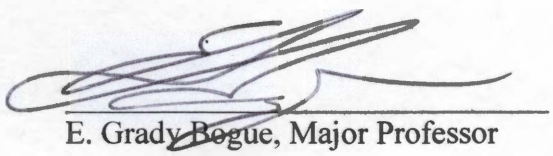
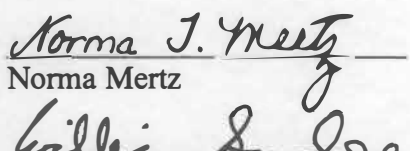
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Donna Ann Tipton-Rogers entitled "Higher Education Accountability in Tennessee: A Corporate Perspective." I have examined the final paper copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, with a major in Educational Administration and Policy Studies.



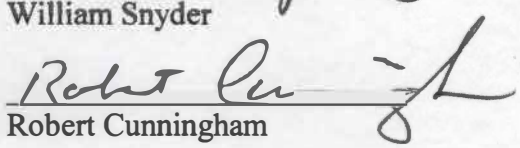
E. Grady Bogue, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:



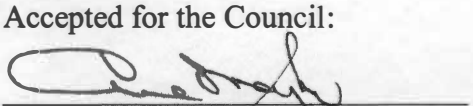
Norma Mertz

William Snyder



Robert Cunningham

Accepted for the Council:



Vice Chancellor and
Dean of Graduate Studies

Higher Education Accountability in Tennessee: A Corporate Perspective

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctorate of Education Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Donna Ann Tipton-Rogers
December 2004

Thesis
2004b
.T59

Copyright © 2004 by Donna Ann Tipton-Rogers
All rights reserved.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving and supportive husband, Hayden, my beautiful baby girl, Torin Alexandria Elizabeth and my parents, Barbara and Bill who always provided encouragement and confidence throughout my life. Their love, patience and understanding have made it possible for this project to be completed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many professional colleagues and mentors to whom I owe much gratitude for their patience and guidance throughout the completion of this project. I want to thank the staff and faculty at Tri-County Community College for understanding my commitment to continuing my educational endeavors. I am thankful to Charlene Waldroup and the employees of the Graham County Center for their encouragement and support, Nancy Williams for reviewing what must have seemed like an endless number of proofs, and President Norman Oglesby for his assistance and flexibility.

I am very grateful to Dr. Grady Bogue for his unending encouragement and guidance, as well as the other members of my dissertation review committee, Drs. Norma Mertz, William Snyder and Robert Cunningham. My educational experiences at the University of Tennessee and the contributions to my Doctor of Education program by the faculty members have led to both my professional and personal growth.

I also wish to thank many other family members and friends that have assisted me throughout the completion of this project, particularly the members of my doctoral cohort. I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of them, especially my wonderful friend, Kristi Roberson-Scott.

ABSTRACT

This in-depth, semi-structured interview study was undertaken to describe Tennessee corporate leaders' perception of accountability in Tennessee higher education and of current accountability policies and/or programs. Answers to four research questions were sought:

1. What are Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of the meaning of accountability in higher education?
2. What are Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of current higher education accountability policies and/or programs?
3. What expectations do Tennessee corporate leaders have for accountability initiatives in higher education and what do they express as evidence of those initiatives?
4. To whom is higher education accountable as perceived by Tennessee corporate leaders?

The sources of information for this study included interviews with twelve corporate leaders in the private sector who were associated with Tennessee Tomorrow, Incorporated and observations of attitudes and actions relating to their perception of accountability issues in higher education.

Findings of the study included the need for accountability initiatives in higher education, meaningful partnership dialog, workforce readiness demands, thoughtful stewardship of resources, and enhance performance indicators. Through the study, a substantial lack of awareness was discovered among Tennessee corporate leaders of current accountability initiatives at the state and local levels.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I....1
INTRODUCTION....1
Statement of the Problem....6
Purpose of the Study....7
Research Questions....8
Significance....8
Delimitations....9
Limitations....10
Definitions....11
Chapter II....12
LITERATURE REVIEW....12
Rising Importance of Higher Education....13
Historical Developments in the Search for Quality and Accountability....17
Accountability Policies and Programs....31
Enrollment and Persistence....37
Remediation....38
Quality and Performance....38
Teacher Education....39
Research and Public Service....39
Student Assistance....40
Chapter III....42
METHOD AND PROCEDURES....42
Research Design....42
Researcher's Role....44
Participants....45
Data Collection Procedures....45
Data Analysis....46
Validity and Reliability....48
Chapter IV....50
FINDINGS....50
Research Question One....51
Research Question Two....55
Research Question Three....61
Workforce Readiness Skills....62
Meaningful Partnership Dialog....67
Stewardship of Resources: Effectiveness and Efficiency....71
Educational Performance Indicators....74
Research Question Four....79
Chapter V....82
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS....82
Overview of the Study....82
Summary of Findings....83
Discussion of Findings....84

Meaning of Accountability 84
Awareness of Current Accountability Initiatives 86
Expectations and Evidence of Accountability Initiatives 88
Multiple Higher Education Stakeholders 91
Conclusions 92
Recommendations 94
REFERENCES 95
APPENDICES 111
APPENDIX A: Letter of Invitation and Introduction 112
APPENDIX B: Consent Form 113
APPENDIX C: Confidentiality Agreement 114
APPENDIX D: Interview Protocol 115
APPENDIX E: List of Interview Participants 116
VITA 117

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, higher education has become one indicator by which success in our society is measured and is considered in large part responsible for the greatness of our nation. No longer quiet enclaves of stately buildings and tree-lined quadrangles isolated from the busy world, today higher education in the United States is a $225 billion enterprise with over 15 million students, more than 3,800 institutions, and over 1 million faculty and staff providing instruction and services (Lyons, McIntosh & Kysilka, 2003; CEW, May 13, 2003; Kinser & Forest, 2002; NCES, 2002; NCPI, 2001). As America's 13th largest industry, it is an enterprise with an expanded array of stakeholders, including students, college faculty and staff, parents, employers, public officials, community leaders, and the general public that has come to see higher education as both a commodity and a public good (NCPI, 2001; Gaither, 1995).

As a concerned populace, stakeholders, particularly business and industry leaders, seek reflection and change as they rely upon the enterprise of higher education to contribute to the betterment of our nation: to prepare an educated populace to overcome the problems that challenge our nation, to broaden the horizons of citizens' ideas and expressions, to improve the quality of life for each new generation, and to contribute to our growing economy (Lyons, McIntosh & Kysilka, 2003; CEW, January 13, 2003; NMCHE, 2002; Hull & Grevelle, 1998; Oblinger & Verville, 1998).

The rising importance of higher education to the continued civic health, growth and prosperity of the nation clearly stands as one of the great pressures driving a culture

of accountability within American colleges and universities. As our nation leads the world economy from the industrial revolution into the knowledge revolution, institutions of higher education have found themselves in an enviable position (Bok, 2003). The United States House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce (2003) summarizes in a fact sheet how the enterprise of higher education is being viewed as a major economic resource to an extent never seen before, evidenced by a definitive emergence of policy both within the higher education community and among stakeholders external to the enterprise, that accents accountability issues. As Peter Drucker (1994) explains, the world economy in which our nation must compete is rapidly evolving to a point that knowledge is the chief source of comparative economic advantage among various companies and countries. Advantages in land, labor and capital that once dominated economic prosperity are receding in importance relative to knowing how to use our resources effectively and efficiently (CEW, January 13, 2003; Drucker, 1994).

As the velocity of change continues to fuel our current knowledge-based economy, institutions of higher education have a unique responsibility for developing and maintaining high quality knowledge resources that form the foundation of our economic growth and contribute to our nation (NMCHE, 2002; Gardiner, 1994; Drucker, 1994). For example, institutions dedicated to their historic missions of education, research and public service now have the responsibility of successfully responding to the growing importance of those missions in an international context. As stakeholders seek reliable information about the condition and effectiveness of the education enterprise, institutions are being called upon to "account" for their programs and actions and to demonstrate how

and to what end they serve their constituents (Newman, 2003; Burd, 2002; Wellman, 2001; Katz, 1994).

At the close of the 20th century, the sheer scope and magnitude of higher education in the United States meant that academe and the work of the enterprise were too important to the rest of the country to be left unexamined. A demand for accountability has become a standard feature in the higher education literature (Newman, 2003; Chaffee, 1998). As Wellman (2001) states, " higher education must demonstrate its value" to stakeholders to gain the support it needs. Today, higher education institutions are being asked to educate students to a very high level as the restructuring of the world economy, global competition, international economic integration, unprecedented technological change, defense conversion, and related structural changes demand a new national workforce development strategy for the nation (King, 2002; IHEP, 2002).

Virtually every sector of the economy requires workers with skills and competencies beyond those most students acquire in high school (Hull & Grevelle, 1998). Some say that soon adult workers will need the equivalent of one year of college every seven years in order to keep up with or change careers (Dolence & Norris, 1995). Therefore, it should come as no surprise that external stakeholder demands for accountability in higher education have been escalating (Donald, 1999). As a powerful voice in higher education, stakeholders want and need to know what students are learning and what colleges and universities can do to better prepare students for the future (Newman, 2003; Burd, 2002; Katz, 1994). Society depends on the enterprise to develop citizens who can intelligently contribute to the democracy and meet the needs of our

nation for high quality international competition in the knowledge-based economy of the 21st century (NMCHE, 2002; Gardiner, 1994).

Historically, issues related to quality in academic settings have been topics of philosophic engagement and sources of tension over the years among stakeholders from within and without (Bogue & Hall, 2003). However, for years, higher education found it politically unnecessary to answer external stakeholder queries. Nevertheless, times changed in the latter half of the 20th century as calls for greater educational accountability became quite strident in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These calls subsided briefly, only to reemerge with much greater intensity in the 1980s and 1990s as coordinating agencies, legislators, executive branches of government, and accrediting agencies more assertively demanded reliable information and a more public engagement with quality and performance issues (Grantham, 1999). As various regulations and laws were enacted, American colleges and universities were called upon to improve quality and to make the increased focus on accountability more public. Many of these efforts resulted in an expanded repertoire of quality assurance systems and improvement measures (Bogue & Aper, 2000), including assessment, performance indicators and performance funding/budgeting (Bogue & Hall, 2003). At state, national and local levels higher education institutions initiated various ways to account for their programs and actions and to demonstrate how and to what end they served their constituents (Burd, 2002; Wellman, 2001; Katz, 1994).

To efficiently and effectively answer demands for accountability, higher education has attempted to improve its capacity to demonstrate how it serves social expectations. However, in the future, the survival of many institutions will be determined

by how willing they are to continue to confront and respond to growing external concerns and to be accountable to the people they serve (Chaffee, 1998). Higher education serves broad social purposes and can be seen as both a private and a public good (Katz, 1994). Therefore, institutions cannot survive if they are perceived as serving only institutional but not social purposes. "In the age of consumerism and public transparency, accountability is necessary for preserving the compact between higher education and society" (Wellman, 2001).

In the 21st century, accountability in the enterprise of higher education requires that benefits be defined in terms that are important to the public, and the public must know about them (Bogue & Hall, 2003; Katz, 1994). The sheer scope and magnitude of higher education means that institutions and the collegiate enterprise are too important to the rest of the country to be left unexamined. Providing the public with a better and clearer accounting, rendering public what too often has been left private, is in order (CEW, May 13, 2003; Newman, 2003; Hull & Grevelle, 1998).

Today, accountability expectations in higher education are of global interest (Brennan, Fedrowitz, Huber & Shah, 1999; Terrenzini, 1989). Higher education must demonstrate its value to stakeholders to gain the support it needs while being ready and willing to answer to those stakeholders outside the enterprise (Newman, 2003). For example, while attending college is more important than ever (CEW, January 13, 2003), students and parents want to know if they are getting their money's worth, as virtually every sector of the economy requires workers with advanced skills and competencies (CEW, 2003). Employers are increasingly insistent in asking whether higher education institutions are preparing today's college students for tomorrow's jobs, while public

officials and community leaders seek assurances that institutions are pursuing established missions and achieving results consonant with their public purposes (CEW, May 13, 2003). Though the language often reflects individual agendas, the same basic question is being asked by everyone: Do the nation's colleges and universities meet, exceed, or fall short of our expectations? As many stakeholders state, the quality of our future civic, social and economic life depends on the quality of education available to all students at all levels of our higher education system, now and in the future (*Investing in People*, 2000).

The accent on accountability in higher education is well understood and documented. However, the question is whether the activities and reports associated with accountability in higher education are perceived as beneficial to various stakeholders. In the past, businesses have made clear the importance of sustaining and enhancing the foundations of our knowledge-based economy; however, little is known about corporate leaders' perceptions of existing accountability measures in higher education. How do corporate leaders perceive accountability in higher education and what is their perception of current accountability policies and/or programs?

Statement of the Problem

Accountability has been one of the premier policy accents in American higher education since the latter half of the 20th century (Bogue & Hall, 2003). Demands for accountability are now standard features in the higher education landscape (Chaffee, 1998). Accountability expectations in higher education are of global interest as stakeholders expect publicly supported institutions to meet increased accountability demands (Newman, 2003; Brennan, Fedrowitz, Huber, & Shah, 1999; Terrenzini, 1989).

Over the past several decades, there has been an increased pressure on higher education institutions to account for processes, expenditures, and finally, accomplishments (Zumeta, 2000). Today, there continues to be a need for ensuring the validity and utility of accountability initiatives both within the higher education community and among external stakeholders (CEW, 2003; Katz, 1994; *Investing in People*, 2000).

Clearly, institutions of higher education have initiated numerous measures to keep stakeholders informed regarding the condition and effectiveness of the enterprise (Bogue, 2002); however, it is not known to what extent they are aware of current accountability efforts. How do stakeholders perceive accountability initiatives in higher education? Have accountability measures made a difference to external stakeholders, and have they been effective in terms of improved partnerships and communication efforts? Moreover, while stakeholders have demanded accountability from institutions and mandated policies to secure it, institutions of higher education have little information about the perceptions fueling this demand, specifically corporate leaders' perceptions of efficient and effective accountability policies and programs (Pascarella, 2001; Peters, 1994; Katz, 1994). When combined with similar, concurrent studies being undertaken to address these issues, a significant and sizable contribution will be made to the prevailing body of literature on various stakeholders' perceptions of accountability.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of accountability in Tennessee higher education and of current accountability policies and/or programs.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of the meaning of accountability in higher education?
2. What are Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of current higher education accountability policies and/or programs?
3. What expectations do Tennessee corporate leaders have for accountability initiatives in higher education and what do they express as evidence of those initiatives?
4. To whom is higher education accountable as perceived by Tennessee corporate leaders?

Significance

A study of corporate leaders' perceptions of accountability in higher education and of current accountability policies and/or programs was important for several reasons. First, demands for accountability are now standard features in the higher education landscape (Chaffee, 1998). Currently, higher education must demonstrate its value to students, to business and industry, and to the public to gain the support it needs (Wellman, 2001). Second, while external stakeholders across the country have demanded accountability from public higher education institutions and mandated policies to secure it, institutions of higher education have little information about the perceptions fueling this demand and few sources about the particulars of their intent. Third, researchers have often studied accountability in higher education, but their findings may have been implicitly over-generalized to all stakeholders. Therefore, this study provided previously

unavailable data about corporate leaders' perceptions of accountability in higher education, data that maybe important to institutions of higher education and to corporate leaders themselves. Further, the study addressed ways to improve current accountability policies and/or programs by examining their effectiveness. It also discussed ways to improve and to make more acceptable various forms of accountability by focusing mainly on corporate leaders and their relationships with institutions of higher education.

Delimitations

By design, this study described corporate leaders' perceptions of accountability in higher education in only one state, Tennessee and confined itself to interviews of a purposeful sample of 12 corporate leaders within that state. Therefore, the findings speak to the perceptions of those corporate leaders and only apply to those corporate leaders and to higher education institutions in that state, although they may be representative of other corporate leaders' perceptions within the state and in other states.

The fact that this study focused solely on corporate leaders' perception of higher education accountability in Tennessee limited the generalizability of findings to other states and to the nation as a whole. However, while Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of accountability issues in higher education may not be exactly the same as in other states, the concepts, insights and suggestions for improvement may prove to be beneficial for those who seek information on business and industry involvement in higher learning in other parts of the nation.

Limitations

This study was designed to describe Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of current higher education accountability measures using qualitative research methods, specifically interviews. Consequently, the use of this method imposed certain limitations on the study. Specifically, breadth was sacrificed for depth. No comparison of the data gained will be made at this time to other states accountability efforts. Therefore, external validity of the study is limited.

For this qualitative study, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were chosen as most appropriate; however, the findings could be subject to other interpretations. Because the purposive sampling procedure decreased the generalizability of findings, this study was not generalizable to all areas of accountability initiatives.

It was assumed that those interviewed during the course of the study provided information and opinions that were as accurate and truthful as possible. It was recognized that due to the different positions and functions within the corporations these participants interpretations of accountability efforts may exist. However, even though participants were assured that their name and position would not be revealed, it was acknowledged that some interviewees may not have provided complete information as to their perceptions regarding accountability in higher education for various personal reasons.

