet and network with public policy professionals. Crippen added that the field studies have led to internships and to jobs over the years, “So there's that sort of finishing school component to it, as well.”

*Exit Interview and Final Reflection Paper*

Towards the end of each semester, Crippen meets individually with each Fellow as well as assigning the final reflection paper (John Jay Institute, 2015l). The exit paper is not an academic paper; Crippen instructs the Fellows to write in a reflective way that is much more like a journal entry (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). The paper is guided by a series of questions that Crippen provides the Fellows, as well as a 2,000-word minimum length. Crippen described it as “not necessarily day-by-day, but sort of reflecting on the totality of the John Jay experience; certainly in terms of the curriculum, but in terms of the community, in terms of their faith
journey, in terms of their calling, in terms of their next steps. The paper is and has been part of
the program assessment, but its more an exercise in self-assessment for the Fellows. Crippen
tells them, "Do it now and do it six months from now, or a year maybe. Put it in your calendar
and do this again."

Externships

Once the semester in Philadelphia is complete, Fellows have the opportunity to be placed
in an externship through the John Jay Institute network (John Jay Institute, 2015c). Through
this network, Crippen now has alumni working in strategic places “who can move applicants to
the top of the pile” (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). As Crippen explained, “So in
some ways, we're in a pretty good place to help the motivated Fellow get where they want to
go.” Crippen also noted:

I think you find with so many millennials now, they're a generation where everything
has been given to them, and they haven't necessarily known how to work for things.
And so it's important to not just give them the academic experience, but kind of help
them get on their feet so they can have a first hand experience. And often, people
who actually come to John Jay, they've had internships, they've already been
working a little bit, but it helps them have a solid foundation and not just a
fellowship that they are then left wondering what comes next.

The externships used to be funded through John Jay, but then the realities of the 2008 recession
hit. Another reason they are no longer funded was that the majority of fellows were getting paid
internships or full-time jobs. While it was a bonus to get an additional pay check from the
Institute, Crippen saw that it wasn't necessary in the way that he had initially thought.

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6 http://www.johnjayfellows.com/jji-fellows
Class Constitution

Each semester, the new class writes its own constitution (John Jay Institute, 2015m). The model offered them is the one written by the first class. The Fellows are required to read it and ratify it for their own. Crippen added, “Since 2007, there's never been an amendment proposed to it. So they basically rule themselves by the instrument of government the first class drafted” (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). Additionally, the Fellows do have to come up with their own sort of laws of governance, “which could include to date or not to date [chuckles], do we allow alcohol in the building and all that good stuff.”

Looking for the Win

When asked what a win looked like five, ten, twenty years down the road, Crippen admitted that “when people are investing the lives of our fellows, it’s a long-term investment that might not have the leadership that we see on a grand scale right away, but they’re on the path for that” (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). Crippen and his staff created an impact report for the 10th Anniversary celebration that was meant to document the steps the alumni are taking individually and as a network. And then Crippen, looking across the table to Martin Luther and back, added:

There's a win, right there. 14 years ago we had a conversation about returning to Slovakia and I said, "Well, Martin, maybe your calling is to do something like we're doing here in Slovakia." I just planted that seed and so here we are, sitting here, 14 years later. Martin is doing what we're doing here, but doing it in an appropriate cultural context in Slovakia with a high sensitivity of what Slovakia needs. It's amazingly successful. We've got alumni around the world doing that kind of thing, but these impact reports, I think highlight a number of them. So incarnationally what do the wins look like? They look like the people we highlight in those alumni reports. (Crippen, Alan interview. April 27, 2015)
Martin Luteran, founder of the Collegium of Anton Neuwirth in Kosice, Slovakia

Before coming to the Witherspoon Institute, Martin Luteran was a university student in law school. He remembered being very frustrated with his law school in Bratislava, because the students didn't really have any relationships with their teachers, didn't read primary texts, and were expected to memorize things instead of thinking and writing critically (Luteran, Martin interview. February 8, 2016). Then Luteran said,

And then I went to the Witherspoon Fellowship and there I was in a small community with people interested in me, personally. You know, having close relationships with other fellows and Alan Crippen and reading primary texts of great thinkers. It was all very exciting and in some sense new to me, and back then I told myself how wonderful it would be to have something like this back in Slovakia.

When he returned home from the Witherspoon Fellowship in 2002, he pulled together a group of his friends and started something similar called Ladislav Hanus Fellowship, an academic fraternity of university students and young professionals in Bratislava. The Fellowship was a semester-long non-residential program for university students who got together once a week and discussed texts. Luteran adjusted and abbreviated the syllabus from the Witherspoon Fellowship to “Slovak circumstances.” In addition, they got the books from the Witherspoon Fellowship and had people apply for a semester-long program. Luteran stated, “We are now having the 26th semester I think or 27th, I don't remember.”

“Seven years into that, we started with the Collegium of Anton Neuwirth in 2009, which was just-- it was another step in getting closer to the original Witherspoon Fellowship, in that

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7 The Collegium is one of three sister organizations that the John Jay Institute recognizes in its “Alumni Impact Report” (May 2015, p 3) and briefly mentioned in “Huston Foundation grant application” (2015). The others two organizations are Lachlan MacQuarie Internship in Canberra, Australia and the Venn Foundation in Auckland, New Zealand.
now we have a residential program, it's one-year long. But it's still the same idea, just a different incarnation,” Luteran said (Luteran, Martin interview. February 8, 2016). This was also the point that Luteran committed himself full-time to this work along with two others, one being the Witherspoon Fellow who initially told him about the opportunity. He always knew that the ideal situation was to have a residential community component, but there was no practical way for their emerging fellowship of young students to do that in 2002. The collegium brings university students together for year in a residential community and is supplemental to their university education. Luteran added, “So that's the difference from the Witherspoon and the John Jay Institute. They don't have to take a gap year. They study at their universities, but they live with us, and in the evenings and weekends they have the program.”

Luteran continued, “The vision is also similar in that “we're trying to form servant leaders for the common good, for the society (Luteran, Martin interview. February 8, 2016). And then the way we do it is that we, apart from living in a community, we also read great texts.” The Collegium offers two courses: Christianity and Culture, and Moral and Political Philosophy. He noted that in terms of the academic content, the Collegium is similar to the Witherspoon and John Jay. Where it differs is in the limited pace and rigor of his program due to the fact that his students are in full-time classes at the university.

Another major difference Luteran has witnessed deals with the caliber of students and the student culture in Slovakia (Luteran, Martin interview. February 8, 2016). He has first-hand experience with students and student cultures in Slovakia, the U.S., and at Oxford. Through importing this model to Slovakia, he had come to terms that “the whole culture around university, the way the university life looks in Slovakia and looks in America or in England is just different. 40 years of communism still has a great [negative] impact on the university
Starting with a team of three back in 2009, the Collegium had grown to a fifty-member staff by January of 2016 (Luteran, Martin interview. February 8, 2016). In addition to the year-long residential community, he and his staff organize summer schools as adaptations of the model of year-long programs for two high schools. They also do essay competitions, publish books, and do public lectures. Over the past fourteen years, Luteran has watched this fellowship of young adults grow “into more of an institute with different education programs.” Yet the flagship program is still the one-year residential program, which they now have plans to turn into a two-year program.

For Luteran, the unifying vision for all the programming is “to help Slovak young people think critically and learn more about the Christian and Western intellectual heritage” (Luteran, Martin interview. February 8, 2016). Specifically, for the high school students, Luteran and his staff are investing in those relationships in the hope that they will be able to continue to work with them in the collegium. He also believes this strategy will impact the quality of university students they get to recruit.

When asked if the collegium is part of the local university, Luteran stated, “We’re separate. It's an independent NGO that's renting space, fundraising for itself. We don't have any accreditation. We're not dependent on the state or any other university” (Luteran, Martin interview. February 8, 2016). According to him, the only motivation for students to participate is to actually get the education and the formation they provide. In addition, the students do pay a small tuition of about $1,200 a year which covers about a third of the program costs. Luteran has to raise the rest of funds through donations to cover the budget.
As an educator, Luteran has never considered working in the Slovakian university system. He considers the system too corrupt and falling apart (Luteran, Martin interview. February 8, 2016). He stated, “So I knew that I had to start something new, where I can actually work with people that want to work and with students that want to study, and where I can teach what I like to teach.” While he still believes that he could find employment inside a university, it has never been appealing to him – then or even now. He is convinced that he has more options, more freedom, and more flexibility to impact the Slovakian culture by being peripheral to the university system.

Since the beginning, Luteran and his growing team have stayed connected to the Witherspoon Fellowship and now John Jay Institute. As Luteran tells it, “we had this agreement with Alan that we started sending Slovaks to the Witherspoon Fellowship, and still continue sending Slovaks to John Jay Institute” (Luteran, Martin interview. February 8, 2016). Fourteen years later, twenty people have gone from Slovakia to Witherspoon or John Jay.

Despite the difference in cultures, the one common element that both programs seek to impact is the quality of public leadership in their respective countries. Luteran believes:

It's much more critical in a soviet post-communist country than it is in the U.S. We have the same problems. We have a falling apart educational system, and we have lack of good political leaders or public leaders, if you wish, a lot of whom are badly educated and badly morally formed. The result is this the way the public sphere, public life, looks like. That's one of the major motivation for it, I think. And the reason for the importance of the collegium is to form future public leaders.

As a leadership development program, Luteran seeks to prepare them “to be able to think critically, and to have sources where they can turn when there's something that they don't know” (Luteran, Martin interview. February 8, 2016). Faced with the challenges in Europe, such as the
growing refugee crisis, the financial crisis, and terrorism, Luteran is convinced that they need leaders who “know good and are willing to do good, and I think that the only way to form that, to have that, is to be surrounded, and to immerse yourself in this tradition of talking about, discussing these big issues about happiness, goodness, justice.”

Though Luteran thinks the Collegium was the first, he is now seeing more and more leadership programs develop in Slovakia that target university students (Luteran, Martin interview. February 8, 2016). The major difference between the Collegium and all the other the programs is that they are the only program that requires students to read original texts, discuss their ideas, and write essays. He sees the other programs having to do with soft skills trainings or mentoring with CEOs of other organizations. Luteran fears that “we're losing touch with our tradition, with our roots, and we're losing sense of where we are and where we're going. And that's, I think, what we need in all the challenges that are awaiting us.”

Luteran describes the Collegium as based on three pillars of formation: a library, a dining room, and a chapel (Luteran, Martin interview. February 8, 2016). Yet, he would not say that the Collegium is a Christian leadership program. Luteran explains, “Well, we are all Christians. We attract mostly Christian students, Catholic students, although there are exceptions here and there . . . We don't check at the entrance whether they are or not, but just self-selection works.” Unlike John Jay which asks applicants to write an essay on their spiritual pilgrimage, the Collegium does not include any such requirement. Luteran explained, “We don't go around talking, ‘We are Christian. Come.’ It's not part of our PR. We try to talk about moral formation, leadership development, education, western civilization values, and all the other benefits that come from the collegium.”
As the interview was closing, Luteran reflected, “My time with the Witherspoon changed a lot. If I hadn't gone to the Witherspoon Fellowship, I probably would be doing something completely different right now” (Luteran, Martin interview. February 8, 2016). Describing his work as “a fragile project” dependent on raising a certain amount of money every year, he reflected:

Who knows how long we'll be successful in doing that. But yes, there's nothing else I would like to be doing than what I'm doing right now. It's a great combination of working with young people, developing an institution, having to read and write and think, influencing public life. It's a lot of different things. It's a fun and exciting job. Not that it doesn't have its challenges, but overall, it's great.

Like Crippen, Luteran is playing the long-game. While he is beginning to see the first signs of his students gaining influence in the culture at large, there are many others who are still finishing their education all around the world that he hopes will return to Slovakia. Luteran stated his hope for the future in this way:

It would be wonderful to see some of our alumni being successful and influential. That would be great, but even on top of that, I think I would be happy if I saw a change, societal change, that didn't result from just one strong individual, but from maybe a hidden and invisible cooperation of many of our alumni. Kind of-- as Alan sometimes would say, conspiracy of faith. Faith is breathing together. So seeing them breathe together for the common good and making things happen. That would be wonderful. (Luteran, Martin interview. February 8, 2016)
Chapter 6: History of Project Transformation

Mission: The mission of Project Transformation (PT) is to engage young adults in leadership and ministry, we support these children in our program and help them reach their potential, and we help connect the churches to their communities in these urban areas. (Project Transformation, 2015c, 2015d)

Project Transformation, An Idea on a Napkin, 1997

Over lunch in Dallas in 1997, Sarah Wilke, then director of the Wesley-Rankin Community Center, Dr. Leighton Farrell, then District Superintendent in the North Texas Annual Conference, and Rev. David Blackman of Oak Cliff UMC “began to sketch out an idea on a napkin” (Project Transformation, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). Ultimately named Project Transformation, the program was created to tackle three systemic challenges: meet the academic, physical and socio-emotional needs of children from low-income communities; give college students opportunities to develop as young adult leaders; and revitalize struggling churches through community engagement. The problem was that there didn’t seem to be much middle ground between these seemingly disparate issues.

What was needed was one program that could address all three challenges. First, the program needed to create a community of young adults that would work together in some hands-on ministry and challenge them to grow in their faith. Second, the program needed to help urban churches in decline build a bridge to the changing and diverse communities they were now in. In looking at these two situations it appeared to Wilke and Farrell that the best answer to both problems was working with children (Wilke, Sarah interview. May 5, 2015). Specifically, working with the children in the inner city communities around the churches through day-camp

1 http://projecttransformation.org/national/about-us/history
summer programs run by college interns out of the urban churches. The three main components of Project Transformation were brought together here – children, churches, and communities.

Wilke wrote:

In hindsight, I’d like to think Leighton and I laid out an internship experience we wished we had as college students with a call to mission and ministry. We identified four urban churches, in addition to Wesley-Rankin, where the interns could run a summer Bible school for elementary-age children – and hopefully, be inspired to greater church service. We thought of ways we could include other Methodist institutions, and from the Texas Methodist Foundation meeting, we sensed we would find enthusiasm from several key players: Jim Caswell, SMU’s Vice President for Student Affairs, Tom Locke of TMF, Methodist Hospital of Dallas, Perkins School of Theology, and the United Methodist Reporter. We also saw a crucial role for the Dallas-area churches disconnected from the urban core. (Project Transformation, 2015b)

Referred to as the co-founders of Project Transformation, Wilke and Farrell were critical to getting Project Transformation started. Farrell, then in his 70’s, had the experience, connections, and position to champion this nascent ministry. Wilke, just back from the Peace Corps, had a love for the United Methodist Church, a love for young people, and the entrepreneurial savvy to fit it all together (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). Their friendship and leadership got a lot of other people to buy in to what was then still a broad concept. Reflecting back on that first year at Project Transformation 10th anniversary, Wilke stated:

We launched Project Transformation with handshake agreements for personal commitment, in-kind gifts, and financial support from our institutional partners and the annual conference. Churches provided stipends for the interns. The United Methodist Women provided books for each location. Sunday school classes provided volunteers to read one-on-one to the children daily and to provide evening meals to the interns. The entire conference caught the excitement about loving and supporting this ministry. (Project Transformation, 2015b)
All they needed now was someone to put all the pieces together.

**Project Transformation, Summer of 1998**

As Shawn Jucht Bakker tells it, it all started for her in the spring of 1998 when Wilke gave her a one-page outline of a summer reading program that involved college-age interns and asked her if she wanted to do this (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). It was the spring of 1998, and Bakker just been hired as the new program director for the Wesley-Rankin Community Center, after having serving for two years as an AmeriCorps member connected to the center. She wished that she still had the one-page outline, but remembered, “It was literally one page and just an outline that talked about the college student component, talked about urban churches, and just the summer internship and that was kind of it.” Wilke has always been quick to point out that Bakker “took the vision and ran with it” (Project Transformation, 2015b) yet most people do not know how much Bakker and her growing team had to flesh out in a relatively short time frame.

Bakker remembered, “It was in the very beginning stages. Sarah and Leighton had some initial conversations about it, and then from there, passed it on (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). They obviously continued to be very involved in helping to shape the program, but turned over the day-to-day figuring it out to me.” Reminiscing about that initial conversation, she laughed:

I think the other part of it is Sarah and Leighton are both very gifted salespeople. It probably wasn't an option to say no to them. I didn't feel that I was coerced into doing it, but it was-- they got behind me and said, “This is going to be great, you can do it, we'll help you with whatever you need.”
Scheduled to happen within a few months, Bakker agreed to become the first director of Project Transformation. She recalled how she took on a program whose major components, like funding and intern housing, had yet to be thoroughly worked (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). Yet Bakker said it sounded exciting and connected to passions and experiences from her undergraduate years around inner city missions and social justice. Most of all, Bakker said, “Knowing though that I had Sarah and Leighton's support behind me, both from their connections, their experience in the church, but also just their own commitment to helping me to be successful, allowed me to walk forward with some sort of confidence to say, ‘Okay, I'll take this on and see what it can-- what it will lead to.’” And so at twenty-three years old, Bakker said yes.

In many ways, Bakker had been preparing for this role since attending Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). Before she worked in the inner city of Dallas at the Wesley-Rankin Community Center as an AmeriCorps member, she had spent a summer serving in Philadelphia at Bart Campolo’s Kingdom Work inner city mission as well as a one-year community living experience through Bethel University. Interestingly enough, she worked with United Methodist churches in all three locations, though she did not grow up in that denomination. Bakker drew upon what she calls “pieces of her background” that had been “very formative for me, as a young adult, and that I thought this is the way for me to live in to that. It would be these experiences she used to shape what Project Transformation could look like.
Her summer in Philadelphia with Kingdom Works\(^2\) was spent with five other college students living in a house in a neighborhood in South Philly and working with the church in the neighborhood, which happened to be United Methodist Church (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). As a volunteer program, Kingdom Works provided the housing and food, but no living stipend. Bakker remembers that “there was some structure to our day with the kids, but it was also up to us just to create programming and structure.” The other component that stuck with Bakker was the fact that they were one of many across the city in Philadelphia doing the same kind of work. Over the summer, Bart Campolo brought the teams together to interact and to learn from the other groups.

What Kingdom Works did not model was a wider church involvement beyond the “six of us trying to have an impact on this one neighborhood church and this one community” (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). She instinctually felt that “when we left, a lot of the connections that we had made also probably left.” With Project Transformation, Bakker wanted to create relationships and connections that would last beyond the eight or nine weeks of the program by involving what Project Transformation would call partner churches, site churches, and local church volunteers.

Her experience in inner-city Minneapolis as a college student living in an intentional community was built around an entrepreneurial practice that tried to figure out what are the assets of the neighborhood in which they lived. Referring to it as “asset-based community development,” Bakker and her community looked beyond what they could bring to the

\(^2\) Originally named Kingdom Works, the organization ran into financial trouble and was brought under the umbrella of The Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education (EAPE). http://eape.org/ministries/mission-year/.
community to what already exists in the community could be leveraged for a positive impact.
This practice found its way into Project Transformation in the form of its “family fun nights” and having mothers help volunteer with serving lunches to the kids. Bakker summed it up with a question, "Okay, wait. Where are there gifts within this community that we can use and leverage?"

Bakker’s two years of experience and relationships within AmeriCorps in Dallas also helped her see how AmeriCorps could be involved and help provide educational vouchers, and eventually stipends, for the emerging program (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). Because they had already determined that they wanted a strong reading focus and much of what the young people would be doing would fit within the AmeriCorps context, Bakker saw a way to involve AmeriCorps if they separated out the faith component. Bakker’s relationships within and knowledge of the AmeriCorps structure provided space for both organizations to partner together and say, “Let’s figure out how to make this work.”

