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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Patricia R. Silverman entitled "Persuasion Strategies, Motivational Factors and Obstacles: Influences in the Evolutional Transition from Public Relations Practitioner to Professor." I have examined the final electronic 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 Philosophy, with a major in Communication and Information.

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PERSUASION STRATEGIES, MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS AND OBSTACLES: INFLUENCES IN THE EVOLUTIONAL TRANSITION FROM PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTITIONER TO PROFESSOR

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

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Patricia R. Silverman

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Steve,

for his constant support, patience and prayers throughout this journey

and to my daughter, Bethany, and my extended family who

encouraged me throughout my academic program.

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Abstract

Future public relations practitioners may not be as well-equipped as their predecessors due to a faculty shortage. The shortage "is severe because we are faced with a critical gap between available qualified full-time faculty and an enrollment of students that continues to climb year after year" (B. F. Neff, personal communication, September 7, 2006). Additionally, low salaries, limited training, inadequate number of Ph.D. programs and stricter faculty requirements has contributed to this shortage. How do we persuade more practitioners to transition to the classroom? The purpose of this study was to look at the practitioner/professor transition experiences to provide answers to the question above. An examination of the messages, motivators and obstacles was studied using in-depth interviews. Twenty public relations faculty representing ten states were asked to discuss their transitional journeys. Using Strauss and Corbin's (1998) coding paradigm, five themes evolved in the analysis including mentoring, love of academe, rewards, calling and obstacles. Findings indicated that practitioners turned professors made the career transition based on perceived self-efficacy and self-determination. Those who are considering a transition from one career to another, particularly one with less tangible benefits, can be explained by not only self-efficacy as a predictor of "career decision-making intentions and behavior" (Betz & Voyton, 1997, p. 180), but also by self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In addition to the fulfillment of the three psychological needs of self-determination theory--competence, autonomy and relatedness--the study found an additional need, situation, also had to be met. Self-efficacy and self-determination theory with the added element of situation, presents a good model for determining success and fulfillment in career transitions.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction …… 1

Chapter 2: Method …… 12

Definitions …… 12

Participants …….. 14

Researcher …… 22

Methodology …… 23

Reliability …… 26

Validity …… 27

Chapter 3: Results …… 30

Composite Stories …… 30

Coding Results ……. 42

Causal Conditions …… 42

Intervening Conditions ……. 43

Contextual Conditions …….. 44

Themes …….. 46

Messages …… 46

Motivators …….. 49

Obstacles …… 57

Re-defining the Transition Process …… 63

Chapter 4: Discussion …… 65

Stage One: Antecedents ……. 66

Stage Two: Transition …… 69

Stage Three: Consequences ……... 76

Rewards ……. 77

Chapter 5: Conclusion …… 84

Implications and Recommendations …….. 84

Participant Recommendations …… 88

Limitations …….. 89

Future Research …….. 90

Conclusion …….. 91

References …… 94

Appendices ……102

Vita …… 112

Chapter 1: Introduction

Bonita Neff, the head of the Public Relations Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication [AEJMC], calls the public relations faculty shortage "severe." Neff, who also serves as an executive committee member for the Commission on Public Relations Education, believes that "the public relations faculty shortage is severe because we are faced with a critical gap between available qualified full-time faculty and an enrollment of students that continues to climb year after year" (B. F. Neff, personal communication, September 7, 2006). From 1995-1999, there was a growth of 25.2 percent in the number of public relations students but only an increase of 11.1 percent in faculty to teach these students (Johnson & Ross, 2000). The most recent Journalism and Mass Communication Enrollment Report (Becker, Vlad, Tucker & Pelton, 2006) indicated another enrollment growth of undergraduates in 2005 over the previous year. This means "enrollments in journalism and mass communication programs at the undergraduate level have grown every year since 1993" (p. 313). Master's programs also saw an enrollment increase in 2005 while the doctoral students declined almost 10 percent (Becker, et al., 2006). "Future generations may not be as well-equipped as their predecessors. The quality of education of people going into public relations will suffer" (Friederichs-Fitzwater quoted in Crawford, 2005, p. 18).

"A shortage of qualified public relations faculty exacerbated by this mushrooming growth in the number of university-based public relations degree programs" (Wright & Turk, 1998, pp. 415-416) was a concern in the 1990s and remains an even greater concern today. In 1998, approximately 25 colleges and universities were searching for

public relations faculty (Wright & Turk, 1998) and that number has continued to grow each year. Hallahan, Colorado State University professor and operator of PR-education.org, a web portal site devoted to public relations education, distributed a news release in 2002 announcing that there were more than 90 public relations faculty vacancies across the nation. In 2005 that number had increased to an all-time high of more than 120 vacancies. Presently, there are more than 85 vacancies for the 2006-2007 school term (Hallahan, 2006).

Many faculty positions remain unfilled for several years because the demand for qualified professors far exceeds the supply of graduating Ph.D. candidates. While undergraduate degrees being granted continue to rise in journalism and mass communication programs across the nation, the number of doctoral degrees being granted is decreasing (Becker, et al., 2006). The decrease in doctoral degrees in 2004-2005 was 15.6 percent. Robert S. Pritchard, chair of Public Relations Society of America [PRSA] Educators Academy, referred to this shortage of public relations faculty as a "consistent and growing problem and a crisis in our profession" (personal communication, August 30, 2006). "Finding public relations professionals to teach is easy; finding *qualified* professionals is difficult" (Kent & Taylor, 2005, p. 18). And those qualified public relations professors who have taught for many years across this nation are nearing retirement.

"Twenty-five or 30 years ago, there was a boom in faculty hiring, but this baby boom generation is nearing retirement, without being replaced" (Friederichs-Fitzwater

quoted in Crawford, 2005, p. 18). This graying of the faculty is evident by the statistics. "Nearly a third of the country's full-time professors are 55 or older, compared with about a quarter just 10 years ago, according to a national survey conducted in 1998-99 by the University of California at Los Angeles" (Magner, 2000, p. 18). A later report that came out in the fall of 2005 indicates that there was approximately 6,000 full-time faculty in 458 journalism and mass communication programs and "a little over one-quarter of them were 56 years or older" (Becker, et al., 2006, p. 314). This decrease in qualified faculty and increase in enrollment has created a chasm that has grown wider and wider since the inception of the first undergraduate class in public relations taught by Edward L. Bernays in 1923 at New York University (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2006).

Since that first undergraduate class, public relations education has flourished with approximately 275 schools now offering majors or concentrations in public relations (PRSSA, 2006). And there continues to be an increase in the number of students who are choosing public relations as their field of study (Ross & Johnson, 2004)**.** For twelve consecutive years, since 1993, undergraduate enrollments in journalism and mass communication programs, where public relations programs are traditionally housed, have increased (Becker, et al., 2006). According to the 2005 *Annual Survey of Journalism & Mass Communication Enrollments*, there were 195,376 undergraduates from 458 colleges and universities enrolled in the field of journalism and mass communication with 26.1 percent of that total "enrolled in some combination of advertising, public relations or strategic communication" (Becker, et al., 2006, p. 301). The Undergraduate Journalism-Based Integrative Team, assigned by the 1998 Commission on Public Relations Education and made up of educators and practitioners from across the nation, reported

that half of the students located in speech/communication studies departments are planning careers in public relations while another 25-35 percent in journalism/mass communication programs have chosen public relations (Leuven, 1999). Public relations classes serve as a "cash cow" for colleges because "more and more students are enrolling in PR classes, but there are fewer and fewer people to teach them" (Russell quoted in Crawford, 2005, p. 18).

A different view of the faculty shortage is taken by Maureen Taylor, chair of the public relations division of the National Communication Association [NCA]. Taylor agrees that there is a shortage but postulates it is a constructed shortage that allows university administrators to move public relations programs to other areas, like organizational communication (personal communication, October 9, 2006). She describes the crisis by saying, "The crisis is that our field is undervalued by mass communication and not respected as a discipline in the academy." Taylor believes the academy should look for people who are academically inclined and interested in research and then teach them the practice of public relations through mentoring, internships and part-time consulting. "I think practice is something you can learn; it's harder to learn research," argues Taylor.

Reporting on the results of the 40th annual edition of the *Where Shall I Go to Study Advertising and Public Relations* directory, public relations showed increases in all areas: number of public relations programs, graduates and number of students enrolled (Ross & Johnson, 2004). The field of public relations has also grown substantially with approximately 200,000 jobs in 2004 and an employment growth in projection of 18-26 percent by 2014 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006). CNNMoney.com, an Internet site for

Fortune, Money, Business 2.0 and *Fortune Small Business*, estimates a 22.6 percent job growth in public relations by 2014 (Kalwarski, Mosher, Paskin & Rosata, 2006). Supply and demand are certainly a concern, but salaries, training, number of Ph.D. programs and the rise in requirements for qualified faculty has also contributed to this faculty shortage.

Salary is one of the reasons that more practitioners don't choose to join the academy. Most practitioners are capable of making more money than professors. "If the salary is the most important reason for teaching in a college or university, forget it. Salaries are notoriously low in most educational institutions in communications fields" (Fearn-Banks, 2004, p. 5). "These jobs go unfilled because potential candidates can make so much more money by working for PR firms than they could by teaching" (Hallahan quoted in Crawford, 2005, p. 18). "I left a six-figure paycheck to go back to school, get graduate degrees and go into teaching. I have no regrets but I also realize that I'd have been a lot better off financially if I had stayed in public relations" (Friederichs-Fitzwater quoted in Crawford, 2005, p. 18). "It is extremely difficult for universities to find people with the desirable and necessary combination of academic and professional credentials willing to teach public relations, especially given the relatively low salaries paid to full-time college and university faculty" **(**Wright & Turk, 1998, p. 422).

Training is another concern and has recently been an emphasis in the academy to help with the shortage of qualified faculty to teach public relations. In the summer of 1998, the National Communication Association [NCA] dedicated its entire conference to public relations education (Coombs, 2001). Although a lot of valuable curricular issues came out of this conference, many faculty expressed frustration at "the lack of time

devoted to ‘how to teach’ various public relations courses” (Coombs, 2001, p. 1). Teaching resources and training on how to teach public relations have been lacking for years, but steps have been taken since that 1998 summer conference to alleviate those concerns. The training of potential new faculty members has increased over the past few years in an effort to identify those who may be thinking about or have made the transition from practitioner to professor.

The first step was a follow-up NCA Conference in 1999 that included “a day-long session designed to address ‘how to teach’ issues” (Coombs, 2001, p.1) and a special edition of *Public Relations Review* with teaching-related materials. In fall 2006, the PRSA Educators Academy sponsored a “Learning to Teach” professional development seminar in New York geared to professionals who are interested in making the transition from the practice to teaching (PRSA, 2006). More of these nationwide teaching seminars are being planned for the future. “As a profession, we’re at a critical juncture. Training future professors is at the top of our list,” says Pritchard (quoted in Drake, 2006, p. 25). Training has long been needed for a profession that traditionally hands you a book and says, “Do it yourself.” Although this is a step in the right direction, the academy is still a long way from offering an adequate amount of training.

A third issue is the lack of public relations doctoral programs. In 1966 there were no Ph.D. programs in public relations; however, 29 universities were offering sequences in public relations on the undergraduate level and five universities were offering masters programs (Simon, 1966). Today, that has certainly changed, but the number of Ph.D. programs and degrees being awarded cannot keep pace with the continual increase in the number of public relations programs being added or the number of students enrolling.

"The number of Ph.D. degree-granting institutions in public relations remains insufficient" (Kruckeberg, 1998, p. 237). In 1998 there were 175 universities with undergraduate public relations sequences or programs (Wright & Turk, 1998). Today, approximately 275 universities offer an undergraduate degree (PRSSA, 2006). Although no comprehensive lists of Ph.D. programs in public relations are available, several have identified communication-related Ph.D. programs.

In 2000, there were 56,910 communication bachelor degrees awarded compared to only 357 communications Ph.D.s (NCA). In 1999, when the degrees awarded were broken down by discipline, there were 2,714 public relations bachelor degrees and no Ph.D.s awarded specifically in public relations (NCA). The 2005 *Annual Survey of Journalism & Mass Communication Enrollments* indicates that there are 42 doctoral programs in journalism and mass communication with 178 doctoral degrees granted in academic year 2004-2005 (Becker, et al., 2006). This same year, there were 48,983 bachelor's degrees awarded. Wright and Turk (1998) encourage the development of a plan that will strengthen and support existing doctoral programs in public relations and the creation of new ones (p. 438). "There are too few people to teach these students, and there are too few doctoral programs to teach teachers" (Wilson quoted in Crawford, 2005, p. 18).

An issue of concern to many is the demand for qualified faculty who not only have professional experience, but a Ph.D. Charles Lubbers, immediate past head of the PR Division of AEJMC, believes that the root of the faculty shortage has been the requirement for the terminal degree and he said there has been "pressure on departments to hire faculty with Ph.D.s" (personal communication, September 5, 2006). The shortage

of public relations educators along with the increasing number of public relations students is “compounded by the fact that colleges and universities are being pressured by accrediting bodies to fill faculty positions with Ph.D.s” (Kruckeberg & Paluszek, 2006, p. 9).

As the profession grows, and as more students seek public relations as their major area of study, the academy could find itself graduating future practitioners whose public relations classes were taught mostly by practitioner adjuncts, by communication generalists who have no public relations experience or both. “Public relations courses should not be taught by people who have little or no experience and interest in the field and have no academic preparation in public relations” (Kruckeberg & Paluszek, 2006, p. 50). “As the field of public relations continues to grow and become more complex and professional, it is increasingly important to recruit only highly qualified faculty with both theoretical and experiential credentials” (p. 14). Fearn-Banks reiterated and says, “It is important for public relations instructors–lecturers or professors–to have real world experiences. The Ph.D. without the professional experience is handicapped” (2004, p. 5).