Because the nature and scope of the research prevented a large and extensive interview pool, every attempt was made to ensure that all opinions and ideas were heard. An interview protocol was established to promote clearness and consistency of information gained through the interviews conducted for the study. A clear system of data analysis was also designed. Yet, as with all research studies, interviewer interpretation of

responses was realized as a challenge to internal validity due to potential biases brought to the study by the researcher.

Definitions

The following terms are used in this study and are defined here.

Accountability – in the context of higher education, may be defined as evidence offered on the extent to which an institution achieved its mission and goals, with a particular accent on educational outcomes. Bogue and Aper (2001) states, a formally expressed expectation-a campus or board policy, state or federal law, or formal policy of another agency such as an accrediting agency that (1) requires evaluation of both administrative and educational services; (2) asks for public evidence of program and service performance; (3) encourages independent/external review of such performance evidence; and (4) requests information on the relationship between dollars spent and results achieved.

Stakeholders – in the context of higher education, may be defined as internal or external parties who have a share or interest, as in an enterprise.

Chapter II

LITERATURE REVIEW

As important influences in higher education, a variety of stakeholders want and need to know what students are learning and what colleges and universities are doing to better prepare students for the future. For example, in the 2002 article "Policy for Accountable Post-Secondary Education for New Mexico," the following summary, which could apply to any state, addresses the necessity and importance to our nation of accountability in higher education:

> The strength of [the nation's] economy, the quality of our workforce, the vitality of our communities, and the productivity and well-being of our citizens depend on an education system that provides residents of all ages with the knowledge and skills needed to live, learn and work in a changing world. A strong system of higher education is essential for the continuing development of our [nation]. Our challenge is to determine how higher education can best meet the needs of our citizens within available resources. We must recognize and support the many strengths of our colleges and universities, while simultaneously encouraging them to implement new strategies that promote continuous improvement. In order to encourage innovation while ensuring responsible stewardship to our taxpayers. . .a [commitment] to a program of accountability for our public colleges and universities [is a must] (NMCHE, 2002).

As the reader will see in this chapter, which reviews the literature on accountability in higher education, this citation provides a concise and descriptive summation of the feelings of many stakeholders within and without academia with regard to accountability efforts in the higher education community.

The first section of this chapter provides a brief overview of the rising importance of higher education to the continued growth and prosperity of the nation. This synopsis will render a better understanding of the demand for a knowledge-based culture of accountability within American colleges and universities and a clearer picture of stakeholders' concerns over what they seek as reflection and change in the 21st century. The second section presents a review of the historical origins of accountability in the United States. This overview provides the historical context for what has taken place in the latter half of the 20th century as it probes the search for quality in institutions of higher education. The final section includes a brief review of accountability policies and programs used to provide information to various stakeholders in a more public way. *The Status of Higher Education in Tennessee* annual report will be used to demonstrate responses to calls for legislative and consumer accountability and the progress and contributions that have been made in colleges and universities across the state of Tennessee.

Rising Importance of Higher Education

Over the years, higher education has become one measure by which success in our society is measured and is a major factor in the greatness of our nation. No longer quiet enclaves of stately buildings and tree-lined quadrangles isolated from the busy world, today, higher education in the United States is a $225 billion enterprise with more

than 15 million students, more than 3,800 institutions, and over 1 million faculty and staff providing instruction and services (Lyons, McIntosh & Kysilka, 2003; Kinser & Forest, 2002; NCPI, 2001). As America's 13th largest industry, it is an enterprise with an expanded array of stakeholders, including students, college faculty and staff, parents, employers, public officials, community leaders, and the general public who view higher education as both a commodity and a public good (NCPI, 2001; Gaither, 1995). Stakeholders seek reflection and change as they rely upon the enterprise of higher education to contribute to the health of our democracy: to prepare an educated populace to engage the problems that challenge our nation, to broaden the horizons of citizens' ideas and expressions, to improve the quality of life for each new generation, and to contribute to our growing economy (Lyons, McIntosh & Kysilka, 2003; Hull & Grevelle, 1998; Oblinger & Verville, 1998).

The rising importance of higher education to the continued growth and prosperity of the nation clearly stands as one of the great pressures driving a culture of accountability within American colleges and universities as other pressures have been related to tight budgets and a loss of public trust in higher education's ability to educate students entrusted to their care (Bogue & Hall, 2003). As our nation leads the world economy from the industrial revolution into the knowledge revolution, institutions of higher education have found themselves in an enviable position (Bok, 2003). As Bogue and Aper (2000) explain, "The evolution of higher education mission and purpose reveals a growing complexity in expectation, from the earlier and singular mission of teaching in the colonial college to the more complex missions of advancing and applying knowledge in research and public service in the modern college and university." The enterprise of

higher education is being viewed as a major economic resource to an extent never seen before, evidenced by a shift in emphasis in higher education goals from an accent on the enhancement of access and social/economic justice to a concern with quality, integrity, and accountability (Bogue & Aper, 2000).

As the velocity of change continues to permeate our current knowledge-based economy, institutions of higher education have a unique responsibility for developing and maintaining educational resources that form the foundation of our economic growth (Gardiner, 1994; Drucker, 1994). For example, institutions dedicated to their historic missions of education, research, and public service now have the responsibility of successfully responding to the growing importance of those missions in the world context. As stakeholders seek reliable information about the condition and effectiveness of the education enterprise, institutions are being called upon to "account" for their programs and actions and to demonstrate how and to what end they serve their constituents (Burd, 2002; Wellman, 2001; Chaffee, 1998; Katz, 1994).

At the close of the 20th century, the sheer scope and magnitude of higher education in the United States meant that academe and the work of the enterprise were too important to the rest of the country to be left unexamined. A demand for accountability has become a standard feature in the higher education literature (Linn, 2000; Chaffee, 1998). As Wellman (2001) states, " . . .higher education must demonstrate its value" with accountability measures to stakeholders to gain the support it needs. Today, King (2002) explains, higher education institutions are being asked to educate students to a very high level as the restructuring of the world economy, global competition, international economic integration, unprecedented technological change,

defense conversion, and related structural changes demand a new national workforce development strategy for the nation. As Hull and Grevelle (1998) conclude in *Tech Prep: The Next Generation*, virtually every sector of the economy requires workers with skills and competencies beyond those most students acquire in high school. In addition, Dolence and Norris (1995) state that soon adult workers will need the equivalent of one year of college every seven years in order to keep up with or change careers. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that external stakeholder demands for accountability in higher education have been escalating (Donald, 1999). As a powerful voice in higher education, many sources explain how stakeholders want and need to know what students are learning and what colleges and universities can do to better prepare students for the future (Burd, 2002; Hull & Grevelle, 1998; Katz, 1994). Gardiner (1994) maintains that society depends on the enterprise to develop citizens who can, as employees, meet the needs of our nation for high quality international competition in the knowledge-based economy of the 21st century. However, one important question remains: How did we as a nation foster the growing search for quality issues in higher education?

Historically, issues related to quality in academic settings have been topics of philosophic engagement and sources of tension over the years among stakeholders from within and without (Bogue & Hall, 2003). According to many educators, including Bogue and Aper (2000) in *Exploring the Heritage of American Higher Education: The Evolution of Philosophy and Policy*, the concern for and debate over the nature and nurture of quality in higher education is both a "historic and contemporary concern" (p. 83). But for many years higher education found it politically unnecessary to answer to external stakeholders (Chaffee, 1998). Nevertheless, times changed in the latter half of

the 20th century (Bogue & Hall, 2003). Calls for greater educational accountability became quite strident in the late 1960s and early 1970s, subsided briefly, then reemerged with much greater energy in the 1980s and 1990s as coordinating agencies, legislators, executive branches of government, and accrediting agencies more assertively demanded reliable information and a more public engagement with quality and performance issues (Linn, 2000). As various regulations and laws were enacted, American colleges and universities were called upon to improve quality and to make public their increased focus on accountability (Linn, 2000). Many of these efforts resulted in an expanded repertoire of quality assurance systems and improvement measures (Bogue & Aper, 2000), including assessment practices (Ewell, Finney & Lenth, 1990), performance indicators (Bordon & Banta, 1994; Gaither, Nedwek & Neal, 1994), and performance funding and budgeting systems (Bogue & Hall, 2003; Burke & Servan, 1998; Bogue & Brown, 1982). At state, national and local levels, higher education institutions initiated various ways to account for their programs and actions and to demonstrate how and to what end they served their constituents (Burd, 2002; Wellman, 2001; Katz, 1994).

Historical Developments in the Search for Quality and Accountability

Some historical background is critical to understanding the continuing tension between the search for quality and performance in higher education in the United States and the relationship of accountability efforts to this tension. Not so long ago, institutions of higher education were perceived from both within and without as enterprises with a degree of isolation from the rest of society. Influenced first by the British and then by the German models, colleges and universities embraced the tradition of "autonomy," a freedom of action immune from external scrutiny. Governance was driven by collegiality

and was achieved slowly through extensive deliberation among faculty committees and college administrators (Lyons, McIntosh & Kysilka, 2003). However, since the establishment of land grant colleges and universities in the mid- and late-19th century (Morrill Act, 1862; Second Morrill Act, 1890), states have been concerned with and involved in the outcomes of their public postsecondary institutions. As Ewell (1987) and others explain, the historic foundations for state involvement in public colleges and universities have rested on long-standing concerns related to access, economic development within the state, and the cultivation of a skilled citizenry (Fisher, 1988; Gladieux & Hauptman, 1995).

Quality assessment and the concern for access to colleges and universities have long histories in the United States. Cave, Hanney, and Kogan (1991) trace these activities to college reputational ranking studies conducted as early as 1910, making it clear that institutional comparisons have long been the one of the most common methods for public assessment of quality. However, as Lyons, McIntosh, and Kysilka (2003) explain in *Teaching College in an Age of Accountability*, " . . .many outside academe misunderstood or did not fully appreciate its value to society" (p. 2). In a search for public assessment of quality, beginning nearly a century ago with John Dewey (1916) in *Democracy and Education*, a small and steadily growing number of stakeholders, both internal and external to institutions, claimed that colleges and universities should be expected to do more for a larger number of citizens. They lobbied to provide access, moving from exclusion to inclusion in institutions of higher education (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997; Coffey, 1989; Brubacher, 1977). As a result, by the conclusion of World War II, veterans used the GI Bill to expand student enrollments in ways never witnessed before

(Servicemen's Readjustment Act, 1944). Two decades later the civil rights movement created access to higher education and better employment opportunities for many who had been denied them. (Lyons, McIntosh & Kysilka, 2003; Kinser & Forest, 2002; Lucas, 1994).

The launch of Sputnik became one factor for education reforms in the United States during the last four decades as Stake (1998) explains in some comments on assessment in education found in *Education Policy Analysis Archives*. In 1957, Sputnik shocked the nation into recognizing the need for increasing the human resource base and reinforcing the quality of education particularly in the sciences, engineering and technology (Kinser & Forest, 2002; Stake, 1998). As a nation, we perceived ourselves as being in a "race for space," while we questioned the ability of our educational system to help us get ahead (Mathers, 2000). Our schools are not good enough; they have to do better! As Mathers and King (2001) explain in "Teachers' Perceptions of Accountability," a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association in Seattle in 2001, the blame was laid on the enterprise of education, and a solution was demanded. The result was the National Defense Education Act of 1958, which provided limited loans and scholarships, reinforced graduate programs in science, and provided for the establishment of centers of scientific excellence at universities around the country (Kinser & Forest, 2002). However, Millard (2001) explains, the primary emphasis of the NDEA was on strengthening the quality of higher education and research in the natural sciences to meet the challenges of the Cold War and beginning space age.

In the meantime the impact of the war and post-war baby boom began to be felt across the nation as the higher education community experienced new and rapid growth (Walters, 1960; Lee, 1970). For example, there were 2.3 million 18-year-olds in 1957 with the number growing to 3.8 million in 1965 (Hansen & Stampen, 1987; Anderson; 1968; Trow, 1988). Between 1960 and 1970 college enrollments had increased 126 percent -- growing from 3,789,000 to 8,580,000 -- and although expansion occurred in both public and private institutions, public institutions experienced growth at a far more rapid pace (Millard, 1991). According to Richard Millard (1976) in a "Higher Education Research Report," more than 400 new public institutions were created by the states in this decade as the number of students, size of the institutions, number of institutions and programs, and inevitable jockeying for state funds increased as well. Nevertheless, during that time of rapid growth, the primary social concern was that in the process of expansion, priorities also should be established and quality should not be sacrificed (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). As so clearly stated in *Improvement of Instruction in Higher Education*, a study in a series conducted by the American Association of Colleges and Teacher Education (1960), "Educational history reflects a variety of concerns...about the nature and importance of effective instruction in colleges and universities" (AACTE, 1960).

As institutions continued to face new growth between 1960 and 1970, changes in those institutions were inevitable. For example, as public spending on colleges and universities grew, a new demand for quality in higher education surfaced as well. Additional groups of stakeholders were taking an interest in the higher education community (Kerr, 1972; Wolff, 1969; Jencks & Riesman, 1968). Recognizing this in

1970, the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE), the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Center for Research and Development in Higher Education (CRDHE) at the University of California, Berkeley, summarized the current state of higher education in a report preceding a seminar sponsored by the organizations in 1970: "Our mandate is clear...We are going to have to prove that we deserve the dollars spent on higher education and justify our asking for each additional dollar" (Lawrence, Weathersby, and Patterson, 1970 p.1). State leaders also responded to the growth by forming statewide citizen higher education boards to rationalize poorly controlled postsecondary expansion taking place under loose legislative supervision (Stadtman, 1970; Berdahl, 1971). By 1970, approximately 23 coordinating or governing boards were created bringing the total number to 47 across the nation. While these varied from state to state, some being statewide governing boards and others being advisory commissions, the majority of citizen stakeholders had some responsibility for planning, program review, and budget concerns related to their educational institutions due to the increased civic tension (Millard, 2001).

Due to increased stakeholder interest in higher education, concern with additional responsibilities for equity and assessment were the consequence of a shift in priorities leading to an even greater emphasis upon quality during the 1970s (Astin, 1977). For example, in 1978, Howard Bowen in *Investment in Learning* responded to a succession of articles and books that questioned whether college education was worthwhile and whether institutions of higher education were doing their job. Through his written response to the tide of public debate concerning quality issues in higher education at that time, he strongly suggested that investment in higher education was a public good and

should be viewed accordingly (Bowen, 1978). Speaking to this topic in 1979, a leader of public higher education in Ohio, John Millett, predicted the changing emphasis in the role and focus of state-level, centralized lay boards and their search for quality in colleges and universities:

> State boards of higher education are going to hear a great deal about quality in the next several years. We have talked about quality in public higher education in the past, but I believe it is fair to say that at the level of state government our necessary preoccupation in the 1960s and 1970s was with quantity rather than quality. Now state governments will be told that it is time to give renewed attention to the quality of our higher education endeavors (Millett, 1979).

Fisher (1998) confirms the accuracy of Millett's prediction and contends that the renewed attention to quality encouraged new levels of state legislative involvement in the affairs of colleges and universities during that era, and despite previous state concerns for institutional quality, the 1980s would witness some states making explicit their expectations for more systematic and coordinated approaches to assessment while demonstrating specific outcomes.

From 1980 to the present, higher education witnessed the pendulum swing progressively in the direction of concern for quality. As Chaffee (1998) asserts, in the 1980s, several factors were behind the growing demand for an accountability culture in higher education. For example, marking this demand in a very public way, several national reports were released that ultimately had a major impact on the need for substantive educational reform (Chaffee, 1998). Included among the organizations and

reports that critically analyzed the declining quality and lack of accountability in postsecondary education were the National Commission of Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (1983); the National Endowment for the Humanities, in *To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education* (1984); the National Institute for Education's Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education, *Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education* (1984); the Association of American Colleges' *Integrity in College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community* (1985); and the National Governors Association, in *Time for Results* (1986).

"The idea of accountability for educational reform" as we know it today began in 1983 with the report *A Nation at Risk,* explains Mathers (2000). As a catalyst for undergraduate reform, assessment of higher education performance, improvement in quality initiatives, and increased accountability, *A Nation at Risk* described the decline of student academic performance in the basics of reading, writing, and mathematics related to America's growing need for economic competitiveness (NCEE, 1983). Other reports also emphasized the necessity for higher education to assess knowledge, skills, attitudes, and the basic design of academic and student services programs (NIE, 1984; AAC, 1985; NGA, 1986). Through alarming declarations, these reports raised concern that colleges and universities were not displaying evidences of coherence, purpose, or success to the public (Astin, 1991; Morrell, 1996).

Efforts to promote assessment of quality knowledge in student learning quickly emerged as a notable way to hold institutions accountable in the late 1970s, with most states joining the reform movement by the late 1980s (Zumeta, 2000; Astin, 1982). As

more stakeholders became interested in higher education, public and private entities, such as state legislatures, business organizations, and accreditation associations were increasingly asking challenging questions about the evidence available to support educators' claims that learning was actually taking place (Ikenberry, 2001). Provoked by criticisms of graduates' abilities to write effectively, compute efficiently, think critically, and learn independently, a growing number of external stakeholders exhibited a heightened interest in educational policies and programs in higher education institutions (Donald, 1997). As a consequence of increased concerns by 1986, the governors of all 50 states called upon colleges and universities across the United States to significantly strengthen and expand their assessment programs (NGA, 1986). Two years later, a follow-up study indicated that a vast majority of states had undeniably embarked on several attempts to expand accountability policy and expatiations as institutions searched for better ways to keep their stakeholders informed (NGA, 1988). Notwithstanding these new attempts for greater accountability; however, demands still could be heard.