And then there is the story about how she came to develop a United Methodist program even though she did not grow up United Methodist (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). Bakker described it this way:

I did my undergrad at Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota. So I lived in downtown Minneapolis and actually lived in the neighborhood of a United Methodist Church there, so got involved. I wasn't Methodist at the time, but through my Kingdom Works experience, being in the Methodist Church, and then through the experience in Minneapolis-- and then when I did AmeriCorps and was placed at Wesley Rankin, at that point still was not Methodist. But my love of urban ministry kept pointing me to the Methodist Church and so kind of figured out, you know what? There's something here to this church that really resonates with me. Then I actually became United Methodist.
She laughed that it took her a while to get the message, but after working with the United Methodist Church in three locations, she finally realized, "Okay. I get it. I get it."

With all of those experiences guiding her, and the support of Wilke and Farrell, Bakker still only had a one-page outline that needed to be fleshed out into a real program by the beginning of the summer (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). When she tells the story of how it began, it’s easy to hear how her college experiences helped her build the Project Transformation bridge while she was walking on it. Quick to mobilize the human assets around her, Bakker recounted, “When we figured out what were the key components to the program, then we just recruited volunteers to help with different components of it.” Because they did not start with a large budget, Bakker said she and her team of volunteers were forced to ask, "'Who can be our partner in this?' And, ‘Where can we share the ownership?’ And, ‘We're going to need help?’"

Contrary to having some grand design, Bakker readily admits how much of the way Project Transformation was shaped was by necessity (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). For example, after they secured a fraternity house at Southern Methodist University to house the interns, they learned that they could not use the commercial stoves due to university policies. Not wanting the interns to have to eat cold meals all summer, they wondered if they could get local churches to come bring dinner to the interns. Bakker recruited a volunteer named Diane Presley who personally called her connections among the Dallas area churches and arranged for a summer’s worth of dinners for the interns. Known as “community meals” (Project Transformation, 2015d), this is now a core practice of the Project Transformation program for connecting the young adult interns and members of local congregations. While this and other core components of Project Transformation are taken as foundational as the program expands to
other areas of the country, their origins came into being through a combination of budgetary constraints, entrepreneurial/assets-based mindset, and collaborative partnerships that shaped the model.

Bakker also spoke about the process of choosing where to locate the office for the new ministry now that housing had been secured for the interns (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). Bakker said, “I know we were intentional at having our office at Munger Methodist Church so that we, as much as possible, were a part of the community. For me that was something that was really important, to be able to be a part of the community in which we were learning with, working with.” The economically depressed and racially diverse neighborhood where the office would be opened was in direct contrast to the neighborhood of University Park, where Southern Methodist University was located, one of the wealthiest areas in the city of Dallas. As she told it, Bakker was not directly involved with securing the housing. The arrangement had been worked out by Rev. Leighton Farrell and Dr. Jim Caswell, Vice President for Student Affairs at Southern Methodist University, and at a discounted price. Bakker was initially concerned that the interns would not be living in the communities where they would be serving, like she had during her summer in Philadelphia and year in Minneapolis. Yet Bakker discovered:

that disjuncture oftentimes provided a lot of good conversation for the interns. They just realized how different the worlds were so they - after being in the community all day - would then drive out. And it was kind of - for some - just a shock, going within just a 15-minute drive, but being in a completely different world.

Coincidentally, Project Transformation moved its offices to University Park United Methodist Church in the University Park township in April 2016.
Bakker also laughed when she remembered how Wilke billed Project Transformation as an “elite internship experience” (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). Bakker continued, “It was elite only because we said it was elite [chuckles], but that allowed us to just recruit some really capable young adults.” That first summer, 22 United Methodist college students signed up to be a part of the first class of interns in Dallas (Project Transformation, 2015a, 2015b, and http://projecttransformation.org/national/about-us/history). Bakker recounts, “I would say I’m still in touch with at least 50% of them because they-- we were all committed to figuring this out, and we didn't really know-- they didn't know what they had signed up for.” She confessed, “It was literally on the fly that we were building this program while the summer was going on.”

Looking back at the first summer, there are many things Bakker thinks of and wonders how they got away with it (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). Bakker admitted, “It was not a formalized program. There was no business plan.” But what “flying fast and loose” allowed them to be was hyper-focused on “What’s our mission?” as well as highly adaptable to both successes and failures of a startup endeavor. Because she lived with the interns that first summer, she received daily feedback and helped the interns reflect on what went well and what bombed that day. Some days, Bakker said the discussion was, "Okay, that didn't work, let's try something else.” On other days, the conversation was, "Oh that's a great thing, let's figure out how to do more of that" or "Let's try to get some more volunteers to help us with this part because that's going really well.” Additionally, this nighttime practice of reflection helped Bakker as she directed the overall scope of the program. Bakker realized that as the program evolved, things had to become more structured. Yet, Bakker realizes the programmatic flexibility “was really helpful as when we were trying to shape the program, that we did not have to adhere to so much red tape.”
Bakker summarized her role as the first director of Project Transformation when she stated, “I always said that I felt like from the very beginning, it was just my job to keep up with the energy and the ideas of our interns” (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). The fruitfulness of this attitude was best expressed in her willingness to help the interns meet the needs of the children they were serving. Bakker exuded,

I think the initial ideas came from some of my background, but once the interns got on board, it was really-- from the moment they started, my whole time working with Project Transformation, I felt like was just trying to keep up with their ideas, their energy. And they were the ones who were developing the relationship with the kids and the families. They were seeing some of the opportunities, better than I saw. And I just thought it was my job to try help resource and empower the young people, to help fulfill some of these opportunities, in the same way as Leighton and Sarah empowered me to do that with the whole program.

Following this strategy, Bakker led Project Transformation to not only establish the five summer day camps for K-6th graders during the summer of 1998, but also the expansion to offer year-round after-school programs (1999), the urban camps3 for inner city youth (2000), for students 7th – 9th grades (2003), and the L.I.T.E (Leadership In Training Experience) high school program (2008) (Project Transformation, 2015a). As of 2015, 29 former youth participants have returned to serve as college interns (Project Transformation, 2015c). With more L.I.T.E. participants enrolled in the program, Project Transformation expects the percentage of former participants serving as interns to increase with each summer. For Eric Lindh, the L. I. T. E. component completes the life cycle of the program as a child moves from being a participant to being a mentor in his/her local community. Finally, former interns have led the development of Project Transformation in four other locations (Project Transformation, 2015a, 2015c, and

3 Modeled on Kanakuk Kamp’s “Kids Across America”

Related to a commitment to shared leadership with the interns, Bakker believes their success was directly related to the shared ownership among partner agencies who surrounded Project Transformation (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). Remembering all the partners involved, Bakker found partners in “everybody from the local food bank, to the churches, to the mothers in the neighborhood.” Bakker commented that possibly the worst thing that could happen to a new Project Transformation chapter would be to receive a $100,000 startup grant. She reasoned:

I think that could be a problem because it would allow them to just become much more insular than reaching out to get partners and to figure out what does the community has to offer here, I think, is what has created such a strong fabric, at least with the program in Dallas, that it's now just a very well understood part of the DNA of the conference and I think that's critical.

The collaborative and entrepreneurial nature of Project Transformation also extended to the local churches that became involved with the program (Project Transformation, 2015b, 2015e, 2015f). Beyond providing hot meals each night during their “community dinners,” volunteers from local churches read with children, provided need supplies and books, and financially backed the burgeoning ministry. One story Bakker told to highlight this sense of true partnership and ownership occurred during the third or fourth year of the program when she was at Project Transformation’s booth at a United Methodist ministry fair. A middle-aged woman walked by, saw the sign, and exclaimed, “‘Our church started Project Transformation,’ and kind of went on and on about it.” Bakker thought:
I have been with the program since day one, and I've never met you and yes, I know of your church. But just the fact that we were able to-- everybody kind of owns the program. I didn't go on and say, ‘Oh, well actually, I started the program,’ but was very grateful that this person in this one particular church had such ownership and realized that they played such an important role in the whole program. I feel, especially in those early years as we were just making our way, not sure what was going on, because we shared ownership with so many people and really passed on and needed the help from so many individuals and churches, that's in my mind what made it successful, that everybody claimed that they owned it, which I had no problem with. I was grateful to have so many people want to be a part of it.

Finally, this larger reality of this ownership was reflected in how the North Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church bought into Project Transformation (Project Transformation, 2015c, 2015e, 2015f). Even though the interns had barely begun to serve in their inner-city communities, Wilke and Bakker had them commissioned during the opening worship of annual conference (Wilke, Sarah interview. May 5, 2015; Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). Bakker recalled that the impact of seeing 22 young adults standing in front of the sanctuary, giving up their summer, and saying, "We want to serve," was a powerful image. The North Texas Conference continues to celebrate its role in the creation of Project Transformation, especially as it is adopted in other conferences across the United States.

Yet as Shawn Bakker tells it, “There was no real thought to whether Project Transformation would last beyond its first summer” (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). The original thought was, “Let’s try this for the summer” without really building with a long-term sustainability model or plan. Yet overwhelmingly, all involved that first summer became convinced that they had stumbled upon something worth doing again. They began developing some basic evaluation measures, and they were all coming back positive. These measures included the number of volunteers who served, the number of kids who participated, and the number of hours that children had read in the summer. They also started a survey among the
interns that asked, “How many of you particularly for those who have graduated are continuing to stay involved in Mission and Ministry?” But the tipping point was when the interns said they wanted to come back and the churches asked to be involved again next summer. After that, Bakker thought, “We just had to find a way to make it work again.”

The major hurdle to moving forward was funding, especially for the director’s position (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). Project Transformation was not able to pay Bakker all year long, and so she took another position in the fall of 1998 (Wilke, Sarah interview. May 5, 2015; Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). Project Transformation hired a school teacher in 1999, who served in the director role that summer. After the summer of 1999, Bakker was accepted into the US-2 Young Adult Missionary Program of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries and appointed for the next three years to Project Transformation as the full-time director. This partnership was strategic because it allowed Project Transformation “to build up enough financial support that after that period the organization could afford to pay an executive director.” Bakker served as the director of Project Transformation Dallas until 2006, when Eric Lindh was named as the second director.

**Project Transformation, 2007 - 2015**

Eric Lindh, now serving in the new role of executive director for Project Transformation National, remembered his first experience with the program when he and a group of people from his church took dinner to a bunch of interns at SMU in the summer of 1998 (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016). Later that summer, Lindh said:

I also read with kids at Oak Cliff United Methodist Church in one of these old Sunday School’s sewing rooms or something they had here - really, really old building. Never been there before. We had some volunteers come and do a family fun night later that afternoon where we had a mariachi band playing and just served dinner and saw all the
interns running around with these kids. And I thought it was a great thing. I didn't know really at that point how involved other churches were. I just kind of saw this as something our church was doing as a partnership with Oak Cliff, and so that was my first encounter with the program.

Lindh never served as Project Transformation intern, but he did serve a year in inner city South London working with an Anglican ministry. From there, he came back to Dallas and taught middle school before going to the University of Wisconsin for his MBA. His studies focused on non-profit work and arts education, but he reflected that he never felt like he had found his niche. It was about that time that he began hearing that the director position at Project Transformation in Dallas was open. After what he called “a series of left turns,” he felt led back to an organization that he remembered serving at the very first summer in Dallas. When thinking about why he accepted the position, Lindh said:

I think the why for me was always the driving factor of experience the college students had, and a similar experience that I had out of college, living in an urban community, in an urban church, working with kids, and working with other young adults, and in the process of that trying to discern my gifts for ministry and next steps and I saw so much of that happening through Project Transformation.

Even though it wasn't on the ground level working directly with kids on a daily basis, Lindh saw his role as director as supporting other college students in that journey as a gift.

**New Chapters, Births and Deaths**


“borrowed” to start a ministry in Mobile, AL with young adults initially called 3.0 Summer Internships but then renamed Quad W (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016). In all of the current chapters, it was Project Transformation’s young adult alumni that took the initiative to export the model to start these programs. Two chapters have failed to thrive, and eventually closed. They are the Virginia chapter, which closed in 2007 and the Kansas City chapter, which closed in 2010 (Project Transformation, 2015a, 2015d).

When asked about the circumstances that led to the Virginia and Kansas City chapters closing, Lindh admitted he does not have all the details (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016). Back in 2007, Lindh was serving in his first year as the Project Transformation director and described himself as being very Dallas-focused. At this point, Lindh had very little to do with the other chapters. From his perspective, Lindh knew that they started in 2004 out of the UVA Wesley Foundation and ended abruptly in 2007. One contributing factor had to do with the ministry getting a new director during their last year. A second factor involved this new director wanting the ministry to become an ecumenical rather than solely a United Methodist ministry. Lindh understood that this caused the chapter to lose significant financial support from local United Methodist churches and donors. A third and final factor dealt with the new director not understanding that AmeriCorps grants were reimbursement-based grants that required agencies to raise a matching percentage of their funding. All of that culminated in the Virginia chapter not having enough cash flow to get their matching grant, forcing the director to tell all the interns that were hired for that summer that the program was closing. Lindh called it a “bad shut-down.”

The Kansas City chapter was staffed out of the University of Kansas Wesley Foundation in 2008, but it was designed to be a shared ministry of the Kansas East and Missouri conference.
The program operated at two site churches during the summer of 2008 and 2009, but shut down after a staffing transition at the University of Kansas Wesley Foundation. Additionally, the Kansas City chapter had not developed a strong board that could navigate the relationships and complexity of belonging to both conferences. The chapter closed at the end of the summer programming in 2009 (Project Transformation, 2015c).

Two chapters exist that are not part of the national Project Transformation movement but are inspired by the model (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016). The first is Motown Mission Experience that was started in 2005 in Detroit, Michigan, by a former Project Transformation intern, Carl Gladstone. The second is currently named Quad W Summer Missional Internships started in Mobile, Alabama. Formerly known as 3.0 Summer Internship, the program was started by Don Woolley after heavily investigating the Project Transformation model. After being approached by Woolley and engaging him in some conversations, Lindh remembered sharing Project Transformation’s manuals, procedures, applications, and training material with Woolley in an effort to help, what Lindh understood, start a new PT chapter (Project Transformation, 2015l). Within the next year, a campus minister who was familiar with Project Transformation was asked to fill out a recommendation for a student for a new program called 3.0 Summer Internships, but it was almost identical to Project Transformation’s recommendation minus the logo. When Lindh called and asked Woolley about it, Woolley told him that they were starting an internship for United Methodists who were Christians. Now named Quad W Summer Internships, that program now operates in seven locations.

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5 http://quadw.org/missions
The first chapter to launch after Dallas was Project Transformation – Oklahoma in 2001. Bakker, first director for Project Transformation – Dallas, remembered having the conversation with the Oklahoma conference (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). It began when one of the interns from the first year, Joanna Moss Robinson, took the idea back to her dad, who just happened to be on the Conference cabinet at the time. Bakker said, “There was a lot of interest and momentum at the Conference level, and so they fully embraced it, and she helped them provide the leadership in getting that started.”

Project Transformation - Tennessee

Courtney Aldrich, founding director of Project Transformation – Tennessee, grew up in Nashville, Tennessee, and attended Western Kentucky University for college. In 2008, she had applied for a summer internship with the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries, but “received a lovely honorable mention letter. In that letter, they did mention that I should consider check out Project Transformation, so I researched it and applied. I was hired and spent the summer of 2008 in Sherman, TX. I was hired pretty quickly as an intern for the summer of 2008” (Aldrich, Courtney interview. January 26, 2016). Aldrich said, “I returned in 2009 as a site coordinator and then as a house pastor in 2010.”

Aldrich wanted to do social work and felt drawn to social welfare policy, but that was before she started at Project Transformation (Aldrich, Courtney interview. January 26, 2016). Aldrich said:

I was quickly captivated by this model of ministry, and I felt like God might be changing my trajectory a little bit through Project Transformation. It really wasn't until after my second summer with PT that I began to hear this tiny little whisper Project Transformation Tennessee.
She started asking herself if this ministry model that had worked so well in Dallas could be replicated in her own hometown, Nashville. She entered a time of prayer and discernment with some mentors, but she didn’t take it any farther than that at the time.

It was during her third summer at Project Transformation that Lindh began to share more about the board’s vision of being a national model of ministry, and in particular, to expand the model to other conferences and communities (Aldrich, Courtney interview. January 26, 2016). Aldrich shared, “And so we begin to talk about Nashville, and it sounded like things were just aligning for that conversation to continue.” She returned home after her third summer with Project Transformation and, with her mentors, began to share the vision for Project Transformation with church and community leaders and around the Nashville area. In 2011, “The doors quickly begun to open and people just began to walk through these doors one at a time.” Aldrich stated, “It became apparent that my plan to do social welfare reform at the state level was emerging into something else, and God was calling me to be part of Project Transformation Tennessee.” So she joined on staff at Project Transformation Tennessee in October 2011, right before their first summer of programming in 2012.

Aldrich recounted a conversation with Sarah Wilke, now CEO of The Upper Room in Nashville (Aldrich, Courtney interview. January 26, 2016). She said that at one point, they were aiming to begin in the summer of 2013. But when they met with Sarah Wilke, she said, “[chuckles] Sarah Wilke in the only way that she can do was like, ‘Why are you waiting? Do it now. You need to do it now. If you having this conversation, go. It's 2012. Do it’.” Looking back on it now, Aldrich recognized that it made sense to start in 2012 because “as we're having this conversation an energy is forming. It's important that you're a good steward to that energy, and when people were excited and ready we needed to move forward.”
As far as who she was talking with, Aldrich says she talked “with people at the top and people at the bottom and everybody in between” (Aldrich, Courtney interview. January 26, 2016). From conference leaders to Sunday school teachers, from mission chairs to community educators, from social services to pastors, and from big churches to small churches, Aldrich and her team had a lot of coffee dates. Aldrich knew “it was important for us to get everybody's buy-in into this vision, because we know that PT is such a collaborative model.” She understood that was what made Project Transformation so sustainable, because of this wide-spread community ownership of the vision.

Aldrich described her team’s approach as “not gung-ho” but “Let us tell you about PT, and does this resonate with you? Is there a need, or are there are other programs or models that are in Nashville right now that are doing this that we can just support?” (Aldrich, Courtney interview. January 26, 2016). Aldrich was clear that they were not asking for other’s financial backing, but they were genuinely there to listen to what the needs of the community were. Aldrich was open to either possibility, but she found through those conversations that they had discovered a real need that was not yet being met. Affirmed that they should move forward, the team then went back and asked for specific and strategic support from each emerging partner. Their requests depended on who they were talking with and how that partner was passionate about helping. In this way, Aldrich built Project Transformation Tennessee from the ground up, leveraging the assets of the greater Nashville community.