“Many schools compensate for the shortage of professors by hiring adjunct faculty to teach undergraduate public relations courses” (Kent & Taylor, 2005, p. 13). This will continue to be a temporary fix for a much larger problem. Practitioner adjuncts are highly valued in the classroom by students because of their “real-world” experience, but not always highly valued by other academicians. Without a Ph.D. and being actively involved in research, they are sometimes treated as “second-class citizens in academe” (Ohl, 1998, p. 370). Although they may offer teaching that encompasses real-world application, they lack the theory base to back up the “whys” of their work. Having been a

professional does not necessarily make one qualified to teach (Kent & Taylor, 2005). Today, the academy requires not only professional experience, but also a Ph.D. and a willingness to conduct research.

Many adjuncts are unable to establish and maintain strong relationships with those students they teach because their first priority, as it should be, is to their full-time job requiring that they pop in and out of the classroom with little additional time to mentor or advise. Although adjuncts can offer their workplace experiences, they do a "disservice to the students because they only cover classes and don't serve on committees, advise or supervise on-campus clubs," reasons Lubbers (personal communication, September 5, 2006). Depending on practitioner/adjuncts, who have full-time day jobs, to solve the faculty shortage also means that universities across the nation will be providing public relations classes primarily in the evening, drawing complaints from students.

Since 1975, The Commission on Public Relations Education has developed four reports with recommendations for undergraduate and graduate public relations education (Kruckeberg & Paluszek, 2006). These reports have suggested curriculum and educational guidelines that will advance public relations education and produce successful practitioners to meet the growing demand for their services and counsel (Kruckeberg & Paluszek, 1999). This Commission, which includes representatives from 12 professional and educational societies in the field of public relations, "has outlined the kind of knowledge and skills students must acquire at the undergraduate and graduate levels if they're to contribute meaningfully to public relations organizations now and in the decades ahead" (Paluszek, 2000, p. 28). But, how will future public relations

practitioners acquire this knowledge and these skills if there is not enough qualified faculty to teach them? Low salaries, limited training, inadequate number of Ph.D. programs, and stricter faculty qualifications, create the formula for the crisis that Pritchard mentioned earlier. So, what is the answer to this crisis?

The academy will need to do some of its own "PR" to persuade more professionals to make the transition from practitioner to full-time professor. The academy cannot afford to sit around and wait on practitioners who may decide to try teaching as a second career or volunteer as adjuncts to meet the growing faculty shortage. But, how do you persuade someone to leave a job for one that pays less, provides minimal training, requires a Ph.D. and sometimes necessitates 60-hour work weeks including class preparation, teaching, grading papers, advising, committee work, and contributing to the public relations body of knowledge through research and publication? What motivates someone to make the transition? What obstacles did they encounter along the way? What persuasive messages have been used to entice a qualified practitioner to consider teaching as their next career move? Only those who have transitioned from industry to the academy can answer these questions. Making the transition from the practice to the classroom does not happen overnight or without much thought, sacrifice and determination.

The purpose of this study was to look at the transitional experiences that practitioners go through as they move from the practice to the academy. An examination of the messages that have been used to persuade practitioners to move from a position of practitioner to professor is one area that was studied. Additionally, this study investigated the motivators that led to the move from practitioner to professor along with the obstacles

encountered during the transition. This study answers the question, “What kinds of experiences do public relations professionals go through during their evolutional transition from practitioner to professor?”

Chapter 2: Method

As previously mentioned, this study explored persuasion tactics, motivations and obstacles that occurred during the transition from public relations practitioner to professor. This study included qualitative in-depth interviews of practitioners who are currently making the transition to the academy and current academicians who have transitioned to full-time professors in the past 11 years. This chapter presents the operational definitions of transition, persuasion and motivation, along with a description of the participants and researcher. It then discusses the methodology selected for this research study.

Definitions

Transition refers to the passage from one place to another and for this study that place was from the practice of public relations to the classroom as a public relations professor. For some participants, the transition included a move from the practice to an educational setting in pursuit of a master's or doctorate degree and then a second transition to higher education as a professor. Other transitions included a move directly from the practice to the classroom as a teacher.

Persuasion is "the use of communication in an attempt to shape, change, and/or reinforce perception, affect (feelings), cognition (thinking) and/or behavior" (Pfau & Wan, 2006, p. 102). Carl Hovland, one of the forefathers of communication study, conducted extensive research on persuasion focused on communication effects (Rogers, 1997). Even prior to Hovland's research studies in persuasion, persuasive skills have been used since Plato's day. The Greeks, more than 2000 years ago, developed the term rhetoric, which is "the art of using language effectively and persuasively" (Wilcox, Ault,

Agee & Cameron, 2001, p. 182). Rhetoricians used their skills of public speaking to persuade public opinion about building projects, appointment of officials and criminal justice issues (Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman, Toth & Leuven, 2004).

Persuasion research was a popular social science study during the 1950s and 60s with thousands of studies and articles being written during that period of time. Persuasion is still a major area of theoretical research in the field of public relations, although the role of persuasion in public relations is somewhat controversial (Pfau & Wan, 2006). Considered by many to be the "fathers" of public relations, Edward Bernays and Ivy Lee both viewed persuasion as essential to the public relations practitioner who they described as "an advocate in the arena of public opinion" (Pfau & Wan, 2006, p. 101). James Grunig and others have challenged this view by positing that Bernays' perspective on persuasion is based on manipulation to benefit the organization; the preferred method should be a two-way symmetrical approach to public relations which involves a mutually beneficial dialogue between communicator and receiver (Pfau & Wan, 2006). Although this debate will probably continue for a long time, persuasion is, nevertheless, being effectively used by practitioners in fundraising, lobbying, advertising, crisis communication, media relations and social marketing.

Persuasion could also be used in a recruiting campaign to entice public relations practitioners to consider a move from industry to the college classroom. To convince practitioners to make this transition, though, it is important to look at not only persuasive messages, but also the motivational factors that influenced former practitioners during their conversion to professor.

Motivation is usually described by psychologists as being either intrinsic or extrinsic in nature (Sternberg, 2000). What motivates people into action can come from within or from the outside. Intrinsic motivators come from the enjoyment of doing something, not because of any external rewards; the activities themselves are rewarding. Extrinsic motivators come from the rewards to be received or threats of punishment. Rewards may include money, power, promotion and praise. Deci and Ryan (1985) define intrinsic motivation as "based in the innate, organismic needs for competence and self-determination" (p. 32). Self-determination is "the capacity to choose and to have those choices, rather than reinforcement contingencies, drives or any other forces or pressures, be the determinants of one's actions" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 38). This study examines both the intrinsic and extrinsic motivators that caused practitioners to transition from industry to the academy.

Participants

The profile for participants in this research study included part-time and full-time faculty who are currently teaching undergraduate or graduate public relations classes and have been teaching for 11 years or less. The other criterion is that they have had at least five years of professional experience in public relations prior to their transition to teaching. One group of faculty members were selected from public relations programs located within a day's drive of the researcher in four southeastern states including Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina and Alabama. Additionally, public relations faculty from other states who were attendees at the PRSA Educators Academy Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah, November 10-12, 2006, was asked to participate. Phone interviews

were also conducted with public relations faculty who lived in states far from the researcher's home. Faculty who fit the profiles listed above was identified through membership lists in PRSA Educators Academy, PR Division of AEJMC, and PR Division of NCA, as well as through referrals from other public relations faculty. A paragraph asking for volunteer participants was printed in the Educators Academy and AEJMC-PR newsletters along with email solicitation and listserves (see Appendixes A and B for participant solicitation).

There were a total number of 20 participants interviewed for this research project, 17 in person and 3 by phone. There were 9 males and 11 females representing 10 states: Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Dakota, South Carolina, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kentucky and New York. They ranged in age from 28 to 66 years and represented both private and state institutions including Research I, liberal arts and faith-based universities. One of the participants has a master's degree, one will be completing her master's this year, three are currently working on their Ph.D.s and the rest of the participants hold a Ph.D. as their terminal degree. In a full-time teaching capacity 2 participants have taught only 1 semester while another participant had taught 11 years. One participant, who is currently in her Ph.D. program, has taught 2 ½ years on a part-time basis only. The rest of the participants had taught full-time between 1 and 11 years. All of the participants have had prior public relations professional experience ranging from 5 years to 28 years in areas including corporate, education, nonprofit, government, health, agency, freelance, broadcast and the military. A brief description of the participants follows using fictitious names so that they are not identifiable.

Brent is an associate professor and chair of the Department of Journalism/Mass Communications in a private liberal arts undergraduate and graduate university in the south. His prior professional experience included science writing and work with medical physicians on publishing their work in medical journals. It was this experience that got Brent interested in pursuing graduate work and communication research.

Betty recently completed her Ph.D. in 2006 and is now an assistant professor of public relations teaching at a Research I state university in the south. Her former public relations experience included six years in government work including employment for a mayoral candidate along with grassroots activism for a county recycling division. Upon completion of her master's degree, her career goal was to move to D.C. and become a lobbyist. But, Betty discovered a love for teaching and research while a master's student which caused her to change those plans and complete her Ph.D. to become a professor.

After 20 years in international corporate public relations, Bob returned to his first love—teaching. He first began teaching after receiving his master's degree but turned to corporate public relations for financial reasons. He enjoyed it so much that he continued in the practice for 20 years until he became physically and mentally tired and left to pursue his Ph.D. Bob is now a professor and chair of the Department of Advertising and Public Relations in a large Research I institution in the south.

As a visiting assistant professor of communication at a southern regional four-year state university, Donna finds her job as a teacher very rewarding and a fulfillment of a longtime desire to teach. Prior to teaching, her professional career included over 18 years of public relations experience in both nonprofit and educational settings. Most of her professional life was spent in hospital public relations. Donna landed a job as a writer

and taught part-time as an adjunct until she landed her full-time job as a teacher where she is presently employed. Along with a teaching certificate, Donna has a master's degree.

Of all of the participants in this study, Linda has been teaching full-time the longest, for 11 years. She is currently a lecturer in the Journalism and Public Relations Department at a four-year liberal arts state university in the south. Linda has two bachelor degrees and plans to complete her master's in 2007. Her professional public relations experience includes nine years in education, agency and freelance positions. Linda also worked as a reporter and it was during that time in her life that she had reached a crossroads and was looking to do something else with her career. Her next move was to a university as the student newspaper advisor and part-time teacher which she did for five years. She returned to public relations work for five years and then came back to teaching a second time, this time as a full-time faculty member teaching public relations classes.

Susan had a "hunch since I was five years old that I wanted to teach one day." That hunch was fulfilled when she started teaching full-time two years ago at a research university in the south where she is an assistant professor and coordinator of the public relations program. Prior to teaching, Susan spent 12 years in public affairs for large corporations making a six-figure salary while she also completed two master's degrees and a Ph.D.

Albert had a 20-year career serving in the military doing various aspects of public affairs. One of his roles was training senior officers' communication skills and during this time Albert discovered the joy of teaching. Upon retirement from the military he became

a full-time Ph.D. student with a desire to one day teach full-time at a university. Albert is now an associate professor in the Department of Communication Studies at a research intensive university in the south.

Most of Todd's 18-year professional career was spent in a university setting in the Public Information Office. While working at the university, he received his master's and taught part-time for eight years. His love for teaching persuaded him to pursue a Ph.D. which he earned in 2001. Todd now teaches full-time at a state university in the north and has the title of assistant professor of mass communication.

Candice has been interested in education since her childhood. Her great-grandmother was an educator in a one-room schoolhouse. Prior to becoming a full-time professor, Candice spent 11 years doing public relations in corporate and nonprofit settings. In 2005 she became an instructor in the Contemporary Media and Journalism Department at a four-year liberal arts university in the Midwest and is currently working on her Ed.D. with plans to graduate in May of 2007.

Carrie says she has "always had a love affair with school" and "could probably be a full-time student if my budget could handle it." She tried teaching at the secondary level but didn't enjoy it because of the student discipline issues. She was later able to teach at the university level while in her master's program and fell in love with college teaching. Carrie realized that she needed practical experience in public relations if she were to be an effective professor so she worked for five years in various nonprofit positions. She is now an assistant professor of communication at a Christian liberal arts university in the south.

For 25 years Tim worked in various public relations jobs for one large U.S. automobile corporation. His company was offering some buyouts so Tim thought this would be a good time to leave and do something else. That something else was to pursue his Ph.D. full-time in hopes of becoming a college professor. Tim is now an assistant professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications in a large Research I university in the south.

Charlotte is currently a full-time Ph.D. student at a large Research I university in the south. She is pursuing her communication degree with the hopes of teaching public relations. Prior to becoming a Ph.D. student, Charlotte worked for two publishing companies and a large department store chain in their corporate offices. It was in this last job that she conducted some diversity training and really enjoyed the teaching aspect. Shortly after that she began teaching part-time at a community college where she fell in love with teaching and made the decision to pursue her Ph.D.

For more than 15 years Mona worked as a public relations practitioner working in government, corporate and nonprofit settings. During her professional career she also enjoyed teaching as an adjunct instructor. She became tired of doing public relations work and made a formal commitment to teaching and pursued a Ph.D. Mona is now an assistant professor in the College of Communication and Information Sciences in a large Research I university in the south.

Mel worked as a practitioner, taught part-time as an adjunct and was a student, sometimes all at the same time. His practitioner work included public relations service in nonprofit, agency and corporate settings. While a master's student he was mentored by one of the public relations research icons in the industry and later taught some adjunct

classes at a large university in Texas. These teaching and research experiences led him to the decision to enter a Ph.D. program with aspirations of becoming a full-time professor. Mel is now doing that at a large Research I university in the south and is an assistant professor in public relations.