The goal of accountability in the 1980s was to improve quality in both teaching and learning and to make public the expanded efforts. Yet, as Chaffee (1998) explains in "Listening to the People We Serve," in many ways American educators were slow to embrace the emerging accountability culture. Throughout the decade of the 1980s, public demands for accountability escalated, as many state governments adopted new assessment mandates designed to keep the public more informed (Fisher, 1988). Through a formal auditing process, an increasing number of states turned to an evaluation of outputs as a means to monitor quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of the schools in their systems (Layzell & Lyddon, 1990). Assessment and improvement became a focus guided

by external forces, as the number of states that required public colleges and universities to assess learning outcomes went from near zero to more than 40 in a very short time (Gaither et al, 1994). For example, as legislative and consumer calls for accountability increased, the state of Tennessee became a leader in the nation by implementing an innovative performance funding policy designed to stimulate instructional improvement and student learning (Ewell, 1993; Bogue & Hall, 2003). In addition as Erwin (1998) states, by 1988, all of the regional and programmatic accreditations began to include assessment in their criteria for approval. Through these actions, it became clear that the external stakeholders planned to hold the higher education community accountable for its products in the future. Educational institutions were expected to report to external entities on the assessment of their successes and failures and to rectify the failures in a timely manner (Schaefer, 1990).

Throughout the 1980s, assessment of student learning became a condition of doing business; however, with growth in mandated assessments, controversy grew around two overlapping cultures centered on accountability and autonomy issues (Bogue & Hall, 2003). Externally imposed mandates versus institutional autonomy on one hand and standardized tests versus campus-based assessments on the other made matters difficult. Public officials and consumers initially pushed for statewide, standardized measurements of learning that would allow them to measure and compare institutional achievements and student outcomes (Lucas, 1994). Many educational associations and organizations, including the American Association of Higher Education (AAHE), called for locally based, faculty-owned forms of assessment designed to monitor teaching and learning in their respective institutions (Barr & Tagg, 1995). Faculties and administrations invested

considerable time and effort to promote, support, and implement student assessment at the institutional level, while continuing to search for appropriate and effective strategies for student assessment and for credible evidence to guide their efforts (Peterson, Einarson, Augustine & Vaughan, 1999). As conflicts between cultures continued throughout the 1980s, institutions of higher education prevailed as most states opted to require assessments but left institutions free to develop their own procedures for the process.

By the 1990s, accountability in higher education as a reform movement had made major strides. Educators had become engaged in not only accreditation and assessment activities; but performance initiatives were beginning to emerge in accountability efforts, including performance funding and budgeting. Consequently during the period of the 1990s, developing and assessing student knowledge became a major thrust of professional development programs. Educators from many institutions attended numerous assessment forums and workshops across the nation (Angelo & Cross, 1999; Angelo & Cross, 1993). The movement to improve quality in higher education was growing, but disputes related to modes of accountability lingered. On some campuses, faculty still viewed accountability as externally imposed reporting requirements, having little to do with their business of research and teaching (Boggs, 1999; Hoyler, 1998). Many also objected to the public's oversimplified view that measuring learning was an easy task. If there was a problem with student learning, the faculty tended to argue that it resided in student motivation and inadequate schooling prior to higher education (Schmidt, 1999).

The differences between early assessment efforts and the more recent accountability policies of the 1990s lie in their purposes and procedures. As Boggs (1999) explains, earlier assessment efforts were decentralized and institution based, thus complementing the heritage of institutional autonomy. Through assessment, colleges and universities were encouraged to make institutional changes by developing evaluation measures unique to their missions. This action encouraged measurement over time but not inter-institutional comparison (Hoyler, 1998). In most states, this measurement is still ongoing, where it has been useful in promoting assessment of student learning and improvement in academic programs (Ruppert, 1994).

Newer accountability policies, on the other hand, reflected the view that higher education needed to be more responsive to external stakeholder concerns and more publicly accountable to a broader constituency that included parents, students, employers, legislators, and the general public (Lucas, 1994). While accountability requirements built upon earlier assessment efforts, the added element of publicly reporting on a set of performance indicators gave those with a stake in the enterprise a better understanding of what was being achieved with public resources (Gaither et al, 1994; Ruppart, 1994). Nevertheless, a challenge was present because many educators felt that increased accountability meant a loss of the most cherished and longstanding tradition of institutional autonomy (Lucas, 1994).

As higher education continued to struggle with quality issues throughout the 1990s, colleges and universities faced other challenges as well, making the call for accountability even more apparent. Issues of quality and performance had captured the attention of those in higher education, revealing other tensions among stakeholders within

and without (Gaither et al, 1994). Prompting much interest in these topics were, among other things, reduced confidence in education, shrinking state budgets, taxpayers' complaints about rising costs and taxes, and concern at both the state and national levels about the loss of economic competitiveness, partially as a result of the perceived erosion of educational quality (Ruppart, 1994).

Continuing to face challenges, higher education began to witness a loss of public trust in its ability to educate students. Allegations that academic standards had declined precipitously were a familiar refrain among observers of the collegiate scene in the 1980s and 1990s. As Lucas (1994) describes, "...similar complaints had been voiced many times before, of course, and were hardly novel, but they appeared more frequently and seemingly with greater force than ever before" (p. 290). Unfortunately, during this period a plethora of authors found reasons to pen book-length treatments critical of the higher education community. Consequently, these blistering attacks on the performance of institutions resonated deeply in the popular culture (Kolb, 1995). Included among the works that critically analyzed the declining erosion of trust in postsecondary education were Allen Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (1986) from the University of Chicago; Charles Sykes's *Prof-Scam: Professors and the Demise of Higher Education* (1988) and *The Hollow Men: Politics and Corruption in Higher Education* (Sykes, 1990); Page Smith's *Killing the Spirit: Higher Education in America* (1990); Martin Anderson's *Imposters in the Temple: American Intellectuals Are Destroying Our Universities and Cheating Our Students of Their Futures* (1992); George Roche's *The Fall of the Ivory Tower: Government Funding, Corruption, and the Bankrupting of*

American Higher Education (1994); David Patterson's *When Learned Men Murder* (1996); Alan Charles Kors's and Harvey Silvergate's *The Shadow University: The Betrayal of Liberty on America's Campuses* (1998); and Lionel Lewis's *When Power Corrupts: Academic Governing Boards in the Shadow of the Adelphi Case* (2000).

As some critics assessed the situation, the modern university all too often had lost sight of the conditions necessary for promoting genuine education (Lewis, 2000; Kors & Silvergate, 1998; Patterson, 1996; Roche, 1994; Anderson, 1992). In many regards, the 1990s became an unstable era for higher education marked not only by an erosion of trust but also by a change in revenue patterns resulting in escalating cries from the public for accountability (Bogue & Hall, 2003). As Lucas (1996) explains, during this period universities routinely struggled to meet internal and external demands. Simultaneously, they were attempting to respond to volatile demographic changes such as fluctuations in traditional student cohorts, periodic enrollment declines punctuated unexpectedly by temporary enrollment upswings, an emergence of new constituencies, at times an oversupply of graduates, and limited state support for higher education (Lucas, 1996). In times of cost containment pressures and reduced revenue regimens, political leaders expressed a desire for sharper mission focus and less across-the-board mentality in dealing with fiscal retrenchment (Bogue, 2002). Meanwhile, parents and students viewed tuition as an investment in the future and expected it to yield a good paying and satisfying job upon graduation while corporate and civic leaders expected higher education to contribute to the growing economy (Bogue, 2001; Newman & Couturier, 2001).

As pressures on institutions increased, accountability became the watchword of the legislative movement toward direct involvement in activities related to higher

education. National studies reported that recurring questions continued to emerge among various stakeholders (Gaither et al, 1994). Concerns such as how much students learned and whether they completed college prepared for employment abounded. Local debates emerged among the public stakeholders regarding the assessment of general education outcomes, critical thinking skills, and student/alumni satisfaction (Peterson et al, 1999). Throughout the 1990s, many elected and appointed officials affiliated with state higher education systems became impatient and continued to struggle with the scarcity of reliable information about the condition and effectiveness of the enterprise.

By the close of the 20th century, public stakeholders had become more aggressive players in college and university policy. The external desire for accountability and the continued search for quality forced student-learning issues to become an essential part of higher education's agenda (Erwin, 1998; Donald, 1997; Marchese, 1994). In describing this new view of the role of colleges and universities, Barr and Tagg (1995) write:, "We now see that our mission is not instruction but rather that of producing learning with every student by whatever means work best" (p. 13). To higher education's credit, substantial numbers of faculty were now engaged in assessment-driven conversations about teaching and learning, mission and goals, and the uses of evidence for quality improvement (Barr & Tagg, 1995; Boggs, 1999).

Emphasis on accountability could be found through several policy developments, such as increased state regulation of higher education, growing numbers of states mandating some form of assessment and testing, consumer protection regulations to protect citizens, performance indicator reporting by campuses, adoption of experimentation with forms of performance funding and budgeting, increased curiosity of

trustees about curriculum issues and faculty personnel issues, and the emergence of "report cards" at both state and national levels (Bogue, 2002; NCPPHE, 2000; Marchese, 1994). Also, accrediting agencies became one of the main external agents requiring colleges and universities to take student assessment seriously while numerous conferences and workshops across the nation continued holding sessions related to the importance of accountability in higher education (Eaton, 2001). However, one key question remained after the various attempts were made to keep the public better informed: Have the numerous accountability policies and programs made an impact on stakeholder understanding, involvement and support in the higher education community?

Accountability Policies and Programs

While states have traditionally relied on detailed laws and regulations to assure quality control in public elementary and secondary schools, institutions of higher education in this nation have had different experiences as explained in the prior section. Over the latter half of the 20th century, escalating public interest in knowledge-based performance has generated a variety of approaches to accountability in colleges and universities (Bogue, 2002; Gardiner, 1994; Drucker, 1994; Marchese, 1994). The impetus for colleges and universities to periodically assess the quality of teaching and learning on campus has been manifold. As of the mid-1980s, catalysts for the accountability movement in higher education included existence of assessment standards in regional accreditation criteria from process to institutional effectiveness, escalating state policy initiatives, national reports from a variety of leading special commissions, and funded institutional projects such as Kellogg Foundation support of the University of Tennessee's performance funding initiatives (Banta, et al, 1996; Banta, et al, 1995; Banta

& Moffett, 1987). Thus, many of these accountability policy developments are expressed in form of assessment mandates, performance indicators reports, and performance funding and budgeting (Bogue, 2002).

As an accountability accent, the practice of auditing compliance with laws and regulations became well developed in most state governments during the early 20th century as part of an attempt to discourage fraud and abuse of the public trust. In many ways, compliance auditing is the precursor to other approaches related to accountability and still plays an important role in systems today. All colleges and universities that receive any form of federal assistance are required by law to follow standard definitions of student enrollment, provide basic statistics, and comply with various laws and regulations governing employment and financial practices. At the state level, public higher education institutions must comply with defined state operational regulations as well (SNC, 2002).

Accreditation is a uniquely American construction, characterized as a voluntary, self-regulating, evaluative process that combines outside peer review and consultation of colleges and universities with internal evaluation and planning. The accreditation process emerged as a national concern and practice at the 1906 meeting of the National Association of State Universities (NASU), where a group of college and university leaders, including representatives from the four existing regional associations, recommended the creation of common institutional definitions and standards of college admissions (Young, 1983). Since their inception at the turn of the 20th century, the historic role of the six regional, six national, and 45 specialized accrediting associations has expanded and is now well known and accepted. Accreditation is the most widely

known and respected form of quality assurance among parents, government officials, corporate leaders, and other friends of American higher education (Bogue & Hall, 2003).

Statewide coordinating and governing boards got their start in the 1960s and 1970s as most states faced the swift and unexpected expansion of American higher education (Barak, 1982). Over the last 25 years, as the rapid rate of enrollment growth subsided in most states, statewide agencies began to devote more attention to program quality and other public priorities (Bogue & Hall, 2003; Lucas, 1994). Through systematic reviews of academic programs, many state agencies identified programs where student demand was declining or growing and encouraged the reallocation of resources to areas of concern. Also, through various policy studies, statewide boards focused attention on broader issues of public policy such as student preparation for postsecondary training, participation rates, graduation rates, participation and achievement of minority students, tuition costs, and student assistance.

Performance indicator policy systems can be seen as yet another way to provide information to public constituents. The decade of the 1990s was the dominant period of dialogue for performance indicators. As Bogue and Hall (2003) explain, a performance indicator is a publicly reported quantitative measure or evidence of education resources, activity, or achievement that "furnishes intelligence on strategic operating conditions, facilitates evaluation of operating trends, goal achievement, efficiency and effectiveness in benchmark relation to historic, comparative, or criterion standards, and informs decision making on resource allocation and program/service improvement" (Bogue & Hall, 2003). It also is important to note that performance indicators can be developed at the program, institutional, system, state, regional, national and international levels while

they are designed to serve five functions: monitoring, evaluation, dialogue, rationalization, and resource allocation (Bogue & Hall, 2003).

Performance indicators also were designed to focus on issues related to accountability in higher education. According to a 1997 State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) study, 37 states were using measures of institutional performance in some way in an attempt to respond to accountability demands from external stakeholders (Christal, 1998). As Christal goes on to explain, this is more than double the number of states with such measurements in place in the early 1990s. Based on the SHEEO study, the most common performance indicators are:

- Graduation rates (32 states)
- Transfer rates (25 states)
- Faculty workload/productivity (24 states)
- Follow-up satisfaction studies (23 states)
- External/sponsored research funds (23 states)
- Remediation activities/effectiveness (21 states)
- Pass rates on licensure exams (21 states)
- Degrees awarded (20 states)
- Graduate placement data (19 states)
- Admission standards and measures (18 states)
- Total student credit hours (18 states)
- Number and percentage of accredited programs (13 states)

The SHEEO study in 1997 also found that 8 states used performance indicators directly to determine funding levels, 15 considered performance in budgeting but did not make direct linkages, and 9 additional states planned on using performance measures within the next few years. In a more recent study, Joseph Burke and colleagues (2000) report that currently 37 states consider performance in budgeting either directly or indirectly.

With focus on accountability, the most direct link between elected officials and campus leadership is the fiscal chain that connects the two. Therefore, demands for comparative measures of student learning and continuous improvements became tied to funding-allocation decisions in many states. In an initiative first developed in Tennessee in the 1980s, performance funding became an effective incentive for meritorious institutional performance (Bogue and Hall, 2003). As Bogue and others explain, performance funding in the State was designed to provide citizens, legislative and executive branches of state government, education officials, and faculties with a means of assessing the progress of publicly funded higher education. It also encourages instructional excellence; contributes to continuing support of higher education; and complements academic planning, program improvement, legislative accountability, and student learning (Dumont, 1980). Following Tennessee's lead, other states began to propose financial incentives for evidence of student learning and program quality. Eventually, states such as South Carolina, Texas, Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri, and New Mexico adopted innovative initiatives (Schmidt, 1999; Burke, 1997).

It was in appreciation of the need for an informed response to the demands of accountability and in simultaneous recognition of the limitations of the enrollment-driven

formula that performance funding and budgeting found its stimulus and rationale (Bogue & Hall, 2003). As the interest in performance increased, over half the states began to include a broader range of performance measures to answer the more general questions linked to accountability issues. Many indicators were more easily calculated performance measures. For example, enrollment and graduation rates, degree completion and time-to-degree, transfer rates to and from two- and four-year institutions, pass rates on professional exams, and faculty productivity through student-faculty ratios and instructional workloads were some of the measures. These indicators assist with calculating current needs of and future demands from the higher education community.

Through the various activities associated with Tennessee's accent on accountability, policy makers have been provided with numerous ways to gauge effectiveness and efficiency in their colleges and universities. As an example, given this call for legislative and consumer accountability, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) established in 1989 the *Tennessee Challenge 2000* annual report to demonstrate " . . .the commitment that the higher education community has to improved quality in higher education, its interest in fostering racial diversity and awareness, and its desire to be accountable to all the interested parties that surround and influence the course of higher education in Tennessee" (THEC, 2001). The accountability measures listed in *Tennessee Challenge 2000* are numerous but show a steady and regular improvement in specific goals developed to meet accountability demands. According to *The Status of Higher Education in Tennessee* 2000-01 annual report, over the past 10 years (1990-91 through 2000-01), the following measures reflect accountability efforts made in Tennessee higher education:

Enrollment and Persistence

- Undergraduate enrollment in public institutions increased by 8.9%.
- Undergraduate enrollment in independent institutions grew 12.1%.
- Over 87% of the total public institution enrollees for fall 2000 were Tennessee residents.
- There was an 18% increase in the number of Tennessee residents enrolled at independent institutions.
- Enrollment of undergraduate female students in public institutions grew by 13.8%.
- Undergraduate enrollment of African American students increased by 42.3%.
- Enrollment of African American students in graduate programs in public institutions rose 75.8%.
- Transfer rates of students who graduate from public two-year institutions into public institutions increased 50%.
- Graduate and professional school enrollment in public institutions grew by 10.7%.
- Graduate and professional school enrollment in independent institutions grew by 55.3%.
- The persistence-to-graduation rate at public universities was 47.02% for the 1994 cohort.
- The persistence-to-graduation rate at two-year public institutions was 22.67% for the 1994 cohort.
- The persistence-to-graduation rate of African Americans at public institutions increased 10.9% since 1992.