When putting the program together, Aldrich reflected on the changes she saw during her three summers as an Intern in Dallas (Aldrich, Courtney interview. January 26, 2016). One

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6 News article on Project Transformation – Tennessee site that tell their history: http://projecttransformation.org/tennessee/who-we-are/media/our-news.
positive development was that the program was becoming more evidence based, utilizing statistics and best practices to inform programming that shaped the children’s experience. She thinks that there's still opportunity for them to develop the evidence base of the young adult experience as well. Other changes in Dallas have stemmed around AmeriCorps. Aldrich noted, “Just from the internship experience as I was coming up, through my three summers, there were a little bit of changes each year because of the AmeriCorps relationship.” Specifically, Aldrich talked about required spiritual components at one point that later became optional in Dallas because of the AmeriCorps restriction to even what they had to call the young adults – “They’re Corp members and not interns.” Aldrich asserts, “And as our spiritual components are still an important piece of our internship and everyone's expected to participate, and our interns are our interns.” Because of those issues, when they launched in Tennessee, they decided not to prioritize building relationships with the local AmeriCorps, at least not yet. Aldrich elaborated,

Dallas knows who they are and so when they enter into and apply for AmeriCorps grants, they are able to state clearly this is who we are, this is what we can do this is what we can't do and we didn't have that yet in Tennessee. So we wanted to be able to formally say "This is who we are," to Nashville, and let's prioritize this and let's look at AmeriCorps later on down the road when we have more of a capacity both in our identity and mission and values to understand how the implications of AmeriCorps would effect us.

Now having lived through its fourth summer⁷, Aldrich reflected on big turning points in the history of Project Transformation Tennessee (Aldrich, Courtney interview. January 26, 2016). First of all, she said it was very formative for the program when they decided to become their own 501c3 instead of becoming a program of an existing ministry. “All of a sudden we

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⁷ Four years of annual reports are available online that document the growth of the chapter: [http://projecttransformation.org/tennessee/who-we-are/media/annual-reports/](http://projecttransformation.org/tennessee/who-we-are/media/annual-reports/).
were really driving our destiny in a lot of ways, in our leadership ways,” she said. Second, the first summer was a crucial point because, for the first time, people could experience the program first hand, “and felt the Holy Spirit working through this model.” A third major turning point was when the program became partners with Belmont University in Nashville in 2012. Aldrich recalls, “It really gave us legitimacy as an organization”8. Fourth, Bishop McAlilly being appointed to the Tennessee conference was an important moment for the program. He and his wife’s involvement has been extremely valuable. A fifth turning point was when they hired a third staff person in May of 2014. At that point, the staff began to be able to take on specialized roles and that made a positive impact on their programming. Finally, this past summer (2015), when Project Transformation Tennessee expanded to Murfreesboro, which is 30 minutes south of Nashville, they confirmed that they could expand this model outside of the original metropolitan area.

*Project Transformation - Rio Texas*

Nathaniel Odell, founding director of Project Transformation Rio Texas, recounted how the program came to San Antonio (Odell, Nathaniel interview. January 28, 2016). In the summer of 2014, the bishop’s wife led an exploratory task force on a site visit of Project Transformation Dallas. The group liked what they saw, and they began efforts to bring the model to San Antonio by expanding the task force to 30 - 40 volunteers. What Odell found interesting was that the Rio Texas conference of the United Methodist Church has just been formed by merging the Southwest Texas and the Rio Texas conference in January of 2014. Odell saw the timing as advantageous because it allowed Project Transformation to weave itself into the conference

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8 [http://news.belmont.edu/belmont-helps-project-transformation-move-students-to-ministry/](http://news.belmont.edu/belmont-helps-project-transformation-move-students-to-ministry/)
DNA while it was taking shape. It was this task force that asked Eric Lindh for names to fill the new director position in San Antonio, and it was Lindh who contacted Odell.

Odell had been a Project Transformation Dallas intern in 2007 (Odell, Nathaniel interview. January 28, 2016). Instead of joining the Peace Corp, he instead applied and was accepted as the year-round site coordinator at the Wesley-Rankin Community Center until 2012. Odell was at Dallas Afterschool until February 2015, when Eric contacted him about the executive director position. Lindh knew that Odell had grown up in San Antonio and that his family was still there. They thought he might be interested because of his ties to this community, and he was. Odell said:

> I was personally looking for sort of that next step in my own career. I still obviously loved Project Transformation and recognized the impact it had on me personally, and gave me a chance to come to my hometown, where I grew up, and get to bring this transformational program to my hometown community.

Unlike Aldrich, Odell was invited into a functioning team that had been working for over 18 months by the time he started on March 1, 2015 (Odell, Nathaniel interview. January 28, 2016). By the time Odell came on board, all the site locations had been decided, the intern housing was secured, and over $100,000 had been raised to start the program. Odell and his associate director, a former Project Transformation Dallas intern as well, were hired directly by the conference with a summer deadline looming to start the program. Odell said that Lindh wondered if they could pull it off in two months or needed to push it off another year.

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9 Odell’s bio on Project Transformation – Rio Texas website: [http://projecttransformation.org/riotx/who-we-are/staff/](http://projecttransformation.org/riotx/who-we-are/staff/)
With the task force having put in place all the pieces before Odell arrived, the last remaining task was recruiting interns (Odell, Nathaniel interview. January 28, 2016). Odell admitted, “Recruiting was so crazy . . . I pretty much offered a position to everybody who applied.” With the first summer over and his new associate director on board, they have set their recruitment deadlines for March 1st for 2016. So this year with Stacey on-board, she's really been able to come up with a game plan for recruiting. Their goal for this year is to get more people applying than they had in 2015, and then seeing who accepts and who declines offers, and what their reasons are. This will help them get an idea of who they are competing against for quality interns.

**Project Transformation, 2015 to the Present**

For Project Transformation, two issues loom large on its horizon as it shapes its future national strategy. When asked what Project Transformation needs to address to stay viable, Bakker believed the current leadership needed to hold true to some of the “foundational pieces of who we are as an organization and to not get distracted by other pieces or components” (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). Primarily, she was referring to trusting the leadership of the young adults to keep Project Transformation relevant and growing. Bakker commented, “I do see the [Intern] leadership as being so critical and I think back to the first [chapter] expansion into Oklahoma. It was an intern that took it there.” Her concern centered on the fact that Project Transformation is what it is today because they let the Interns’ voices be heard and let them take ownership in making it happen. Bakker cautioned:

It was so easy for us, for me, to be dependent upon that [ownership of the interns] because I didn't have the infrastructure in place and so I needed that. I think as more of that infrastructure is developed [we have] to make sure that the voice, the energy, the passion of the interns is still kind of given a primary place in the program design and also in the strategic direction. Because that, like I said, I did out of necessity, but I think
what's just kind of core in how the program grew but also core in the DNA of the program and I would recognize-- I mean I would imagine as things get more formalized, it's harder to continue to hear and listen and respond because it doesn't have the flexibility that we had in the beginning. That's how it worked in the beginning and I think there's something really to be said for that.

If asked, Sarah Wilke, co-founder of Project Transformation, would tell you that Project Transformation has drifted on this very point. Wilke regretfully asserted:

It is not a child care program. It is an internship program - the children have the luxury of benefiting from it. We have to trust that our young people want so much to give their part to do their bit to play a role and to be valued. It just takes a little guidance, cheerleading, and direction. (Wilke, Sarah interview. May 5, 2015)

Both she and Bakker not only witnessed what young adults could accomplish with the right support, but they were both first-hand recipients of being “elevated to the table” and trusted to lead. When pressed, Wilke admitted, “Sure they need someone to ask questions . . . but the vast majority [of young people] really have it going on. My goal in life is always to invest in the younger adult.”

Without being prompted, Eric Lindh, executive director of Project Transformation National, stated:

Sarah Wilke will probably say - and still, to her grave - say, ‘It's all about college students. It's a leadership program for college students’. And she's right, though that's kind of the founders' mentality, but we can't diminish the importance of our work with children, especially now that we've seen the continuity that they can have through becoming the next C (college), and potentially even the third C (church). (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016)

And it’s not that he disagrees with Wilke. For Lindh, it’s a shift in prioritization from “It’s really all about the young adult,” to now stating more robustly that all three C’s are equally important.
In many ways, Lindh saw the over-emphasis on the college students as communicating the wrong message, that the children were a “means to an end” for the vocational development of the young adults. Lindh said that the mission statement has been changed to now read:

Our mission is to engage young adults in purposeful leadership and ministry, support underserved children and families, and connect churches to communities in need. (Project Transformation, 2015c, 2015d, and http://projecttransformation.org/national/)

Lindh emphasized that they give equal weight to all three components, and that all three revolve around this core idea of transformation coming through relationships.

Looking ahead, Lindh said he will “be doing backflips one day if we see a kid who grew up in the program, came back to serve as a college student, and then ultimately went to seminary and served as a pastor in one of these churches, I mean that would be the ultimate celebration of all three phases of our program cycling together” (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016).

Lindh reflected on how Project Transformation was organized, in all its complexity. He noted:

They may not have thought about all those pieces out there, how inter-related they are and how important it was that volunteers got to come bring food because they couldn't cook, and how they had community living at all because they didn't know where they were going to have all these people live. So it's just interesting to know that history and ultimately how it's connected really well together.

**AmeriCorps**

The AmeriCorps relationship with Project Transformation started under Bakker has evolved over the life of the program. Currently, two out of the four Project Transformation chapters receive AmeriCorps grant monies: Dallas and Oklahoma. This division of the

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10 Project Transformation - Dallas (http://projecttransformation.org/dallas/) website is branded with AmeriCorps logo. Project Transformation – Oklahoma is not, but talks about AmeriCorps
programs has led to a discussion about what the national funding strategy is for new chapters. Lindh questioned, “in the absence of any clear direction or strategy from the national level, on AmeriCorps, is that detrimental?” (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016). More than what Bakker experienced during her tenure, Lindh has watched an evolution of AmeriCorps as it “potentially tightens up its restrictions and willingness to partner and be flexible with faith-based organizations.” Lindh anticipates the funding could create more potential to have a negative impact, but stopped short of saying that it takes away from Project Transformation’s identity.

He does admit that it makes certain parts of what they do a little awkward in terms of the faith components11 of the program at the Dallas and Oklahoma chapters, which cannot be required but are only voluntary (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016). Lindh elaborates, “We can’t say, ‘You're in charge of leading bible study, it's your week, you're on it, you have to do it, because this is part of your internship, it's a part of our program day.’” Lindh said that they have never had a circumstance where none of the team members wanted to lead the Bible study with the children, but if for whatever reasons they did, they would have the pastor in the church lead that part of the day. Another awkward aspect impacts the site churches that are hosting Project Transformation because it is optional for the team to go to worship at that church on Sunday morning. Not only does it change the relationship the church has, or won’t have, with the college students individually, but it also affects the ability of the interns to bring some of the children and their families to church on Sundays. Lindh confessed, “so that kind of thing is

partnership in Intern application (http://projecttransformation.org/oklahoma/what-we-do/programs/college-internships/).

11 Example of how this is explained to Interns in Oklahoma application (http://projecttransformation.org/oklahoma/what-we-do/programs/college-internships/) and Dallas application (http://projecttransformation.org/dallas/what-we-do/programs/college-internships/).
potentially detrimental if you're not required as part of your internship to attend worship.”
Likewise, Lindh projected that with every faith component being deemed voluntary, “if interns have the option to sleep, take a nap, go work out, not attend, for whatever reason, those interns are missing out on part of the overall experience.”

For Lindh, the struggle is balancing the opportunities the AmeriCorps funding provides with the increasingly restrictive and inflexible requirements for faith components (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016). Lindh acknowledged that “it's restricting, it's sometimes inconvenient, and at times you miss out on certain opportunities that you would otherwise have if that weren't part of the mixture.” Lindh also sees the topic impacting the national board, whose members are on both sides of the issue. Believing Project Transformation can accomplish more by being collaborative than working in isolation, Lindh is clear it cannot be at the cost of losing their identity or guiding purpose of why they exist. At this point, AmeriCorps provides significant funding for interns and staff at the Dallas and Oklahoma chapters. While there is a growing tension for Project Transformation, Lindh does not know of any available alternative to replace those funds without drastically impacting the scope of the program. One hope is that the United Methodist Church would adopt and adapt Project Transformation on a national scale with regard to young adult leadership development and vocational discernment, replacing less successful strategies that currently exist.

With each new chapter, Project Transformation National is leaving the decision to pursue AmeriCorps funding “as something that they don't have to do. We're not saying yes or no either way, or encouraging either way” (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016). Particularly for new starts, the focus needs to be on creating buy-in and partnerships from local churches, the conference, and community partners. Lindh suggested that the point to consider AmeriCorps is
if a local chapter wants to grow its capacity to bring on more interns. Those chapters could then consider expanding their funding sources beyond the local church world and church-affiliated foundations.

As the newest chapter, Project Transformation Rio Texas is currently not an AmeriCorps grant recipient. Odell, founding director of Project Transformation – Rio Texas, understood that as the program was being shaped in San Antonio, the task force would like “to avoid ever doing AmeriCorps because the restrictions it places on the types of activities that we can do,” especially when it come to the ability to require interns to participate in the faith-based activities (Odell, Nathaneil interview. January 28, 2016). Odell and his team have been working to “integrate all of these disparate pieces into a more meaningful existence” like the Friday experiences, Tuesday night worships, the leadership curriculum, and the overall curriculum.

What concerns Odell is that accepting AmeriCorps funding could threaten the ability to create a coherent program by designating some activities as required and others as voluntary (Odell, Nathaniel interview. January 28, 2016). Odell conceded, “When I was a PT Intern worship was required. We just couldn't put it on our timesheet. And, personally, knowing myself, if worshiped was not required I wouldn't have gone and my experience would have been worse because of it.” For Project Transformation Rio Texas, they are making worship mandatory as a part of the experience, something Odell knows that Project Transformation Dallas cannot do now. As an example of this integration, Odell and his staff will craft their worships around particular social justice themes that then match up with what they're doing on their Friday Experiences. For Odell, it’s not about reinventing the wheel of Project Transformation, but it is working to connect the dots and create continuity throughout the program.
Project Transformation National

Drawing on the successes and failures in establishing other chapters, Project Transformation launched a national office in June 2015 to provide the structure, financial resources, and growth strategy needed to expedite national expansion efforts and ensure new chapters are successful and sustainable. Having served in this role in an informal way since becoming the executive director of Project Transformation - Dallas, Eric Lindh was hired as the first national director in 2015. For Lindh, there are three major growth areas related to turning Project Transformation into a national ministry model.

The first area has to do with the curriculum (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016). Historically, PT has allowed its young adults to create the curriculum for children's/youth programming and viewed this as "leadership experience.” However, because not all (and in fact, most) young adults have the expertise needed for this, the programming hasn't always been of the highest standard. PT Dallas and other chapters are still working through this issue with the goal of finding a common curriculum that raises standards and is evidence-based, while giving each PT chapter the flexibility and autonomy to allow its young adults to still take a leadership role in tailoring it to their specific programs.

The second growth area is finding the balance between “catering the program to a wide and diverse group of young adults vs having a more narrow focus of programming and recruitment of a specific type of young adults” (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016). This pertains primarily to developing a vocational formation program for young adults from a faith-based and United Methodist-affiliated perspective while maintaining compliance with a federal funding source (AmeriCorps). Two of the PT chapters receive AmeriCorps funding (Dallas and Oklahoma) and two do not (Tennessee and Rio Texas). The AmeriCorps-funded programs not
only require them to use different terminology (AmeriCorps member vs "intern"), but activities that are religious in nature must be optional for the young adults, and the recruitment and selection of young adults for AmeriCorps programs is much broader, which leads to a more diverse group of young people. For example, the AmeriCorps-funded chapters might have more young adults from a different faith background or no faith background at all; whereas, the non-AmeriCorps programs can hire young adults based on their faith background and vocational desire. There are pros and cons for each, but as the national model expands, Lindh has found it more difficult to explain the full Project Transformation experience consistently and measure the impact uniformly.

Lindh viewed the third growth area as being connected to the second, in that Project Transformation needs to define what their ultimate outcome is for the young adults who participate (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016). Lindh stated:

In the early years, many understood the program to be a pipeline for recruiting young clergy for the United Methodist Church. While some still view Project Transformation in this narrow way, the vast majority of our alumni do not become ordained. We are currently revising our surveys to better reflect the impact of the program. While each chapter shares the same Friday Experience (ministry/service vocational exploration) model, we do not yet have a more structured, summer-long curriculum around helping young adults think and reflect on vocational discernment, calling, or whatever terminology you use to describe this.

Compounding this issue is the reality that Project Transformation has to carefully negotiate how much of the Christian faith can be woven into these activities on a chapter by chapter basis, particularly the two chapters that depend heavily on AmeriCorps grant monies to maintain the scope of their programming. Unless and until some significant financial partnerships can be developed that would allow Project Transformation to either redefine its relationship with
AmeriCorps or operate entirely without its contributions, Lindh will have to continue balancing increasingly competitive institutions and interests in this season of expansion.
Chapter 7: Comparing Survey Rankings with Interviewees

This chapter records the portion of the thirteen interviews that reviews the survey results that ask respondents to rank the most important practices and philosophical components used in their programs. For this segment of the interview, the survey results were shared with the interviewees via email and then I walked them through the results during the interview. I then asked them to respond as to whether or not the survey results accurately described their programs. The persons being interviewed were responding to the study’s survey that was completed by 202 participants from all three programs. This number is made up of 141 participants from twelve of the twenty-one locations within The Fellows Initiative, 51 participants from all four chapters of Project Transformation, and eleven participants from the John Jay Institute. Table 3 displays basic details about the respondents for each program.

The snapshot of each program’s respondents in Table 3 presents four factors worth elaborating on. First, there were fewer responses from the John Jay Institute than expected, thus significantly impacting the interpretive results due to the small sample size. A major explanation for this lack of participation was a conflict created by the upcoming John Jay Institute’s Tenth Anniversary Celebration on November 11, 2015. As a major fundraising event for John Jay, publicity for the event understandably, but unfortunately, took organizational priority over disseminating the research questionnaire among faculty, board members, volunteers, and the advisory council. Despite this conflict, the results do inform the study in subtle ways. Second, the ratio of total respondents to alumni, represented in the formula TOTAL (alumni), potentially speaks to each program’s level of involvement of non-alumni volunteers, individual chapters’ relationships to local congregations, and their commitment to a multi-generational experience.
Table 3: Snapshot of Respondents for each Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>JOHN JAY INSTITUTE</th>
<th>PROJECT TRANSFORMATION</th>
<th>THE FELLOWS INITIATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># OF RESPONDENTS</td>
<td>11 (9)</td>
<td>51 (9)</td>
<td>141 (43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROGRAM STAFF</td>
<td>10 (9)</td>
<td>50 (9)</td>
<td>136 (43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOARD</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11 (1)</td>
<td>45 (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOLUNTEER</td>
<td>9 (9)</td>
<td>27 (1)</td>
<td>92 (37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RANGE OF YEARS SERVED</td>
<td>0.5 – 4.0</td>
<td>0.0 – 20.0</td>
<td>0.0 – 24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERAGE YEARS SERVED</td>
<td>1.59 (1.43)</td>
<td>5.63 (4.83)</td>
<td>3.95 (2.77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUM OF YEARS INVOLVED</td>
<td>15.9 (12.90)</td>
<td>275.65 (43.5)</td>
<td>528.75 (113.75)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Table 1, all data is provided in terms of TOTAL (Alumni). Missing data (n) for each program: 1) John Jay Institute, n = 1; 2) Project Transformation, n = 1; and 3) The Fellows Initiative, n = 6.

Third, the range of years served, average years served, and sum of years involved for Project Transformation and The Fellows Initiative’s respondents may indicate a generative impact on staff, board, and volunteers. Finally, overwhelmingly strong and positive statements of support in the survey’s open-ended questions reflect a broad commitment to the success and goals of their respective programs.