Martha began her teaching career as a newspaper advisor and part-time instructor of journalism classes, which she did for 20 years while working full-time in the public relations profession. Her practitioner experiences included 12 years of work with hospitals and publishers. She completed her master's degree in communication in 1985 and is currently working on her Ph.D. while teaching full-time at a small Catholic liberal arts college in the south.

For 15 years Barry practiced public relations in an educational setting at a church-related institution where he also taught part-time at this same college. He had always thought that he would enjoy teaching and had even acquired a secondary teaching certificate along with his undergraduate degree. Barry left the university where he was doing public relations to complete his master's degree. He returned to this same institution in a full-time tenure track position and decided to pursue his Ph.D. It was during his pursuit of the terminal degree that he discovered his love for research and decided he needed to teach at a Research I university, which he now does in a large university in the south as an assistant professor.

After teaching at a Research I university, Bethany recently moved to a smaller four-year private liberal arts university where she is an assistant professor. Prior to teaching full-time, Bethany worked for two land grant universities doing science communication. While at these universities she had the opportunity to teach as an adjunct

and realized her love for teaching. Upon completion of her Ph.D. she left her public relations job for a “higher, noble calling to go into the classroom.”

It was Joseph’s intellectual interest and love for school that drove him to pursue his Ph.D. Although he taught some classes part-time while a public relations practitioner, he never had a desire to teach full-time. For 28 years Joseph worked in various public relations arenas including education, nonprofit and agency. He fell into teaching full-time when the PBS station he was working for laid off two-thirds of the executive staff, including Joseph. He was asked to join a comprehensive state university in the north where he has been teaching for nine years as an assistant professor in the Communication Department.

Paul received his Ph.D. while still practicing public relations where he worked in both the corporate and agency arenas and then on his own as a public relations freelancer. Paul recalls a conversation with his thesis advisor who suggested he consider teaching full-time at the university level. Paul’s ideal job would be as a professional student and since that was not feasibly possible with a family to support, a career as a college professor was the next best thing. He has been teaching full-time now for four years and is an assistant professor of public relations for a teaching/research state school in the north.

After serving as an enlisted person in the Navy in public affairs, Kathy accepted a public relations position in healthcare working for a hospital. Although she enjoyed the professional world she had thought about becoming a professor because she really enjoyed the research component during her academic endeavors. After 10 years as a practitioner and completing her Ph.D., she left to begin teaching full-time and is currently

an assistant professor in public relations at a Research I institution in the south. Although research is still her number one motivation for transitioning to academe, Kathy has “found teaching” and enjoys the interaction with her students.

Researcher

As the researcher for this dissertation, my journey from practitioner to professor has been similar to many of the faculty that I have interviewed. I spent almost 20 years as a practitioner in corporate, nonprofit, tourism, broadcast and health-related industries in three states and thoroughly enjoyed and was challenged by the profession. My last position as the public relations director of a nonprofit worldwide broadcast ministry was extremely invigorating but also exhausting and frustrating. In addition to overseeing a department of seven employees with a $300,000 budget, I was also the spokesperson for a highly visible and controversial Christian broadcaster who was frequently featured in national and international media. After 5½ years, I became physically and emotionally exhausted and left my job. My options at that point were to either start freelancing or, because I had a master’s degree, teach part-time as an adjunct professor at one of the local universities.

I began teaching speech and public relations classes at Old Dominion University, a large regional university in Norfolk, Va., for one year and fell in love with teaching. Being able bring my 20 years of professional experience into a classroom of eager, enthusiastic future practitioners really excited me. I realized very quickly that I could actually make a difference one student at a time and that was very rewarding, even more rewarding than working in the profession. I felt competent and prepared to teach communication and public relations classes and students received my teaching very well.

I was, however, not prepared for the enormous amount of time spent in class preparation and grading but I still decided after that one year of teaching that I would really like to teach full-time. Therefore, I contacted a former acquaintance of mine from graduate school who was now the chair of the Communication and the Arts Department at a small Christian liberal arts university in Tennessee.

With one email, my life was changed. I emailed him and he quickly emailed me back saying that they had just approved a full-time public relations faculty position and my name had come to his mind as a possible candidate. That same year I made the transition from practitioner to full-time professor when I joined Lee University, a four-year Christian liberal arts university located in Cleveland, Tenn., as the first assistant professor of public relations.

As a tenure-track employee, I was encouraged to pursue my Ph.D. and for the past four ½ years I have been teaching full-time at Lee University and taking classes part-time at the University of Tennessee in pursuit of my Ph.D. in Communication. This transitional journey back to graduate school has been a difficult time as I have tried to juggle teaching, school work and family all at the same time. This dissertation stems not only out of my personal journey and interest, but also out of concern for the public relations faculty shortage that currently is impacting our academic institutions and will ultimately impact our public relations students and the profession.

Methodology

The method for this study was qualitative research using in-depth, one-on-one interviews. The in-depth interviews were primarily conducted in the offices of selected faculty on their respective university campuses and at the PRSA Educators Conference in

the conference hotel facility in Salt Lake City, Utah. This natural setting is very important in qualitative research and allows an "interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). Additional interviews were conducted by phone of faculty who lived substantial distances from the researcher and were not available for interviews at the PRSA Educators Conference.

A qualitative method was selected because this study is looking for insight into the experiences that the participants have had when they made their practitioner/professor transition. Additionally, it was used to understand what issues participants faced in their journeys. In other words, to find out "what is going on" which is the basis for all qualitative research. Qualitative research is the best method to obtain this understanding (McCracken, 1988).

A standard interview guide/questionnaire for the in-depth interviews was used loosely to ensure that certain topic areas were covered. The interview guide consisted of five broad, open-ended questions permitting the researcher to probe further or develop additional areas of discussion. Prompts were also included as needed. A sample of the interview guide is below.

Individual In-Depth Interview Guide

1. Tell me about the highlights of your career as a public relations practitioner.
2. What was involved in your decision to begin teaching?
3. Looking back, what do you wish someone had told you about making the transition from the practice to teaching?
4. Today, what would you tell someone considering the transition from professional to professor?
5. Tell me about the highlights of your career as a public relations professor.
    (a) How has your professional experience affected your teaching today?

In addition to the interview guide, a data sheet was filled out on each participant. Information about the participant including name, address, job title and other information pertinent to the study was included on this data sheet (see Appendix C for data sheet). An informed consent form was also signed by each participant indicating agreement to participate in the study (see Appendix D for informed consent).

The in-depth, one-on-one interviews were conducted by the researcher and tape recorded. So that data collection and tentative analysis could occur concurrently, the researcher personally transcribed the majority of the interviews shortly after their completion and then began the analysis looking for similar categories or themes. An outside transcriber was also hired to assist in the transcription, but the researcher listened to the tape recordings of each interview and compared it to the transcribed copy for verification and for editing as needed.

Using Strauss and Corbin's (1998) coding paradigm, where structure and process are integrated, the data were coded for themes around four areas: the phenomenon, conditions, actions/interactions and consequences. "This coding paradigm is particularly useful when coding for a process, such as decision making," (Morrison, 2002, p. 24). The current study looked at the transition from practitioner to professor which involves a decision making process, therefore this coding scheme is the most appropriate. Using this coding method, the *phenomenon* is the practitioner/professor transition; *conditions* are the events that led to the transition; *actions/interactions* are the persuasion strategies, motivations and obstacles involved in the transitional decision-making process; and *consequences* are the end results of those actions/interactions which, in this study, would be becoming a public relations professor.

Once the themes were identified, a set of coding directions was developed. These directions, used by the researcher and others for coding, were used as a guide for coding a representative number of transcripts. The coding sheet included directions on how to code along with the five themes identified by the researcher (see Appendix E for coding directions). Inter-coder reliability and validity checks were then conducted by the researcher.

Reliability.

To ensure reliability of the coding, the researcher conducted inter-coder reliability using the researcher and two other coders. These coders were professors who taught at the institution where the researcher is currently teaching. There was one male and one female coder selected and they were asked to code two transcripts following the directions on the coding sheet.

The independent coders added no additional categories to the coding scheme. Based upon percentage of agreement, Scott's Pi was .60 among the three coders. A more careful analysis of the coding discrepancies revealed that the independent coders saw mentoring from the perspective of the participant as both mentee, being encouraged to embark upon or continue in the transition process, and mentor of new students. This definition was then edited and clarified in the coding sheet to indicate that mentoring involved an action where someone was encouraged, advised or counseled by another person to become a member of the academy. A second discrepancy arose with respect to love of academe and rewards. The coding sheet indicated that love of academe, a passion for teaching and/or research, was confused with rewards, tangible or intangible benefits

that make people feel good about what they are doing or sustain/encourage them to continue what they are doing. These discrepancies appeared when participants were talking about their experiences in the classroom. One coder saw these experiences as love of academe and the other two coders saw them as rewards. After talking through where the differences where, it was agreed that classroom experiences would be coded as rewards.

The researcher then revised the coding directions to more clearly explain the five themes and also added examples for each one. Using the revised coding categories, a new coder was recruited and both the researcher and coder coded two new transcripts. This time Scott's Pi agreement was .902 between the two coders.

Validity.

To ensure validity of the coding results, the researcher emailed six of the former research participants and related the findings from the study including the five themes, with examples, that evolved from the qualitative analysis of the transcripts. The participants were asked how this analysis resonated with what occurred during their own transition experience.

Feedback was received from five of the six participants with the majority in agreement with the findings. Albert said, "I think you've accurately captured the central themes." He added a couple items saying he was glad that he was no longer on call 24/7 like he was in practice and enjoyed the "higher degree of job security" that teaching provided for him. Linda said the areas targeted were "in keeping with my experiences." She added one point that she felt needed to be added to the list, "Teachers who are passionate about their field and continue to 'practice' their vocation/avocation." Paul

said, “I like what you sent and it reflects well on my experiences.” Mona generally agreed with the findings but said they seemed somewhat “rosy.” She surmised that it was her coping skills developed in her prior work experience that got her through the graduate school challenges, not her drive to be a teacher or search for a higher ethical ideal.” She also expounds, “I’m convinced that mentoring during all phases of the process could be the most important factor for success and for enjoying (and understanding) the ride.”

To ensure anonymity of the participants, the data sheets, informed consent forms, tape recordings of the interviews and transcriptions are in the care of the researcher and will not be accessible to anyone else. Upon completion of the research project, the tapes will be destroyed and the informed consent forms will be kept in a secure location for at least 3 years on the campus of the University of Tennessee. The data sheets and transcripts will remain in the custody of the researcher for use with follow-up research projects but will remain confidential and in a secure location. No reference was made in oral or written reports which could link participants to this study. To preserve the identity of the participants, they have been assigned fictitious names which are used in the written research report.

To recap, this study, using qualitative research, included 20 one-on-one interviews with public relations faculty throughout the nation. The volunteer participants talked about their transitional experiences including persuasion tactics, motivations and obstacles/challenges that they faced along their journey from the practice to the academy. Additionally, their decision-making process was discussed along with suggestions that they would give to future transitioners. This information was obtained using an in-depth

interview guide with prompts, and the discussions were taped and later transcribed for analysis using the Strauss and Corbin (1998) coding paradigm.

Chapter 3: Results

From the analysis of the twenty interview transcripts, it became very clear that the transitional journeys of the faculty in this research revealed five very specific themes that will be discussed later in this chapter. In addition to these themes, it was obvious that the transitional stories of the faculty could be easily divided into three groups: group one comprised of public relations faculty who always had a desire to teach and/or research; group two included faculty who through some situational experience in their lives turned to teaching; and group three who discovered their love for teaching and/or research during their educational experiences, after teaching part-time as an adjunct teacher or on-the-job. Before identifying the five themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis of the interviews, a composite story of the faculty in each of the three groups will be described beginning with Stephanie who represents the group who always wanted to be teachers.

Composite Stories

Stephanie knew very early on that she wanted to be a teacher because of her "love affair" with school. At the young age of five she had a "hunch" that she wanted to teach one day. Her interest in being a teacher was also influenced by her grandmother who taught in a one-room schoolhouse in Tennessee. In addition to an undergraduate degree, she had also obtained her secondary education teacher certification. She describes herself as the "perpetual student," and says her ideal job would be a professional student but knows that job won't pay the bills. So becoming a college professor was the closest thing to being a professional student.

Stephanie tried her hand teaching at the high school level but became very concerned about all of the student discipline issues that she had to contend with and only taught for one year. Because she was the consummate student, she decided to go back to school for her master's degree in communication. It was in her master's program that she "fell in love with public relations and college teaching." It was through her teaching assistantship that she realized how different college teaching was from high school and how much she enjoyed the classroom interaction with older students.

Her master's experience stimulated her desire to teach on the college level but she realized that she would need to have professional experience in the field of public relations before she could be a successful college professor. During graduate school she had been taught by several professors who were former public relations practitioners and found them to be very effective in the classroom. She also knew that the academy would not pay her the same salary that she could receive as a professional, and with a family to support she needed to work as a public relations practitioner.

Stephanie had only planned on working for 5 years as a public relations practitioner but those 5 years turned into 15 years because she enjoyed working in the industry and was very successful. Stephanie worked in a variety of public relations positions including nonprofit, corporate and agency settings and thoroughly enjoyed the practice. During this time she also taught part-time at the local university in her town as an adjunct public relations instructor. Teaching part-time reinforced her desire to teach full-time, and after 15 years climbing the corporate ladder, she had become burned out working in the industry. Her last job required a lot of international travel and she had also

begun pursuing her Ph.D. in hopes of fulfilling her dream to become a college professor. She says that during this time of working full-time, teaching part-time and being a part-time Ph.D. student, being a student was the "glue that held me together." Stephanie became physically exhausted and says, "I was ready for the transition physically and mentally out of the corporate world into something else." That something else was becoming a full-time Ph.D. student.