- The persistence-to-graduation rate at independent institutions increased to 56.2%.

Remediation

- The percentage of students needing any remedial or developmental coursework in all public institutions was 51.9% in 1996 and 50.1% in 2000.
- Compared to 1991, almost 2,000 fewer public university and community college students needed any remediation in 2000.
- The need for significant remedial or developmental coursework (more than one course) by entering college freshmen in public institutions was 25.8% in 1996 and 24.8% in 2000.
- Compared to 1991, almost 1,000 fewer public university freshmen needed significant remediation in 2000.
- Only 1.2% of entering freshmen in public universities who were recent high school graduates (freshmen 18 years of age or younger) took only remedial level coursework in fall 2000.
- Only 29% of recent high school graduates at public institutions took developmental coursework in fall 2000.

Quality and Performance

- ACT COMP average scores are slightly (1.2%) below the national norm. College Base average scores continue to exceed the national norm.
- On most licensure examinations, 85% or more of test takers passed.
- Recognized accreditation bodies accredit all accreditable programs at public two-year institutions.

- The placement rate of vocational graduates at technology centers in 1999-00 was 90.4%.
- Since 1992-93, more than 1 million volumes were added to Tennessee public institutional library collections.

Teacher Education

- The number of students who completed teacher education programs at public and independent institutions increased 29.9% since 1990.
- There was a four-fold increase in AfricanAmerican graduates from teacher education programs at public institutions.
- There was a 64.9% increase in African American graduates from teacher education programs at independent institutions.
- Public institutions account for 64% of those who completed teacher education program while enrolling 80% of undergraduates.
- Independent institutions account for 36% of the teacher education program completers while enrolling only 20% of undergraduate students.
- Over 96% of those who completed teacher education programs at public and independent institutions passed the National Teacher Examination in 1998-99.

Research and Public Service

- Research expenditures at public institutions rose by 14.1% since 1993-94and at independent institutions by 58.6%.
- Public service expenditures at public institutions increased by 41.9% since 1993-94 and by 99%at independent institutions by.

Student Assistance

- The average Tennessee Student Assistance Award at public universities was $1,381, which represented 52.8% of total awards.
- For public two-year institutions, the average award was $673, which represented 23.1% of total awards.
- For independent institutions, the average award received was $3,618, which represented 16.7% of total awards.
- Funding for the Contract Education Program has declined since 1991-92.

The emergence of accountability policies and procedures in higher education indicates the growing urgency of demonstrating educational effectiveness, productivity, and public awareness. Policy developments in areas of assessment, performance indicators, and performance funding and budgeting have assisted in filling gaps in accountability by focusing attention on public priorities and explicitly encouraging initiatives for improvement in institutions of higher education. However, through a review of activities of the past two decades, it is clear that no single approach to educational accountability has the power to dramatically increase performance and that different approaches are helpful and provide an overall view when used together. Performance depends on the capacity, motivation, and persistent engagement of many policies and programs. As an attempt to answer public demands, effective accountability systems must reflect the complexity of the resources and processes involved in educational performance.

Through a review of the rising importance of higher education, the historical developments in the search for quality and accountability, and accountability policies and

problems, specifically in Tennessee, we see the emergence of accountability as a standard feature in the higher education landscape. However, it remains clear that no single approach to accountability policies and/or programs alone has answered the growing number of calls for accountability from higher education stakeholders. Moreover, we do not know how various stakeholder groups perceive the current expressions of accountability. Therefore, this study is designed to probe Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of accountability in Tennessee higher education and to describe current accountability policies and/or programs.

Chapter III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to describe Tennessee corporate leaders' perception of accountability in Tennessee higher education and of current accountability policies and/or programs. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were chosen as most appropriate for this study. The following research questions were used to guide the study:

1. What are Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of the meaning of accountability in higher education?
2. What are Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of current higher education accountability policies and/or programs?
3. What expectations do Tennessee corporate leaders have for accountability initiatives in higher education and what do they express as evidence of those initiatives?
4. To whom is higher education accountable as perceived by Tennessee corporate leaders?

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a description and rationale for the research design selected for this study as well as to delineate the methods and procedures used in the conduct of the study.

Research Design

A qualitative research design method (Schwandt, 2001; Merriam, 1998; Creswell, 1994) was selected for this descriptive, exploratory study. Specifically, in-depth, semi-structured interviews (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002) were chosen as most appropriate for the study given the purpose and research questions. As stated in chapter one, the purpose

of this study was to *describe* Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of accountability in higher education and of current accountability policies and/or programs, something we know almost nothing about.

Qualitative research designs such as this are particularly well suited for understanding, describing and explaining the meaning of social or human phenomena, as well as providing an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the subject matter. Building a complex and holistic understanding of a topic based on detailed views of research participants in their natural settings, and attempting to make sense of and interpret the meanings they bring to the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.2; as cited in Mertens, 1998, p. 159-60). Since the purpose of this study was to describe and understand corporate leaders' perceptions of what it means for higher education to be accountable, the use of a qualitative method, and particularly in-depth, semi-structured interviews was the most appropriate method of inquiry for gaining answers to the research questions and producing rich descriptive results.

According to Merriam (1998) "interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them. In qualitative research, the researcher must attempt to describe answers to questions by listening to the interview participants and allowing issues and themes to develop without influencing the answers (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). Interviewing allows the researcher to find out how people have organized the world around them while making meaning of particular things or subjects.

Though a quantitative study would have allowed for a larger population of corporate stakeholders to be surveyed (Creswell, 1994), the opportunity to explore

and describe their perception of accountability in higher education would not have been possible with a quantitative study. Also, a quantitative study could have directed or limited the participants' answers in ways that would not have adequately reflected the perceptions of the corporate leaders. Additionally, due to the depth of information desired by this study, corporate leaders might not have taken the time necessary to complete an in-depth survey. Therefore, for this study, interviews were employed as the method of data collection to allow the researcher to delve into the other person's perspective while exploring and discovering their perceptions related to accountability in higher education. Also, this method of study was selected because it allows for rich and descriptive data, producing better results for this study.

The interviews in this study were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide. This type of format allowed the researcher to respond to the participants as needed based on their ideas and emerging views related to accountability issues in higher education (Merriam, 1998). In addition, the researcher probed for specific information from all participants during the interviews, which at times called for a highly structured section of questions.

Researcher's Role

In qualitative research, the researcher plays the role of the primary instrument for gathering and analyzing the data (Schwandt, 2001; Merriam, 1998; Creswell, 1994). The researcher must have a tolerance for ambiguity, sensitivity to context and data, good communication and listening skills, and an appreciation of objectivity. The researcher also must have the ability to be empathic while maintaining a sense of timing and focus

that recognizes emerging ideas and issues (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative research also expects the researcher to identify any personal biases, assumptions, or beliefs related to the topic at the outset of the study (Creswell, 1994).

Participants

The participants for this study were 12 corporate leaders in the private sector who were associated with Tennessee Tomorrow, Incorporated (TTI). Tennessee Tomorrow, Incorporated, is a statewide public/private partnership whose mission is to provide the vision for Tennessee to improve the quality of life for all citizens. The organization also has become Tennessee's voice for excellence in education. The purposeful sample of corporate leaders from the private sector was selected with the help of key informants George L. Yowell, President of TTI, and Dr. E. Grady Bogue, professor at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. A brief description of each of the participants is included in Appendix E. Descriptions include a basic discussion of each participant's company and career position.

Data Collection Procedures

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Tennessee was petitioned for permission to conduct this study due to the fact that human subjects were employed in this study. Full review (Form B) was sought for this study.

After identifying prospective participants for the study, corporate leaders selected for interview were sent a letter of introduction (see Appendix A) inviting them to participate in the study as well as a copy of the consent form (see Appendix B). The introduction letter described the purpose of the interview and nature of the study and

explained that the study was confidential and voluntary. Moreover, it explained what they were asked to do, how the data would be reported and the measures that would be taken to ensure confidentiality. In addition, the letter explained that the researcher would be contacting them by phone to schedule an interview. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were scheduled based on each participant's willingness to participate in the study and availability. A letter of thanks was sent after the interviews were completed. It is important to note, not all original contactees agreed to participate in the study; moreover, the participants that were interviewed usually allowed no more than 15 minutes for the interview session due to scheduling restraints.

Before the interviews, the researcher and the interviewees reviewed the items discussed in the introduction letter, and the interviewees were asked to sign an informed consent form. A copy of the consent form is in the Appendix B. It is important to note that informed consent was discussed in detail at the beginning of the scheduled interview with special emphasis placed on the confidential and voluntary nature of the study. This discussion took place prior to beginning the interview process. Using the interview protocol (see Appendix D), each interview was audiotape recorded for later transcription and analysis. An analog cassette recorder and a microphone were employed to record the interviews. Interview field notes also were taken as needed by the researcher to record noteworthy non-verbal cues, interviewee reactions and expressions and the researcher's personal impressions.

Data Analysis

The interview audiotapes and field notes were transcribed and entered into Microsoft Word and subjected to content analysis. A certified transcriptionist transcribed

the interview audiotapes. The interview transcripts subsequently were reviewed for accuracy by both the transcriptionist and the researcher. The transcriptionist signed a confidentiality agreement (see Appendix C). The interview audiotapes and verbatim transcripts were stored in a locked file in the researcher's office.

Merriam (1998) and Marshall and Rossman (1989) contend that data collection and data analysis must be simultaneous processes in qualitative research. Creswell (1994) explains that data analysis requires that the researcher be comfortable with developing categories and making comparisons and contrasts. It also requires the researcher to be open to a variety of possibilities and to observe contrary or alternative explanations for the findings (Creswell, 1994). As Patton (1990) notes:

> The data generated by qualitative methods are voluminous. I have found no way of preparing students for the sheer massive volumes of information with which they will find themselves confronted when data collection has ended. Sitting down to make sense out of pages of interviews and whole files of field notes can be overwhelming (p. 297).

Verbatim transcriptions of the recorded interviews and field notes were subjected to inductive, abductive and deductive analyses, based on the interview questions, to identify patterns and themes across interviews (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). The transcripts were reviewed in depth prior to any assignment of codes. During data analysis the data were organized categorically, reviewed repeatedly, and continually coded. The interview field notes and interview transcripts were examined for content, patterns, and overall impressions related to the research questions for this study.

Thematic coding was completed through the use of the verbatim transcripts. Codes, categories and themes were organized by the research questions. General themes were derived in anticipation of revealing a thick description of corporate perceptions of accountability. As Creswell (1994) states, data analysis is the process of taking data and bringing order and structure to it.

Validity and Reliability

In qualitative research, the intent is not to prove a hypothesis about how something or someone will react or behave (Merriam, 1998), nor is it about generalizing findings to a large group. Instead, qualitative research informs by providing rich and descriptive narratives that create holistic views about how an individual or group experiences some phenomena or makes meaning of his or her experiences. Therefore, establishing the validity of the study's findings was extremely important (Schwandt, 2001; Merriam, 1998; Creswell, 1994).

External validity deals with the extent to which findings or conclusions of a study are transferable and/or generalizable to other contexts (Merriam, 1998). According to Merriam (1998), several strategies can be used to enhance external validity. For the purposes of this study, the primary strategy used in this study to ensure external validity was the provision of rich, thick, detailed descriptions so that anyone interested in transferability and/or generalizability would have a solid framework and foundation for comparison (Schwandt, 2001; Merriam, 1998). Readers are provided with a rich, thick, detailed description as the study addressed accountability issues from a corporate perspective in Tennessee.

Internal validity deals with credibility and with how congruent the findings are with reality (Merriam, 1998). High internal validity relates to measuring what one purports to be measuring. Internal validity depends on what is perceived as reality. Merriam (1998) suggests that in qualitative research it is critical to understand the perspectives of those involved in the research, to always be aware of the contextual framework and to present a holistic portrait of reality.

Internal validity was strengthened by the use of a number of basic strategies in this study. The interview protocol was designed in collaboration with key informants and was subsequently field-tested on a chief executive officer and business owner for clarity and refined based on feedback. Care was taken in recording each interview session and the transcripts were reviewed to ensure interview recordings matched the typed transcripts. Peer examination was also used to strengthen internal validity as a colleague was asked to review and comment on the transcript analysis. Moreover, the researcher attempted to identify her assumptions, biases and theoretical orientations to consider how these may have played a role in the collection and/or analyses of the data.

Reliability refers to the extent research results can be replicated if the study were to be repeated by another researcher (Merriam, 1998). For the purposes of this study, the following strategies were used to strengthen the reliability of the project. For example, an audit trail was maintained or chain of evidence that could allow others outside of the research to authenticate the findings by following the trail of the researcher. Every attempt was made by the researcher to provide enough details about data collection procedures and results of the study so that others could follow the trail if they desired through a logical path leading to the study findings.

Chapter IV

FINDINGS

The findings of this interview study articulate Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of accountability initiatives in higher education. These findings are based upon data gathered during in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a selected group of twelve corporate leaders from some of the most well known businesses and industries across the state of Tennessee. The interview participants include presidents, chief executive officers, and vice presidents associated with, or in some way connected to, Tennessee Tomorrow, Incorporated. A brief description of each of the participants is included in Appendix E. Descriptions include a basic discussion of each participant's company and career position. However, in order to protect the anonymity of the interviewees, the names of the participants are not included in this study. For the sake of clarity, I refer to the individuals included in this study as Participant One, Participant Two, and so forth.

Four research questions were used to direct this study:

1. What are Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of the meaning of accountability in higher education?
2. What are Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of current higher education accountability policies and/or programs?
3. What expectations do Tennessee corporate leaders have for accountability initiatives in higher education and what do they express as evidence of those initiatives?

4. To whom is higher education accountable as perceived by Tennessee corporate leaders?

The answers to the research questions are presented in this chapter, along with selections from the data used to highlight themes, illustrate issues, and explain more thoroughly the findings of the study. The narrative presented has been categorized by research questions in order to provide a logical organization of the data. In addition, each research question narrative describes themes that emerged during data analysis. Quotations are cited in order to illustrate and elaborate on these themes. In the narrative, indented text and quotation marks indicate a direct verbatim quote. For the purpose of this study, the presidents, chief executive officers, and vice presidents that were interviewed are referred to as corporate leaders, business leaders, study participants, or interviewees. Text added by the researcher within a parenthetical quote for explanatory purposes is enclosed in brackets ([ ]).

Research Question One

What are Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of the meaning of accountability in higher education?

What is the meaning of accountability from a Tennessee corporate leader's point of view? Although the question was straightforward, the responses from the interview participants were often unclear. Corporate leaders were quick to state that accountability in higher education was a necessity; however, their understanding of the meaning was sometimes vague. All study participants had a tendency to express the importance of accountability efforts and the significance of publicly accounting for those efforts, but most were not sure how to attach a clear and precise meaning to the notion of higher

education accountability. As one business leader explained, business people in various settings express concern in regard to the concept of accountability though many are unsure of its meaning. As the interview continued he explained:

> "The biggest problem I think with accountability starts with its definition. Business people love to scream about accountability, but I have yet to find a person and I mean a person that can really define what the heck they really mean. It usually comes back; well they [higher education] just need to be accountable." (Participant Two)

This statement was straightforward compared to most responses to the same question. Others had a propensity to define accountability from numerous corporate perspectives. For example, ten out of the twelve responses from the interviewees included examples analogous to accounting. When discussing the meaning of accountability, the interviewees usually told a story in order to convey their understanding of the issue, but they would drift off topic, thus causing some difficulty bringing them back on task. Rather than providing a clear definition of accountability, they gave corporate style responses by using language that reflected their daily experiences and followed by in-depth examples relevant to the business world. As Participant Six stated:

> "I think accountability should mean taking care of its customers. Students should be viewed as customers purchasing a service, and higher education should do a better job taking care of its customers. If we in business don't stay accountable to our customers then they go elsewhere to get better service, and we in turn will eventually go out of business. We have to remain accountable to the people we serve…it is essential."

When discussing the meaning of accountability in higher education, six study participants described the importance of a solid and strong relationship between higher education and the corporate community from their point of view. While elaborating on their perceptions, interviewees accented a need for new and/or more effective partnerships with higher education institutions. They expressed the need for that partnership from a business standpoint, explaining how they viewed education as an essential part of the continued growth and prosperity of the workforce. As Participant Four explained, "the state's colleges and universities should be committed to training citizens" in order to promote informed leadership, economic development, and workforce preparation to meet the needs of Tennessee.