Overview of Survey Findings

With the data presented in Table 4, the survey tested the programs’ respondents understanding of the practices employed in the three programs. Overall, the responses to Question #9 demonstrated a high level of recognition of the thirteen practices across the three programs. With only “living with a host family” and “internships in a chosen field” scoring in the 50s, the practices demonstrated high average levels of recognition across all 202 participants.
When the responses to Question #9 were broken out by individual programs, responses accurately and consistently represent those practices employed, or not employed, to shape the experiences of their emerging adult participants. For example, the John Jay Institute program does not include “hands on ministry experience with a local congregation,” “living with a host family from a local church,” or “service learning programs that come along side strategic partners serving with local communities.” Additionally, Project Transformation does not include “living with a host family from a local church” or “academic courses that help participants form a coherent, Christian worldview.” In contrast to the other two programs, The Fellows Initiative recognizes all thirteen practices in its programming.

With Question #10A in Table 5, the object was to move beyond recognition to ranking the most significant practices overall and within each program. Across all three programs, the ranking was: 1) “An intentionally-designed, overall curriculum that helps young adults explore issues of spiritual and vocational identity,” 2) “living in Christian community with other young adult peers,” 3) “access to adult mentors,” 4) “hands on ministry and leadership experiences within a local congregation”, and 5) “Multiple vocational experiences, seminars, and/or field trips that expose participants to a breadth of professional environments and callings.” When the scores are broken down among the individual programs, important distinctions become more apparent. For the John Jay Institute, the top five most significant practices were: 1) tied for first place “living in Christian community” and “academic courses,” 3) tied for third place “job and network connection” and “multiple vocational experiences,” and 5) “intentionally-designed overall curriculum.” For Project Transformation, the top five most significant practices were: 1)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION #9</th>
<th>% PRACTICE RECOGNIZED BY ALL RESPONDENTS (n = 202)</th>
<th>% PRACTICE RECOGNIZED BY RESPONDENTS IN JOHN JAY INSTITUTE (n = 11)</th>
<th>% PRACTICE RECOGNIZED BY RESPONDENTS IN PROJECT TRANSFORMATION (n = 50)</th>
<th>% PRACTICE RECOGNIZED BY RESPONDENTS IN THE FELLOWS INITIATIVE (n = 141)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Career counseling and professional development skills</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>65.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Job and network connections</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>75.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. An intentionally-designed, overall curriculum that helps young adults explore issues of spiritual and vocational identity</td>
<td>77.2</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>87.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Internships in chosen field or career</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>52.1</td>
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<td>5. Hands on ministry and leadership experiences within a local congregation</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>86.3</td>
<td>74.3</td>
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<td>6. Living in Christian community with other young adult peers</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>86.3</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>7. Living with a host family from the local church</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>77.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Access to adult models and mentors</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>79.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Practical modeling of lifelong spiritual formation practices</td>
<td>70.3</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>76.4</td>
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<td>10. Academic courses that help participants form a coherent, Christian worldview</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
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<td>11. Multiple vocational experiences, seminars, and/or field trips that expose participants to a breadth of professional environments and callings</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>70</td>
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<td>12. Service learning programs that come along side strategic partners serving within local communities</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>58.6</td>
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<td>13. Conference and/or retreats that create space for learning, discussion, and reflection</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>72.1</td>
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<td>QUESTION 10A</td>
<td>% PRACTICE IS RANKED IN TOP 5 BY ALL Respondents <em>(n = 202)</em></td>
<td>% PRACTICE RANKED IN TOP 5 BY Respondents IN JOHN JAY INSTITUTE <em>(n = 11)</em></td>
<td>% PRACTICE RANKED IN TOP 5 BY Respondents IN PROJECT TRANSFORMATION <em>(n = 50)</em></td>
<td>% PRACTICE RANKED IN TOP 5 BY Respondents IN THE FELLOWS INITIATIVE <em>(n = 141)</em></td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Career counseling and professional development skills</td>
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<td>54.9</td>
<td>75</td>
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<td>25.2</td>
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<td>5. Hands on ministry and leadership experiences within a local congregation</td>
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<td>72.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
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<td>8. Access to adult models and mentors</td>
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<td>45.1</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Practical modeling of life-long spiritual formation practices</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
“living in Christian community,” 2) “multiple vocational experiences,” 3) “hands on ministry experience within a local congregation, 4) “intentionally-designed overall curriculum, and 5) “service learning. For The Fellows Initiative, the top five most significant practices were: 1) “intentionally-designed overall curriculum, 2) “access to adult models and mentors,” 3) “living in Christian community,” 4) tied for fourth place “practice modeling of life-long spiritual formation” and “academic courses.

The last step was Question #10B, as represented in Table 6. The task was to denote the most significant practice across and within all three programs. For all 202 respondents, “intentionally-designed overall curriculum” scored most significant. For John Jay Institute, “living in Christian community” and “academic courses” tied for most. For Project Transformation, “intentionally-designed overall curriculum” and “hands on ministry and leadership experiences within a local congregation” tied for most. Finally, for The Fellows Initiative, “intentionally-designed overall curriculum” was ranked the most significant practice.

In Table 7, the focus shifts from practices to philosophical components as related to Question #11A. Across all three programs, the top three most significant philosophical components were: 1) “spiritual formation practices,” and 2) tied for second place “leadership development programs” and “Biblical principles.” For the John Jay Institute, the top three most significant philosophical components were: 1) “leadership development programs,” and 2) tied for second “business internship models” and “Biblical principles” each. For Project Transformation, the top three most significant philosophical components were: 1) “leadership development program,” 2) “spiritual formation practices, and 3) “theories of human development.” For the Fellows Initiative, the top three most significant philosophical
## Table 6 – Question #10B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION #10B</th>
<th>% PRACTICE IS RANKED MOST SIGNIFICANT BY RESPONDENTS FROM ALL PROGRAMS (n = 202)</th>
<th>% PRACTICE IS RANKED MOST SIGNIFICANT BY RESPONDENTS IN JOHN JAY INSTITUTE (n = 11)</th>
<th>% PRACTICE IS RANKED MOST SIGNIFICANT BY RESPONDENTS IN PROJECT TRANSFORMATION (n = 50)</th>
<th>% PRACTICE IS RANKED MOST SIGNIFICANT BY RESPONDENTS IN THE FELLOWS INITIATIVE (n = 141)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Career counseling and professional development skills</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Job and network connections</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. An intentionally-designed, overall curriculum that helps young adults explore issues of spiritual and vocational identity</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Internships in chosen field or career</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Hands on ministry and leadership experiences within a local congregation</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Living in Christian community with other young adult peers</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Living with a host family from the local church</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Access to adult models and mentors</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Practical modeling of life- long spiritual formation practices</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Academic courses that help participants form a coherent, Christian worldview</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Multiple vocational experiences, seminars, and/or field trips that expose participants to a breadth of professional environments and callings</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Service learning programs that come along side strategic partners serving within local communities</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Conference and/or retreats that create space for learning, discussion, and reflection</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 7 – Question #11A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION #11A</th>
<th>% PHILOSOPHICAL COMPONENT IS RANKED IN TOP 3 BY RESPONDENTS IN ALL PROGRAMS (n = 202)</th>
<th>% PHILOSOPHICAL COMPONENT IS RANKED IN TOP 3 BY RESPONDENTS IN JOHN JAY INSTITUTE (n = 11)</th>
<th>% PHILOSOPHICAL COMPONENT IS RANKED IN TOP 3 BY RESPONDENTS IN PROJECT TRANSFORMATION (n = 50)</th>
<th>% PHILOSOPHICAL COMPONENT IS RANKED IN TOP 3 BY RESPONDENTS IN THE FELLOWS INITIATIVE (n = 141)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Theories of human development</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Spiritual formation practices</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>71.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Leadership development programs</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>63.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Business internship models</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Career counseling interventions</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Biblical principles</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>71.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. High-impact educational practices</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

components were: 1) tied for first place “spiritual formation practices” and “Biblical principles,” and 3) “leadership development programs.”

In Table 8, the final step was singling out the most significant philosophical components across and within all three programs in Question #11B. Overall, the most significant philosophical component was “Biblical principles.” For the John Jay Institute, the most significant philosophical component was a tie between “leadership development programs” and “Biblical principles.” For Project Transformation, the most significant philosophical
Table 8 – Question #11B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION 11B</th>
<th>% PHILOSOPHICAL COMPONENT IS RANKED MOST SIGNIFICATION BY RESPONDENTS IN ALL PROGRAMS (n = 202)</th>
<th>% PHILOSOPHICAL COMPONENT IS RANKED MOST SIGNIFICATION BY RESPONDENTS IN JOHN JAY INSTITUTE (n = 11)</th>
<th>% PHILOSOPHICAL COMPONENT IS RANKED MOST SIGNIFICATION BY RESPONDENTS IN PROJECT TRANSFORMATION (n = 50)</th>
<th>% PHILOSOPHICAL COMPONENT IS RANKED MOST SIGNIFICATION BY RESPONDENTS IN THE FELLOWS INITIATIVE (n = 141)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Theories of human development</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Spiritual formation practices</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Leadership development programs</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Business internship models</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Career counseling interventions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Biblical principles</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>53.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. High-impact educational practices</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

component was “leadership development program.” For the Fellows Initiative, the most significant philosophical component was “Biblical principles.”

**Discussing the Survey Results with Interviewees**

Out of thirteen interviews conducted for this study, twelve of the respondents were currently in leadership positions in one of the three programs and had participated in the survey. After each individual phone interview was scheduled, each of the thirteen were emailed a list of the interview protocol as well as electronic copies of Tables 4-8 with the overall rankings and their individual program’s rankings from the questionnaire. Each of the interviewees was
walked through the results and then asked to respond to the rankings for their individual program. The following summaries are arranged by program.

**The Fellows Initiative**

Summary for Questions 10A and 10B: For The Fellows Initiative, the top five most significant practices were: 1) “intentionally-designed overall curriculum,” 2) “access to adult models and mentors,” 3) “living in Christian community,” 4) tied for fourth place “practice modeling of life-long spiritual formation” and “academic courses. The most significant practice for The Fellows Initiative was “intentionally-designed overall curriculum.”

For The Fellows Initiative, 141 volunteers from 13 programs responded to the questionnaire. A common response to Questions 9, 10A, and 10B from all five interviews was that the rankings of the practices were “spot on” as stated by Dennis Doran, director of the Trinity Fellows (Doran, Dennis interview. January 27, 2016). Though each of the leaders expressed distinctions associated with their local chapter when responding to Tables 4-6, they all saw the questionnaire results as “a good reflection of The Fellows Initiative (Chapman, Becca interview. January 26, 2016) Morna Comeau, national director for The Fellows Initiative, was encouraged to see what she has called “the Big C” of overall curriculum rank as the most significant practice (Comeau, Morna interview. January 28, 2016). She did not see any one part as more important than the whole of the program which emphasizes a “seamlessness of faith” throughout. Dennis Doran, director of Trinity Fellows in Charlottesville, further expanded this

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1 **Practices in bold** indicate practices deemed most significant in overall study. Hence, practices not in bold indicate practices held as most significant only for the individual program. See Table 2 and Table 3.
thought by saying, “I think curriculum's not so much the word as it's a philosophy of life. . .
There's this pervasive, overall big C Curriculum, philosophy of life, theology of life that is
informing everything. That is the water that we're drinking, the air we're breathing” (Doran,
Dennis interview. January 27, 2016). Becca Chapman, first national director of The Fellows
Initiative, summed up her thoughts on the multiple pieces of their curriculum this way, “It's job,
academics, spiritual formation, community, and service. That's the curriculum for me”
(Chapman, Becca interview. January 26, 2016). Finally, each interviewee viewed the survey
results as an indication that its broader leadership held a consistent understanding about the
essential and core practices of The Fellows Initiative.

Summary for Questions 11A and 11B: For the Fellows Initiative, the top three most
significant philosophical components were: 1) tied for first place “Biblical principles” and
“spiritual formation practices,” 3) “leadership development programs. And for The Fellows
Initiative, the most significant philosophical component was “Biblical principles.”

When the interview moved to Question #11A and #11B, each of the respondents were to
rank the philosophical components which guided their programs, all those interviewed expressed
what distinguished a Christian leadership development program from a leadership development
program. Dennis Doran, Trinity Fellows, saw spiritual formation practices, leadership
development program, and Biblical principles as connected and interchangeable – they were all
needed to make The Fellows Initiative unique (Doran, Dennis interview. January 27, 2016). He
stated, “If you want to be able to tell the difference between a leadership development program
that's faith-based - Christian, if you will - and one that's secular, well then spiritual formation in a
Christian capacity or a Christian context is going to be the thing that people are coming for.”
Becca Chapman, former director of both The Fellows Initiative and the Pittsburgh Fellows, responded, “I'm not surprised that that's the way it's turned out. For me, . . . I would probably have chosen for Pittsburgh Fellows number spiritual formation practices, leadership development program, and business internship model (Chapman, Becca interview. January 26, 2016). Yet she also spoke about a tension in how those principles relate with each other she said:

Maybe I'm splitting hairs, but I'm the wife of an Anglican priest in a large church. This is our fourth church. I've seen a lot of these. In the hands of someone, who really think they just need to get these young fellows to know who Jesus is, and to figure out doctrine, and to know the Bible, that would not be a helpful thing. Yes, you have to do that. We want to do that, but there's no point in having a Fellows program unless you hold your faith absolutely central, but you also are able to have some kind of impact on the culture around you.

Morna Comeau, national director for The Fellows Initiative, talked about how the local church provided the context for the three most significant philosophical components to interact when she stated, “everyone does leadership development programs” (Comeau, Moran interview. January 28, 2016). She said, “Fellows programs establish the importance of the local church in the lives of millennials when nationally, local churches aren’t doing well with young adults. . . They are living with people of different generations, working, serving youth, building relationships and friendships with much older people, which is not common.” And she understands the question being asked, “is not how does the local church feed me, but how can I serve the local church.” The way these principles interact and inform each other within a local congregation distinguishes The Fellows Initiative experience.

John Jay Institute

Summary for Questions 10A and 10B: For the John Jay Institute, eleven respondents completed the questionnaire. Based upon this extremely small sample size, the top five most
significant practices were: 1) tied for first place “living in Christian community” and “academic courses,” 3) tied for third place “job and network connection” and “multiple vocational experiences, and 5) “intentionally-designed overall curriculum.” For John Jay Institute, “living in Christian community” and “academic courses” tied for most significant.²

Rev. Alan Crippen, founder and president of the John Jay Institute, responded that he believes those responses are consistent with input he has received over the years (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). He continued:

When they say living in a community, it’s not just living in the house. It’s living in the house and having relationships and conversations. So I think when they were looking at the curriculum, they were thinking classroom and syllabi. And the classroom and syllabi are meant to generate conversations outside of the class and highlight things on the field studies.

Crippen explained that the vision they have cast is not only that of an episodic transformative experience, though they want the John Jay to be that. What they have constantly held in front of the Fellows is that, while this is a transforming episode in your life, they want it to be “an entry point into a professional fraternity, a band of brothers and sisters who can transform the culture.”

Dr. Claude Pressnell, long time Board member for the John Jay Institute, did not participate in the questionnaire, yet he found the results representative of the program as well as informative to his role (Pressnell, Claude interview. March 3, 2016). He also understood how the questionnaire got lost in the season leading up to the 10th Anniversary. With regard to “living in

² Practices in bold indicate practices deemed most significant in overall study. Hence, practices not in bold indicate practices held as most significant only for the individual program. See Table 2 and Table 3.
Christian community” and “academic courses that help participants form a coherent, Christian worldview,” Dr. Pressnell was not surprised at the high ranking. Pressnell said:

This is exactly it. Alan’s foci have been around intentional community and rigorous curriculum . . . He is very much about understanding what it means to live together. And in that, he exposes them to a pretty aggressive and rigorous Christian thinking about the public square in particular.

Coupled together with how John Jay takes advantage of the context of Philadelphia for its Friday “field studies” and the intentional nature of the alumni network, Dr. Pressnell found that the rankings “sound right on.” The job and network connections correlate with the externships, as well as the growing alumni network.

Summary for Questions 11A and 11B: For the John Jay Institute, the top three most significant philosophical components were: 1) “leadership development programs” and 2) tied for second “business internship models” and “Biblical principles.” For John Jay Institute, the most significant philosophical component was tied between “leadership development programs” and “Biblical principles.”

Crippen commented that the top three most significant philosophical components seemed reasonable, but the discussion caused some questioning of what the participants were trying to indicate with a tie between “leadership development programs” and “Biblical principles” (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). Crippen questioned why “Biblical principles” ranked so high:

We don’t really sell ourselves as a Biblical principles kind of place. We sell ourselves as a leadership development program. We sell ourselves as one that prepares you professionally for life, i.e. “business internship model.” But you know, it’s one that is clearly grounded in holy Scripture with metaphysical assumptions and casts a pretty high view of the institutional church.
When asked if the categories might have been leading in a way, Crippen responded, “maybe leading. I just don’t know if Biblical principles, again it’s not our moniker.” As he talked through his resistance to use the term “Biblical principles,” Crippen said he does not believe it reflects the intentional language they have used in shaping the program.

Turning to Questions 11A and 11B that look at the philosophical components and principles that undergird John Jay, Dr. Pressnell was surprised at how “business internship models” ranked higher than “spiritual formation practices” (Pressnell, Claude interview. March 3, 2016). Noting that in his role as an advisor to Witherspoon Institute in the past and as a current board member for John Jay, he has mainly dealt with finances, curriculum, or intentional community issues, he said that has given very little attention to the internships. Dr. Pressnell continued, “This is educating me that they see that internship as far more important that I would have put it. I would have gone with ‘spiritual formation practices’ and then ‘Biblical principles.’” He admitted, “If anything, they are teaching me in that the role of the internship is a far more significant component of the John Jay experience than I had been giving attention to.” Finally turning to the tied ranking between “leadership development program” and “Biblical principles” as the most significant principle in Question 11B, Dr. Pressnell described how those two principles interact with each other:

One thing that Alan is very intentional about is the stewardship of intellectual prowess if you will. Now that you know these things you must lead. And so, this is how you lead by knowing these things. The leadership development piece is a cornerstone to what he is trying to do. ... With regard to Biblical principles, that goes back to the previous set of questions dealing with the curriculum as well. One word that could be misinterpreted is that he is using the “Biblical principles” throughout very original documents, so in other words, very rigorous scholarship. I wouldn’t want Biblical principles to be interpreted over-lightly in terms of just a simple integration of faith and learning idea, because that is an overused term. It’s far deeper than that . . . So what
have you got? You’ve got intentional community, you’ve got the rigorous curriculum, and then the internship. And so those are the three big ideas and they seem to be identifying those clearly.

**Project Transformation**

Summary: For Project Transformation, 51 respondents across all four chapters completed the survey ranking the top five most significant practices as: 1) “living in Christian community,” 2) “multiple vocational experiences,” 3) “hands on ministry experience within a local congregation,” 4) “intentionally-designed overall curriculum,” and 5) “service learning.” For Project Transformation, “intentionally-designed overall curriculum” and “hands on ministry and leadership experiences within a local congregation” tied for most significant. ³

While reviewing the results of the top five most significant practices, Eric Lindh, director for Project Transformation - National, mused:

I think the top five that you've got from the surveys is spot on. I agree that living in community, the hands-on ministry leadership focus is important, that vocational experience. I would agree that those are the top three. Specifically designed curriculum, yeah, I would agree with all five of those. Nothing really surprises me. (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016)

Then Lindh processed the tied results between “an intentionally-designed overall curriculum” and “hands on ministry and leadership experiences within a local congregation.” He argued for “hands on ministry and leadership experience” being the most significant in this way:

We are even today reflecting on, at least from the national level and are hoping to get feedback on this, formulating a real clear theory of change for the organizations that model the ministry, everything we do revolves around this idea of transformation

³ **Practices in bold** indicate practices deemed most significant in overall study. Hence, practices not in bold indicate practices held as most significant only for the individual program. See Table 2 and Table 3.
happening through relationship. It happens at the very core of who we are, of kids being in relationship with college students, kids being in relationship with churches, churches being in relationship with their children, families in their community. It’s an integrated relationship model, inter-disciplinary. Those relationships go both ways. They’re mutually enriching. So to have it as a hands on ministry with the local congregation, with the community, with those kids, I think is best captured in number five over-- it is in number three, but the actual work of building relationships I think is really where the power comes through.