So because her children had graduated and moved away, Stephanie left her six-figure salary as director of public relations for a large oil corporation, and she and her husband moved closer to the state university where she became a full-time Ph.D. student and graduate assistant. Stephanie's motivation to pursue a Ph.D. was driven by her love for teaching, her desire to earn tenure and an understanding that a terminal degree is the required degree to teach in a university setting. It was during her Ph.D. program that Stephanie realized she loved research as much as teaching. For the next three years she became a full-time doctoral student and calls this time "fun." Three years later she received her Ph.D. in communication and began looking for a full-time teaching job. Stephanie wanted to teach and conduct research so she applied at several Research I universities. She was offered a position at a large university in the southeast.

For the past seven years, Stephanie has been teaching full-time and is an associate professor of public relations. She calls her transition from the practice to the academy a "natural one for the public relations discipline" and refers to her current job as her "dream career." Stephanie says, "I've always had this kind of interest in studying and teaching and sharing and expanding the ideas I had." Being a college professor also allows her to be an interminable student and the rewards are numerous.

Stephanie calls her teaching experiences today “gratifying.” She further deduced that the rewards are daily and mostly revolve around her involvement with students on an academic, personal and emotional level. She calls the rewards intangible and says, “Those rewards include watching my students grow and mature, along with those ‘ah-ha’ moments in the classroom when they finally make a connection.” She enjoys traveling with her students on their journeys and watching them grow along the way. Knowing she is playing a role in their growth is very rewarding. She also receives joy when her students succeed and become confident and capable in the classroom. She describes leading her first master’s student through his thesis as a “new and fun experience.” Stephanie enjoys investing in the lives of future public relations practitioners and can recall many gratifying moments when former students have contacted her to share their job successes or ask her for advice.

Stephanie has also had good research success in a short period of time and earned early tenure because of her accomplishments. She finds it rewarding when her research gets published or her conference paper proposals are accepted by her peers. She has also been promoted to the chair of her department after only seven years as a full-time faculty member. Working with great colleagues is another reward for her. “Being able to hang out with really good, smart people; I think that’s a privilege.”

Stephanie’s longtime desire to teach has been fulfilled and she describes the rewards as “exceptional, but not monetary and they are not external as much as they are internal. My biggest rewards always revolve around my students, and I consider it a privilege and blessing to be doing something that I consider a ‘higher calling’ in life.”

Steve's story is representative of group two, those faculty participants who turned to teaching because of some situational life experience. For Steve, becoming a college professor was something that he had never thought about. He was content working as the public relations director for a large car manufacturer. It was through a life-changing job situation that Steve began thinking about teaching.

There was a change in top level management where he worked, and two-thirds of the staff was laid off while others were offered buyouts. After 25 years with the company, Steve was offered one of the buyouts, which he accepted. In addition to making the decision to accept the buyout offer, he also knew he had to make a decision about what he would do next. Steve was at a crossroads in his life.

Because he had received his master's degree in public relations 10 years ago, he knew that teaching was an option. As an adjunct professor, he had taught a couple of public relations classes at a local university over the course of several years and also did some corporate training. He had enjoyed the part-time teaching at the university and the training aspect of his job. Steve had also complained over the years that the quality of students coming out of public relations programs was inadequate as he had hired, and had to re-train, dozens during his career. Teaching would give him an opportunity to be a part of the solution instead of just complaining about it. So he started to research this option of full-time teaching and asked others in the academy about it.

"As I talked to others in the teaching profession, I realized there were two schools of thought," says Steve. "One was to use my master's degree and go out and teach at a community college and the other was to go back and get my Ph.D. as a requirement to teach in a university setting." Steve made the decision that if he was going to do it right

he needed the Ph.D. for the respect and credibility that it would bring to his classroom experience. So, he selected a school with a good reputation for its Ph.D. program and started his four-year journey as a student.

While in his Ph.D. program, he had the opportunity to work on research projects with some of his faculty and really enjoyed it. He had always liked school and the intellectual challenges that it brought so his four years were an enjoyable experience for him and trained him well for his next job as a college professor. Upon graduation, he received a call from the university where he had previously taught part-time offering him a full-time position teaching communication and public relations classes. He accepted their offer and has been teaching there now for three years.

"For these past three years it has been a privilege to be in the classroom," exhorts Steve. "I know I am making a difference in the lives of my students and serving students has a much greater and long-term impact than serving a corporation." Steve enjoys the rewards of working with colleagues on research, watching students grow and mature intellectually and eventually get jobs, and the opportunity to continue to be a student himself as he grows and learns alongside his students. "Being in a university as a teacher you have an obligation to be a student at the same time and I never give up being a student." He has been able to develop the first Public Relations Student Society of America [PRSSA] chapter on his campus and has helped students get jobs by providing class projects that build their professional portfolios.

His professional experience has been invaluable to him in the classroom, "I don't know how you can effectively teach in our industry without the professional experience. I'm able to bring real world examples from my work experience as legitimate

applications of what is being taught theoretically from the textbooks." He feels he would be going into the classroom "unarmed" if he had not had the practical experience and says, "otherwise it is just academic and public relations is not just academic; it's so practical."

Steve also comments that his transition to the academy was not really a transition at all but "a natural part–an evolution of my professional career." The job market for this evolution into public relations education is tremendous. There are many more job openings for faculty than there are newly minted Ph.D.s. Steve says, "If you like kids and you like to teach and money is not your top concern; go for it."

The last composite story is about Janis who represents group three, faculty who fell in love with teaching and/or research as a teaching assistant in their graduate program, while teaching part-time as an adjunct or through research or training opportunities in their professional practice. Janis loved being in the public relations profession and worked in various positions including nonprofit and corporate settings. While working in the corporate public relations department of a nationwide retail store in Chicago, she had the opportunity to do some corporate training and really enjoyed this aspect of her job. She had also been a volunteer for several years as a tutor and found this experience enriching and rewarding. Finally, she was asked to teach a Bible study that she enjoyed preparing for and learned a lot. "I realized that teaching is the best way to learn."

An acquaintance of hers from a women's professional association that she belonged to suggested she pursue her master's so she could teach, something that she had done to make extra money. So, Janis decided to pursue her master's degree in hopes that

she might be able to teach part-time in the future at the university level. While in her master's program, Janis had the opportunity to teach undergraduates and discovered a love of teaching. She also enjoyed the research aspects of her program. She finished her master's degree in two years while still working full-time in public relations.

A turning point for Janis in making her decision to pursue a full-time teaching position came during her master's program when one of the students she had taught was interviewed for an article on most influential teachers and this student mentioned her name. At that point she realized that she must be pretty good at teaching and decided to try and get a full-time position teaching public relations. Additionally, Janis saw the power that communication had through her own professional work experiences and wanted to teach that to others. Although it would be difficult leaving a job that she enjoyed, Janis sensed a "higher, noble calling to go into the classroom."

Janis thought her M.A. would be enough to get her a full-time teaching position but found out very quickly that a Ph.D. would be required. She was devastated so she continued working in her current public relations position because she needed the medical benefits for her family. Janis also taught part-time at the local community college.

One day while Janis was grading papers in an office at the community college where she taught part-time, a thought came to her, "I am so happy here. I feel like this is where I belong; this is where I'm most comfortable and I thought to myself what am I going to do so that this can happen for me–become a full-time teacher." Her role as an adjunct had been such a rewarding experience, "I like teaching undergraduate students and really like the flexibility and creativity that comes with teaching. I also just adore my

students and really enjoy working with energetic, enthusiastic, talented young people." Teaching was also very different than the corporate world that she came from. It was unstructured with less bureaucracy and the students were less pretentious than her co-workers and she was able to make a connection with them on a much different level. She also enjoyed being a student and teacher at the same time. But Janis wanted more control of her teaching instead of just filling in as needed as an adjunct. After "playing professor" for a few years, she decided it was time to do this full-time.

The timing for Janis was good; the kids were out of the house and she had the support of her husband. She was at a place in her life, emotionally, financially and physically, where she had the freedom to make the change and leave her public relations career in pursuit of her Ph.D. She realized the Ph.D. would allow her to get a good job, do a better job and also give her respect and credibility in the classroom. She had been told by someone that the Ph.D. was the "union card" needed to gain respect in the academy. She knew it wouldn't increase her salary, but her primary purpose was in the "self-satisfaction to better herself.

Janis began her search for a good Ph.D. program and was accepted at a large Research I institution where she received a generous assistantship and apartment on campus. The academic culture shock was a real challenge for Janis. "It was like landing on Mars. I felt like I was in a coma for six months." Some of the other challenges, including the cut in pay, were moving to a new place and being a seasoned professional in a small town of mostly undergraduates. Another difficulty in her transition from professional was that there was a different level of respect as a student. She also realized that she would need to have more self-imposed discipline as a student as compared to the

corporate setting where it's imposed for you. Her transition to the academy was made easier by having good mentors, and her success in her Ph.D. program occurred partly because of the academic role models she developed during her journey.

Four years later, Janis completed her Ph.D. in communication. Because there is a nationwide public relations faculty shortage, she was able to apply for numerous job openings and landed a job at a very prestigious Research I university. She accepted this position because she wanted to not just teach but also conduct research. Although she had taught part-time for several years prior to her Ph.D. program and during it, she realized quickly that the Ph.D. gave her instant credibility in the classroom. She also realized how important it was to have had the professional experience to back up her academic credentials and how it enhanced her teaching. "Professional experience was a necessary prologue for teaching," she says. She is able to use work experiences as illustrations in class and having been a practitioner first, "I feel I know how to prepare my students for the real world better."

Janis also has continued to consult part-time on the side which helps her stay fresh and current in the practice and apply current professional projects into her teaching. She also stays in touch with her professional contacts, which gives her credibility in the professional community, and she calls on them occasionally to be guest lecturers in her classes. She maintains an active membership in the Public Relations Society of America [PRSA] and advises the campus Public Relations Student Society of America [PRSSA], which she enjoys immensely. She also felt it was important to be accredited and took time one summer to prepare for and receive her Accreditation in Public Relations [APR] through PRSA.

Janis has been teaching full-time now for 10 years. In addition to her love for teaching, she enjoys the research aspect of her job as well. She is fulfilled by every study that she works on and considers it a highlight when she is honored by her academic peers for top research papers or when her papers are accepted for publication. She calls the relationships among practice, teaching and research a “symbiotic relationship” and accentuates, “How great that I get to do all three.”

The rewards of teaching far outweigh her challenges as a full-time professor. One of those challenges has been time and preparation. “I didn’t realize how much time and preparation it took to teach full-time,” says Janis. She also calls grading “teaching’s dirty little secret” and suggests there is a need for workshops for new faculty on how to teach. That was not a part of her Ph.D. program and feels that it’s an injustice not to better prepare full-time faculty with information about how to organize a class, how to grade and how to create better classroom learning experiences. But, the rewards are greater, and Janis accentuates, “I cannot think of another job I would rather do.”

The majority of the rewards have to do with the students. Janis calls teaching “one of the most rewarding things you can do” and the rewards are not monetary but intangible. Some of those intangible rewards include being a catalyst in the classroom for learning and being able to affect students not only academically but professionally and personally. There is a feeling of self-worth in making a difference in the lives of her students. Getting students to think and those ‘ah-ha’ moments when they finally make some connection is so enriching. It’s exciting every day to find new ways to make students excited about public relations. Seeing students graduate and get jobs and

knowing that you were a part of that is a great feeling. In addition to the classroom interactions, Janis enjoys advising students and those one-on-one meetings in her office.

Tangible rewards include getting emails from graduates letting her know they got a job. “I measure my success by their success,” says Janis. Another tangible reward is when the student stops by her office for advice or asks her to be a reference. Getting good student evaluations and knowing that she is being successful has also made Janis’ job fulfilling. “I feel like I’m making a difference in the world, one student at a time,” she adds. It’s an exciting time to be in public relations education because the discipline is booming with continued growth. It’s an exciting time for educators as “we are able to send them out better equipped” than previous students, comments Janis.

Other rewards are more personal and include autonomy and the fact that she has control of her job, which allows her to be more creative. The quality of life is also personally rewarding. Janis calls it the “best of both worlds” because she can continue to consult and then share what she does with her students. Additionally, it’s an exciting time to be a public relations educator because there is a nationwide public relations faculty shortage and job opportunities are vast. “There are more jobs than there are candidates coming out, so it’s a good market, it’s a hot market, it’s a growing market,” Janis points out.

This next section will look at the findings from the analysis of the 20 transcripts. It will include a discussion on coding results and themes as well as other findings that evolved from the analysis.

Coding Results

Using Strauss and Corbin's (1998) coding paradigm as the basis for the analysis of the transcripts, four areas were considered: the phenomenon, conditions, actions/interactions and consequences. For this study, the *phenomenon***,** which answers the question, "What is going on?" very clearly is the practitioner/professor transition and was the focus of this research. All of the participants had experienced or were currently experiencing, through their own unique journeys, this transition.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) define *conditions* as the events or happenings that create the situations pertaining to the phenomena. These conditions may be causal, which are happenings that influenced the transition, or intervening, those conditions that alter the impact of the transition. They may also be contextual, which represent the conditions that create the circumstances to which persons respond through actions/interactions and help to explain the "why" of the transition process.

Causal conditions.