Corporate leaders also explained that accountability should mean taking responsibility for providing information related to training issues to key stakeholders, especially business and industry leaders. They stated that developing and maintaining quality knowledge resources through higher education were essential components of accountability to corporate partners. As Participant Four explained, the foundation of the state's corporate growth and continued contribution from business to the state of Tennessee and its citizens depend on the success of higher education institutions. Another interviewee, Participant Five mirrored that response:

> "Higher education is considered accountable when its curricula attempts to address the various issues relevant to the people served, be it social, economic, health, or political issues that contribute to our nation." (Participant Five)

Coinciding with the responsibility of providing training information to key stakeholders, a willingness to be publicly accountable for institutional actions was provided by the interviewees as another facet of accountability. General comments from corporate leaders revealed a desire to build public trust through accountability initiatives. Five of the twelve corporate leaders interviewed indicated that education institutions should be open to public review, and such openness would build public trust. They stated that willingness to account to those being served by the institutions, just as businesses account to their customers, fosters the notion of building and maintaining trust. For example, one interviewee explained, pursuing accountability initiatives offers institutions a way to communicate their strengths and weaknesses to the public which has a right to know how they are faring. Echoing this sentiment, another study participant explained, "Public trust should come from accounting for actions and showing evidence of institutional effectiveness." (Participant Seven)

Participant Eleven built on the concept of higher education's responsibility of pursuing accountability initiatives for the advancement of public trust when he used a corporate comparison based on the common theme of serving customers. After analysis of the interview, his description from a corporate perspective has captured a true reflection of the meaning of thoughtful accountability. As stated in his description of accountability:

> "I see some very strong parallels between higher education and the corporate world when we talk about accountability. Accountability is focused on investors and those who pay the way. In the corporate world, we [business and industry] are accountable to our stockholders. In higher

ed [education], the accountability is to those who pay the bills: students, families and taxpayers." (Participant Eleven)

Thus, one can see that a variety of activities can be defined as providing meaning to accountability from a corporate perspective. However, knowing about accountability and defining its meaning can touch on several topics as revealed through this section.

Research Question Two

What are Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of current higher education accountability policies and/or programs?

The previous question demonstrated that study participants viewed accountability in higher education as both important and necessary, yet these same participants displayed little if any awareness of current accountability policies or programs currently in place in higher education, demonstrating a troubling and disappointing disconnect between higher education institutions and Tennessee corporate leaders. Higher education institutions have expended tremendous effort and resources instituting accountability practices and policies within the higher education system. Some of these practices and policies include peer reviews, performance indicators, and performance audits. These policies notwithstanding, the Tennessee corporate leaders sampled in this study possess only nominal awareness of these accountability policies.

During the interviews, study participants described their meaning of accountability in higher education institutions, yet their awareness of current accountability policies and programs revealed major problems in existing accountability efforts. Interestingly, the corporate leaders seemed comfortable discussing ways colleges and universities should define accountability; however, the interviewees' awareness of

actual accountability initiatives currently taking place in higher education did not extend much above the level of a vague awareness of their existence. In fact, five corporate leaders acknowledged that they simply were unaware of any recent efforts taking place on the part of higher education in Tennessee to institute accountability. One overwhelming, collective theme emerged from these interviews and that is the substantial lack of awareness among Tennessee corporate leaders of any accountability practices and standards existing in higher education institutions.

However, there is some evidence from the interviews that reveals a vague awareness of, and interest in, current accountability initiatives at institutions of higher education. When interviewed, seven corporate leaders made only slight references to accountability initiatives when asked about their perception of current policies and programs. As evidenced by their comments, the corporate leaders displayed a very ambiguous knowledge of any measures taken to hold higher education accountable. There was even less evidence of any knowledge of the actual makeup of these initiatives. For example, accreditation measures were referenced many times by interviewees; however, none of the respondents were able to discuss any specifics related to higher education accreditation initiatives.

Accenting this response, when asked if he was aware of current higher education accountability policies and/or programs taking place in Tennessee, Participant Seven noted, "I am aware of that [accountability initiatives] when I pick up a newspaper but that's the only time." Another statement in the interview data reflected a vague awareness of accountability initiatives but again revealed a lack of understanding in regard to specific activities and benefits of the current accountability initiatives:

"I have seen some [accountability initiatives]. I know it [accountability in higher education] is there. I know that we [higher education institutions] have probably more data in the state of Tennessee than a lot of other states...but I think it [accountability policies and/or programs] is still a long way to really be used and measured to affect the success of the students and to schools being compared to other schools. We [business and industry] have got all this regional data but I don't think it is used. I have some familiarity with the college education system. I would say that, again, business in general is not given the attention they deserve, especially when it comes to the importance of economic development [from higher education]." (Participant One)

When asked about the effectiveness and efficiency of the current accounting efforts, Participant Four, who had a vague awareness of accountability policies and/or programs, quickly replied, "I think they're antiquated," and when asked to elaborate on this comment, the leader simply stated that colleges and universities need to do a better job accounting for their actions. Another interviewee stated that what business needed from higher education was a clearer understanding of the higher education learning environment. Business leaders want and need to know how higher education is "preparing students for the ambiguous, constantly evolving workplace of tomorrow." (Participant Six)

This serious lack of awareness continued when the remaining corporate leaders were asked about the effectiveness and efficiency of policies and/or programs. Three of the leaders, Participant Eleven, Four and Five responded in a hopeful tone; however, their

comments illustrate how little they actually understand about accountability efforts currently taking place in higher education.

> "I am aware of the accountability plan at UT [University of Tennessee], and I really thought that it was a great start for reporting what was happening, what the graduates were doing, where they were going, and the things that we don't assume with grades. We measure graduation rates and we measure a lot of rates, but we don't go further and measure the success that the graduates have. Some schools will . . . take pride in it." (Participant Four)

> "I'm pleased to say that today I see a stronger evidence of well-meaning people who are willing to work toward improving our educational institutions. This is a positive trend and shows me that this is a good time to bring even more focus on the dialogue that needs to take place between the institutions and the audiences they serve." (Participant Eleven)

> "I believe that current accountability policies and/or programs can be improved if there is such a "priority list" of issues that can serve as a guideline in determining the areas of research to focus on by the higher education institutions." (Participant Five)

Unlike Participants Eleven, Four and Five, another corporate leader expressed a far less hopeful view when asked about the current available data to intended for evaluating higher education's effectiveness and efficiency in Tennessee. In fact, he clearly contradicted the above statements. This individual, who had years of experience

working with higher education institutions, felt strongly that current accountability efforts were neither effective nor efficient. He was disappointed with current efforts and in his opinion, the unwillingness to change on the part of higher education. As Participant Two stated, "As long as they are allowed to get by with doing nothing, that is exactly what they will continue to do."

Five study participants noted that they simply were unaware of any current efforts taking place on the part of higher education to accent and account for their actions to stakeholders. The interviewees expressed a complete disconnect in regard to understanding or even knowing about any current accountability efforts in higher education. For example, when probed about even a slight awareness of accountability efforts, the following statement best summarized the thoughts of those with no awareness, "You know, I probably don't even know the answer to that [question]...I don't know of anything [accountability initiatives] out there [in Tennessee]." (Participant Ten)

Further demonstrating a lack of awareness, Participant Three commented on the need for more information from higher education. "In business, we must design structures, policies, forums, and activities that challenge and encourage planning and actions"; however, higher education has failed to see the importance of these tasks. Participant Twelve continued this thought as he explained:

> "I do not [know about any policies and/or programs] and that's what is a little scary. You would think that I would have some information or at least a little bit of knowledge on the different policies that may be in place, but that, I guess, I have to plead that I do not know of any, and I guess that

is a little bit scary…being close to a university and not knowing policies or programs that are in place. I guess that is something that now that my eyes are opened a little bit, I may start asking a few more questions, which I think hopefully everybody will."

The fact that Tennessee corporate leaders display such little awareness of accountability practices in higher education today is alarming. It seems as if higher education is charting its own course toward its definition of accountability, while business stakeholders remain seriously uninformed with little awareness of what higher education is doing. Accenting this thought, another corporate leader spoke in a similar vein as he discussed the need for an "accountability attitude" within higher education institutions. When asked to describe his meaning of an "accountability attitude," Participant Eight referenced a Tennessee institution and its failure to be accountable for past actions:

> "Well, look at UT [University of Tennessee], obviously no. There is nothing in place. If they [policies and/or programs] were in place, there wasn't somebody looking at it saying, why did that happen or who gave that individual the authority to approve some big line items or whatever it is. There should be an accountability attitude, and either you have it or you don't."

Moreover, another corporate leader explained:

> "I am not aware of any [policies and/or programs]. I am not sure how the educational institutions in Tennessee are interfacing themselves with the various segments [higher education stakeholders]. To be effective, I would think that there has to be this mechanism that will facilitate a well-

coordinated liaison between the educational institutions and businesses." (Participant Five)

Research Question Three

What expectations do Tennessee corporate leaders have for accountability initiatives in higher education and what do they express as evidence of those initiatives?

Over the past few years, the environment in which businesses operate has changed, and so too have training requirements and needs of the workforce. The business world has become more competitive and more technical than in the past. This has resulted in increased scrutiny of higher education, specifically its ability to prepare potential employees for the workplace. The twelve corporate leaders interviewed agreed; they expect institutions to account for their programs and actions through clear demonstrations of how and to what end they serve their stakeholders, in particular addressing corporate concerns. As one study participant stated, "...higher education needs to show its value to businesses" (Participant Ten) to gain the support it needs today.

As powerful voices in higher education, corporate leaders expressed their expectations and desire to know more about what higher education is doing to account for its actions. All interviewees shared noteworthy ideas related to the topic, including workforce readiness skills, meaningful partnership dialog, stewardship of resources, and educational performance indicators. Their expectations were made evident via dominant themes that emerged throughout each interview, and they were candid as they described their perceptions of evidences linked to accountability expectations.

Workforce Readiness Skills

All of the interviewees cited concerns about workforce training issues. They expressed the importance of having students graduate with knowledge necessary to meet business and industry demands. As reflected through the interviews, that knowledge included specialized skills emphasizing the ability to think critically, communicate effectively, work in teams, cooperate with others, and function effectively in a technologically, ever-changing world. From their perspectives, that knowledge equated to "workforce readiness skills" and exemplified a successful college experience. As Participant Six stated:

> "If you talk about accountability from an education standpoint, a student learning standpoint, then I think that they [higher education institutions] have a responsibility to graduate people who match the needs of the workforce first and foremost...with quality training. I come from the business side, and if we don't graduate kids for the workforce that can be useful in the workplace, what are we doing? It is nice that they have that broad education but what are they going to do for a living? So, first it's [higher education] accountable to the general public, to graduate people that can make a living and not become a burden."

As five of the twelve interviewees explained, workforce readiness skills and quality training focused on business needs in colleges and universities are essential to the future of the workforce, not only in the state of Tennessee, but across the nation as well. Changes in the global economy require businesses to hire employees with skills

necessary to meet new demands in order to achieve economic success. Articulating this concern, Participant Four explained:

> "If we are going to survive within the global economy, we, as a business, therefore, we expect the graduates from different institutions to keep up with rapid change…to promote successful economic development not only in our state but in our nation as well."

As higher education stakeholders, corporate leaders expressed a desire to know what students were learning and what colleges and universities were doing to better prepare graduates for the workplace. They focused on the ability of colleges and universities to prepare students for employment. Ten of the twelve participants felt that educational institutions should be run like business, with a product (degrees), customers (students), and stockholders (stakeholders). As one corporate leader explained, like businesses, colleges and universities must be competitive and strive for greater productivity, with the term "productivity" equating to graduating students ready for the workforce. "I look at the graduates as the product of the institutions and the employers as the customers for the product," stated Participant Eleven.

Participant Twelve expanded upon this idea by adding the notion of trust, specifically corporation's trust in the value of the product (graduates). For example, the trust of the consumer that there is sufficient value in the product that business is selling. He stated:

> "Well, that goes back to the business world. If I am going to pay for a product, I expect a certain level of comfort knowing that the product is going to be worth it. When it comes to higher education, if I am going to

hire somebody out of a university, I hope that they are coming to me with some level of knowledge and will be able to perform based on the degree that they have been able to achieve. So I would hope that there weren't any shortcuts; I would hope that their education throughout was consistent and that is I guess, the big question: is that happening now?"

Roughly half of the interview participants indicated that educational institutions should become more efficient, producing well trained graduates equipped with only the essential skills and knowledge necessary to perform well in the business world. Additionally, these corporate leaders believed that educational institutions should produce these graduates in less time and for less money than current standards. The ever-demanding consumer continually forces the business world to produce better products for less money. The business leaders felt that higher education should adhere to these same fundamental principles. From their perspective, students and employers alike should benefit from a more efficient and career-focused education, just as consumers have benefited from the increased efficiency of businesses. The business leaders conceded that higher education has some built-in obstacles preventing it from being as efficient as it needs to be. In their view, these obstacles are burdensome general educational requirements, length of time required to graduate and the increasing cost to the student for this degree. As Participant Seven stated:

"The degree programs...have to be accountable...to the student. When a student gets a degree, it must be held in high esteem by the employer. Otherwise, [higher education institutions] are doing a disservice to the student...[higher education institutions] need to ask employers what they

need, then give them what they need as quickly as possible, without escalating tuition and fees."

A tone of disappointment appeared when two of the leaders shared their thoughts on current training efforts. Unfortunately, as the interviewees candidly stated, in the past, business and industry's request for quality-trained graduates seemed to go unnoticed by higher education institutions. According to them, higher education has not spent enough time listening to employers as they express their training needs. Emphasizing this concern, they explained how many students still lack the "soft skills" and work experiences and/or internships that illustrate quality training in relation to business requests. Colleges and universities need to do a better job addressing corporate America's concerns. For example, Participant Four stated:

> "I think corporate America is looking for students that can reason, who can listen, students that can solve problems, and probably less concerned with a lot of the other academic areas that we focus on today. Don't get me wrong; I think it is important to have a knowledge of education. I think if we all went to technical school that would be a big mistake. We need to have the liberal arts but also have a focus on that direct link to corporate America."

Focusing directly on Tennessee's concerns, Participant Three expressed a desire to know more about training issues for employers across the state. Adequately trained employees are extremely difficult to find, and it is very expensive for the employer to provide training. Businesses expect colleges and universities to provide much of this training prior to sending graduates out in the workforce. For example:

"I think higher education needs to make sure in the community they know what the needs are for the companies that are out there, so that…we are not always having to go and recruit nationally but regionally for workers. It would really be good if we could have them coming right out of the higher education [system] within Tennessee. I would like to know…are the graduates prepared to enter the workforce? You know, are we going to be hiring new grads that we have to come in and train? Are they teaching them the curriculum…that we need?"

Stories of students graduating without the necessary skills to begin their careers were abundant throughout each interview. Many times the interviewees were quick to point out the failures of newly hired graduates. Expressing their disappointment, participants focused on a lack of quality training and useful workforce skills. They described not only a need for soft skills, but also a desire for graduates prepared to enter the workplace with an ability to think creatively and critically about a wide range of problems and situations. For example, Participant Two stated:

"Well, I think the higher education community has a responsibility and needs to make a commitment to employers to be able to produce individuals that can enter into the workplace and be prepared to be accountable for their own personal goals, be prepared to be a willing member of a team and organization, and be prepared to interface with people in a business sense that come from different social and economical backgrounds other than their own, and their age groups, other than their own, and be functional in doing so when they enter the workplace…

> unfortunately, I feel like the education system is unable to choose [graduate] individuals that are ready to enter the workplace, to be held individually accountable for their goals and individual performances, and by also being held accountable for their abilities to function and perform as a member of a team organization."

After focusing on their concern for quality of training and exploring their disappointments, seven corporate leaders then expressed their desire for open lines of communication between businesses and higher education. As an evidence of accountability, meeting on a regular basis to discuss training issues with college and universities was viewed as a way to assist with many concerns. The ability to share vital information to better prepare students with marketplace skills was viewed by Participant Seven as a must:

> "It is their [higher education institutions] responsibility to educate students for the marketplace. That is different than being accredited. You could be accredited in, let's say history, but not necessarily for preparing students into an entry for a career. They [higher education] need to do a better job training students with marketplace skills…by asking employers to come to the table."

Meaningful Partnership Dialog

Tennessee corporate leaders not only expressed the need for more workforce readiness skills and specific job training but also expressed the need for an enhanced and innovative partnership between higher education and civic stakeholders as a must. From a corporate perspective, they articulated the desire for a stronger working relationship with

colleges and universities to address demands for better-trained students ready to enter into the workforce. The interviewees deeply desired that higher education better account for its actions through enhanced partnerships and open channels of communication. As they explained, business leaders wanted to know how and to what end institutions could better serve their customers by focusing on solid relationships with the corporate sector of Tennessee. They expect higher education to not only serve the students but also serve business and industry needs as well.

Participant One expressed this need when he stated, "building and maintaining a solid relationship to corporate America should be a focus" for higher education. "Partnership between the organizations is a key to success," explained Participant Eight. Clearly, from the interviewees' perceptions, building a collaborative working environment between higher education and the business community displays an evidence of accountability. Expressing this sentiment, Participant Nine explained:

> "I think for higher education to be accountable to the corporate world, it should be providing the kinds of education that will feed the corporate world...in order for that to occur, they [higher education] have to have a good relationship with one another and be communicating with one another and making sure that both parties are on the same page with one another."