At the same time, he reflected on the work needed to more fully develop an overall and integrated curriculum within Project Transformation:

I think we have some work to do to have any kind of consistent curriculum that is intentionally designed for helping young adults, I think, explore their vocational spiritual identity, that's somewhat there just through the structure of our program design but in terms of, when I think of curriculum I think of activity and reflection and discussion and intentional questions that we ask to guide those discussions, and I don't feel like really we've come to the endpoint that we like to be on that. I think it's something that we all feel we need to develop more. So I'd put that ranked number two for that reason. (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016)

While agreeing that the results were representative of Project Transformation as a whole, the information tapped into on-going conversations between the newly organized national office and the four existing chapters. One of Lindh’s goals in his new position is aimed at clearly articulating their highly-relational model that mutually benefits the lives of college interns, children in poverty, and inner-city churches all in one program.

Courtney Aldrich, director of Project Transformation - Tennessee, saw the ranking in Questions 10A and 10B as “very reflective of PT” (Aldrich, Courtney interview. January 26, 2016). Nathaniel Odell, director of Project Transformation Rio Texas, offered a constructive critique of the results (Odell, Nathaniel interview. January 28, 2016). While the rankings did not surprise him, he stated, “With what we're trying to do with the leadership program if people from
PT have said that intentionally designed curriculum is important, but if I'm being very frank, I don't think PT has ever had an intentionally designed curriculum to help adults explore issues as spiritual and vocational identity.” Odell believes that Project Transformation has the right pieces, but they need to “connect the dots” more intentionally, particularly when it comes to the parts of the program that help young adults explore their spirituality, vocational identity and development as leaders. For Odell, “It's just about always finding a way to make things better, continue with improvement. There's always a way to take something and make it better.”

Sarah Nichols, director of Project Transformation - Oklahoma, was specifically excited by the high rank of “hands on ministry and leadership experiences within a local congregation” because they told her “that our members are really seeing the value in that” aspect of their program (Nichols, Sarah interview. February 11, 2016). Nichols connected with “living in Christian community with other young adult peers” when she reflected that with young adults, “although their service was really important to them, what comes to their minds first is like making friends, and what it was like to live with people, and having an intentional Christian community for the first time. So that's not surprising to me.” What did surprise her was “service learning” coming in at number five, a value she believes would be higher if answered just by the Project Transformation - Oklahoma chapter. While Sarah Nichols offered good suggestions on how to sharpen definitions of practices, she did see the rankings in Questions 9, 10A, and 10B as representative of Project Transformation nationally.

Shawn Jucht Bakker, the founding director of Project Transformation Dallas, sounded relieved when reviewing the questionnaire responses (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). She said, “I'm happy to hear that those are some of the elements that the interns picked up on, because I think that some of those pieces are just what it was built on. And in my mind it's
the identity of the program.” For her, the rankings gave her a sense that the original purpose of PT was still clear, even if the program had strayed from that purpose. Bakker offered, “for it to continue to be successful, it has to stay true to those and really embrace those unique aspects: the community living experience, the Friday experiences of exploring ministry outside of just the local context, hands-on ministry. I think all of those pieces are just the essence of what it's about.”

Summary of Questions 11A and 11B: For Project Transformation, the top three most significant philosophical components were: 1) “leadership development program,” 2) “spiritual formation practices,” and 3) “theories of human development. For Project Transformation, the most significant philosophical component was “leadership development programs.”

Shifting the discussion to Questions 11A and 11B, Eric Lindh, executive director of Project Transformation National, agreed with “leadership development programs” assuming that respondents are referring to leadership development as a key take away from the intern’s experience (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016). Lindh also agreed with “spiritual formation practices,” but expressed surprised at “human development theories” and asked to be reminded about what Question 11 from the questionnaire asked. Lindh then surmised that the respondents were:

answering about the program in general, instead of focusing only on the young adults. And I think where theories of human development are becoming more of a focus for us is around a curriculum designed for the kids, more so than young adults. Our kids, yes they need to learn how to read, and that’s just the foundation, but they need much more than that, they need-- and there's more research is coming out around social emotional development skills, like the soft skills of grit, resiliency and optimism and self control, and those kinds of things that are hard to measure, but are shown to be equally if not
more important than the cognitive skills that kids are developing, and a lack of development in poverty conditions.

Next, Lindh wrestled with the implied contrast between Project Transformation and the other two programs, particularly with respect to “Biblical principles” being lower and tied for 5th place with “career counseling interventions” (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016). He acknowledges that in context of the United Methodist Church, which is a denomination “all across the spectrum” theologically, “Biblical principles” may be associated with negative perceptions. Lindh stressed that knowledge of the Bible and helping children in their spiritual journeys are a key part of their program, but “it’s really a whole child approach, academic, spiritual, and social/emotional.” He summarized his thoughts when he said, “I think I would agree with that [ranking], I don't see that being in any kind of conflict with our mission.”

When reflecting on “leadership development programs” ranking as the most significant philosophical component for Project Transformation, Lindh acknowledge the results were representative of Project Transformation, yet continued to return to the contrast the rankings presented with the other programs (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016). Looking at the results from his perspective in a newly created national role, Lindh is focused on scalability and reproducibility. From his perspective, that requires a clear articulation of Project Transformation’s theory of change and non-negotiables of the program that brings value to the college interns, children they serve, and partner churches. The rankings, while he said they were not surprising, appear to have drawn energy from conversations he has had since taking on this national role:

I don't think those two things are necessarily in conflict, but I would agree with those things, that we do want to raise up leaders of this generation within the church, and to help them find their God-given passions and interests, and apply those in the world
especially with the attitude, how can they use those to be used in the correct areas of injustice, and whether that's your paid profession, or something you have a passion for, and you want your church to get more rallied around, and make a difference in your local community, it's all within the framework of the church and our faith, so it's not excluding biblical principles, but I see as [the most significant philosophical component] develops leaders as the foundational-- whatever that question was, more than-- I wouldn't put biblical principles before leadership development. It's not downplaying the importance of Biblical principles, but I would agree with the ranking.

When asked to respond to the rankings in Question 11A and 11B, Courtney Aldrich, director of Project Transformation - Tennessee, was intrigue by “theories of human development” ranking number three, also asking for the question to be read again (Aldrich, Courtney interview. January 26, 2016). She then deduced it was the educational justice work that Project Transformation provided that shaped this ranking. She stated, “I would say that, primarily we are focused on educational justice and exploring that with our interns first hand. However, we also know that educational justice is connected to all different forms of social justice, so there are different elements that are incorporated from that.” When it came to “leadership development program” ranking as the most significant philosophical component, Aldrich stated “that is directly reflective of our mission, which is to engage college-age and adults in ministry and spiritual leadership development.” She concluded the discussion of the ranking with this:

I think a lot of what we do at PT is honed in on developing self-awareness and educating one's self on who I am, what my gifts are? Who I am in the context of others? How my experience has formed me? Because it's only in practicing self-awareness that we're able to develop compassion and approachability and relationship. So, I think that there's high impact educational practices. Obviously the impact for our children, but a lot of the practices that you named are directly focused on cultivating self-awareness with our interns.
When presented with the results from Question 11A and 11B, Nathaniel Odell, director of Project Transformation - Rio Texas, also touched upon the contrast between Project Transformation and the other two programs in relation to the ranking of “Biblical principles” (Odell, Nathaniel interview. January 28, 2016). Agreeing with the rankings, Odell also articulated a reason “Biblical principles” does not rate as high among the respondents in Project Transformation:

I'm not surprised that biblical principles didn't necessarily make the top three but that spiritual formation practices did, nor the fact that theory of human development did. Because I think, there's always been this idea that PT is a Christian organization and we're Methodist but we don't require you to necessarily be Methodist. If you, as long as you're open to the fact that that's who we are and that's the perspective we're coming from, and that and our Christian faith is the backbone of what we do, we'll welcome you in. Even just when I was a PT intern, it wasn't like every week we sat down and had a traditional Methodist worship service. So it's always like let's explore all these different ways that people explore their faith and for some people that is very Biblical and for some people, there's other ways to do it. So in the same way that people are being exposed all these different types of ministries, they're getting exposed to all these different ways that people can express their spirituality with an obviously Christian doctrine. But I think for a lot of people, this group of people who happen to work for PT understand biblical principles can mean a lot of different things to a lot of different people.

Odell was not surprised to see that “leadership development program” ranked as the most significant philosophical component guiding Project Transformation (Odell, Nathaniel interview. January 28, 2016). He added, “From what I understand of PT, why it was developed and came into being . . . the primary purpose that I see is about training the young adults interns. And being a leadership program for them to gain practical skills, to gain leadership skills, to work on their own personal formation.” Odell was encouraged to see that those involved in Project Transformation recognize this core philosophical component and see it impacting future leaders.
Sarah Nichols, director of Project Transformation - Oklahoma, was excited about “spiritual formation practices,” specifically because her chapter cannot stress spiritual formation due to the funding they receive through AmeriCorps (Nichols, Sarah interview. February 11, 2016). Additionally, “leadership development program” did not surprise her, but “theories of human development” did. When asked what may be behind that answer, she surmised that “maybe just seeing a deeper understanding of the impact of poverty and low economic educational areas as a part of human development. If that was the reason, that wouldn't surprise me.” When Nichols saw that “leadership development program” being ranked as the most significant philosophical component, she was “not surprised and very happy.” She explained, “For PT Oklahoma, it's that we are creating young adult leaders.” Nichols concluded that “surprisingly enough, we don’t put a strong focus on the Bible. On leadership, we definitely make connections to-- connected to your spiritual life through service.”

Shawn Bakker, original director of Project Transformation Dallas, agreed with the top three rankings, yet expressed some surprise as she reviewed the data (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). According to Bakker it made sense that leadership development is the strongest throughout, whether that was giving the interns leadership opportunities at each of the sites or having to take on different roles in the program, like leading Bible studies at the house. She also saw a close connection to the Friday experiences that exposed the interns to other leaders in the field, giving them an opportunity to witness and see other leaders doing it. As Bakker described the Project Transformation experience, interns are given multiple environments to train, practice, observe, and reflect on their individual leadership development. Bakker also noted that in later years as the number of interns grew, Project Transformation hired
a staff person specifically for that role. Bakker was also not surprised that “spiritual formation practices” ranked high, but did not elaborate on why.

Where Bakker did express surprised was in terms of “human development theories” and “Biblical principles” (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). As she processed why “human development theories” ranked third, Bakker connected elements of the intern training that focused on the development of children and youth along with the fact that, for many of the interns, “being exposed to children in lower social economic environments that are different from their own upbringing.” Finally, thinking that “Biblical principles” would have ranked higher, Bakker recollected:

Again, speaking from many years ago, so much of what we would talk about was our mandate, “love God and love others.” This is what we tried to instill in practice. That was kind of a lot of the why we were working and serving each other and in the communities as an expression of our own Biblical understanding and Christian understanding. So I am surprised that this was not something that was picked up as strongly as some of the others.

Summary

Based on the responses and thoughtful discussions with those interviewed for this study, the survey proved to be an effective tool for identifying the practices and philosophical components used by each of the three. The conversations about the survey in each interview helped to further uncover the “how” and “why” beneath the practices and the deeper philosophical foundations (Yin, 2003). Additionally, the interviewees noted that the survey respondents collectively demonstrated a high level of knowledge and consistency across their individual programs.

The results above validated the use of the survey, yet also highlighted areas where language and classifications need to be adjusted and clarified. With regard to the practices listed
in Questions 9, 10A, and 10B, further work needs to be undertaken to make them more readily understood and more distinct from each other. In particular, “overall curriculum” and “service learning” created some confusion among respondents that could be further tested before use with other groups. Concerning the philosophical foundation listed in Questions 11A and 11B, respondents argued that “spiritual formation practices” and “Biblical principles” were either the same category or considered too ambiguous to be useful. Additionally, other respondents suggested that “spiritual formation practices” be expanded to reflect or include intentional community. In all cases, attention needs to be paid to these classifications if they are continued to be used in future surveys. Furthermore, a definition key may need to be developed for the various practices or philosophical components in order to help respondents be more consistent in their categorization of each. Finally, a question could be developed that asks the respondents to connect their philosophical principle(s) back to the practices used to teach them.
Chapter 8: Qualitative Comparisons

This chapter will first explore how Garber’s categories of coherence, conviction, character, and community can be employed to compare and contrast each of the three faith-based leadership programs being considered. Next, it will the juxtapose the intended purpose, or telos, of each of the three faith-based leadership programs with the five most significant practices and the three most significant philosophical components ranked in the survey. These findings are based upon the analysis of data gathered from each program’s materials, survey results, and the thirteen qualitative interviews, particularly focused on each program’s stated outcomes for its young adult participants. The structure of this chapter will explore each practice and philosophical component in order of their ranking order, as well as explore various outliers that emerged in the study. Lastly, each section will conclude with representative statements that will reflect what adult volunteers hoped would happen in the lives of these young adults as a result of participating in their program. These statements also provide additional insight into each program by expressing aspects of their programmatic cultures that may have been missed otherwise.

Coherence and Garber’s Three Commitments

In The Aims of Education, Eliot encouraged his readers to clearly answer, for themselves, and other, the question “what is the purpose of education?” Garber answered Eliot’s question by stating, “without a sufficient telos it is not possible to form a coherent vision for life, one that can meaningfully connect the personal with the political, the individual with the institution” (Garber, 2007). The overall purpose, outcome, or telos of each of these programs determines what practices, or praxis, are employed in modeling a coherent life for its young adult participants.
Due to the nature of working with young adults, the hoped for outcomes of these programs may take years before they are fully recognizable or realized, if at all. Recognizing this fact, these faith-based leadership programs have chosen to invest in young adults who they recognize as future leaders who share their commitments. While each organization has a particular, Christian vision for the future, they have shaped the program in a manner that recognizes and respects the agency of each young adult as well. Far from telling them who to be or what to do, they have entrusted their passions and purposes with these young adults in the hopes that they will become responsible, social change agents in the local church, in public service, or in social justice.

For each program, certain practices were adopted to teach their purpose as well as how to live those purposes out in a coherent manner. Returning to Garber, he summarized his thesis on a coherent life in this way:

What are these habits of heart? Forming a worldview that can make sense of my life in the ever-secularizing, ever-pluralizing world, of my beliefs about God and truth, the human condition, good and evil, joy and sorrow; finding a mentor who embodies these conviction, as the truest truths are taught ad learned only as we look over the shoulder and through the heart of someone who shows that the words can be made flesh, that the ideas can have legs; and making the choice time and again to link up, heart and mind, with a community of kindred spirits, people who together are committed to a coherent life where liturgy, life, learning and labor is understood as seamless. (Garber, p 197)

Diagram 2 depicts how the practices of the three programs might be represented to reflect Garber’s categories of conviction, character, and community, as well as their synergistic effect of coherence. One purpose of this illustration is to visualize how each program’s practices
may align with Garber’s categories, as well as to compare and contrast the programs with one another. Further, the diagram presents the complex interaction of each program’s practices and experiences needed to inform and shape an individual’s sense of coherence, purpose, or integrity (Erikson, 1964, 1963). For this diagram, coherence should be defined as purpose put into practice over time, if not over a lifetime.
The idea for Diagram 2 grew as a response to Smith with Snell’s (2009) six paths to highest emerging adult religious practice. Their research stated that a combination of relational (character), personal-subjective (conviction), and devotional-practice (reinforced in community) factors were needed to produce an overall outcome of highest religious practice (coherence). Yet rather than taking a linear, retrospective view of development, Diagram 2 offers a perspective of how these factors could overlap and intersect with each other in order to produce the potential for each program’s desired purpose in the lives of the young adults. Thus, what coherence looks like differs for each program as determined by its ultimate purpose, or telos, and the practices it adopts to teach that purpose to others. Despite the fact that each of their practices could be categorized as either conviction, character, or community, the diagram does not assume that the programs all have the same purpose, philosophical components, or practices.

This simple diagram is not intended to communicate a forced commonality between the three faith-based leadership programs. Nor is it intended to over-simplify how hard it can be to define what coherence should look like, whether for an individual or an institution. Its purpose is to visualize how any purposeful organization of older adults goes about socializing and passing its culture to a younger generation. First, all three programs could be critiqued on how well they taught a worldview (conviction) designed that connected belief and behavior for their young adult participants. Second, each program could be rated according to how it structured mentoring relationships, both formally and informally, vertically and laterally, that modeled the worldview being taught. Third, each program could evaluate how well the culture of its intentional communities established committed relationships among individuals who share a common worldview and who share in common practices together. And with enough time, each program would be able to weigh the lives of its participants on whether or not they have put the
purpose(s) into coherent practice over their lives. In order to compare and contrast these programs, the next section will look at the each one’s stated telos or purpose of each one.

**Telos (Purpose, Good, Aim)**

For The Fellows Initiative, the telos is focused on the local church connecting with young adults. This outcome is expressed through its individual alumni who is taught to live out his or her faith seamlessly in their relationships and families, through their vocational calling and leadership roles, and as committed members of a local church. Additionally, The Fellows Initiative is convinced that it has found a viable and reproducible solution to the problem of how to connect young adults to local churches. On the verge of launching seven to ten new chapters within the next two years, The Fellows Initiative hopes to bring a renewal to the church, especially through equipping local congregations to invest in young adults in their own context.

The telos for the John Jay Institute centers on (re-)establishing a conservative, Christian vision in the world of politics and public service. By “preparing principled leaders for public service” and linking them in a professional fraternity as they assume positions of cultural leadership, they will be able to effect “the (political and spiritual) renewal of American civilization”. This outcome has yet to be realized through its young, but growing alumni network. What the John Jay Institute did celebrated at its tenth anniversary were the young women and men who were taking on positions of increased responsibility and leadership across multiple sectors in society. While the merit of its stated purpose depends on one’s theological and political leanings, the continued growth of its alumni network represents a steady march toward that day its alumni will acquire the cultural leverage to bring about its political vision.

Project Transformation defined its telos in terms of social justice, particularly with regards to children and education in underserved neighborhoods. Its desired outcome is assessed
by the educational achievements of the disadvantage youth who attend its programs, the growing connection and ministry between the local host churches and their diverse urban neighborhoods, and the young adults Interns acquiring a broader, vocational vision that guides them through college and into their careers. The most vibrant expression of its desired good is found in the twenty-six “kidterns” who attended the problem, graduated from high school, started college, and have come back to serve as Interns. Having entered a season of expansion over the last year, Project Transformation also hopes to position itself as a viable, national model that demonstrates the power of relationships to transform the lives of inner-city youth, urban churches, and young adults.