In the journey from practitioner to professor there was an assortment of events or happenings that influenced the transition of the participants. These causal conditions included job-related issues such as job loss through layoffs and buyouts. One participant retired from the military. For others they had become burned out or dissatisfied with their public relations jobs and were ready for a career change. Advancing in their vocation and meeting professional goals was another cause mentioned as the reason for the transition to the academy.

Personal reasons were given by some participants as the reason for making the transition. One interviewee said she wanted to start a family and her professional career

involved too much traveling. Teaching would allow her the quality of life that she desired for her family. Another felt the quality of life of a teacher was more attractive to her because she could have the best of both worlds—teaching and consulting. Having more control of their lives, more freedom and creativity were also given as reasons to leave the practice for teaching. For others, there was a feeling that teaching was more important and it was even referred to as a "higher calling" by one faculty member.

Many of the participants discovered a love for teaching and/or research. This new 'love' was revealed during educational endeavors, as adjunct teachers or on the job where they conducted research or training as a part of their job responsibility. Their love for teaching and research was the driving force for many in their decision to leave the practice and move to the classroom.

One interviewee trained and re-trained many public relations graduates on the job and was concerned about the quality of PR education. He felt he needed to stop complaining about it and become a part of the solution through teaching. Another participant saw the power that communication had during his career and wanted to teach others about it. For those who were consummate learners and desired to be "professional students," they felt teaching was the best way to continue learning.

Intervening conditions.

Along their transitional journeys there were numerous events that altered the transition process of the participants. Although these intervening conditions did not impede the transition, they impacted the transition in various ways. For many participants, getting the Ph.D. was a struggle. One faculty member indicated that it took her eight years to complete it. Some of that struggle came because she was working full-

time in her professional career while working on her degree part-time. One participant talked about the challenge of working full-time, being a student and raising a family as a huge struggle in her life. For others, the change of moving from the profession to academics as a student was a “culture shock” and required many financial and personal changes in their lifestyles and way of thinking. One faculty member is still working on her Ph.D. while teaching full-time and is uncertain if she will ever finish it.

Financial concerns were given by a few faculty as reasons they did not make the transition sooner. One participant who had been teaching part-time had to leave his teaching position, which he loved, and move into a full-time public relations position to support his family. He ended up staying longer than planned because he was enjoying his practitioner career so much. He later became burned out and transitioned to becoming a full-time Ph.D. student and then a professor. Another faculty member had a choice to make between a full-time offer to teach and a full-time public relations position. There was a huge discrepancy in pay so she chose the public relations position and worked there for several years before later pursuing her Ph.D.

Contextual conditions.

The third set of conditions is contextual and explains why participants made the move from the practice to the classroom. For many of the participants there had been a longing desire to teach for several years. For one, that longing began at the age of five. Others were consummate students and just loved the idea of being a “professional student” and felt teaching was the best way to fulfill that desire to learn.

Many of the faculty interviewed knew that although teaching was their ultimate goal, working in the field of public relations was needed as a necessary prerequisite to

teaching. They felt that they would be better professors and more prepared to teach if they practiced first. All of the participants had professional experience in the field of public relations. A few had made the decision to not pursue full-time teaching right out of their graduate program but to work in the field first. Other participants pursued teaching with a master's and while some were able to obtain full-time teaching positions with the master's, others were not. They knew they needed the Ph.D. to teach at the types of universities they would be applying for, particularly research-intensive universities.

Timing seemed to be a contextual condition that was mentioned by several. For some they were able to leave their public relations practices and pursue the Ph.D. because financially they were in a position to do it. For others their children were grown and out of the home allowing them the flexibility to make the transition. Others, through job loss or job dissatisfaction, made the decision to transition either to a Ph.D. program or right into teaching.

The *actions/interactions* included the different steps the participants have taken that eventually led them to the move from industry to the classroom. For some, that involved teaching part-time because they were asked, because they wanted to try teaching on a part-time basis before pursing it full-time or they taught part-time while working in the public relations field because this fulfilled their desire, temporarily, to teach. For most of the participants they pursued and received their Ph.D. because they knew this would be a necessary action that they would need to take to enter academics at the university level. For many this involved huge financial sacrifices including moving to a new city and living on much less in order to receive their Ph.D.

All of these conditions and actions led the participants to where they are today—full-time faculty members teaching public relations at colleges and universities across the nation. These end results are referred to as *consequences* by Strauss and Corbin (1998). In this study, all of the participants, except one, have made this transition. The one who has not made the complete transition is in the process of transitioning and is currently in a Ph.D. program with hopes of becoming a full-time public relations professor in the future.

Themes

It became clear fairly early in the analysis of the transcripts that five very specific themes were emerging as faculty discussed their individual journeys from the practice to the academy. These themes had an effect on the transition process and were defined as: mentoring, love of academe, rewards, calling and challenges. As we look back to the original purpose of this study, these themes helped to explain the three areas researched in the transition experience--messages, motivators and obstacles. The purpose of this study was to look at the transitional experiences that practitioners go through as they move from the practice to the academy. An examination of the messages that have been used to persuade practitioners to move from a position of practitioner to professor is one area to be discussed. Additionally, this study investigated the motivators that led to the move from practitioner to professor along with the obstacles encountered during the transition.

Messages.

An examination of the messages used to persuade practitioners to transition from the practice to the academy revealed limited results. Only three of the participants in this

study indicated that someone had suggested they consider teaching. These messages had some, but minimal, impact on their decision to transition.

Brent had a job working with physicians on publications for medical journals, which included writing and research. One physician suggested to Brent that he go to medical school. Although he had no desire for medical school, it did spark an interest in Brent to consider graduate school. Charlotte was approached by a woman whom she served with on a committee about possibly teaching part-time and offered to pass along her resume. Charlotte was interested in teaching, so she followed-up with her friend's suggestion and within two weeks obtained a part-time teaching position at a community college. Although Paul had already been thinking about teaching, he was encouraged by his thesis advisor to pursue his Ph.D. and go into full-time teaching. "That is probably the biggest reason why I decided to go into teaching because he saw something in me that would be helpful."

What did appear to impact their decision more, particularly during the transition process, was the mentoring that occurred in several participants' lives. The theme of mentoring in this study is defined as an action involving someone who has encouraged, advised, or counseled another person, by word or action, to become a member of the academy. These mentors included bosses, academic professors, family members and peers.

Carrie was inspired by the actions of several professors in her master's program who were both consulting and teaching at the same time and they integrated their work into the classroom. "The blending of those two things together was an igniter, I guess, for me seeing how they could work together and should work together." Susan was

stimulated by a professor to switch from interpersonal communication to public relations in her master's program. This same professor gave her advice about her transition from the practice to the academy. Susan says, "I think you've got to have that mentor, you've got to have some support, someone who's been through the process to help you get through it. Otherwise, I think, you spend so much time trying to figure things out, you're getting frustrated and you're probably making bad assumptions." Susan reiterates, "And I think it's just an essential part of education to find not only a mentor that you can work with on a one-on-one basis but to find a group that is as supportive as this group [PRSA Educator's Academy]."

Paul says his wife was supportive and instrumental in helping him make his transition decision. He also had a doctoral advisor who helped him "think through the kinds of stuff that I need to be aware of in going into higher education."

Candice not only has a mentor in her department chair, but she stresses the importance of joining a professional organization, like PRSA Educator's Academy. She explains that these important mentoring relationships allow for idea exchanges and for collaboration on projects and papers.

Mona's husband, who was an educator, was an encourager for her. He was very supportive of her idea to move and return to graduate school for her doctorate. Martha also found her support from her husband who, as a Ph.D., was able to help her understand the academic climate at her first full-time teaching position.

Mel talks a lot about the mentoring relationship that he had, and still has, with one of his professors in his master's program who he now also works with on projects. He also mentioned several other professors who mentored him through his academic career

and adds, “I think the mentor relationship is really important; to have someone who’s been in academics, who understands it.”

The mentors the participants talked about in their interviews were influential in their lives and in their transition experience but did not necessarily persuade them to make certain behavioral changes. Instead, these mentors provided influence to the participants through their advise, encouragement, actions or support.

Motivators.

The motivations that led to the transition from the practice to the academy could be enclosed into three themes: love of academe, rewards and calling. All of the participants expressed a love of academe, which is described as a passion for teaching and/or for research prior to completing the transition. For some, it was their desire to teach since their early childhood days.

Susan became involved in corporate training and loved it because it “really reaffirmed by hunch since I was five years old that I wanted to teach one day.” Carrie knew very early that she wanted to be a teacher and calls it a “love affair with school.” She muses, “I could probably be a full-time student if my budget could handle that.” Paul identifies himself as a perpetual student and, like Carrie, would say his ideal job would be a “professional student.” He says that “the only thing that would technically qualify as that would be a college professor.” Candice was influenced by her great-grandmother, who was an educator. “She actually taught out of a one-room schoolhouse in South Dakota and so it was something that I always wanted to do.”

For others, they discovered their love of academe while working in the profession, through their educational experiences, or after teaching part-time. Albert, while in the

military, had the opportunity to train senior officers about communicating with the media and, from those experiences he asserts, “It was a revelation to me about the importance of teaching, the joy of teaching.” With his training success he felt that he was pretty good at teaching and thought maybe he should try it after he retired from the military. He also taught adult Bible studies and really enjoyed the preparation and learned a lot from this experience. He sums these two experiences up by saying that he came to the realization of “how important it is to teach and how you can change the world if you teach, and teaching is the best way to learn; it’s a very structured way to learn.” While working at a university as the public relations administrator, Todd relied on student workers and found himself teaching them on a one-on-one basis and says, “I really enjoyed that.” He was later asked to teach a photography class at the same university and his experience in the classroom “turned out to be great.” While working as a writer, Brent was either the lead or second author on about 15 articles that were published in medical journals and realized that he had the ability to do research. He had basically taught himself, through his job, how to conduct research so he decided to go to graduate school. He enjoyed his master’s program and mass communication research so much that he went on to finish his doctorate.

Carrie had tried teaching at a high school and it was not a pleasant experience. It was during her master’s program that she got to teach as part of her assistantship and “fell in love with college teaching and knew I wanted to be a full-time professor at some point.” Mel discovered his love of academe, particularly the communication study literature, while in his master’s program and then while teaching part-time at a university out west. Kathy first discovered her love for research as an undergraduate student while

taking a Research Method II and Theory class, and says, “I was like, wow, research is really, really cool and I thought if this Navy thing doesn’t work out then I might want to try to be a professor.” For Betty, it was during her master’s program that she realized her love for teaching and research while teaching part-time and says, “I loved the hours and the quality of life that being an academe could afford me and that was attractive on a personal level. On a professional level I had the opportunity to not only continue what I enjoy doing in the practice, but I also get to share what I do, what I love to do with students so it’s just kind of the best of both worlds for me.”

After teaching one class of Business Communication, Mona discovered how much she enjoyed teaching. “I liked teaching grown-ups and I liked the flexibility and the creativity,” she says. “Someone would be paying me and I’d get to do what I like, someone would be paying me to think and I’d get to do some social responsibility stuff through my classes.” She called teaching the “perfect package.” While working at a large university doing agricultural communication, Bethany had the opportunity to teach as an adjunct and found out “how very much I loved teaching because I adored my students.” She expounds, “I loved working with these energetic, enthusiastic, talented young people.” She also enjoyed research and felt there was a place for her in the classroom, “I wanted to be at a place where I could be expected and supported to do research and also be involved in teaching, which I found that I really enjoyed.” Charlotte says she “fell in love” with teaching after teaching part-time at a community college, and says, “My decision to come to get a Ph.D. was based around how can I teach full-time, so I decided to take the plunge.” Martha’s desire to pursue a full-time teaching position happened one

day sitting in an office grading papers for a public relations class she was teaching as a part-time teacher. She says of that moment, “I thought, I am so happy here. I feel like this is where I belong; this is where I’m most comfortable and I thought to myself, ‘what am I going to do so that this can happen for me? I want to be a full-time teacher.’”

One of the other motivators for the participants, and the third theme, was rewards. Rewards were defined as those tangible or intangible benefits that make people feel good about what they are doing. These benefits sustain or encourage people to continue what they are doing. In this study the rewards that participants talked about were primarily intangible.

Bob enjoys working with students and says, “They enjoy my classes and I enjoy them in my classes. So I feel good about that.” When Donna can convey her professional experience into the classroom she says it is “very satisfying that somebody can appreciate and want the information that I have, and I enjoy imparting that information.” The rewards of being a teacher are many for Mona. She likes helping her students learn how to think and creating an environment in the classroom where a diversity of viewpoints can be discussed. Betty calls each day intrinsically rewarding and sees those rewards as “going into a classroom and finding new ways to make them [students] excited and a little more knowledgeable.” She also talks about those “days when you have that one student who does the tiniest thing to let you know that you are out there making a difference in their lives.”

Carrie talks about the relationships she is able to develop with her students and says, “I think it comes to relationships and how you grow together and watching the

students grow and enter the world and impact it in such incredible ways and knowing you got to be a little part of that." Susan says the rewards in teaching "are exceptional but they are not monetary and they are not external as much as they are internal." She describes some of those internal rewards as seeing students succeed and watching them mature and transform. "That transformation is just something, you just can't beat it, you know, you can't quantify it and it's hard for me to articulate it because it's just so intense for me," she says. Charlotte calls teaching "enriching" and says some of those enriching things include "being able to meet individual students wherever they are and help them increase their knowledge." She also feels good because she is finally able to "not just practice it but to really preach it."