Focusing on an enhanced partnership with educational stakeholders, corporate leaders felt that higher education should be required to facilitate communication efforts with key educational stakeholders. The prevailing suggestion among study participants described the need for cooperation and dialogue between higher education and business

and industry. By establishing a strong partnership and a close working relationship, accountability evidences (performance measures and improvements) can be identified by all stakeholders. Four study participants explained that colleges and universities could better prepare their students for success in their future careers if they would work with business and industry to identify and pursue significant issues and methods necessary for change and improvement. These participants recommended direct conversations between corporate leaders and their counterparts in higher education as the best way to provide the learning community with external perspectives and insights that could then be applied to the curriculum in order to provide a truly constructive and useful educational experience for college students. This conversation would also lead to an enhanced working relationship with external stakeholders, especially business and industry leaders. Discussing this evidence, Participant Eleven stated:

> "The evidence would be that these dialogues take place between the institutions and the groups to which they are accountable. The evidence would be performance measures that are identified during the dialogue. And then the most meaningful evidence -- and the one that would be of the greatest benefit to all involved -- would be the improvements that are made in our higher education institutions and in the quality of education provided as a result of working on those performance measures."

Effective partnerships and lines of communication can provide corporate stakeholders with pertinent information necessary to improve their own decision making ability. The interviews revealed a perception that this is not currently taking place. In particular, four study participants acknowledged that they had never been given data to

assist them in making decisions to benefit their businesses; however, if provided with useful information, higher education data could potentially help. Evaluating current efforts, Participant Nine stated benefits for strong partnerships and reliable communication:

> "I think that the thing we really need is...good open communication between both parties right now. I feel like some do a pretty good job of it, others do not obviously...what I mean as good communication, I primarily mean -- what is it that you have to offer, what do we need, can you help refit and redesign what we need -- what you are doing in the higher education community to support what we need, and it is our hope then to build up with that and build a process whereby the company is successful, the education system is successful, and most importantly, the person coming out of it is successful in the role they go into."

All but one corporate leader interviewed seemed to advocate that colleges and universities should be primarily focused on workforce development, working for corporate needs; however, there was one corporate leader who discussed higher education in broader, more conceptual terms of developing a well educated society to meet the needs of the community as a whole. Participant Two stated:

> "I think colleges should keep in mind that they are responsible for educating our society. They are responsible for making our state better through higher education and for making our community a better place to be. Education can only help our citizens be better people...higher education is important and strong partnerships with others are imperative."

These interviews reveal that corporate leaders are definitely not comfortable or pleased with their existing relationships with higher education institutions. Each interviewee expressed the desire to better communicate with higher education and conveyed what they consider to be relevant information related to student training needs. Through each interview, Tennessee corporate leaders expressed their accountability expectations and revealed evidences related to those expectations. Each interviewee, for example, conveyed a concern for collaborative agreements and stressed the concept of building an efficient and effective partnership dialog between higher education and corporate America.

Stewardship of Resources: Effectiveness and Efficiency

Thoughtful stewardship of resources was an accountability expectation expressed by seven of the twelve corporate leaders. Coinciding with this expectation, the responsibility that thoughtful stewardship entails to key stakeholders (students, parents, employers, public officials, community leaders, and the general public) was discussed as an evidence of that accountability effort. The corporate leaders felt that institutions should have the responsibility of accounting for their financial actions while keeping stakeholders informed of activities connected to higher education funding issues.

> "When I think of higher education accountability, it means…stewardship of finances -- that would be an obvious thing. The university has a responsibility to the state in this case, or to the community…to whom they are responsible, so financially it is a big deal to be accountable."
>
> (Participant Seven)

The significance of critical public review of institutional resources was referenced many times as an evidence of accountability. This focus on financial accountability is integral to the thought processes of corporate leaders because their success is measured predominantly in dollars.

> "I think that higher education should be accountable for their expenditure of funds, to taxpayers, to corporations within the community, to the students, and to the parents that are attending there [institutions of higher education]." (Participant Three)

Building on this notion, the corporate leaders spoke of the need for accounting mandates from Tennessee institutions. Interestingly, however, they made no mention of various higher education audit measures currently in place in institutions across the state. The business leaders interviewed displayed their lack of awareness of higher education's numerous existing audit policies and procedures by suggesting such initiatives as new concepts that should be implemented. As Participant Ten stated, in the business world, leaders are responsible to the customers and stockholders for wise use of funds. Checks and balances are in place to prove that they are financially accountable to those they serve. Therefore, on the same note, an evidence of accountability for higher education would be the ability to account for thoughtful expenditure funds in a more public way.

Elaborating on the expectation of thoughtful stewardship of finances, four of the seven corporate leaders highlighted public trust issues linked to funding concerns as an evidence of accountability. They emphasized failed attempts at gaining public trust due to past misappropriation of funds from some colleges and universities. Interestingly, stories of embezzlement, fraud, cheating, and stealing seemed to arise from time to time

throughout these interviews. On this note, participants expressed distress when discussing particular cases. In addition, they were quick to cite particular institutions that they felt had not been doing a good job. For instance, Participant Six discussed a particular situation that had recently appeared in the news. He became agitated and showed conviction as he explained:

> "There is a whole other side of the [meaning of] accountability and the one that is the most in the news with UT [University of Tennessee], of course, is they're accountable to the public for efficient expenditure of funds and that, from a business standpoint, is a lot easier to understand. Yeah, you don't waste money and you're efficient, but I think it is much more difficult on the education side to talk about it, particularly when you get at this level. This [misappropriation of funds] should not be happening."

Participant Twelve also discussed the problem of misappropriated funds. He elaborated upon a growing tendency of disappointment with higher education and provided additional information related to the reckless use of funds. During the interview, he described the use of tuition increases to clarify his feelings related to the need for thoughtful stewardship of resouces in higher education:

> "Well, it's different things that need to be accountable there [in institutions of higher education] because you see it in the paper, you hear it on the news all the time where universities are having trouble balancing budgets. They are talking about increasing tuitions each year. I know just like in the business world, it's if you have nothing to constantly increase the price of

your products you are going to price yourself out of the market, so it's a little disheartening to think that you have a university system that is increasing by 7% or 10% every year without offering anything new. There has to be accountability to figure out how we can run the university and keep it where people could actually go get a degree."

Another study participant built on this perception as he discussed the responsibility of institutions to their students:

"I think they [higher education institutions] also have an accountability to get students out in some meaningful time, and its getting longer and longer and longer, and it is getting easy for the institution to pass off and say, "Well, it is longer today because everybody has to work because prices are too high" and there is some truth to that. But, I think, also, we have allowed a mentality to flow in where the institution does not feel much of a responsibility to get you [students] out. They offer the courses; here are the things you can take, and oh, by the way, the legislature cut our money, so we don't have but five English classes, so you will have to wait. And I don't see a lot of effort by the higher education institutions to really address the totality of problem with the idea that we are going to graduate students in five or six years." (Participant Six)

Educational Performance Indicators

As another accountability expectation, corporate leaders expressed a desire for higher education to account for its actions by providing external stakeholders with data

on student outcomes and performance measures. All of the corporate leaders shared concern and frustration during the interviews due to a shortage of information they had on colleges and universities in their service area and throughout Tennessee. In response to this concern and frustration, the interviewees expressed a desire for useful ways for colleges and universities to explain their educational initiatives in a more public way. The study participants openly discussed a lack of knowledge related to issues involving informative data and stated that little to nothing was being done to promote an awareness of efforts for stakeholders outside the university.

As an evidence of accountability in higher education, interviewees who discussed this concern seemed to adhere to a philosophy that knowing student outcomes and performance measures was a necessity for public stakeholders. Stakeholders want and need to know what colleges and universities are doing to better prepare students to enter the workforce. Participants in this study described the need for specific performance measures. Job placement, ranking, and ratings were repeated suggestions from many interviewees. For example, the following corporate leaders felt that visual improvements through external measures could provide clear evidences for accountability measures:

> "I think you can look at placement. How many students are placed in the jobs? How many graduate on an appropriate time scale? How many are members of professional societies? Are you moving up in the, I mean I know that ranks of universities are hokey and complicated, but nonetheless, are you either … or not. I don't think I know the difference in some of these ranks 25 or 35, but if someone was ranked 25 and know

they are 100, that is not going to make me feel good. I think some senses of improvement are true by some external measure." (Participant Seven)

"One is the ability of their students to get jobs…and their ability to pass their various certification tests on the first time around." (Participant Three)

"Evidence would be to get feedback from companies as to whether or not those employees they hire from the institution are truly measuring up to their peers. The other thing that people in the various institutions don't like, that we in business use, are the various rating systems, especially the graduate schools." (Participant Six)

The following list of questions is an example of the information corporate leaders want to know as evidence of accountability:

- What are students learning?
- How are students performing on exams?
- What are the pass and completion rates of students?
- What are college and university graduation rates?
- How do colleges compare to other institutions across the state and nation?
- How do students perform on their jobs after college graduation?
- How many students are hired into the workforce?
- How many students have work-related learning experiences in college?

Although these questions and measures are important, the overriding challenge of making external shareholders aware of these policies and this information still exists. How can colleges share answers to these questions in a public way? With numerous accountability policies and programs in place, how can higher education promote its existing initiatives related to student outcomes and performance measures?

Interestingly, corporate leaders found it easy to discuss what they wanted from higher education, but they had a much more difficult time addressing ways to share the institutions' responses to corporate concerns. When interviewing the participants, it became clear that they all expected higher education to find ways to provide useful information to business and industry as an evidence of accountability. Participant Six expressed this by stating:

> "How do you measure the accountability of a student...this should be happening...How do you measure accountability, I am not sure but colleges should have an established system in place for monitoring the progress of students then promote the efforts. Something may be in place, but I don't know of anything. I have served on several educational boards, and I have heard a lot of talk about student outcomes and performance measures, but I haven't seen it from a business standpoint. They need to let us know what they are doing and how the students are performing as compared to other colleges and universities. That is how they can be accountable and what it should mean to them."

Following up on this point, two of the study participants used a business analogy to express their concerns. Companies are required to provide useful information to their

consumers and company stakeholders, and the same requirements should be placed on colleges and universities. For example, the corporate leaders commented:

> "At [our corporation], we use projects as a vehicle to drive and track improvements in the performance measures. In higher education, I feel that faculty, administration, and students should participate in the initiatives to drive improvement in outcomes and performance measures identified…and tell people about it." (Participant Eleven)

> "[I expect] a dialogue to take place between higher ed [education] institutions and employers, that objective performance measures be identified, and that we [as a team] drive and track improvements in results." (Participant Twelve)

Possibly one of the most valued expectations cited by the corporate leaders and one that seems to be considered most valid in determining strengths and weaknesses of colleges and universities is the publicizing of student outcomes and performance measures. In each interview, corporate leaders explained how colleges needed to do a better job telling their stories. They need to make the public aware of their successes and failures, when appropriate. External stakeholders must know what higher education is all about and what it is doing to serve the community that funds it. By opening up and sharing information on both strengths and weaknesses, higher education can display an "accountability attitude," showing the public it has nothing to hide. As they stated, by providing the public with the evidence of useful information, trust is enhanced, partnerships are strengthened, and alliances are formed and renewed.

Research Question Four

To whom should higher education be accountable?

Evidence from interviews revealed common themes from corporate leaders as they described to whom higher education should be accountable. Unlike with the other research questions, all of the participants came directly to the point as they offered their opinions about to whom higher education should be accountable. The participants not only offered answers to this question, they often shared multiple ones. The responses were all over the place. Some of the various stakeholder groups mentioned include business and industry, students, parents, taxpayers, and the general public at large.

Six of the respondents seemed to connect accountability with funding issues by indicating that higher education should be accountable to those stakeholders paying the bills. As public institutions, colleges and universities should be able to demonstrate a wise use of funds to those involved. For example, one corporate leader focused upon accountability to the customer, in this case students and parents, and to the public investor, the taxpayer.

> "Accountability is focused on investors and those who pay the way. In the corporate world, we are accountable to our stockholders. In higher education, the accountability is to those who pay the bills: students, families and taxpayers." (Participant Eleven)

It also seems logical for corporate leaders to view accountability in higher education in terms of business accountability. Through the tax dollars of business and industry and sponsorship of research, corporate leaders feel that they assist with a major part of funding that goes into higher education institutions; therefore, colleges and

universities should be accountable to members of the corporate community. Further exemplifying this point, another corporate leader offered a similar response:

> "To whom is higher education accountable? I have quite a list here. I would say to whomever is appropriating the funds is the first one. I think there is a long list of different things. Second one would be the sponsor of the research at a university research school…next, to parents who pay tuition, and to students themselves. Anyone who is being researched upon, and other institutions that are partnering with the university." (Participant Seven)

The remaining six other corporate leaders ultimately offered the same answers as the first group; however, they viewed accountability in higher education as more of a broader perspective rather than accenting one based on financial responsibilities to the investors. This accountability perspective reflected the need to increase the overall good of the society, the business community, the students and the institution itself. In the following quotes, two corporate leaders shared their opinions and offered additional insight. For example:

> "First they are accountable to themselves I think, and second, they are accountable as a public institutions to the general public, and third, they are responsible to the students they serve." (Participant Six)

> "I think its primary responsibility would be to be accountable to our society and … to the business community as a whole." (Participant Two)

Although the corporate leaders who were interviewed offered many different viewpoints about to whom higher education is accountable, there seems to be accuracy in all of their responses. With this in mind, one thing is certain: All of the corporate leaders felt that higher education should be accountable for its actions. Higher education is accountable to a number of both internal and external shareholders, including business and industry partners, students, parents, taxpayers, and the general public.

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of accountability in Tennessee higher education and of current accountability policies and/or programs.

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of the meaning of accountability in higher education?
2. What are Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of current higher education accountability policies and/or programs?
3. What expectations do Tennessee corporate leaders have for initiatives in higher education and what do they express as evidence of those initiatives?
4. To whom is higher education accountable as perceived by Tennessee corporate leaders?

The qualitative study was designed to describe Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of accountability initiatives in higher education. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were used to realize the purpose of the study and to answer the research questions. A purposeful sample of corporate leaders from the private sector was selected for interview. The twelve corporate leaders who participated in the study were presidents, chief executive officers, and vice presidents from some of the best-known corporations

across the state of Tennessee. All interviewees were associated with or in some way connected to Tennessee Tomorrow, Incorporated.

Through the interviews conducted with corporate leaders across Tennessee and observations of their attitudes and actions during the interviews, vast amounts of data were collected. The data were then analyzed and organized categorically, reviewed repeatedly, and continually coded in terms of the research questions. Thematic coding was completed by using the verbatim transcriptions to assign codes, categories, and themes inductively rather than imposing pre-determined classifications on the data. General themes were used to provide answers to the research questions.

Throughout the study, Tennessee corporate leaders expressed their perceptions related to the meanings, current initiatives, expectations, and evidences of accountability in higher education. All interviewees shared their ideas and opinions on higher education accountability from a business point of view.

In this chapter, a summary of findings and a discussion of findings will follow, along with study conclusions and recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

1. The need for accountability is clear from a corporate perspective.
2. Higher education accountability means having a solid and strong relationship with clear dialog between institutions and the corporate community and demonstrating a willingness to be publicly accountable for actions, which builds public trust.
3. Most corporate leaders have little to no awareness of current higher education accountability policies and/or programs at the state and local levels.

4. Corporate leaders expect colleges and universities to account for their programs and actions through a clear demonstration of how and to what extent they serve their stakeholders.
5. Accountability expectations of corporate leaders focus on workforce readiness skills, meaningful partnership dialog, thoughtful stewardship of resources, and improved educational performance indicators.
6. Corporate leaders expect higher education to be accountable to multiple stakeholders, including corporate leaders, students, parents, taxpayers, and the general public.

Discussion of Findings

Meaning of Accountability

What is the meaning of accountability in higher education? Interestingly, responses from the interview participants varied and were often unclear in relation to higher education. Corporate leaders were quick to state that accountability in higher education was a necessity; however, many times their answers were imbedded in stories linked to their corporate experiences and were not directly tied to college and university settings. To the surprise of the researcher, the interviewees had a tendency to explain accountability from their business experiences, not recognizing any possible differences between their corporations and learning institutions.

Overwhelmingly, all of the study participants emphasized the importance of accountability efforts and the significance of publicly accounting for those efforts. However, most were unable to attach a clear or precise meaning to the notion of accountability from the perspective of higher education. As one corporate leader honestly stated, business people in various settings love to express concern in regard to the idea of

"accountability" in higher education; however, many are unsure of its true meaning. When asked to define accountability in relation to higher education, most of the corporate leaders explained the concept by offering detailed analogies related to their business experiences. They were not able to distinguish between the two types of organizations. All of their answers seemed to center around a corporate theme.

Four overarching themes related to the meaning of accountability emerged from their stories of corporate concerns. First, they discussed building a solid and strong relationship between higher education and the corporate community. Second, the interviewees shared the importance of providing information related to workforce and economic development issues to key stakeholders, especially business and industry leaders. Third, they described a need for institutions to be publicly accountable for their actions. Fourth, the study participants emphasized higher education's responsibility to pursue accountability initiatives for the advancement of public trust. In reality, the corporate leaders explained their thoughts on accountability issues without providing direct or precise answers to the first research question.

The themes that emerged from the data, though not precise, described in general terms what it means to be accountable from a corporate perspective. Interestingly, the study participants' ideas repeated many of the themes found in the literature addressing accountability efforts in colleges and universities. As stated throughout the literature, accountability for higher education should mean providing the public with a better and clearer accounting, rendering public what too often has been left private. (CEW, May 13, 2003; Newman, 2003; Hull and Grevelle, 1998).