**Philosophical Components**

*Biblical principles*

In the study, the theme of worldview was defined as referring to the Bible, biblical, Gospel, scripture, scriptural, foundation, principles, narrative and framework. In comparison to ranking [Question #11A](#) from the survey, the theme of worldview connected most closely to the category of “Biblical principles.” Erickson (1964), Ream and Glanzer (2007), Glanzer (2013) and Clydesdale (2015) addressed the absence of coherent ideologies, traditions, moral philosophies, and/or metanarratives that are made available for young adults. Additionally, Garber (2007), Smith with Snell (2009), Smith (2011), and Cote and Roberts (2010) have asserted this worldview deficit is due to cultural, philosophical and epistemological roots in modernism and postmodernism. Compounding this issue, Smith with Snell (2009) found that most emerging adults do not order their worlds around their religious convictions. Implicitly, each of the three organizations could have responded to these larger cultural forces by creating programs that immerse young adults, at least for a time, in an alternative meta-narrative.
The theme of “worldview” was widely used within The Fellows Initiative and the John Jay Institute, but not at all within Project Transformation. For The Fellows Initiative, a large majority of respondents articulated a similar hope that the Fellows would “develop a Christian and/or Biblical worldview.” Interestingly, the John Jay Institute has avoided the use of explicit worldview language, instead choosing the language of Christian narrative, ethics, and moral truths found in the Bible in order to communicate more effectively in the public sector. Project Transformation essentially does not employ the theme in describing their program. As noted in the previous chapter, “Biblical principles” created a lot of discussion with all the interviewees associated with Project Transformation and separately with Alan Crippen of the John Jay Institute, but for very different reasons. Lastly, worldview was a repeated topic within the graduate-level courses offered through The Fellows Initiative and the John Jay Institute. In contrast, Project Transformation does not offer academic courses for their Interns.

A number of factors arose during the study that could explain the lower ranking of “Biblical principles” for Project Transformation. First, according to Bakker’s response, a drift from a Biblical understanding of the program as expressed in “to love God and love others” has occurred over time (Bakker, Sean interview. January 29, 2016). Second, a theological difference between the moderate to liberal culture of the United Methodist Church may influence the use of its particular faith-based vocabulary, as opposed to the moderate to conservative vocabulary of The Fellows Initiative and the John Jay Institute. This moderate vs. conservative language distinction held not only in how respondents talked about their programs, but it was also evident in the documents produced by each organization. Lastly, the growing restrictions placed on two Project Transformation chapters due to AmeriCorps funding has served to deemphasize any
spiritual activities involving the youth or Interns. These growing constraints could be defined as a competing worldview to the Christian worldview originally taught and practiced within Project Transformation.

On the opposite side, Crippen of the John Jay Institute was surprised by the fact that “Biblical principles” ranked as high as it did stating, “It’s not our moniker” (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016). One explanation for the result could have been the limited categories on the questionnaire, with the respondents choosing the one that fit best. Another explanation could be due to the fact that each academic day (Monday through Thursday) began with the Daily Morning Prayer service and end with the Vesper Prayer Service in *The Book of Common Prayer*. In a fifteen-week period, the John Jay Fellows would be immersed in a spiritual *praxis* that few would have experienced before. This daily rhythm would lead them in reciting creeds and confessions, reading through the lectionary, and praying through the Psalms. In short, they would have been exposed to a significant portion of the Bible that could account for this effect.

**Open-ended Survey Responses on Biblical Principles**

**The Fellows Initiative:** I hope that the fellows will leave the program with a holistic, Gospel-shaped perspective that shapes their lives moving forward. I hope that it reforms their view of themselves, other people, culture, vocation, and any aspect of life the Lord is calling them to.

**John Jay Institute:** Develop an appreciation for the breadth of human ideas, an understanding of how those ideas of shaped history, and a knowledge of those ideas that trace their roots in Judeo-Christian philosophy.

**Leadership Development Programs**

A common language that each program used to describe themselves was that of a leadership development program. Having framed their programs within this broadly defined concept, each program was then able to express its distinctive purposes and practices in a more
effective manner, whether that be to potential recruits, parents, local churches, foundations, or researchers. Under this designation, all three organizations are structured to help young adults discover their leadership role within the context of their vocational calling. The differences had to do with the emphasis of leadership development implemented, with each program falling somewhere between the experimental (hands-on) and the academic (theoretical). Project Transformation could be classified as experimental in that its young adults Interns learned by jumping feet first into running the summer day camps. The Fellows Initiative leadership emphasis was equally experimental and academic. Its Fellows learned leadership principles inside local churches by working with youth and older adults on a weekly, if not daily, basis. This hands-on component was balanced by attending seminary-level courses and vocational seminars. The John Jay Institute was focused almost exclusively on an academic preparation model for future leadership roles by centering its curriculum around the classroom experience. Regardless of their orientation to action or intellect, all three programs intentionally provide space for the young adults to reflect on what they are experiencing.

Each programs understood itself as preparing future leaders who act as social change agents, whether that be in the local church, marketplace jobs, public service roles, or social justice settings. One avenue for future research to explore if these programs could be categorized into different leadership development models, especially socially responsible leadership (Soria et al., 2013). All three programs fit the socially responsible leadership definition of collaborative, process-oriented leadership roles based on shared values. The intersection of what empowers leaders working in contexts with shared values, or a common worldview or metanarrative, suggests a possible fruitful avenue of future study.
A sub-theme of leadership development that emerged was that of cultural impact. This theme included a focus on serving others that included references to such phrases as transform, renew, impact, engage, redeem, revive, and the common good. Smith with Snell (2009) suggest that emerging adults “will have to come to terms with many of the larger social and cultural forces to which their lives are now subject.” Interestingly, each program not only sought to help emerging adults come to terms with their culture, but sought to equip them to impact specific aspects of their society through their curriculums. Through their involvement in local churches, the Fellows Initiative sought to equip emerging adults to engage the culture of their city through their vocation in the marketplace1 (The Fellows Initiative, 2015a, 2015c). The John Jay Institute remains committed to developing future leaders who will serve in various public or political roles (John Jay Institute, 2015c, 2015d). Project Transformation has created a leadership laboratory that confronts emerging adults with issues of social justice and inequality in the context of working with disadvantaged youth (Project Transformation, 2015c, 2015j).

Even with each program’s unique focus, they share three foundational approaches to how they work with emerging adult leaders. First, each program understood the upfront investment required when working with emerging adults. Second, while the programs represent the distinct theological, socioeconomic, and political commitments of the institutions and leaders who founded them, their curriculums do not offer prescribed solutions or “right answers.” Rather, these programs demonstrate a respect for each individual agency and the unique contribution their lives will make, both during the residency and into the future. And third, over time each

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1 Marketplace was language adapted to explain the context of secular jobs, careers, and vocations.
program has developed a long view on cultural impact and change through the lives of their alumni.

Looking at the programs individually, The Fellows Initiative was not designed for recent graduates to retreat back inside a church, but to equip them to live a seamless faith that serves the common good.\(^2\) Becca Chapman, founding director of the Pittsburgh Fellows program, offered the most concise statement about why The Fellows Initiative is committed to engaging the culture when she stated, “there's got to be the equal emphasis to leadership development, the equal emphasis of understanding, exegeting, and impacting the culture” (Chapman, Becca interview. January 26, 2016). One host mom echoed Chapman’s understanding of the outward movement of the Fellows program by describing it as “a generous gift that our church gives to the wider body of Christ. We don't expect to benefit from it directly. We are launching leaders and Christ followers into the world to serve the Lord.” These and similar responses echo the belief that a Fellows program is not simply for the benefit of the churches that operate them, but a natural outcome will be the transformation of the surrounding communities as Fellows impact the marketplace and the city. Lastly, Doran, the director of The Trinity Fellows, in envisioned the outcome like this:

I want it to be said that as you look out over the landscape of Charlottesville, you can see these dynamic young men and women really impacting the city for good, regardless of their faith. Any secular person could look at the Fellows Program and say, "You know what? This city's a better place because of that thing.” (Doran, Dennis interview. January 27, 2016)

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\(^2\) This concept is informed by a mixture of Catholic political theory, Kuyperian Calvinism, and even Aristotelian philosophy that challenges Christians to work for shared, positive outcomes as redemptive agents in culture. Steve Garber’s *Visions of Vocations: Common Grace for the Common Good* offers a practical exploration of this idea.
For Crippen, The John Jay Institute’s programs are intended to prepare young men and women to enter and successfully compete in institutions of cultural influence. By adopting the strategy of “preparing principle leaders for public service,” Crippen understands that:

Unlike a lot of non-profits, it's not a speedy return on investment where they're going to pay for a paper to be published and it's out six months later. When people are investing the lives of our fellows, it's a long-term investment that might not have the leadership that we see on a grand scale right away, but they're on the path for that. (Crippen, Alan interview. March 7, 2016)

In May of 2015, the John Jay Institute produced an “Alumni Impact Report”³ that gave an account of where 693 plus commissioned Witherspoon Fellows, John Jay Fellows, and Saratoga Fellows are presently serving in positions within education, non-profit/policy, military, the church, government, and as homemakers.⁴ Additionally, this report envisaged the professional fraternity that Crippen has invested the last twenty years of his vocational life into building. Less quantifiable in the short-term than the other two programs, the impact of the John Jay Institute is directly linked to the combined and continuing careers and contributions of its Fellows.

The impact of Project Transformation is most widely reported in the lives of the college interns, the children they serve, and the potential future they both could create. More than simply meeting the needs of today, Project Transformation seeks to build:

A vital link between the services we provide and the hands-on educational experience that prepares tomorrow’s leaders and educates them about the true nature of the people and problems of the inner city. We invest heavily in our young adult interns who provide the programs for the children and youth. The goal is to inspire these young

adults to future service in their communities after their internship. (Project Transformation, 2015k)

One volunteer who helped launch Project Transformation – Rio Texas stressed the potential of the program:

I really hope you can grasp what I see as the importance of the exposure to social, economic, and cultural difference experiences that interns get in Project Transformation. But more importantly, it is critical that the program demonstrates how the world can work together to solve serious social problems with the energy and contributions of young adults. (107)

To listen to the staff and volunteers who filled out the questionnaire, they collectively asserted that Project Transformation is not simply a ten-week internship for college students. It is a network of redemptive relationships that has celebrated the fact that children who once were participants in the program have graduated high school, started college, and come back to serve as interns in their own communities as “kid-terns.” This dynamic underscores the multiplicative, generative, and long-term cultural impact Project Transformation wants to replicate as the program spreads to other cities.

Open-ended Survey Responses on Leadership Development Program

The Fellows Initiative: Our hope is that Fellows will go on to become Christian leaders (both lay and ordained) who will make a significant contribution to the renewal of the Church. They will be committed disciples of Jesus Christ who order their whole lives around the love of God and neighbor.

John Jay Institute: That they will engage in living the life of the mind and develop a smart and reflective outlook on addressing issues of public importance in contemporary politics.

Project Transformation: PT gives space for young adults to recognize their own spiritual gifts and graces and explore various ministry-related vocation. We want every young adult to walk away knowing that they are called to live a life of ministry, whether that be behind a pulpit or in a corporate board room. Aside from this primary goal, we
seek to deepen each young adult's understanding of social justice, community, as well as the connection and power of Christ's Body.

**Spiritual Formation**

The theme of spiritual formation emerged across all three programs. This theme included such practices as prayer, Bible Study, roundtable discussions, spiritual accountability meetings, small groups, worship, and daily devotions that the classes of emerging adults participated in community. The theme also confirmed respondents’ views across all three programs as seen in Question #10A, Questions #10B, Question #11A, and Question #11B. The reasons for including them in each of the programs could be validated by the research of Smith with Snell (2009) who have found that there is a strong correlation between the internal and external religious expression of emerging adults. Akin to the chicken and the egg question, these programs provide an external structure to support the young adults’ internal faith development.

Several overall factors inform the use of spiritual formation practices among young adults. First, to be effective in these faith-based leadership development programs, spiritual formation practices must be equally valued and thoughtfully implemented along with all other programmatic components (Brower and Inkelas, 2010). This includes prioritization and time in the weekly schedule, due to the finding that emerging adults demonstrated highly consistent levels of religious expression between the internal and external dimensions of their religious lives (Smith with Snell, 2009). Second, they must be modeled in a way that can be replicated once the program is over. And third, emerging adults do not need to be told that practicing their faith is important as much as they need to be shown what it looks like in life after college.

Interestingly, the inclusion or scope of the spiritual formation practices were not necessarily a given at the beginning of each of these faith-based leadership development
programs. The inclusion of these practices were included or expanded as the programs responded to the felt needs of the young adults who participated in them. For example, a weekly “Bible Study was instituted in the fifth year of The Falls Church Fellows program in response to the 4th year Fellows class’ suggestion to have a regular time set aside for studying the Scriptures” (The Fellows Initiative, 2015d). Since first using the *The Book of Common Prayer* once a week with the Witherspoon Fellows, Crippen has more fully incorporated these prayer services into his educational model at the John Jay Institute. Lastly, among the four chapters with Project Transformation, Nathaniel Odell of the Rio Texas chapter expressed his desire to strengthen the coherency between the various pieces of the curriculum, particularly the weekly Bible study, worship, and the Friday vocational experience. Coincidentally, Odell is looking to strengthen the spiritual formation practices at his site, while at the same time, the two AmeriCorps funded chapters have had to redefine those same components as voluntary activities for their Interns.

In contrast to The Fellows Initiative and the John Jay Institute, the theme of spiritual formation becomes muddled when looking at Project Transformation. In the study’s questionnaire (see Questions #11A), Project Transformation ranked “spiritual formation practices” second out of the top three most significant philosophical components that shaped the program. Yet, only two respondents among fifty communicated an understanding of how spiritual formation practices informed the work of the Project Transformation interns. One volunteer stated, “A commitment to God through practice of spiritual disciplines and serving Christ through serving others”. Compounding this result is the expressed tension created by AmeriCorps funding to designate all faith-based, spiritual formation practices as voluntary.\(^5\)

\(^5\) This growing tension was articulated in interviews with Eric Lindh, Sarah Nichols, Nathaniel Odell, and Shawn Bakker.
While there are many articulations of faith, ministry, leadership development, purpose, and service to others in both the questionnaire responses and archival documents used in the study, these references are not directly connected to spiritual formation practices. Furthermore, within Project Transformation marketing and training material, House Pastors are tasked with coordinating the spiritual formation practices listed in the weekly schedules. Yet beyond these few formal descriptions, it is not clear how the spiritual formation practices are directly connected to the work at the summer reading camps or the overall Intern experience. Lindh addressed the tension that exists throughout the organization:

So that kind of thing is potentially detrimental if you're not required as part of your internship to attend worship. The Tuesday night worship services, while still well-attended, it's not 100% attendance. Those worship services include many great opportunities to learn and grow spiritually, and also reflect on what you're doing with your summer. And so, if you have the option to sleep, take a nap, go work out, not attend, for whatever reason, those students are missing out on those opportunities. But on the flip side, I mean, those components of the AmeriCorps funding source would say, "How can you do the greatest good?" And it's an attractive thing to have more funding to attract and pay more college students to have more impact in the community. It's helping make the organization sustainable, so you're assured that they're going to exist to-- would you rather exist, or would you rather be able to do Bible study on your own time, be more flexible with that and have to turn your AmeriCorps badge around when it's that part of the day kind of thing? So it's restricting, it's sometimes inconvenient, and at times you miss out on certain opportunities that you would otherwise have if that weren't part of the mixture. And I'm just talking from my personal opinion on it. I've got people on the board now - the national board - that are on both sides, feel pretty passionately about both sides. One person may not like it at all, someone else sees tremendous value in it. (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016).

Open-ended Survey Responses on Spiritual Formation

The Fellows Initiative: They will emerge with a strong foundation in knowing what it looks like to live a dynamic Christian life, by being placed in the middle of real-world experience. The forum allows them access to real people and experiences — to see the ongoing growth process of a spiritual life as opposed to being "taught about" how to live that life from speakers on a podium.
**John Jay Institute:** I hope that they will know God better, know who they are in Him, and know more of His will and calling on their lives.

**Project Transformation:** Experience ministry in new ways. Explore their own call. Challenged in their own spiritual journey by peers and their work.

**Practices**

**Overall Curriculum**

Overall curriculum was defined as “an intentionally-designed, overall curriculum that helps young adults explore issues of spiritual and vocational identity” within the study’s survey. During the course of the interviews, it was referred to as “The Big C.”

While the programs’ overall curriculums were designed to produce unique outcomes, they share similar levels of structure and practices as highlighted in Table 2. First, the overall curriculum (praxis) of each program was designed around an articulated telos or purpose and adapted to its local context, stated mission and organizational goals. Second, each were made up of intentionally-crafted, weekly schedules of activities of all types, even days and times that were deliberately left open. Third, highly structured and intensely relational, these overall curriculums are designed to teach beneficial patterns, practices, and concepts that can serve the young adult, both now and in the future. These experiences created a period of liminality, self-discovery, and challenge. And lastly, many respondents in all three programs stressed that it’s not the formulas, components, structures, or program design that make them work, but it is the synergy of all the practices that positively effect the lives of the emerging adults who participate in them.

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6 Term used by both Morna Comeau and Steve Garber in interviews and documents describing The Fellows Initiative curriculum.

7 Dean discusses this concept in *Almost Christian* as experiences of transition, crossing, reflexivity, and awakening (pp 103, 165-167).
Each program has incorporated elements that are comparable to Kuh’s (2008) high impact educational practices and Clydesdale’s (2015) purpose exploration programmatic tools. Additionally, these programs implicitly reflect an understanding that there is no one high impact practice that connects with all students. This is evidenced by each program incorporating a number of high impact practices that they believe best accomplish their goals. Lastly, Miller et al. (2015) demonstrated a connection between certain high impact practices and students pursuing careers or graduate school. This research could help future Faith-based leadership development programs choose between practices based on their desire outcomes.

Individually speaking, The Fellows Initiative chapters reflected the purpose exploration tools of curriculum, internships, mentorship programs, retreats, and personality assessments. Similarly, they demonstrated use of the high impact educational practices of common intellectual experiences, collaborative assignments and projects, service learning, community-based learning, and internships. The practices of the John Jay Institute could be compared to the purpose exploration tools of curriculum, themed residence halls, and mentorship programs. Likewise, this study showed a similarity to the high impact educational practices of common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, and capstone courses and projects. For Project Transformation, the purpose exploration tools of service-learning and themed residence halls, as well as the high impact education practices of learning communities and service-learning, community-based learning would best describe its practices.

Open-ended Survey Responses on Overall Curriculum:

**The Fellows Initiative:** The goal and hope is that they will deepen their walk with Christ, gain an understanding of work as a God-given calling, develop leadership and relational skills, and realize the importance of being connected to a local church.
John Jay Institute: What is unique about the John Jay Institute is not any one of these attributes offered, but the specific combination of attributes offered together. Students may have lived in Christian community in college, but it was probably not in combination with intensive academic study of Christian belief and worldview. Students may have read some of the same material in college, but they probably did not get to discuss it with their housemates who were also in the same program. The combination of intensive study, Christian community, and field studies is what makes JJI unique. JJI also provides a really valuable opportunity for personal reflection and introspection that is often missing during college. (John Jay Class of 2013)

Project Transformation: They will gain hands-on experience working with children (and their families) who live in underserved neighborhoods, live in community with one another, honor those connections and become cherished partners in the Christian experience of local congregations . . . see the words of Matthew (and more!) lived out in real time, real world living . . . and pray the experience will inform their lives relative to their spiritual formation and their career choices.