Candice describes those intangible rewards as those " ah-ha moments where you know your students have gotten it, where they make the connection between what they've read in their textbooks and what you're describing in class." Making an impact one student at a time is very rewarding to Candice. Joseph says, "Teaching is tremendously rewarding. And it is rewarding because at the end of the day, at the end of the semester, if you have one student that comes out of you know several hundred students, who gets it, who does it and becomes successful in his or her own life—that's worth it."

Tim says the highlights of his job as a professor "all revolve around students." He enjoys bringing his students to national conferences and having graduates come back to him for references or advice. Bethany enjoys advising the PRSSA chapter leaders and seeing them receive national awards. She also enjoys being a catalyst for learning in her classrooms. Donna gets a lot of joy out of her students' successes. She calls it "gratifying" when she hears about one of her students getting a job or internship.

Mel says the biggest motivator for him is “autonomy.” He is also motivated by the intellectual challenge, the academic community and “the energy and the youth and the enthusiasm of working with students. “Martha enjoys the nurturing part of her job as a teacher and says “that’s always where I’m most comfortable, where I’m happiest.” Todd calls it a “feeling of self worth that I have made a difference” in the lives of his students and says it “doesn’t have any zeros on a checkbook register but it’s a benefit and it’s a very real benefit of the teaching profession.” Linda calls teaching “relaxing” and says, “I find teaching something that I’m real comfortable with and that it’s so enjoyable.” When asked about the highlights of career as a public relations instructor, Linda says, “I enjoy every day.”

For other participants, the rewards of teaching were tangible benefits. Barry says one of the tangible rewards of teaching was his being able to lead his first master’s student through his thesis and called the experience “fun.” Getting his scholarship published and working with colleagues are highlights to his job as well and he says it is a “privilege to hang out with really good, smart people.” Joseph enjoys the rewards that come with working with colleagues “on projects and doing research and winning grants and just discovering new stuff.” Paul is also personally rewarded when his ideas get published and he talks about a recent book that he and another colleague just co-authored. Another rewarding aspect of his job is his ability to provide a service to his university based on his previous corporate experience. He says, “I was able to positively affect the development of the University’s strategic plan through the committee process,” and adds,

"That was really cool." Getting articles published is personally rewarding for Mel, along with getting grants. He also "likes the excitement of helping kids get jobs."

Kathy calls it rewarding that she got her job teaching at a highly respected Research I university in the south. She also feels very rewarded when she receives top paper billing at academic conferences and says the highlight of her academic career is "every single study; every single piece of research for me is a highlight." Mona receives tangible rewards through her own scholarship, being a historian and "being around people who love that stuff." Seeing graduates get jobs and then write to her sharing the news and letting her know how her teaching impacted their career is, as she describes it, "pretty exciting."

Another tangible reward is expressed by Donna who says it is a great feeling when she sees her students put on their caps and gowns and walk in graduation knowing that "you did your best to get them ready to go out into that big ole wide world and concur it. I think you get a sense of pride almost like a parent." Betty says it is very satisfying, "just knowing how much you are affecting students lives not only on an academic level and a professional level but also on a personal level and it gives you that satisfaction, a very tangible reward when you see them successful."

Charlotte says that the learning that goes along with the teaching is a highlight for her and a tangible reward. Brent talks about starting their first PRSSA chapter on his campus and seeing it grow to 50 students as a highlight in his teaching career. He also is rewarded when his students get public relations jobs or good internships.

Albert talks about one of the tangible rewards in teaching public relations by saying that he measures his success by his student's success. When one of his former students carves out a prosperous career he feels like it validates the teaching approach he is taking. He calls these kinds of experiences, "great moments." Bethany says running into former students who have found jobs in public relations or getting emails from them are "one of the most rewarding things," and adds, "That's why we do it, I think. To see them succeed and feel we were some little part of that."

For several of the participants, they believed teaching at the college level was a calling. For this study, the fourth theme of calling is defined as doing something because it is the right or moral thing to do; feeling personally obligated to do this.

In Bob's decision to leave corporate public relations and transition to teaching, one of the factor's in his decision-making was that he believed that "maybe teaching was more important than what I was doing in the corporate world and that I could make a better contribution to communication." He also says that in addition to a need for well trained communication professionals he saw a need for "people who were good thinkers with strong values and strong ethics. So the chance to do that with students I felt was important and something that I really needed to do." Carrie agrees and says her biggest passion in teaching is "to develop future practitioners that are going to be good practitioners but are also ethically grounded; they're not wishy-washy."

As a student, Brent experienced former professors who "were just taking a paycheck" and says he wanted to be a different kind of teacher because "being in a classroom is a privilege." Although Bethany found it difficult to let go of a job that she really enjoyed, she says the move to the classroom was made easier because "I felt a sort

of higher, noble calling to go into the classroom and do a better job than many of the teachers that I had."

Through his work experience in the military, Albert saw the power of communication and this inspired him to teach and says, "The skills we have are extremely powerful and they need to be employed in a very measured, restrained, cautious and responsible way, and that's when I started saying I need to become a teacher. I need to teach people to use these tools, to use them responsibly because I saw how powerful communication is."

Linda believes she is making a difference in her student's lives and explains, "When you're doing agency PR, which I did right before coming back here to teach, at least I felt like I was serving no one but my client and my company. As a teacher I can feel like I'm serving students who will take something and it makes a long term effect or impact rather than a groundbreaking ceremony that is over with one day and made my client happy and made my boss happy, but didn't have a lasting impact." Todd says of teaching, "I feel like I'm making a bigger difference in the world, one student at a time. So, you can't eat that but there's a tremendous feeling that comes from doing that."

Obstacles.

Although all of the participants completed their transition, many discussed the obstacles and challenges that they faced in their journey, and this became the fifth theme in the analysis. These obstacles are defined as those difficult times/situations that people go through in their journeys in life; they are overcome but pose some concerns during the process.

The greatest challenge for Mona came when she began her Ph.D. program. “When I started it was like landing on mars; it was a different language. I was much older than everybody; I came in the middle of the semester so I didn’t have a class, I didn’t have a group. It was, I was really, I was in a coma for six months; I had no idea what I had gotten myself into.” When getting his Ph.D. Mel also had some struggles. Those struggles included taking a pay cut and living off a fellowship, moving to another state and leaving friends and “going to a small college town as a young professional.” The level of respect was different moving from a professional position to being a student, he says. Charlotte also experienced some challenges when she moved from the practice to becoming a student. Her challenges included a move to another state, finances and just being able to find her way around in her new environment. She also says the difference in time management and discipline has caused her some challenges as she is currently in her Ph.D. program, and says, “You have to be disciplined instead of someone making you disciplined.”

A real obstacle and challenge for Bethany was getting her Ph.D. which took her about eight years. It made it particularly difficult when she had to prepare to take her comprehensive exams and tried to accumulate everything she had collected over all of those years. Carrie talks about some of the hardest times during her transition were when she was a new mom, working full-time in public relations, teaching part-time and a full-time student. “That was probably the hardest thing was just trying to end one thing and begin a new thing and how to mesh those together so you don’t lose yourself in the process.” Albert talks about obstacles he has experienced while a Ph.D. student and says

the classes are challenging, it's a different kind of writing and calls the comprehensive exams, "the worst part."

Bob would have continued his teaching early in his career but he had to change careers to financially support his two kids so he moved into corporate public relations. He later moved, received his Ph.D. and moved into full-time teaching but says that there are many obstacles that must be considered and overcome such as pay, benefits, stature, pace and rhythm and says moving from the practice to the academy is a "different environment, a different set of constraints that you work under." When Charlotte first received a teaching position offer, she would have had to take a $20,000 pay cut. She also received another offer in the corporate setting which offered her a $20,000 pay raise. Because of the major discrepancy in pay, she had to give up her dream of teaching, temporarily, and stay in the practice. After receiving her master's degree, Martha thought that would be enough to get her a full-time teaching position but found out it wasn't. "I was just devastated cause I thought I really like this, I like being on a college campus but at that point in my life I couldn't just work part-time; we needed the money. I needed a full-time job, I needed medical benefits and with kids in middle school and high school and approaching college, my goodness we needed the money and so I missed that teaching experience and went back to teaching one class and working 40 hours a week also."

Tim talks about the discrepancies he has seen in the academic world as being "disheartening." He says you are either looked at as a Ph.D. and your professional experience is not as important anymore, or you're looked at as an instructor with lots of experience which counts more than the degree and says, "it's kind of like you are either

one or the other and you can't be both." Tim also talks about the conflict at his university as lying in "two camps," those who feel their public relations program should be more research and strategy-oriented and those who feel there should more emphasis on practical skills. He believes a balance needs to be found and sees a struggle "between what are we trying to do for our students" and trying to be the Research I where it's for the professors who are more important, and adds, "Is the emphasis on the students or on the research? From somebody that came from the profession into education, that's really disappointing."

Todd has been surprised at how much time is involved in preparing for classes. For Albert, the obstacles he's encountered as a teacher include grading and calls it, "teaching's dirty little secret" and says it will consume you if you let it. He didn't feel very prepared in how to organize a class and says, "I wish there were some sort of workshop that they put you through to teach you to teach." Martha is frustrated by the pressure that is there to get the doctorate and says, "no matter how good a job you do, no matter how good your experience is, and no matter how much the students learn from you, it keeps coming back down to, but you don't have the doctorate. And that was painful."

Although they were not established as separate themes because they fit into the obstacle area nicely, the issues of pay and culture were mentioned numerous times by the interviewees and deserve some special discussion. Twelve of the twenty participants mentioned pay as a concern or challenge in the transition from the practice to the academy. Pay was mentioned by some participants when they talked about leaving their

jobs to get their Ph.D.s while others referenced the difference in pay between the practice and the academy.

Betty, when talking about the barriers in making the transition from the practice to the academy says, “You have to accept the fact that the money is going to be a little different but that’s probably the only thing and you know it’s a great life so I’m certainly not complaining.” When someone decides to move from corporate public relations to teaching, Bob says, “It’s not going to be the same kind of paycheck, it’s not going to be the same kind of benefits that you’re used to getting.” According to Candice, people need to ask why they want to become a teacher because if “someone is doing it for the extra money, there really isn’t extra money.” Susan says the rewards of teaching “are exceptional but they are not monetary and they are not external as much as they are internal.”

Brent believes a lot of the reasons that more people don’t choose the path is because they are making more money in the practice than they will in academe so he would tell them “there are great opportunities if you like kids and you like to teach and money is not your top concern; go for it.” Bethany agrees and says, “I would tell them that it is one of the most rewarding things that they can do. It’s not very financially rewarding. I took a cut in salary in order to teach. That’s how much I wanted to do it and I’ve never regretted doing that. I don’t miss the extra bucks that I brought home, and I doubt that I ever will.” “If you’re doing it because you think the paycheck is going to be bigger and you get a lot of free time, that might be misguided because the paycheck is smaller and I have a lot less free time,” says Todd. “But, I feel like I’m making a bigger difference in the world, one student at a time.”

The culture of the business world and the academic world are very different and created challenges for many of the participants as they made their transitions. Betty calls it a "rude awakening when you enter this very different world." Although there's an academic culture just like there's any other kind of culture, culture shock was her biggest challenge, says Mona. She had no idea how much time it would take to work on her Ph.D.; she lost friends along the way, and says, "I wish I'd understood a little more about what that [academic culture] was going to be like. It was like landing on Mars."

Bob says the "pace of change in universities is a lot different than it is in the business world." It's just a different set of constraints that you work under, a different environment, and a different pace and rhythm. And because the cultural differences are pretty significant, a really good way to try it out is to teach as an adjunct," says Bob. Susan says it takes a long time for decisions to be made, and the pace is slower in academe. As a new full-time faculty member, Todd says he's still having a little trouble learning the faculty culture. "I'm still not 100 percent sure on how the faculty hierarchy or the culture of the faculty works." The positive cultural differences that he notices are that he feels the academic environment allows one to be an entrepreneur and self-focused and says, "I feel like I'm an independent contractor, my own boss, with more freedom."

Charlotte says, "One of the things I fell in love with was actually how different it was from the corporate environment." The corporate climate doesn't allow as much creativity as the academy does. The school environment is unstructured and the students are different than her work colleagues--less pretentious. They also give unconditional respect to the teacher and the connection with students is at a different level than in the

corporate setting. Mel also feels that the academy culture has many positive aspects when compared to the corporate culture and says it allows for more input in the process, a different management structure, a different decision-making structure and a lot more autonomy.

Re-defining the Transition Process

Another interesting discovery from this study that warrants some discussion is the transition process and how that is defined. Results indicated that the original definition of transition, as discussed in Chapter Two, did not adequately describe all of the transitions of the participants. Transition was originally defined as the passage from one place to another and for this study could include passage, or movement, from the practice of public relations to the classroom as a public relations professor or transition from the practice to an educational setting in pursuit of a master's or doctoral degree and then a second transition to higher education as a professor.

What was revealed in this study was that for many, the transition was a much longer process. For some this transition began during childhood. For others, who have become public relations educators, they are still going through the transition even now as they talk about adjusting to their new environment or culture in higher education. For some the transition did not conform to the original patterns that were suggested but instead there were some faculty who actually taught first, then went into the practice, then taught again. The transitional process has actually been longer for most of the participants than originally envisioned.

Others didn't see the move from the profession to the academy as a transition but rather a natural evolution from practice to professor. Barry says, "I think the transition

from professional practice to teaching is a very natural one in our discipline. It seems like because of it being a professional practice area that it would be a natural thing to do." Joseph agrees and says, "I never considered my moving to academe as a transition; I see it as a natural part—evolution of my professional career."