Awareness of Current Accountability Initiatives

To the surprise of the researcher, while the study participants described their perceptions related to the meaning of accountability in higher education, they lacked an awareness of current policies and/or programs currently underway in Tennessee. This especially came as a surprise to the researcher knowing that some of the interviewees had served on various college and university committees and boards. For the most part, corporate leaders stated that they were unaware of most accountability efforts. As revealed through the interviews, the majority of current accountability efforts have gone unnoticed by leaders in the corporate community; therefore, this finding revealed a major problem in higher education's attempts at accountability initiatives. Accountability measures have not had a significant impact on corporate stakeholders, though peer review, performance indicators, and performance audits currently exist in an attempt to account for the condition and effectiveness of the enterprise.

A clear, but troubling disconnect exists between higher education institutions and Tennessee corporate leaders regarding accountability initiatives given the corporate leaders' lack of awareness of the existence of accountability measures. Moreover, some study participants even stated that they were not aware of any current efforts taking place on the part of Tennessee colleges and universities to account for their actions. Therefore, the interviews have revealed that higher education in Tennessee has not effectively promoted current accountability efforts designed to demonstrate its value to stakeholders in order to gain and keep the support institutions need.

This is a disturbing and disappointing finding for colleges and universities across Tennessee due to the fact that these institutions have expended tremendous effort and

resources implementing accountability practices and policies over the past few years. For example, some of these policy and program developments include increased state regulations, growing numbers of state mandates for assessment and testing, consumer protection regulations, performance indicators, performance funding and budgeting, trustee interest, state and national report cards, and accreditation reviews to name just a few. These policies and programs notwithstanding, Tennessee corporate leaders sampled in this study possess nominal awareness of these accountability initiatives. Interestingly, higher education seems to be collecting their own data that is important to colleges and universities while their business friends are being left unaware of measures produced to better inform them of the condition of the enterprise.

Therefore, this lack of awareness of ongoing accountability practices on the part of corporate leadership, presents a significant challenge for higher education. Regardless of these measures, data analysis revealed that institutions have not successfully made external corporate stakeholders aware of these measures. It is imperative that higher education makes stakeholders more aware of these current accountability policies and programs as well as future accountability efforts. Whether mandated by accrediting agencies, boards of trustees, consultants, or funding sources, accountability in higher education through policies and/or programs has become a standard feature of the learning landscape, and so must the communication of these policies and programs to external shareholders.

As revealed through a study of the literature on accountability, numerous efforts have been made on the part of colleges and universities to account for their actions. To discover that higher education's various attempts to keep stakeholders better informed of

institutions' actions have gone all but unnoticed is alarming. Over the later half of the 20th century, escalating public interest in knowledge-based performance has generated a variety of approaches to assist colleges and universities in accounting efforts (Bogue, 2002; Gardiner, 1994; Drucker, 1994; Marchese, 1994); however, Tennessee institutions' attempts to answer public calls with effective and efficient accountability practices have left corporate stakeholders with questions, confusion and uncertainty on this topic.

Expectations and Evidence of Accountability Initiatives

Over the past few years, the environment in which business and industry operates has changed; therefore, their workforce needs and training requirements have changed as well. As the interview data revealed, the business world has become more competitive and more technical than in the past. Because of new demands on the corporate community, there has been increased scrutiny of higher education to answer a call for accountability, specifically in regard to its ability to prepare potential employees for the workplace. Through each interview, the twelve corporate leaders agreed: they expect institutions to account for their programs and actions through clear demonstrations of how and to what end they serve their stakeholders, in particular addressing corporate concerns. As one study participant explained, higher education needs to demonstrate its value to the corporate community to gain the support it needs from businesses and industries.

Corporate leaders expressed their accountability expectations by emphasizing their desire to know more about what higher education is doing to account for its actions. All interviewees shared noteworthy ideas from which institutions can learn. Consistent with the researcher's expectations, themes addressing their concerns revealed an interest

in workforce readiness issues, stronger partnerships and dialog, enhanced soft skills, thoughtful stewardship of resources, and improved student outcomes and performance measures. As dominant themes emerged from each interview session, the participants' expectations were made clear. Higher education has not successfully addressed corporate concerns. Expounding their expectations, the corporate leaders candidly described their perceptions of evidences linked to their expectations of accountability from colleges and universities, useful information that colleges and universities can use as a focus in addressing the corporate concerns.

While discussing their expectations, the researcher felt it was important to note that the study participants seemed to, again, view accountability relative primarily to corporate terms. They seemed unable to distinguish between their corporate needs and the needs of the institutions and even, perhaps, the needs of students. Their overriding concern, demonstrated through this study, focused on higher education's ability to serve their corporate needs. It was as if they expected colleges and universities to be run as businesses, for the benefit of business. It was also implied in some interviews that corporate leaders could do a better job running colleges and universities because they would use business management principles. In fact, in a straightforward manner, corporate leaders demonstrated a conviction that colleges and universities needed to become more efficient, producing well trained graduates equipped with only the essential skills and knowledge necessary to perform well in the business world. Disappointingly, the interviewees tended to focus on the enterprise of education from the perspective of a boardroom, emphasizing its production, cost and efficiency. Comparing colleges and universities to businesses, the corporate leaders suggested that higher education could be

successful if colleges and universities adhered to corporate principles, producing graduates in less time and for less money than current standards.

Even though higher education institutions have increased efforts to bring partners to the table to discuss ways to enhance working relationships among educational stakeholders, these Tennessee corporate leaders revealed disappointment in current partnership efforts and frustration with future partnership efforts. Through the interviews, Tennessee corporate leaders described a need for more specific job training and a desire for an enhanced partnership between higher education and business and industry stakeholders. From a corporate perspective, they articulated the desire for a stronger working relationship with colleges and universities in order to address their business needs, but felt currently that they had no voice in how colleges and universities met their training needs. The interviewees expressed a deep desire for higher education to better account for its actions and felt the way to do this was to enhance partnerships and open channels of communication with the corporate world. As they explained, business leaders expected higher education to not only serve the students by preparing them to enter the workforce, but to serve the businesses and industries that will employ these students.

Unfortunately, higher education institutions have not effectively promoted a notion of partnership or cooperation with business leaders. The interviews revealed that study participants were definitely not comfortable, nor were they pleased, with the existing relationship with higher education institutions. Throughout the interview process, each interviewee expressed a desire to better communicate with higher education by focusing on accountability expectations.

These corporate expectations are not surprising, as a review of the literature reveals. The literature on accountability in higher education provides evidence that demands for accountability are now a standard feature in the higher education landscape (Chaffee, 1998). *What Kind of University* further explains that today, accountability expectations in higher education are of global interest, and employers are increasingly insistent in asking whether higher education institutions are preparing today's college students for tomorrow's jobs (Brennan, Fedrowitz, Huber & Shah, 1999). Therefore, the themes found within the responses to this research question are consistent with the findings in the literature. Higher education institutions are expected to educate students to a very high level as the restructuring of the world economy, global competition, international economic integration, unprecedented technological change, defense conversion, and related structural changes demand a new national workforce development strategy for the nation (King, 2002; IHEP, 2002). Many of these efforts have resulted in an expanded repertoire of quality assurance systems and improvement measures (Bogue & Aper, 2000) that provide evidences for accountability measures in colleges and universities. As the interviews reveal, the themes of quality training, enhanced partnerships and communication efforts, thoughtful stewardship of finances, and improved student outcomes and performance measures coincide with those found in current literature related to this topic.

Multiple Higher Education Stakeholders

As the interview findings revealed, corporate leaders expressed their desire for emphasis on accountability and demonstrations of value to external stakeholders. Therefore, it came as no surprise to the researcher that corporate concerns for

accountability in colleges and universities continued to be a topic of interest in each interview. Evidence from interviews revealed common themes among corporate leaders as they described to whom higher education should be accountable. Unlike with the other research questions, the twelve study participants provided specific, pointed opinions about to whom higher education should be accountable. The participants not only offered answers to this question, they often shared multiple ones. As study participants stated through the interviews, higher education should be accountable to all groups with investments in higher education, including business and industry, students, parents, taxpayers, and the general public at large.

According to publications throughout the literature, these findings confirmed the sentiments of many. For example Wellman (2001) states, "In the age of consumerism and public transparency, accountability is necessary for preserving the compact between higher education and society." Today, accountability in the educational enterprise requires that benefits be defined in terms that are important to the public, and the public must know about them (Bogue & Hall, 2003). Confirming this notion, the study participants pointedly articulated this concept as they accentuate to whom higher education is accountable.

Conclusions

Based on the findings from this study, the following conclusions seem warranted:

1. Corporate leaders clearly want and need higher education institutions to be accountable for their actions; however, they are cannot clearly state a definition for accountability in higher education. Higher education institutions need to find a way to get more voices involved in the creation of a unified definition of accountability.

2. Current accountability initiatives in Tennessee have not been communicated effectively to corporate leaders across the state and much skepticism exists among interviewed leaders regarding current accountability efforts, even though a range of reports are currently being furnished through higher education state and local efforts to account for actions.
3. Continuous improvement in partnership and dialog is needed to enhance a stronger relationship between colleges and universities and the corporate community to deal with the absence of accountability awareness and promote teamwork among leaders in Tennessee.
4. Corporate leaders expect higher education to provide business and industry with well-trained individuals ready to meet workforce readiness demands first and foremost.
5. Corporate leaders have some awareness of higher education's more complex challenge of multiple stakeholders; however, it is not clear that they understand the complexity of having to answer to multiple stakeholders. Interestingly, their statements reflect that they feel colleges and universities could be more successful if managed based on business principles.
6. Currently, corporate leaders feel that they have little to no say in the training initiatives offered by colleges and universities. They seek reflection and change as they rely upon the enterprise of higher education to contribute to the betterment of the state, prepare students for their careers, broaden ideas and expressions, improve the quality of life for all citizens, and contribute to Tennessee's economy.

Recommendations

While this research study revealed additional studies that could be worthwhile, the following recommendations are worthy of further inquiry:

1. Are Tennessee corporate leaders' perceptions of accountability in higher education unique to this State or would other interview studies in other states reveal similar answers to this question? We do not know if the answers to these research questions apply to just Tennessee or could prove useful to other states. Similar qualitative studies in different states would answer this question. Also, a quantitative study based on a survey to get at a broader range of businesses based on type and size could reveal important information related to accountability issues as well.
2. How should colleges and universities answer the demands for accountability from various stakeholders? What will it take to better inform the public of their actions and what will it take to gain the trust of external stakeholders? Should other accountability data be produced independent of higher education institutions and would corporate leaders trust outsides data collection sources more? It is clear that leaders in the higher education and corporate sectors need to create a more meaningful partnership dialog to address the meaning, mission, expectation, and evidence of accountability. Partners need to come to the table for discussions and recommend policy and practices that focus on accountability issues. A large-scale quantitative study of various stakeholder groups across the state will help provide answers to this question.

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

Anderson, Charles J. *A Fact Book on Higher Education.* Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1968.

Anderson, M. *Imposters in the Temple.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992.

Angelo, T. A., and K. P. Cross. *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers.* 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.

Angelo, T. A., and K. P. Cross. "Classroom Assessment Techniques." 1999 [On-line]. Available: http://www.hcc.hawaii.edu/intranet/c...DevCom/guidebk/teachtip.

Angelo, T. A., and K. P. Cross. "Muddiest Point." 1999 [On-line]. Available: http://www.siue.edu/~deder/assess/cats/muddy3.html.

Association of American Colleges. *Integrity in the College Curriculum: A Report to the Academic Community.* Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges, 1985.

Astin, Alexander W. *Assessment for Excellence: The Philosophy and Practice of Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education.* New York: ACE/Macmillan, 1991.

Astin, Alexander W. *Four Critical Years: Effects of College on Beliefs, Attitudes, and Knowledge.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977.

Astin, Alexander W. "Why Not Try Some New Ways of Measuring Quality?" *Educational Record* 63 no. 2 (1982): 10-15.

Banta, T., et.al. *Assessment in Practice.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995.

Banta, T., et al. *Making a Difference: Outcomes of a Decade of Assessment in Higher Education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.

Banta, T., et at. "Performance Funding Comes of Age in Tennessee." *Journal of Higher Education* vol.67, no. 1 (January/February 1996): 23-45.

Banta, T. W. and M. S. Moffett. "Performance Funding In Tennessee: Stimulus for Program Improvement." *Student Outcomes Assessment: What Institutions Stand to Gain*. Halpern, D. F. ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1987.

Barak, R. *Program Review in Higher Education: Within and Without.* Boulder, CO: National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, 1982.

Barr, R., and J. Tagg. "From Teaching to Learning: A New Paradigm from Undergraduate Education." *Change* vol. 27, no. 1 (November/December 1995): 12-25.

Berdahl, R. O. *Statewide Coordination of Higher Education.* Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1971.

Bloom, A. *The Closing of the American Mind*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1986.

Boggs, G. B. "What the Learning Paradigm Means for Faculty." *American Association of Higher Education Bulletin* 51 (1999): 3-5.

Bogue, E. "Searching for the Soul of American Higher Education," *100 Class Books about Higher Education*. Fincher, C., G. Keller, E. Bogue, and J. Thelin, eds. Bloomington: Phi Delta Kappa, 2001.

Bogue, E. Grady. "The Evolution and Effectiveness of Accountability Policy in Higher Education." *Policy Research Proposal,* 2002.

Bogue, E., and Kimberly Bingham Hall. *Quality and Accountability in Higher Education: Improving Policy, Enhancing Performance.* Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003.

Bogue, E., and R. Saunders. *The Evidence of Quality.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992.

Bogue, E., and W. Brown. "Performance Incentives for State Colleges." *Harvard Business Review* vol.60, no. 6 (1982):6.

Bogue, E. Grady and Jeffery Aper. *Exploring the Heritage of American Higher Education.* Phoenix, Arizona: The Oryx Press, 2000.

Bok, Derek. *Universities in the Marketplace: The Commercialization of Higher Education.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003.

Bordon, V. and T. Banta, eds. *Using Performance Indicators to Guide Strategic Decision Making.* New Directions for Institutional Research. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994.

Bowen, H. *Investment in Learning: The Individual and Social Value of American Higher Education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1978.

Brennan, J., J. Fedrowitz, M. Huber, and T. Shah. Eds. *What Kind of University? International Perspectives on Knowledge, Participation, and Governance.* Buckingham UK: Open University Press with Society for Research into Higher Education, 1999.

Brubacher, J. *On Philosophy of Higher Education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977.

Brubacher, J. S. and W. Rudy. *Higher Education in Transition.* New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1997.

Burd, Stephen. "Lieberman Calls for More Accountability." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 26, 2002.

Burke, J. C., et al. *Performance Funding and Budgeting: An Emerging Merger?* The 4th Annual Survey. The Nelson Rockefeller Institute of Government, SUNY, 2000.

Burke, J. C. *Performance Funding Indicators: Concerns, Values, and Models for Two- and Four-Year Colleges and Universities*. Albany, NY: Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, 1997.

Burke, J., and A. Servan, eds. *Performance Funding for Public Higher Education: Fad or Trend?* New Directions for Institutional Research No. 97. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Spring 1998.

Cave, M., S. Hanney, and M. Kogan. *The Use of Performance Indicators in Higher Education: A Critical Analysis of Developing Practice.* 2d ed. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1991.

Chaffee, Ellen E. "Listening to the People We Serve." *The Responsive University: Restructuring for High Performance.* Tierney, William G. ed. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998.

Christal, Melodie. "State Survey on Performance Measures: 1996-1997." Denver, CO: State Higher Education Executive Officers, 1998.

Coffey, J. C. "From Access to Accountability: Community Colleges and Student Tracking." *Working Paper*: Prepared for the AACJC FIPSE Project on Student Tracking, January 5, 1989.

Creswell, J. W. *Research Design Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994.

Denzin, N. K., and Y. S. Lincoln. "Strategies of Inquiry." In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln. Eds. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994.

Dewey, J. *Democracy and Education.* New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1916.

Dolence, M. C., and D. M. Norris. *Transforming Higher Education: A Vision for Learning in the 21st Century.* Ann Arbor: Society for College and University Planning, 1995.

Donald, J. *Improving the Environment for Learning.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997.

Donald, J. G. "Motivation for Higher Order Learning." *Motivation from Within: Approaches for Encouraging Faculty and Students to Excel.* M. Theall, Ed. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, No. 78. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999.

Drucker, Peter. "The Age of Social Transformation." *Atlantic Monthly*, November 1994.

Dumont, R. G. "Performance Funding and Power Relations in Higher Education." *Journal of Higher Education* 51 no. 4 (1980): 400-423.

Eaton, Judith. S. "Regional Accreditation Reform: Who is Served?" *Change*, March 2001.

Erwin, T. D. "Assessment and Policy: Selected Institutions Utilizing Assessment Results." *Office of Educational Research and Improvement.* Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Education, 1998.

Ewell, P. "Assessment, Accountability and Improvement: Managing the Contradiction." *Paper presented at the American Association for Higher Education Assessment Forum,* 1987.

Ewell, P. " Assessment: Where Are We?" *Change*, 19 no.1, (1987): 23-28.