Living in Community

In this study, “community” proved to be overused and too large of a concept to be useful. In order to be more accurate, specific types of community were coded for, including class, local churches, friendships/relationships, city/town, marketplace, and the public square. The most basic understanding of community was that of class, designating the Fellows or Interns who participated and lived together in each program. This theme included references made to Fellows, Interns, intentional Christian community, class, or cohort. This theme was strongly associated with “living in Christian community with other young adult peers” (Christian community) in the study’s survey, Question #10A.

Each program has invested large quantities of resources into providing a residential experience for their young adult participants. The emphasis on this component in each program’s marketing material is contrasted with research that indicates “lower levels of social

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8 For community, themes were developed that could express Erikson’s concept of a young adult’s widening social radius. This idea was also represented in The Fellows Initiative “TFI Intro and How To” brochure (PDF), Come and See Event (April 2015).
and institutional concerns and involvements” among young adults (Smith with Snell, 2009; Cotes and Roberts, 2014). It seems counter-intuitive that at a time when young adults belong to fewer organizations, these programs highlight living in community as a draw to future participants. The benefits these living communities could potentially offer are guidance and support that society and families may no longer be able to provide (Arnett, 2005; Schwartz et al, 2005; Setran and Kiesling, 2013), especially with regard to faith-formation. Second, these programs could provide structures designed to aid young adults to and through schooling (Smith with Snell, 2009), especially when connected to a larger and supportive adult community. In fact, multiple authors wrote about the functions of community in identity formation, religious commitment, vocational discernment, and developing a coherent “life plan” to name a few (Erikson, 1964,1964; Bellah, 1985; Garber, 2007; Clydesdale, 2015; Setran and Kiesling, 2013).

Second, while each program can accurately state that Fellows or Interns will live in Christian community, there are as many differences as there are similarities between them. This practice proved to encompass a broad set of parameters determined by the context and goals of each organization. For example, The Fellows Initiative describes the year as living in intentional Christian community with other young adults, but eighteen out of the twenty programs house their Fellows with individual host families. Similarly, the John Jay Institute and Project Transformation provide settings for what could be equated to living-learning communities (Kuh, 2008), yet the contrast between the John Jay residential manor and Project Transformation renting a university’s residence hall or fraternity house for the summer offer widely different experiences. Lastly, the high value that The Fellows Initiative expressed for its Fellows living in Christian community, would seem to indicate that they are defining Christian community to include practices and components that extend beyond where each person sleeps at night. This
broad idea of community began with, but expanded beyond the community of the young adult participants to include the local churches, neighborhoods, and alumni networks of older adults committed to supporting the programs and its goals. Yet the most fundamental concept of community was understood to be the class of young adults in each program.

Third, while the study did not focus directly on or collect detailed information about the young adult participants, observations about the composition of current and classes could provide insight into the three programs. The following observations are from site visit notes, pictures available on program websites, and an unrequested spreadsheet provided by The Fellows Initiative. With regard to gender distribution of the current classes, The Fellows Initiative was 56% females, John Jay Institute was 58% female, and Project Transformation was 59% female. The makeup of ethnically diverse participants in the current classes (non-Anglo) was less than 5% for The Fellows Initiative, 0% for John Jay Institute, and 22% for Project Transformation. Except for Project Transformation, the vast majority of young adult participants appeared to be from white, middle to upper socio-economic backgrounds. The lack of diversity did get mentioned in a handful of survey responses from volunteers associated with The Fellows Initiative. This was in contrast to the priority placed on issues of diversity within Project Transformation. Perhaps due to its focus on education in poor, urban communities, Project Transformation recruited a more socioeconomically and ethnically diverse class of young adults than the other programs.

Fourth, one major factor affecting each program’s definition of a community of young adults were the individual class sizes. Class size was determined by each of the programs’ goals,

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9 Past classes of the John Jay Fellows program have included one or two ethnically diverse participants.
budgets, and desired outcomes for participants. Class sizes also created natural limitations for what practices can be used in a given program. For The Fellows Initiative, class sizes are built around eight to sixteen Fellows due to logistical, educational, budgetary, and spiritual principles. The total for The Fellows Initiative class of 2015-2016 across all 20 churches is 183. For the John Jay Institute, Crippen had described their “call to be small” for similar reasons, setting their maximum class size at 16, for a maximum of 48 Fellows per year (Fall and Spring John Jay Fellows classes plus Summer Saratoga Fellows class). As a contrast to the others, Project Transformation recruited the largest classes of all three programs, particularly during the summers. For the summer of 2016, the Dallas chapter is seeking to recruit 100 interns, Oklahoma chapter – 50, Tennessee chapter – 63, and Rio Texas chapter – 25; which brings the total class to 238 summer interns.¹⁰

Open-ended Survey Responses on Living in Community

**The Fellows Initiative:** Living in community with their peer group over the course of nine months often reveals important truths about themselves that they had not seen previously or had not had to deal with previously.

**John Jay Institute:** The depth of relationships formed in a class, and then the support and encouragement they receive from other classes, it is unparalleled in young adult development programs.

**Project Transformation:** I think the unique part is that they are living together in Christian community. While some might think its strange or "strict" it's neat that they get to experience that.

**Mentors**

For the category of character, the theme of “mentors” was relevant for The Fellows Initiative but not for the John Jay Institute and Project Transformation. Garber (2007) described

¹⁰ This figure does not include the number of interns who serve in the year-round programs.
a mentor as “a teacher who incarnated the worldview which they were coming to consciously identify as their own, and in and through that relationship they saw that it was possible to reside within that worldview themselves.” For the purpose of this study, mentor should be understood as an older person who invests relationally in the growth and development of a younger person professionally, academically, or spiritually.

By including mentoring relationships, each program could be seen as responding to what Cote (2006), Clydesdale (2015), Setran and Kiesling (2013), and Barber (2012, 2014) have similarly called “an insufficient socialization of youth by families, schools, and congregations for the altered economic and cultural landscapes that now exist.” In various forms, these programs began to address the breakdown of cultural support and guidance for young adults by connecting young adults with adult volunteer mentors. While different for each program, both in scope and effectiveness, they each have set up structures to equip a variety of adult mentors, while at the same time immersing these young adults into a web of mentors. Though there are no guarantees how any relationship will grow, these programs have at least created a structure of multiple contacts between older and young adults. This approach improves the odds of the young adults hitting it off with at least one potential mentor.

Overall, The Fellows Initiative was the most consistent in defining and the role of mentoring in its marketing materials, training materials, and responses to the questionnaire. This comparison validates the rankings in Question #10A in that only The Fellows Initiative ranked “access to adult models and mentors” within their top five significant practices. Formally and informally, the Fellows Initiative held it as a distinctive programmatic component of each Fellows program (The Fellows Initiative, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2015e, 2015f, 2015n). This is demonstrated by the creation of a web of mentors, or a mentoring community (Setran and
Kiesling, 2013 p 213), surrounding each Fellows class through the dozens of volunteers the Fellows interact with on a weekly basis; including host families, other adult youth volunteers, Bible study leaders, faculty members, board and committee members, parishioners, and the director/coordinator for each church.

For the John Jay Institute, mentoring appears to be centered on Crippen, the lateral mentoring among the Fellows, and the individual alumni who serve as long-distance mentors to the current Fellows. Outwardly, the mentoring component only appears on the website in reference to the Field Studies held each Friday and the connection with the professional fraternity upon completion of the program. Yet for the John Jay Institute and Crippen, mentoring was observed to be a programmatic commitment that is facilitated through the small class size, the residential and classroom experience, and the daily interaction between the John Jay Institute faculty and the Fellows; even if it is not featured in its publicity material.

For Project Transformation, the majority of the time that respondents or marketing materials discussed mentors or mentoring, they were referring overwhelmingly to the college-age Interns mentoring the children in the program. Digging into the Project Transformation Training Manual (Project Transformation, 2015d), Site Pastors are asked to mentor the Interns, are provided with a modest training (30 minutes of training) at the beginning of each summer, and are repeatedly asked to self-evaluate themselves with regards to mentoring the Interns over the course of the program. The Training Manual also listed House Pastors as persons who would serve as residential directors, organize meals, lead weekly Bible studies and worship services, and be available as needed to discuss issues. Speaking to this issue, one volunteer hoped the

11 http://www.johnjayfellows.com/jji-fellows
Interns would find a mentor over the course of the summer. Another respondent shared her frustrations about the overall level of mentoring in the program:

I think that one of Project Transformation's biggest growing edges is giving more individual time to our young adults. With limited staffing, it's hard to have in depth conversations with all 100+ college students in our program. We have partnered with a counseling center and obtained the funding to offer counseling and/or spiritual direction to our students. It has been difficult to persuade students to take advantage of this. We've also begun to offer more small group opportunities for students to connect with individuals in careers that are of interest.

Beyond the formal descriptions, the informal lateral mentoring among Interns, as well as recognizing the relational capacity limitations created by small staffs leading large classes of Interns, it is not clear what consistent and on-going mentoring activities occur for the emerging adult Interns. This begs the question of what mentoring practices are effective in different settings, class sizes, and length of various programs.

**Open-ended Survey Responses on Mentors**

**The Fellows Initiative:** I hope we will train leaders that will have grown in their spiritual life while learning that faith does not end when they exit church but rather is part of every second of their life. We hope that will see others model their faith and emulate what they have seen and have a greater dependence on the Lord.

**Project Transformation:** The experience of participants becoming interns illustrates the full circle of Project Transformation. Kids who grow up in the program experience the love that the interns provide, as well as the mentoring that encourages them to succeed academically. These relationships lead to the kids going to college and becoming interns, beginning the cycle all over again. These "kid-terns" are the definition of PT's motto--transforming lives through relationships.

**Outlier: Host Families**

In the study, one additional type of mentoring emerged that was specific to The Fellows Initiative alone: host families. Described as an informal means of mentoring (The Fellows
all but two of the twenty chapters of The Fellows Initiative have Fellows live with host families from the local church. This unique twist on living in community was originally designed to model one of the four pillars of The Falls Church Anglican’s vision statement - strong families (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015). A number of respondents from new programs expressed how hard it was to convince families in the church to host a Fellow, often referring to it as their biggest challenge in starting a new Fellows program. Despite the initial difficulties of establishing a strong host family pool, respondents reported that they were overwhelmingly outweighed by the positive outcomes. Lastly, Morna Comeau, national coordinator with The Fellows Initiative, believes that host families have modeled practical expressions of Christian hospitality, lessons she believes will not be lost on the Fellows once they graduate (Comeau, Morna interview. January 28, 2016).

Open-ended Survey Responses on Host Families

The Fellows Initiative, Host Mom: Living in community with their peer group over the course of nine months often reveals important truths about themselves that they had not seen previously or had not had to deal with previously. The fellows that have lived with us have each discovered important truths about themselves, their personality, and their temperament and their gifts that have helped them to make healthier decisions after the Fellows program in terms of what job they pursue, what adult friendships look like, how to offer their gifts in their local church, and even how to be in healthy long-term relationship with someone that they plan to marry. In particular, the Fellows that have lived with us the past two years have also expressed that living with a Christian family has changed their view of what a family could be and how family can operate. Both expressed that they came from broken and dysfunctional families, and living with us has given them a completely different picture of what a family could look like for them in the future - in particular the commitment to stay in relationship with members of the family when faced with conflict, differences, and life change: to communicate, to work on conflict, to offer forgiveness, to reconcile, to admit fault and be willing to change behavior when you see something that you were doing that is hurting your relationship with other people in the family. Being a host family has offered our fellows

12 http://www.tfcanglican.org/vision
13 or generativity
a training ground for new and possibly healthier ways of relating as a family that they want to see in their future family relationships.

**Outlier: Discipleship**

In this study, the theme of discipleship\(^{14}\) was defined by the terms disciple, discipleship, youth, and children. Broadly defined, Christian discipleship describes a structured relationship between an older Christian teaching a group of younger Christians spiritual practices such as small group accountability, acts of service, prayer, and Bible study. The term is widely used in youth ministries to describe the relational work that adult volunteers engage in. This theme of discipleship indicated an association for both The Fellows Initiative, but not for the John Jay Institute or and Project Transformation.

For most chapters of The Fellows Initiative, their Fellows serve up to ten hours per week in their church’s youth ministry leading discipleship groups. In this way, the Fellows become an integral part of the discipleship, or generative, culture of each church, both receiving and giving spiritual instruction. In contrast to The Fellows Initiative, a central focus of each Project Transformation Intern involves mentoring underserved children in poor neighborhoods. In addition, local church volunteers spend thirty minutes each day reading with these children in one-on-one settings. The practices the Interns and adult volunteers employ to mentor\(^{15}\) these children are similar to the types of discipleship activities within The Fellows Initiative, although being in more of a secular vs. spiritual sense. Even though the Project Transformation Interns mentor children in a radically different context than the more affluent churches where the

\(^{14}\) Discipleship is defined here as a relationship, most commonly an older adult with someone younger, that involves the teaching and modeling of spiritual principles and practices, usually by an older

\(^{15}\) Project Transformation did not use discipleship language (potentially connected to faith language issue above) to describe Interns’ work with the children but consistently used the word mentor.
Fellows lead youth discipleship groups, both groups of young adults are participating in the *praxis* of investing relationally into others.

**Open-ended Survey Responses on Discipleship**

**The Fellows Initiative:** Our Fellows have a great impact on the lives of the youth at our Parrish. They have done countless activities, trips, and projects with the youth and have really been able to pour into the lives of the next generation.

**Project Transformation:** Confidence to be leaders, spiritual guides, and/or mentors to youth, children and families.

**Creating Cultures of Generativity**

In its own way, each program has created a mentoring culture marked by common, generative elements. First, each program created a narrative that was compelling to both young adults and adult volunteers. Second, they created a delivery system for a specific community of adults to invest in a defined group of young adults. Third, each program drew upon common passions, interests, and commitments of the older adults involved to create multiple, personal, and organic connections. Fourth, volunteers were given a variety of ways and levels to participate, often starting small and progressing to larger commitments. Fifth, the programs modeled a mutuality between generations that was marked by everyone benefiting from the experience. Lastly, the older adults expressed a gratefulness for having been involved. There are undoubtedly more markers of generative communities, but unfortunately this present study’s research design did not include how these programs would be mutually beneficial to the older adults who led them.

Though all three programs demonstrated these shared qualities, The Fellows Initiative most fully articulated what a culture of generativity might look like. The volunteers, staff, and board members of The Fellows Initiative who responded to the survey frequently articulated how
much they had received while serving in these various capacities. One retiree and host dad expressed that he and his wife “got more out of the fellows we hosted then we could ever give back.” A wife of a volunteer shared, “We love the long-term family blessing we've received from when my husband mentored a Fellow.” Another volunteer shared that he believes that “the Fellows Initiative has changed the life of each person involved.” In one last example, a volunteer asserted that “the concepts of the program affect the other members of the congregation and give them opportunities to ponder on a smaller scale the same things.”

Chapman expanded on this phenomenon when she described how the mentoring relationship benefited both parties:

It's multi-generational and that works so well because what we're really doing is using extraordinary Christian leaders, who are coming out in the marketplace, CEO's of this place and that place, or at least senior executives. And right at the time when they've realized success and are heading into a time when they really care about significance [chuckles], right at that moment, we grab them and we make them a mentor to a young man or a young woman, and that young man or young woman are often very vulnerable stage of their life, and they'll listen to anything anybody will tell them who's been successful in the workplace and also being a Christian. And so it's a perfect match. It's really just a perfect match. (Chapman, Becca interview. March 26, 2016)

Open-ended Survey Responses on Creating Cultures of Generativity

**The Fellows Initiative:** The amount of selfless giving in the Falls Church community, without regard to reciprocation or result, is one of the most impressive things I have ever seen. Not is there a culture amongst Fellows, but in the community where people young and old get to participate in that work directly and by proxy. Young people get to see what it means to be a Christian at 20, 30, 40, etc. And Fellows get to work with school-age kids, as well as get to be a part of a family dynamic that may be completely different from where they grew up, but is no less authentic.
Hands on Ministry and Leadership Experiences within a Local Congregation

The theme of “local church” emerged to not only represent a broader view of community but also a context where emerging adults were placed into leadership roles. This theme was comprised of terms such as local church, local congregation, worshipping community, site church, and body of Christ. Represented in the three organizations are three distinct orientations to local churches and their sponsoring denominations. The Fellows Initiative programs are individually immersed within a local church context. The John Jay Institute falls into more of a para-church role. Even though it is led by an ordained Anglican priest, John Jay Institute has no direct affiliation with any one local congregation because of its ecumenical commitment.

Project Transformation is a separate United Methodist organization that creates partnerships within United Methodist annual conference and among local United Methodist churches to operate summer internships for disadvantaged youth run by college-age Interns.

Together, all three programs are intentional models of how older adults can be connected to and invest in the lives of emerging adults, which Smith with Snell (2009) argued is greatly needed. Yet the relatively short duration and high intensity of both Project Transformation and the John Jay Institute do not appear to allow enough time or create enough relational touch points to experience the deeper, relational connections possible in a local church – not to the level The Fellows Initiative experience provides. Only The Fellows Initiative model provided a holistic integration of emerging adults into the day-to-day life of a congregation. This was accomplished

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16 As an ecumenical organization, The John Jay Institute has worked on developing strong, informal relationships with churches that the Fellows attend on Sundays. The John Jay Institute curriculum emphasizes a strong ecclesiology and the vital role of the local church in shaping culture. About the church, Crippen stated in his interview that “if you are really serious about changing culture, you ought to be involved with [a local church]. The church is the organization that will do that.”
through components that more fully connected the Fellows to the congregation, such as living with a host family, being mentored by a church member, being paired with another adult to lead a discipleship group for the youth ministry, and being required to attend Sunday morning worship services; all of which is contained within a nine to ten-month residency program. As described in The Fellows Initiative 2013-2014 Annual Report (2015q), the national board has witnessed that an organic outcome is that “Fellows Programs create relevance for the local church with the next generation.” As Skancke shared it, “[The Fellows program] has renewed the relationship between our congregation and these post-college kids” (Skancke, Steve interview. March 25, 2015).

As one of Project Transformation’s three C’s (Project Transformation, 2015a, 2015c, 2015d, 2015j) local churches are a vital partner to the program’s success. According to respondents, Project Transformation’s summer internships gave young adults a positive vision of the United Methodist connectional system of local churches, especially how they can work together to serve their communities. Aldrich, director of Project Transformation – Tennessee, said:

I think that Project Transformation exemplifies what it means to be the connective church. My experience isn't isolated. As we get feedback from our interns, some of them say that the most influential aspect of their internship experience were the volunteers and the partnering churches, and to have all of these different people invest in them. And to see, again, the body of Christ at work is very powerful. (Aldrich, Courtney interview. January 26, 2016)

Both Odell, director of Project Transformation – Rio Texas, and Aldrich attribute the success of starting and maintaining their new chapters to the direct partnership connection of churches and volunteers within their annual conferences. Aldrich shared:
For my personal experience as an intern, I don't think I realized the power of the body of Christ and the power that the church can hold until I served with PT. But before I came to PT, the church was-- when I thought of church I thought of Franklin First United Methodist Church, which is my home church, and that's what church to me. All of a sudden when I showed at PT, the church became a lot larger and the church became a lot more powerful with a lot more possibilities. The church became more diverse, and the church became more reflective of what I imagine the Kingdom of God would be. (Aldrich, Courtney interview. January 26, 2016)

Aldrich’s positive assessment aligned with what many respondents described as the collaborative partnerships between young adults and local church volunteers in serving the children.