In summary, five themes emerged: mentoring, love of academe, rewards, calling and challenges. Mentoring was more informal but provided support for the participants throughout their journeys. Love of academe was the primary motivation for making the transition while the rewards included autonomy, seeing students succeed, research success and others. Several participants felt they were called to teach because they felt it was more important than the work they did in industry and because they wanted to impact students lives and help develop ethically responsible future practitioners. Challenges along the journey included financial struggles, getting the Ph.D., and adapting to the new academic culture.

Chapter 4: Discussion

The original purpose of this study was to look at the transitional experiences of public relations practitioners as they moved from the practice to the academy. Three areas were examined: messages, motivators and obstacles. After evaluating the data from the interview transcripts, it became clear that these three areas unnecessarily limited the study and that there were more variables involved in the transition process. To explain the findings, a practitioner-to-professor model was developed to elucidate what is occurring in the transition. This model, displayed below (Figure 1), shows the practitioner/professor journey in three stages: antecedents, transition and consequences. These three stages are influenced by rewards throughout. In this chapter the model stages and elements are described along with a discussion of the theories that help explain what is occurring during each stage in the model.

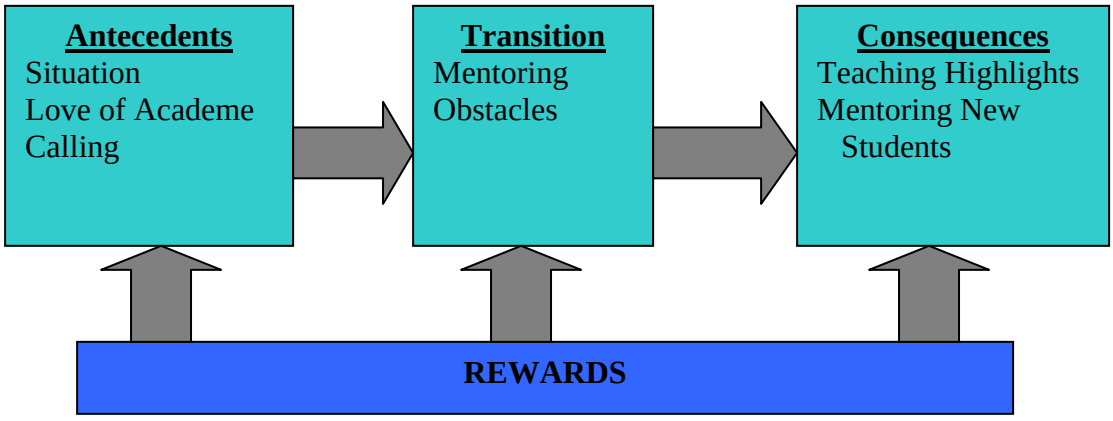


Figure 1. Public relations practitioner to professor transition model

Stage One: Antecedents

One of the antecedents included those experiences or situations that the participants found themselves in prior to making the transition. These antecedents were instrumental in the participants' decision-making process to begin the transition. For some participants, the decision to begin the transition process to the academy occurred through job loss, military retirement or job burnout. Others delayed their transition because they felt they needed practical experience first before they pursued teaching full-time. One participant wanted to start a family and felt teaching would be a better career choice to do that. Several participants mentioned that timing was a factor in their decision to transition. They had kids out of the house and had the freedom to move; spouses were also making career changes; or they were financially able either to return to graduate school or become a professor.

Another antecedent, love of academe, was the number one reason that participants made the transition. It was this love for teaching and/or research that was the strongest initiator for the professional/professor transition. For some, it was the love of teaching either discovered on-the-job through training or mentoring of interns. Others discovered this love of teaching while attending graduate school and taking on positions as teaching assistants. Others, while still practicing in the field, taught part-time as adjuncts and found the experience to be very rewarding. Some participants discovered a love for research that they conducted as a part of their job while the joy of research was revealed to others through their studies in graduate school. Others sensed a calling to teach very early in their lives either through family influences or through a long-held passion to teach.

The last antecedent in stage one was calling. One participant called teaching a "noble higher calling," while another felt there was a need for more ethically-grounded practitioners and wanted to contribute to that grounding. Several participants mentioned that they felt teaching was more important than working in the corporate setting and wanted to make a difference in the lives of students. They felt they could impact their profession in a bigger way by training future practitioners. All of these antecedents were important factors in their decision making and motivators that caused the participants to begin their transition process from the practice to the academy.

This study looked at the motivators that led to the move from public relations practitioner to professor in an effort to answer the *why* of their behavior. What kinds of things (motives) impelled the participants in this study to make this transition (the behavior) and continue the process? Some of the motivations already mentioned in the antecedent section above can be explained by reviewing the motivation theories.

"Motivation theories are built on a set of assumptions about the nature of people and about the factors that give impetus to action" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 3). As discussed earlier in the introduction, psychologists describe motivations as being either intrinsic (internal) or extrinsic (external). Intrinsic motivation comes from within ourselves; we do it because we enjoy doing it. Extrinsic motivation is usually associated with rewards and punishment used to shape behavior. Overwhelmingly, the results from this study indicated that participants were more motivated intrinsically with the strongest motivation being their love for academe, which was defined as a passion for teaching and/or research prior to completing the transition. For some participants this passion was kindled at an early age while others discovered this passion while working or as an

adjunct instructor. Abraham Maslow's (1970) motivation theory may give some explanation for their motivation.

One of the most widely known theories of human motivation is Abraham Maslow's (1970) motivation theory, which looks at five fundamental needs. According to Maslow, human needs form a hierarchy beginning with lower levels, referred to as basic needs. These four basic needs include physiological, safety, love and belongingness, and self-esteem needs and are also termed deficiency needs because they lead to behaviors (motivate) when the organism has a deficiency with respect to a need. Once these basic needs are met and satisfied, "we may still often, if not always, expect that a new discontent and restlessness will soon develop, unless the individual is doing what he [sic], individually, is fitted for" (Maslow, 1970, p. 46). This "fit" is referred to as the fifth need, which is self-actualization. Maslow defines it as "man's [sic] desire for self-fulfillment, namely, to the tendency for him to become actualized in what he is potentially" (p. 46). The individual is now "propelled by growth motivation rather than by deficiency motivation" (p. 162). It is this self-actualization or "fit" that surfaced when talking to practitioners turned professors about the rewards of their teaching careers referring to it as a "higher, noble calling" and describing it as being comfortable, satisfying, exciting, enriching and rewarding. Linda says, "I enjoy every day," while Kathy says, "I could not think of another job I would rather do."

Another area studied was persuasion and its influence, in the form of communicative messages, in the decision by the participants to transition. As described in Chapter 2, persuasion was defined as "the use of communication in an attempt to shape, change and/or reinforce perception, affect (feelings), cognition (thinking) and/or

behavior" (Pfau & Wan, 2006, p. 102). Results indicated that social support from informal mentors had some influence on the participants throughout the transition, but did not indicate that any messages, in the form of persuasion were used to directly influence them in their decision-making prior to the transition. Therefore, persuasive messages fell out as an important element in the participants' transitional experiences.

Stage Two: Transition

In this stage, the participants are moving through their transition. This may mean going to graduate school to work on a master's or Ph.D. as prerequisite for teaching or a transition directly from the practice to the academy. It was during these periods of their transition that several participants talked about the mentors who either supported or advised them during their journey. During this time they also encountered many obstacles that did not impede the transition but caused challenges along the way. Next we will look at the literature on mentoring as well as obstacles as it relates to career development theories.

The results of this study suggested mentoring as one of the five themes associated with the practitioner/professor transition. Most of these mentoring experiences appeared to be more informal in nature and included family members, peers, professors and co-workers. These interpersonal support systems were somewhat influential in helping the practitioners through their transition although these relationships did not appear to be formal, structured mentoring relationships. The researcher did not pursue the depth and degree of these relationships since it was not the focus of the study.

In Homer's *Odyssey,* a character named Mentor was introduced as a trusted friend and wise and faithful counselor and was given the task of tutoring the king's son in his

absence. Mentor not only taught the king's son but helped him in his personal, professional, political and social development. It is Mentor's character that was the inspiration for the term *mentoring* which, according to Buell, (2004) is defined "as the process of one person supporting, teaching, leading and serving as a model for another person" (p. 56).

Mentoring has been studied extensively in academic and other scholarly research for a variety of purposes. Kartje (1996) talks about three activities that contribute to the relationship between academic mentor and graduate student. These three roles are as educator, role model and providing psychological support for their protégé. Another study looked at the relationships between graduate students and faculty mentors and found the mentoring experience for students to be an "overall enjoyable and meaningful experience" (Waldeck, Orrego, Plax & Kearney, 1997, p.105). The mentoring relationships between academic mentors and newly-hired faculty have also been studied. Schrodt, Cawyer & Sanders (2003) found that the benefits of mentoring impacted not only the mentor and protégé but also the institution. As a result of good mentoring relationships, those being mentored were more loyal and stable faculty members which "are advantageous for institutions of higher education" (p. 26). The research in these studies looked at formal mentoring relationships that were developed and instituted in academic settings.

Unlike Mentor, who was formally designated to mentor the king's son, the mentors in this study appeared to be more informal mentors who reinforced, rather than shaped or changed, the behavior of the participants. These interpersonal influences included offering support and advice, along with collaboration on projects. Support was

received from family members, academic professors, peers, bosses and professional groups who were considered highly credible sources to the participants. In other words, their communication was trustworthy and competent and appeared to have some effect on the participants.

The influences from their mentors occurred at home, in the work place, during participation in graduate programs and into the teaching career of the participants. These sources, it seems, had an indirect influence in the lives of the practitioner as they transitioned to the academy and were considered credible by the participants. Factors that influenced their credibility included expertise, trustworthiness, education, occupation and experience, along with similarity such as group/family membership; source factors that are often considered influential in persuasion (O'Keefe, 2002). Their academic mentors provided the education, expertise and experience that many of the participants needed as they moved into their new academic culture. Family members and peers were trusted advisors who they called upon for support and encouragement.

Mentoring is important in career transition as expressed by Freeman (2000), "Overall, we might say that a mentor supports their mentee through the process of transition—a journey from one state of being to another" (p. 507). She adds that mentors provide support during the mentee's transition and "offer guidance in the complex process of becoming 'aculturised,' helping them find their way around the unspoken and unpublished contours of the profession, towards establishing their own professional identity. The mentor recognizes that gaining knowledge is not, in itself, sufficient to pass from one stage to another" (p. 507). These mentoring relationships enhance and, at times, are very much a part of the success of the person being mentored whether in a work

environment, academic setting or during times of transition. This mentoring support is important throughout the transition from the initial decision-making process all the way through tenure and promotion.

Thomsen and Gustafson (1997), in a study involving interviews with 25 advertising and public relations "practitioners turned professors," found that a more formal induction/mentoring process would have "helped to smooth the transition or induction process" (p. 26). Participants explained that this mentoring could have been useful in the interview and hiring process and at the department level once they were hired. "Mentoring, they suggested, should begin in the initial job interviewing process and continue through tenure" (Thomsen & Gustafson, 1997, p. 30). This same sentiment was held by the participants in this study who, when asked what they would tell someone else who was making the practitioner/professor transition, indicated that they would tell them to find a mentor who could help them get through the academic process and then help them adapt to their new academic culture. One participant said, "I think you've got to have that mentor; you've got to have some support, someone who's been through the process to help you get through it."

Anyone moving from public relations professional to full-time faculty member will experience not only benefits, but also obstacles. Another area studied in the practitioner/professor transition was the obstacles or challenges that the participants experienced during their journeys. For some, going back to graduate school and earning the Ph.D. was a huge obstacle. But, interestingly, of the 20 participants interviewed, 15 had either already earned their Ph.D. prior to considering the transition or pursued it once the decision was made to teach full-time. They described it as a different culture and for

some, adapting to this new culture was difficult. Others discussed the pay differential along with the adjustment of moving from being a professional to a student.

Understanding the new culture of academe was mentioned by many participants in this study as a challenge during their transition. Fogg (2002) discusses some of the challenges for new faculty who have moved to academic life as "preparation for teaching, dealing with the academic hierarchy and the autonomous nature of the faculty" (p. 10). Another study by LaRocco & Bruns (2006) looked at the experiences of second career academics' entry into academia and also found that participants who had made the transition were "ambivalent about feeling prepared to teach, to conduct research, or to publish" (p. 631). They also had trouble balancing work life and home life and were unclear about scholarly and service-related expectations. In other words, "these second career academics did not seem to feel adequately 'schooled' in the politics and culture of academic institutions" (p. 636). Understanding the new academic language and research requirements, learning how to teach and prepare for classes, as well as the new academic hierarchal structure were mentioned by participants as challenges. One participant said it felt to her like she had landed on another planet while others talked about not feeling prepared for their new roles as faculty members. Several suggested that there needed to be more preparation for new teachers, including how to prepare for classes, how to evaluate students and how to understand the new academic climate.

In a study of student affairs administrators who had transitioned to full-time faculty by McCluskey-Titus & Cawthon (2004), a number of challenges were also cited by these respondents. Although the respondents had worked in an educational setting as student affairs professionals, they said the "faculty culture was a mystery" (p. 324). The

challenges they faced “included: unfamiliarity and uneasiness with the faculty culture, weaker research or publication backgrounds, salary concerns, having the right experience to be competitive in the faculty job search process and inadequate support in the position” (p. 324). In the practitioner/professor study the academic cultural challenges occurred during graduate school both as students and as teachers since many of them taught part-time as graduate assistants. Understanding the new language of academe, along with research requirements were challenging to many. Additionally, many did not feel prepared to teach as adjuncts while in school and did not feel very prepared upon graduation.