Ewell, P. T. "Performance Indicators: A New Round of Accountability." *Assessment Update* no 5 (1993): 12-13.

Ewell, P., J. Finney and C. Lenth. "Filling in the Mosaic: The Emerging Pattern of State-Based Assessment." *American Association of Higher Education Bulletin* 1990 42:8.

Fisher, M. B. "Surveying Your Alumni." *Alumni Research: Methods and Application.* G. S. Melchiori, ed. New Directions for Institutional Research, no. 60. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

Gaither, G. H. ed. *Assessing Performance in an Age of Accountability: Case Studies*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995.

Gaither, G., B.Newek, and S. Neal. *Measuring Up: The Promises and Pitfalls of Performance Indicators in Higher Education*. ASHE-Eric Higher Education Report Volume 23, Number 5 2nd Printing. Washington, D. C.: School of Education and Human Services, George Washington University, 1994.

Gardiner, Lion F. *Redesigning Higher Education: Producing Dramatic Gains in Student Learning*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report 7. Washington, D. C.: George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development, 1994.

Gladieux, Lawrence E., and Authur M. Hauptman. *The College Aid Quandary: Access, Quality, and the Federal Role.* Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1995.

Grantham, Marilyn. "Accountability in Higher Education: Are There 'Fatal Errors' Embedded in Current U.S. Policies Affecting Higher Education?" 1999 [On-line] Available: http://danr.ucop.edu/eee/aea/Accountability_in_Higher_Education_Summary.htm

Gubrium, Jaber F., and James A. Holstein. Eds. *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002.

Hansen W. Lee and Jacob O. Stampen. "Balancing Quality and Access in Financing Higher Education." *Unpublished paper prepared for the National Center for Post-secondary Governance and Finance*, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, September 1987.

Hoyler, Robert. "The Road Not Taken." *Change*, 30 no. 5, 1998.

Hull, Dan and Julie Grevelle. *Tech Prep: The Next Generation*. Waco, Texas: Center for Occupational Research and Development, Inc., 1998.

Ikenberry, Stanley, O. "Higher education and market forces." *USA Today,* March, 2001.

Improvement of Instruction in Higher Education. Report by the Subcommittee on Improvement of Instruction of the Committee on Studies. Washington D.C.: American Association of Colleges and Teacher Education, 1960.

Institute for Higher Education Policy. "Accountability and Quality Assurance." 2002 [On-line] Available: http://www.ihep.com/Org.php?parm=PRS.html.

Investing in People: Developing All of America's Talent on Campus and in the Workplace. Business-Higher Education Forum. 2000.

Jencks, Christopher, and David Riesman. *The Academic Revolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968, 1977.

Katz, Stanley N. "Defining Education Quality and Accountability." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 16, 1994.

Kerr, Clark. *Uses of the University*. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.

King, Jacqueline. *"Factors Affecting Access in the 21st Century."* Presented at the ACSFA's Meeting in Boston, MA., April 12, 2002.

Kinser, Kevin, and James Forest. *Higher Education in the United States: An Encyclopedia*. New York: ABC-CLIO Publishers, 2002.

Kolb, Charles E. M. "Accountability in Postsecondary Education." *Financing Postsecondary Education: The Federal Role*. Washington, D.C.: Department of Education, 1995 [On-line] Available: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/PPI//FinPostSecEd/kolb.html.

Kors, A., and H. Silvergate. The Shadow University. New York: The Free Press, 1998.

Lawrence, B., G. Weathersby, and V. W. Patterson. Eds. *The Outputs of Higher Education: Their Identification Measurement and Evaluation*. Bolder, CO: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 1970.

Lee, Calvin B. T. *The Campus Scene: 1900-1979*. New York: David McKay Publishers, 1970.

Linn, Robert L. "Assessment and Accountability." *Educational Researcher*, vol.29 no.2, March 2000.

Lucas, C. *American Higher Education: A History*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.

Lucas, C. *Crisis in the Academy*. New York: St. Martin's Press 1996.

Lyons, R. E., M. McIntosh, and M. L. Kysilka. *Teaching College in an Age of Accountability*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2003.

Layzell, D. T. and J. W. Lyddon. "Budgeting for Higher Education at the State Level: Enigma, Paradox, and Ritual." In *ASHE Reader on Finance in Higher Education*, ed. D. W. Breneman, L. L. Leslie, and R. E. Anderson. Needham Heights, MA: Simon and Schuster Press 1990.

Lewis, L. *When Power Corrupts*. Somerset, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2000.

Marchese, Ted. "Accountability," *Change*, November/December 4, 1994.

Marshall, C., and G. B. Rossman. *Designing Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1989.

Mathers, J. K. "State Performance-Based Accountability Systems: A National Perspective." 2000. [On-line]. Available: http://www.matherskb.doc.

Mathers, J. K., and R. A. King. "Teachers' Perceptions of Accountability." *Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association*, Seattle, 2001.

Merriam, S. *Qualitative Research and Case Study: Applications in Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

Millard, R. M. *Today's Myths and Tomorrow's Realities: Overcoming Obstacles to Academic Leadership in the 21st Century*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991.

Millard, Richard M. "State Boards of Higher Education." *ERIC/Higher Education Research Report* No. 4, 1976. Washington, DC: The American Association for Higher Education, 1976.

Millett, J. D. *New Structures of Campus Power*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1979.

Morrell, L. C. *Acting on the Possible While Awaiting Perfection: The Effect of General Assessment at Public Two-Year Institutions of Higher Education in Tennessee.* Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Dissertation Abstracts International 58-06A 1996.

National Center for Educational Statistics. *Digest of Educational Statistics*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, 2002.

National Center for Postsecondary Improvement. "A Report to Stakeholders on the Condition and Effectiveness of Postsecondary Education." Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 2001.

National Center For Public Policy and Higher Education. "Measuring Up 2000." San Jose: The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2000.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform.* Washington, DC: National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983.

National Endowment for the Humanities. *To Reclaim A Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education.* Washington, D.C.: National Governor's Association, 1984.

National Governors' Association. *Time for Results.* Washington, D.C.: National Governors' Association, 1986.

National Governors' Association. *Results in Education: 1988.* Washington, D.C.: National Governors' Association, 1988.

National Institute of Education. *Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education.* Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of Education, 1984.

New Mexico Commission on Higher Education. "Policy for Accountable Post-Secondary Education for New Mexico." 2002 [On-line]. Available: http://www.nmche.org/reports/acctpol.html.

Newman, Frank. "Creating an Effective Market: Higher Education in the Age of Accountability." The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education. 2003 [On-line]. Available: www.highereducation.org/crosstalk/ct0303/voices.

Newman, F., and Couturier, L. *The New Competitive Arena: Market Forces Invade the Academy.* Providence, R.I.: The Futures Project: Policy for Higher Education in a Changing World, May 2001.

Oblinger, Diana G., and Anne-Lee Verville. *What Business Wants From Higher Education.* Phoenix, Arizona: The Oryx Press, 1998.

Pascarella, Ernest T. "Identifying Excellence in Undergraduate Education." *Change.* May 2001.

Patterson, D. *When Learned Men Murder.* Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa, 1996.

Patton, M. Q. *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1990.

Peters, Roger. "Accountability and the End of Higher Education." *Change.* November/December, 1994.

Peterson, M. V., M. K. Einarson., C. H. Augustine, and D. S. Vaughan. "Institutional Support for Student Assessment: Methodology and Results of a National Survey." *Report of the National Center for Postsecondary Improvement*. Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1999.

Roche, G. *The Fall of the Ivory Tower*. New York: Regnery Publishing, 1994.

Ruppart, S. *Charting Higher Education Accountability: The Roots and Realities of State-level Performance Indicators*. Denver: Education Commission of the States, 1994.

Schaefer, William D. *Education Without Compromise: From Chaos to Coherence in Higher Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990.

Schmidt, Peter. "A state transforms colleges with 'performance funding'." *Chronicle of Higher Education: Government and Politics*, July 2, 1999.

Schwandt, Thomas A. *Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2001.

Smith, P. *Killing the Spirit: Higher Education in America*. New York: Viking Press, 1990.

Stadtman, V. A. *The University of California: 1868-1968*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970.

Sykes, C. *Profscam: Professors and the Demise of Higher Education*. Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1988.

Sykes, C. *The Hollow Men: Politics and Corruption in Higher Education.* Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1990.

Stake, R. "Some Comments on Assessment in U.S. Education." Education Policy Analysis Archives, 6 (14) 1998. [On-line]. Available: http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v6n14.html.

State of North Carolina. "Financial Statement Audit Report of Tri-County Community College." Raleigh, N.C.: Office of the State Auditor, 2002.

Tennessee Higher Education Commission. "Annual Status of Higher Education in Tennessee: Tennessee Challenge 2000." Nashville, TN: The Commission, 2000. [On-line] Available: http://state.tn.us/thec/ACADEMIC/C2000/e2000brief.html.

Tennessee Higher Education Commission. "Performance Funding." Nashville, TN: The Commission, 2001.

Tennessee Higher Education Commission. "The Status of Higher Education in Tennessee." Including the 11th Annual Report on Progress toward the Goals of Tennessee Challenge 2000 for the State's Public Higher Education Institution and the 8th Annual Report on Contributions of the State's Independent, Regionally Accredited Higher Education Institutions. Nashville, TN: The Commission, January 17, 2001.

Terenzini, P. T. "Assessment with Open Eyes: Pitfalls in Studying Student Outcomes." *Journal of Higher Education*, 60 (1989): 644-664.

Trow, Martin. "American Higher Education: Past, Present, and Future." *Educational Researcher*, April 1988.

U. S. Congress. *GI Bill Act* of June 22, 1944. [Servicemen's Readjustment Act [G.I. Bill of Right]] Unrestricted. (NWCTB-11-LAWS-PI159E6-PL78(346))

U. S. Congress. *First Morrill Act* of July 2, 1862.

U. S. Congress. *Second Morrill Act* of August 30, 1890.

U. S. Congress. House. "Accountability in Education: What are Parents and Students Getting for Their Money?" Washington, D. C.: Committee on Education and Workforce, 2003.

U.S. Congress. House. "Boehner Praises Ohio Governor Taft for Emphasizing Quality and Results in Higher Education." Washington, D. C.: Committee on Education and Workforce, January 13, 2003.

U. S. Congress. House. "Committee Leaders Launch Efforts to Ensure Accountability and Quality in U. S. Higher Education." Washington, D. C.: Committee on Education and Workforce, May 13, 2003.

Walters, Raymond. *Four Decades of U.S. Collegiate Enrollments*. New York: Society for the Advancement of Education, 1960.

Wellman, Jane V. "Assessing State Accountability Systems." *Change*, March 2001.

Wolff, Robert Paul. *The Ideal of the University*. Boston: Becon Press, 1969.

Young, K. "Prologue: The Changing Scope of Accreditation." *Understanding Accreditation: Contemporary Perspectives on Issues and Practices in Evaluating Educational Quality*. Young, Kenneth E., Charles M. Chambers, H.R. Kells, and Associates. Eds. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1983.

Zumeta, William. "Accountability: Challenges for Higher Education." *The NEA 2000 Almanac of Higher Education*. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 2000: 57-71.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Letter of Invitation and Introduction

May 29, 2003

Title
Company
Address 1
City, State, Postal Code

Dear _____:

Over the last several years, public institutions of higher education in Tennessee have been engaged in accountability efforts designed to "account" for their programs and actions to demonstrate how and to what end they serve their constituents. As a doctoral student in higher education at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville I am interested in whether the activities and reports associated with accountability in higher education are perceived as beneficial to business and industry stakeholders. As part of my study, I am conducting interviews with members of Tennessee Tomorrow, Inc. who are interested and involved in becoming Tennessee's voice for excellence in education.

By participating in this study, you will be contributing to a better understanding of how accountability in higher education is perceived by key business and industry leaders in Tennessee. The outcomes from this research have the potential to inform decisions that are made regarding accountability policies and programs across the state.

I am requesting that you participate in this interview study. Your responses will not be identified with you or your business. Responses will be analyzed as a group. Following the data analysis of the interviews, I will contact you with a follow-up letter.

Participation in the study is voluntary and requires your consent. Included with this letter you will find an informed consent form for your review.

If you have any questions regarding the research, I can be reached at 828-479-9256 (work). Each participant will receive a copy of the findings of the study. I truly appreciate your willingness and participation in this research project.

Dr. E. Grady Bogue
Professor
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Donna Tipton
Candidate for Ed.D
University of Tennessee, Knoxville

APPENDIX B

Consent Form

Higher Education Accountability in Tennessee:
A Corporate Perspective

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to describe Tennessee corporate leaders' perception of accountability in higher education and of current accountability policies and/or programs.

Risk & Benefits: There are no foreseeable risks involved in your participation in this project. Participation will provide you with the benefit of reflecting on your own experiences and will provide me, as the principle investigator, the opportunity to understand and describe more completely some of your perceptions. Also, you may indirectly benefit from the knowledge gained from the project findings.

Information & Confidentiality: With your permission, you will be asked to participate in an informal interview that will last approximately one to one and a half hours. The interview will be audio taped and the tapes transcribed to capture your exact words. Your identity will be kept completely confidential through the use of pseudonyms. Only I will have access to the consent form, tapes, and transcripts. The information in the study records will be kept confidential. Data will be stored securely at my office in a locked file cabinet and only I will have access to the study unless you specifically give permission in writing to do otherwise. No references will be made in oral or written reports, which could link you to the study.

Participation: Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at anytime without penalty. If you withdraw form the study before data collection is completed, you data will be returned to you or destroyed.

Contact: If you have any questions at any time about the study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study) you may contact me, Donna Tipton-Rogers, at Tri-County Community College - Graham County Center, PO Box 1997, Robbinsville, NC 28771, (828) 479-9256 or email: dtipton@tccc.cc.nc.us. If you have questions about your rights as participant, contact the Research Compliance Services Section of the Office of Research at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (865) 974-3466.

Consent: I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I have received a copy of this form.

Participant's name (print)_____

Participant's signature and date_____

APPENDIX C

Confidentiality Agreement

Research Title:
Higher Education Accountability in Tennessee:
A Corporate Perspective

I, _____, understand and agree to keep all information transcribed from this study completely confidential. I understand these transcripts will only be discussed with the Principal Investigator, Donna Tipton-Rogers, for the purposes of clarification. I agree to maintain confidentiality, including the identity of the research participants. I understand the confidential nature of the information transcribed for this study, and as such, will take the necessary precautions to keep all transcripts confidential while in my possession.

I understand and agree with the above conditions.

_____
Signature

_____
Date

APPENDIX D

Interview Protocol

Higher Education Accountability in Tennessee:
A Corporate Perspective

Higher Education accountability has emerged as a major policy focus, but what is not so clear is the impact and decision utility of accountability policies and/or programs as seen by various stakeholders. The purpose of this study is to describe Tennessee corporate leaders' perception of accountability in Tennessee higher education and of current accountability policies and/or programs. The study will be guided by the following research questions:

Interview Questions

1. What does it mean for higher education to be accountable?

2. Do you think the higher education accountability policies and/or programs in place in Tennessee are effective?

3. What are your expectations for higher education accountability?

4. What do you consider to be evidence of higher education accountability?

5. To what extent are you aware of the current available data intended for evaluating higher education's effectiveness and efficiency?

6. To whom is higher education accountable?

7. Thinking about the information that has been provided to you, for example, from higher education institutions...has this information aided your decisions related to higher education issues?

8. How could the current accountability policies and/or programs be improved?

9. From your perspective, how has higher education accountability changed during the last few years and what changes are foreseen in the future?

APPENDIX E

List of Interview Participants

Participant One -- Chief executive of a telecommunications industry giant.

Participant Two -- Chief operating officer/owner of regional convenience stores and petroleum related equipment.

Participant Three -- Human resources director of a large, modern research hospital.

Participant Four -- Chief executive of a large non-profit organization.

Participant Five -- Owner/Chief executive of a manufacturing and wholesale distributorship.

Participant Six -- Chief executive of large aeronautical corporation.

Participant Seven -- Chief executive of large government contractor.

Participant Eight -- Vice president of regional investment firm.

Participant Nine -- Vice president of food distributorship.

Participant Ten -- Chief executive of large, well established food manufacturer and distributor.

Participant Eleven -- Chief executive of large chemical company.

Participant Twelve -- Chief executive of large investment firm.

VITA

Donna Ann Tipton-Rogers was born in Copperhill, Tennessee on November 22, 1968 and grew up in Brasstown, North Carolina. She graduated in 1987 from Murphy High and enrolled at the University of North Carolina in Asheville. In 1991, she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in History and a minor in Business Administration. After graduating from college, she enrolled in graduate school at the College of Charleston and the Citadel and graduated in 1997 with a Master of Arts in History. While in graduate school she held jobs in education and historic preservation until moving back to North Carolina to accept a position at the Grove Park Inn Resort as a department director. In 1996, she moved to Robbinsville, North Carolina to work for the Tri-County Community College as director of their new satellite campus. In 1998, she was promoted to Dean, and in 2001, she was named Vice President of Graham County Operations and Executive Director of the Graham County Center. She received her Doctor of Education degree, with a major in Educational Administration and Policy Studies from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in Fall 2004.

5897 7108 5
04/06/05 MAB