Yet, during the course of this study, Project Transformation’s volunteer and paid leadership acknowledged issues affecting its churches that need to be better defined and strengthened moving forward. The first issue mentioned concerned the interaction of the young adult Interns and local churches¹⁷ (Project Transformation, 2015g, 2015h). Lindh of Project Transformation – National conceded a disconnect, particularly on Sunday mornings:

For example, churches that are hosting Project Transformation, because it's optional for the team to go to worship at that church on Sunday morning, that's a real downer, it changes the interaction that the church has and the relationship the church has with those college students. (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016)

Similarly, Odell of Project Transformation – Rio Texas recognized that they need to do more in assessing site churches to determine “what does having this program on a church campus really do for that congregation?” (Odell, Nathaniel interview. January 28, 2016). One respondent from the Project Transformation – Dallas staff indicated that the new position he holds was created to offer “pastoral insight to selecting sites, creating action plans, and coaching plans for achieving

¹⁷ Both summer intake and exit surveys for the emerging adult interns do not include any items about experience with the site church or past and future church attendance.
goals.” Odell indicated that Project Transformation needs to move beyond reporting the number of volunteers they get from partner churches and asking site churches what is needed to make the camps run better. While confessing he does not know what it should look like, he asserted:

If we're going to continue to say that we are one program that serves three groups, then in the same way that I can tell you that 100% of our students maintained or improved their reading level, and 95% of our interns said that they gained practical leadership and work skills, then I should be able to say some percentage of our churches or people in our churches recognize this difference that was made to their congregation. And there's nothing like that, that I know of that we've measured or anything like that. (Odell, Nathaniel interview. January 28, 2016)

Open-ended Survey Responses on Hands on Ministry and Leadership Experiences within a Local Church

The Fellows Initiative: Life long commitment to Jesus Christ, leadership in the church (not necessarily our local church, but in the larger sense of the church body), personal growth.

Project Transformation: Interns expressed that they were almost "shocked" to find out that there are so many major and very important services provided to the needy families by the church such as dental care, health care, counseling, and another variety of services.

Vocational Exploration Experiences

All three of these programs shared a core focus on helping emerging adults to discover their vocational calling in life, whether that is in the marketplace or in ministry. The experiences provided are intended to help emerging adults wrestle, clarify, explore, and even test their callings while surrounded by a supportive community and caring mentors. Additionally, each program individually instituted weekly vocational experiences, seminars, and/or field trips that exposed participants to a breadth of professional environments and callings that fit into the scope
of their telos (The Fellows Initiative, 2015p; Project Transformation, 2015i; John Jay Institute, 2015k).

The language of purpose, vocation, and calling was a common tongue spoken within each program, yet an interesting contrast developed among the programs with regard to this theme. On one hand, the Fellows Initiative and the John Jay Institute focus equally on both secular and ministry vocational development. On the other hand, Project Transformation has placed a higher institutional value on those interns who indicate a calling into full-time ministry18 (Lindh, Eric interview. January 29, 2016; Project Transformation, 2015b, 2015g, 2015h, 2015j). This repeated emphasis on future clergy and full-time ministry leadership, over leadership in secular environments, distinguished Project Transformation from the other two programs which expressed an equal value for both.

Open-ended Survey Responses on Purpose, Vocation, and Calling

The Fellows Initiative: That they would understand that work is ministry; that to pursue a life dedicated to the teachings of Jesus does not mean that they would "work for a church" or "become a missionary," but rather that they would pursue their passions wholeheartedly and use their gifts to the best of their ability in whatever field that may be. And in so doing, they would grow the influence of Christ in the world.

John Jay Institute: My hope is that the fellows will understand their calling in life and how to integrate their faith and vocation to glorify the Lord through public service.

Project Transformation: Our goal and prayer is that young adults will feel more comfortable discerning their vocational and spiritual calling(s) and that they will continue advocating for children and communities in need.

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18 Project Transformation respondents and materials placed a high importance on young adults expressing or pursuing a vocational calling into full-time ministry. For The Fellows Initiative, ministry most often came up in the context of the Fellows involvement in the church’s youth ministry or articulating an understanding that all of life is ministry.
**Self-Discovery**

The respondents from all three programs closely associated the theme of “self-discovery” with “purpose, vocation, and calling.” For Fellows and Interns alike, the staff, volunteers, and alumni from each program expected their experience to be a transformative season that would “echo through the rest of their lives.” They hoped that these emerging adults would be able to identify gifts, skills, ability, passions and talents that could be used to serve others. They anticipated that these young men and women would “understanding how their individual story fits into God’s story.” Many hoped that these participants would be able to identify their individual purpose, a sense of direction vocationally, and even mature socially and emotionally. Other respondents expressed a desire for them to gain a new found confidence in themselves, their faith, and their place in the world.

**Open-ended Survey Responses on Self-Discovery**

**The Fellows Initiative:** I think what I continue to see in new fellows is going from entitlement to humility over the 9-month period. Sometimes it's a really rough journey, but the fellows are in a safe community to explore parts of their stories that maybe have never been dealt with and how that's shaping who they are in relationships both inside and outside of work. The result at the end of year are a group of young adult leaders who are much more self-aware without being self-obsessed which is what we desperately need more of in our selfie generation.

**John Jay Institute:** It is an honor to participate in the transformation and watch these young leaders grow. Often, they enter the Institute ready to take on the world based on their own merit and goals, but become grounded in tradition and their faith during their residency. There is a deepening of conviction, service, and calling, and they leave their residency ready to take on the world because they understand their role as Christians in the culture and meta-narrative of history.

**Project Transformation:** PT gives space for young adults to recognize their own spiritual gifts and graces and explore various ministry-related vocation. We want every young adult to walk away knowing that they are called to live a life of ministry, whether that be behind a pulpit or in a corporate board room. Aside from this primary goal, we seek to deepen each young adult's understanding of social justice, community, as well as the connection and power of Christ's Body.
Summary of Qualitative Comparisons

This chapter sought to verify the most significant practices and philosophical components, as indicated on the study’s survey, across the three faith-based leadership development programs; especially as they relate to the what each program hoped to accomplish in the lives of the emerging adult participants. By looking at the relationships between each program’s goals, practices, and philosophical components as articulated in the open-ended survey responses, the study was able to describe programmatic consistencies and discrepancies that existed for each program. This was validated throughout all levels of older adult involvement by those who exhibited an honest awareness of their own program’s strengths and growth areas. And lastly, by comparing the programs together; this chapter demonstrated three similar, yet also distinct, programmatic designs that were created to impact the lives of the young adults.
Chapter 9: Conclusion

Restatement of the Purpose and Design of the Study

A unique field of faith-based leadership programs has arisen within and around the context of higher education. The programs have developed alongside two trends in higher education:

1. The social, demographic, economic, and educational macro changes that have led to a delayed transition to adult roles and responsibilities called emerging adulthood, and
2. The growing body of research in higher education that highlights the positive, but under-realized, benefits of religion, spirituality, meaning and purpose in the lives of emerging adults.

Specifically, these faith-based leadership development programs have addressed issues such as purpose exploration, faith and spirituality, and vocation among young adults. This study has explored the histories of three of these programs in order to understand how their stated outcomes inform their philosophical components and practices, as understood by the founders, staff, and adult volunteers of each organization. The views of the participating college students and recent college graduates were not included in this phase of the research.

This chapter will focus on the main research questions and the larger body of literature that frames the study. The research questions are:

1. What are the factors that have given rise to and caused the spread of these emerging adult intervention programs?
2. What does each of the programs hope to accomplish in the lives of the emerging adult participants?
3. What are the philosophical components and practices used by each program to accomplish its goals?
4. What lessons and implications might be useful for other young adult intervention programs?
Questions 1 and 2 have been explored at length in Chapters 4 – 6. Question 3 has been explored in Chapter 7 and 8. Lastly, this chapter will address Question 4 as it provides a summary of the major findings.

**Major Findings**

*Factors of Growth and Spread of Faith-based Leadership Programs*

These faith-based leadership programs are hybrids of religious and higher education communities. The programs have developed their mission and niche along the periphery of undergraduate education, including re-appropriating high impact practices widely recognized within higher education. They exist because they have recognized that colleges and universities, on the whole, are either unable or unwilling to incorporate issues of faith development, purpose, or vocation in a holistic manner. Yet rather than being adversarial or combative, these programs offer unique educational experiences that are meant to be complimentary and build upon a student’s academic experiences. Run by para-church ministries, local congregations, or denominational adjudicators, these programs represent a significant investment, prioritization, and hope that these institutions have place in young adults. Like any organization operating in the co-curricular free market within the higher education, these programs’ continued growth and spread would appear to indicate they are meeting a felt need among a population of young adults that is not being adequately addressed in other places.

Coming from different faith traditions and located in different cities, these programs began spontaneously and independently of each other. Though the founders of the programs can point to at least one programmatic model that they each borrowed from, there was were no organizational structures or direct connections to their predecessors. Additionally, beyond the
Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities\(^1\) acting as a conduit to disseminate its semester study model to its member institutions, there was no broader, national network that connected these nascent organizations. To their credit, rather than simply copying programs like the CCCU’s American Studies Program, the L’Abri community, the Mormon missionary program, or creative ministries like Kingdom Works (now Mission Year) in a cookie-cutter fashion; the leadership of the three programs adapted, modified, and improved the practices received to fit their mission and their context.

These faith-based leadership development programs resemble other student movements, both in the past and in the present. From student movements like the Peace Corps, and the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960’s, and Anti-War Movement to organizations like Teach For America in the present day, all of these organizations had similar components in common. These purposeful organizations had a worldview, a sense of purpose, encouraged community living, and even had mentor-figures and alumni networks. They provided their participants a coherent vision of life by teaching a specific worldview, by giving them a sense of purpose, by connecting them with older adults who could be described as mentors, and it all being set in within the context of community living.\(^2\) Like their earlier predecessors, these faith-based leadership programs could be viewed as performing many of the same functions as other, non-religious student groups. Far from being new to the higher education landscape, these types of purposeful organizations continue to emerge, develop, and diminish as newer forms take their place, including these new faith-based programs.

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\(^1\) Leaders in both The Fellows Initiative and John Jay Institute indicated a knowledge of CCCU’s semester study programs and its influence on their program.

\(^2\) Ideas were first expressed in dissertation defense by Dr. Rury reflecting on his participation as an undergraduate in the 1960’s and as a graduate student in the 1970’s.
Lessons and Implications

These faith-based leadership programs suggest a number of useful lessons for other similar programs. First, when working with young adults, it is necessary to articulate, teach, and connect, and integrate one’s worldview, or metanarrative, throughout the curriculum. Second, intentional, Christian community should prioritize spiritual formation practices equally alongside other programmatic components. Third, the practice of mentoring is best approached by creating access to a web or community of mentors for young adults. Fourth, young adults need to be given vital roles inside multi-generational communities in order to develop needed leadership skills. And lastly, young adults benefit from a variety of experiences that expose them to vocational and career possibilities.

Despite their twenty plus years of histories, one fascinating aspect of the programs has to do with the fragility and obstacles experienced during their early days. Specifically, the Bennett scandal at the end of the first year, of what would become the Falls Church Fellows program, jeopardized there being a year two, let alone a year twenty-three. Similarly, when the first incarnation of the John Jay Institute was launched at Focus on the Family in 1995, it was poorly received and out of step with the goals of its parent organization. The concept would not be validated until Crippen was hired by Family Research Council, after which he was given a supportive context to cultivate what would ultimately become the John Jay Institute. Lastly, Project Transformation began as a one-off idea with no plans to continue after the first summer in 1997. It was not until they received positive feedback from all involved that they began taking steps to ensure the sustainability of the program. A new organization might be encouraged to know that these programs struggled to start and sustain their visions of working with young adults.
Emerging Adulthood

Begun in the 1990’s, this present group of faith-based leadership programs began before the term “emerging adulthood” was coined by Arnett (2000). The leadership involved in these programs did not explicitly use the language of or refer directly to the theory of emerging adulthood to describe their work with young adults, although they had come to similar conclusions about the challenges young adults face. The founders and creators of each of these organizations sensed that something was changing and missing within the higher education experience, whether from their work with young adults, their own experiences in college, or discovering similar program(s) that informed and inspired them to get involved with the young adults. The leadership of each organization could be characterized as having a profound belief and hope in these college students and graduates. The programs were developed to assist and guide these young adults at a time when the transition from college to full-time work was getting more complicated, prolonged, and harder to navigate.

The people who work in these programs have their own, largely implicit, views about where their program participants are developmentally that came through in how they talked about their program and the young adult participants. On one extreme, some of these leaders thought about their participants as still struggling to figure out who they are and their role in the world, which was consistent with an emerging adulthood view. On the other extreme, different leaders thought of their participants as people who already know who they are and what they want, and seen themselves as providing these young adults with connections and support to achieve their goals. The majority of the survey respondents or the interviewees would fall somewhere between these two poles, yet closer to the latter option. In other words, they did not perceive the participants as emerging - or not fully-formed – adults. This perspective is based
upon each’s program admission standards, as well as a high regard for the individual agency of the young adult participants themselves. Consequently, these faith-based leadership programs are not designed to help young adults figure out their faith and find themselves. They are purposeful, not value-neutral, programs that recruit from a self-selecting group of students. They are designed to prepare participants, who already share the commitments of the sponsoring organization, to live a specific vision for life after college.

A criticism of emerging adulthood could be made of The Fellows Initiative and the John Jay Institute, specifically with regard to which young adults are included in them. Considered a response to the prolonged transition between graduating college, finding a job, and becoming self-sufficient, emerging adulthood has failed to address the sizable population of young adults who do not or cannot attend any form of higher education. This segment of young adults is referred to as the “forgotten half” in emerging adult literature. The validity of the concept is questioned because of its inability to account for the developmental issues of all young adults, not just the privileged minority who can attend a college or university.

Similarly, the type of students who participate in The Fellows Initiative and the John Jay Institute may be potentially problematic from a diversity perspective. This fact is even more pertinent when compared to the young adults accepted in Project Transformation. While each program admits over 50% women into its classes, only Project Transformation seems to admit over 20% of young adults from ethnic minorities. The contrast between Project Transformation and the other programs may also extend to students’ socioeconomic level, type of post-secondary institution they attend, and purpose of each program. Despite the limited snapshot of the current classes, the type of young adult recruited and accepted to each program may depict unconscious factors or biases that influence the make up each community.
This criticism is particularly troubling for The Fellows Initiative due to its aspirations to expand the number of local churches hosting Fellows program. At present, The Fellows Initiative is comprised of theologically-conservative, middle to upper-class, white congregations. Although two African-American congregations have attended “Come and See” events in the past to explore the Fellows program, neither church have started a Fellows program (The Fellows Initiative, Come and See Event, April 2015). A slight awareness of this lack of diversity among participants was registered by a handful of volunteers on the survey, but their responses did not include suggestions to address it.

Lastly, each faith-based leadership program recruits young adults who are either in college or recent college graduates, but not young adults who stepped directly into full-time jobs right out of high school. Like emerging adulthood, the scope of their programming does not include the “forgotten half” of American young adults. Due to their local church and community connections, The Fellows Initiative and Project Transformation could potentially adapt their strategies to include recent high school graduates entering the labor force, like the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints does for its young adults.

**Agenda for Future Research**

**Young Adult Outcomes**

By design, the three case studies were written from the perspective of each program’s founders, leaders, staff, and adult volunteers. The goal of this study was to develop a foundational understanding of this group of organizations before attempting to explore young adult outcomes and impact in a follow-up study. The strategy for this future research would begin with a qualitative analyze of the exit interviews, surveys, and final essays collected from
young adults at the end of each programs. Drawing upon the insights gleaned from the qualitative materials, a survey would be designed to test and refine the preliminary findings. This survey would then be sent out to all past participants, analyzed, and compared to the findings of the qualitative material. Lastly, a protocol would be created to select and interview a three to five past participants from each program qualitative interviews. The findings could provide concrete examples of which practices the past participants perceived had the greatest impact on them. By giving voice to the past participants on what practices were the most effective, the study could offer needed insight into how similar organizations could shape their programmatic goals, practices, and outcomes.

The number of alumni combined across all three faith-based leadership programs represent a sample size of just under 3,000 participants involved over a twenty to twenty-four-year period. The current numbers break out in this manner: The Fellows Initiative – 1,229 (The Fellows Initiative, 2015r), John Jay Institute – 693 (John Jay Institute, 2015c, 2015d), and Project Transformation – over 1,500 (Project Transformation, 2015c). These programs have maintained active connections with their alumni for fundraising and recruiting purposes, and have willing to provide access to them for future study.

**Faith-based leadership programs**

At present, there are dozens of faith-based leadership programs operating across the United States. Run by para-church ministries, local congregations, or denominational adjudicatories, these programs represent a significant investment, prioritization, and hope of these religious institutions. Based upon the categories of the current study, future research could be expanded to further define, categorize, and describe this expanding organizational field. It
would also be interesting to compare these programs with secular leadership programs that have similar missions, goals, or contexts.

**Cultivation of Cultures of Generativity**

This implication for future research is connected to unsolicited, open-ended survey responses that indicated these faith-based formation programs created positive benefits in the lives of the adult staff, volunteers, and board members. This factor, along with others like number of volunteers, average length of involvement, and attitudes and perceptions of young adult participants could be an indicator of healthy, effective programs that impact and transcend the outcomes for the young adult participants. Especially with regard to The Fellows Initiative, there appears to be some generative process that is replicating itself with each new successful chapter.

For lack of a better term, this study is calling these combined experiences cultures of generativity (Erikson, 1964, 1963, 1959). Calling “Man” the teaching, instituting, and learning animal, Erikson (1963) understood generativity as central to our “evolutionary development” and the succession of generations. Yet authors like Setran and Kiesling (2013), Barber (2012, 2014), and Smith and Snell (2009) speak of a mentoring gap that is present in the lives of emerging adults in both higher education, religious congregations and society in general. This absence of substantial succession practices in our culture may be symptomatic of a larger generational problem, one where older adults no longer understand their generative role as being primarily concerned with “establishing and guiding the next generation” (Erikson, 1963).

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3 I believe Erikson may call this a succession gap. My interpretation is that Erikson would include mentoring as a practice in generational succession.
It is in this succession gap that these faith-based leadership programs may have implicitly untapped and connected older adults’ generative need by working with these young adults. Future research would need to begin with establishing a working definition, key indicators, and obstacles for cultures of generativity. The next step might begin to identify case studies that focus on any program or organization, from any field or sector of society, or group of individuals that meet, and hopefully refine, the working definition. For example, case studies could be designed to investigate Scoutmasters who helped 100 boys earn their Eagle ranking, professors who have received an outstanding teacher award based on student voting, or high school teams (athletic, band, choir, debate, math club etc . . .) that have won multiple state competitions over a 10-year period. The findings produced from the analysis of similar case studies could provide a potential direction for further studies.

**Limitations of the Study**

As stated in the Methodology section, I have acknowledged that I approached the subject matter as a critical advocate, having served for the last seventeen years as a campus pastor on four different universities. Beyond this natural affinity for these groups, this study is limited by a number of other factors. First, the fact that it consists of only three case studies among a growing field of faith-based leadership development programs. Second, this study explored Christian-Protestant organizations, though all programs were open to all Christian students. It would benefit from including studies that focus on other religions’ programs that work with emerging adults. Third, it only looked at the history, purposes, and practices of the programs from an adult staff, volunteer, and board member’s perspective. It was not designed to focus on the outcomes of the emerging adult participants. Fourth, response rates varied greatly from
across all three programs, influencing the data towards The Fellows Initiative and effecting the strength of the programmatic comparisons. And fifth, the study would have benefitted from including literature from leadership development and interventions programs.


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