Although salary figures were not collected, 12 of the 20 participants mentioned salary in the teaching profession as being much lower than in the practice. In Garrison’s (2005) survey and analysis of faculty members who moved from industry to academy “three times as many respondents accepted a reduction in salary as those experiencing an increase [75% and 25% respectively]” (p. 417). These salary decreases ranged from $10,000 to $100,000 but there was no explanation as to why the respondents were willing to give up so much financially to make the career move.

One theory that may help explain the practitioner/professor transition experience is Albert Bandura’s (1986, 1995) self-efficacy theory. Self-efficacy looks at not just the skills needed for successful accomplishment but the person’s belief about one’s personal competence. The achievement of goals is influenced by feelings of being competent enough to achieve those goals and belief that their actions will be effective. This is referred to as perceived self-efficacy, “a belief in one’s personal capabilities” (Bandura, 1997, p. 4). Those with high self-efficacy consider more career options and show greater

interest in them, persevere more in their chosen pursuits, are more likely to succeed and approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than threats to be avoided. Their self-efficacy in the area of teaching/research was revealed to them either through teaching/research opportunities in their work place or through teaching/research experiences in their graduate programs. They felt successful and competent and participants in this study expressed performance attainments as good teaching or research successes Highly-motivated practitioners persevered even when faced with obstacles including pay, culture adaptation and the pursuit of their terminal degree and succeeded in making the practitioner/professor transition.

Self-efficacy has also been applied in career development. Betz and Voyton (1997) stated that "one of the most useful practices in career development research has been the application of self-efficacy theory to the study of educational and vocational behavior" (p. 179). Research in this area, called career self-efficacy, has indicated the "role of self-efficacy as a predictor of academic performance and persistence as well as career decision-making intentions and behavior" (p. 180). One study, which looked at second-career teachers and their reasons for the job transition to teaching, indicated that a common thread "was the tendency to view teaching principally as a means of enhancing self-efficacy or other aspects of personal satisfaction" (Serow, 1993, p. 197). Like these second-career teachers, the participants interviewed in this practitioner-to-professor study all appeared to have high self-efficacy and believed in their competency to successfully transition into the academy. Obstacles or challenges along the transitional journey were easily overcome due to the self-efficacy of the participants, or their belief that they will be competent enough to complete their transition to teaching.

Stage Three: Consequences

The third stage in the model looks at the consequences of the practitioner/ professor transition and includes highlights of teaching and mentoring new students. When asked about the highlights of their career as a professor, many of the participants' comments revolved around their students. They talked about the classroom experience and getting discussions going and seeing students become excited about the profession. Developing relationships with the students was important to the participants and was expressed as a feeling of self-worth and pride when watching them grow academically and professionally and walk down the aisle at graduations. They also talked about the advising/mentoring times with their students as rewarding and as experiences that made them feel good about what they were doing. Earning strong positive performance evaluations from students made the faculty feel like they were doing a good job along with hearing back from alumni who were successful in their careers. Bethany best summed up the highlights that come from teaching and mentoring students by saying how rewarding it is "to see them [students] succeed and feel we were some little part of that."

Personal and professional highlights for the public relations faculty included conducting research and having their scholarship evaluated and deemed appropriate for publication. Several mentioned that a highlight was getting good jobs at Research I schools with the ability to work alongside great scholars. One participant said that getting to practice, teach and do research offered the best of both worlds and another said she enjoyed the learning that goes with teaching.

Rewards

The other piece to the practitioner/professor model is rewards that influenced the transitional experience throughout. The rewards of teaching/research have been discussed throughout this paper and it is these rewards that gave the participants impetus to begin the transition, sustained them through the transition and maintains them in their current faculty position. The rewards of teaching and research were so strong and were such powerful influences that the participants were willing to give up a lot and face challenges and obstacles along the way to make that transition to the classroom. As indicated earlier in this paper, the rewards were predominantly intrinsic because the participants described teaching and research as something they did because it was satisfying and enjoyable. Possibly Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory could explain this since external rewards, like salary, do not motivate those who are self-determined.

The motivation theory that appears to give the best explanation of what is going on in this study is Deci & Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory (SDT). "Self-determination is the capacity to choose and to have those choices, rather than reinforcement contingencies, drives, or any other forces or pressures" (p. 38). This theory says that humans need to feel *competent* (capable of performing key tasks), *related* (a sense of belonging and being connected to other people) and *autonomous* (being the source of one's own behavior). Its influence was felt throughout the three stages of the practitioner/professor transition.

SDT "begins by embracing the assumption that all individuals have natural, innate and constructive tendencies to develop an ever more elaborated and unified sense of self" (Deci & Ryan, 2002, p. 5) It also says that "there are necessary conditions for the growth

and well-being of people's personalities and cognitive structures, just as there are for their physical development and functioning" (p. 7). According to SDT, we are all powerfully motivated to meet the three basic psychological needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy. "Social environments that allow satisfaction of the three basic needs are predicted to support healthy functioning" (p. 6). It was these three needs, competence, relatedness and autonomy that seemed to be the driving forces behind the participants in this study.

"Competence involves understanding how to attain various external and internal outcomes and being efficacious in performing the requisite actions" (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier & Ryan, 1991, p. 327). In this study the participants expressed competence in the classroom based on positive student evaluations, feedback from students as well as seeing their students become successful in their careers. They also felt competent to teach public relations because of their years of practical field experience that made them feel more qualified. Donna described her professional experience as giving her an opportunity "to give, I think, that added value for the students to share with them some real life experiences, the way it really is and hopefully make them more prepared than I was." Having the Ph.D. also gave the participants a sense of credibility in the classroom and among their peers. Additionally, those who had research success in the form of presentations, publication or awards, also expressed a feeling of accomplishment or competence.

The second need identified by SDT is relatedness which "involves developing secure and satisfying connections with others in one's social milieu" (Deci, et al., 1991, p. 327). Practitioners turned academics expressed how much they enjoyed the collegiality

they had with other professors, especially when working on collaborative research projects. The connections/interactions with students, whether as advisor, mentor or teacher, was also a rewarding experience mentioned by all of the participants in this study. For many, it was these relationships that gave them the most satisfaction and enjoyment.

Autonomy, the third need, "refers to being self-initiating and self-regulating of one's own actions" (Deci, et al., 1991, p. 327). One participant said he enjoyed the autonomy of his job while others talked about the flexibility they had to plan their own work schedules and classes allowing them a better quality of life. Others talked about the freedom to be more creative and about the enjoyment of "being their own boss."

These three psychological needs are intrinsically motivated meaning that the "energy is intrinsic to the nature of the organism" and "is based in the organismic need to be competent and self-determining" (Deci & Ryan, 1985, p. 5). In other words, the motivation comes from within and is not drive-based or controlled from external pressures such as rewards or contingencies. That is, it reflects the person's need to be in control of events in the environment. "Others have argued that intrinsic motivation simply means that a task or activity is enjoyable independent of any external rewards" (Franken, 1988, p. 470). Deci & Ryan suggest that "intrinsic motivation will be operative when action is experienced as autonomous, and it is unlikely to function under conditions where controls or reinforcements are the experienced cause of action" (1985, p. 29). "When people are intrinsically motivated, they experience interest and enjoyment, they feel competent and self-determining, they perceive the locus of causality for their behavior to be internal, and in some instances they experience flow" (p. 34). The

opposite of flow and interest is pressure and tension which is usually attributed to some extrinsic motivation being involved.

Deci & Ryan (1985) identify four types of extrinsic motivation as external, introjected, identified and integrated forms of regulation. External regulation includes those behaviors that are initiated by some external cause such as offer of reward or threat of punishment. Introjected regulations are internal rules that cause behavior such as guilt or self-aggrandizement while identified regulation is when the person values the behavior and pursues the activity for the goal of improving or succeeding. Integrated regulation occurs when an individual regulatory process is fully integrated with their values, needs and identities.

A study by Sheldon, Elliot, Kim & Kasser (2001) tested 10 psychological needs of students in an introductory psychology class at the University of Missouri by asking the participants to describe their most satisfying events in their lives and rate the salience of each of the 10 needs within these events. The purpose of their study was to determine which needs were the most fundamental for humans. The 10 psychological needs tested were autonomy, competence, relatedness, physical thriving, security, self-esteem, self-actualization, pleasure-stimulation, money-luxury and popularity-influence. The results yielded that autonomy, competence and relatedness, “emerged among the four most salient in every sample” (Sheldon, et al., 2001, p. 335). These results supported Deci & Ryan’s (1985) self-determination theory. These results also gave the appearance that this “theory’s ‘big three’ needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness may indeed serve as important foundations on which to build a unified typology of motives” (Sheldon, et

al., 2001, p. 336). Additionally, self-esteem appeared at the top of the list of psychological needs and the data from this study propose that "if one were to pick a single need that is most important to satisfy in the United States, the current data suggest it would be self-esteem" (p. 336). To help explain this outcome in relationship to SDT, it could be surmised that self-esteem be considered "as a well-being outcome rather than as a predictor" or "to consider self-esteem as a broader manifestation of the competence need" (p. 336). Therefore, the results of the Sheldon, et al. (2002) study suggests that there may be "four fundamental psychological needs, not three: autonomy, competence, relatedness and self-esteem" (p. 336). As mentioned previously in this chapter, the participants in the practitioner/professor study also indicated that their reasons for transitioning clearly met these needs as well.

Another study that looked at student affairs administrators who had transitioned to full-time faculty indicated that quality of life issues were important to more than half of the respondents (McCluskey-Titus & Cawthon, 2004). Their comments "focused on having a more flexible, predictable schedule" (p. 322) and the ability to structure their own workday, which gives additional support to the autonomous nature of teaching. Three other frequent themes that emerged, along with quality of life, were "desire to focus on intellectual pursuits, enjoyment of teaching and research and desire to contribute to the profession on a different level" (p. 322). All of the themes that emerged from the McCluskey-Titus & Cawthon (2004) study were consistent with the themes from the practitioner/professor study. One of the rewards mentioned several time by participants in the practitioner/professor study was autonomy and the ability to be their own boss. Others talked about a work environment that was flexible and allowed them more time with their

families in addition to more time off. These rewards could be summed up as the same quality-of-life issues mentioned in the McCluskey-Titus & Cawthon study. Additionally, two of the McCluskey-Titus & Cawthon themes of desire to focus on intellectual pursuits and enjoyment of teaching and research coincided with the love of academe theme that emerged from the current practitioner/professor study. The fourth theme in their study, contribution to the profession on a different level, is consistent with the calling theme in the practitioner/professor study, which dealt with impacting the profession.

When applying SDT to the practitioner/professor journey a fourth basic variable, or need, is required to explain what is going on in the transition. That fourth need is *situation.* Without the right conditions, timing or situation, the participants would not have begun the transition process. It was only after their situation became suitable could they begin the practitioner to professor journey. Whether that was based on a family situation, financial situation, job situation or other situational variables, the transition would not have occurred even though a move to the academy would provide autonomy, competence or relatedness for the participant.

These findings add an additional element to the career decision-making literature. Those who are considering a transition from one career to another, particularly one with less tangible benefits, can be explained by not only self-efficacy as a predictor of "career decision-making intentions and behavior" (Betz & Voyton, 1997, p. 180), but also by self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Feelings of being able to successfully complete the transition (self-efficacy) along with the fulfillment of important psychological needs can be strong determinants in predicting career transitions. Adding situation presents a stronger case for shaping career transitions. Perceived self-efficacy

and self-determination theory with the added element of situation, present a good model for determining success and fulfillment in career transitions.

In summary, the practitioner-to-professor transitional journey is made up of many variables that can be best explained by the practitioner/professor model presented at the beginning of this chapter. This model includes three stages in the practitioner/professor transition: antecedents, transition and consequences. These three stages are influenced throughout by rewards. Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which posits that three of the highest basic psychological needs of humans are their need to feel competent, related and connected, gives the best theoretical explanation of what is occurring during the practitioner/professor transition. These needs were mentioned by participants in this study as rewards and reasons that they made the transition. The results from this study also indicated that a fourth variable must be met prior to the practitioner/professor transition and that is the need for the appropriate situation or circumstances to be in place before the transition can begin. With all four needs met, a career transition is more apt to occur and to transpire successfully as indicated by the successful transitions of the 20 participants in this study.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The literature on job transitions and the decision-making and motivations that go into career changes is plentiful. But, studies specifically related to the transitional experiences of public relations practitioners' move to the academy were almost obsolete. With a major public relations faculty shortage that has reached a crisis stage, this research is timely and should be of interest to university administrators, public relations faculty, practitioners who may be thinking about making the transition as well as those practitioners who depend on the academy to send them their future employees.

Implications and Recommendations

The results of this research imply more needs to be done to ensure that our future practitioners will be receiving the quality education needed to contend in a very competitive marketplace. The faculty shortage, ensuing retirement of older faculty and inability to develop new Ph.D. programs to train new faculty due to the faculty shortage, creates a cycle with no end in sight unless proactive measures are taken. Recruiting strategies, new ways of developing and training qualified faculty and considerations of pay are tactics that need to be addressed to deal with the nationwide faculty shortage.

Conducting this type of timely research could be used by professional associations like PRSA, AEJMC and NCA to promote careers in the academy and to recruit practitioners to transition to teaching. Recognizing the rewards of teaching and sharing those rewards with some 200,000 practicing public relations professionals gives the academy a huge base to promote and recruit future public relations faculty who can then train the future generation of practitioners.

"We should be doing 'missionary work,' selling the idea of being a public relations educator to practitioners who we have identified as having an innate gift to teach" (C. A. Lubbers, personal communication, September 5, 2006). Those practitioners with this innate gift to teach could be identified by those we have speak in our classrooms as guest lecturers or those who adjunct at our universities. Recognizing particularly good public speakers at professional meetings or conferences is another way to identify potentially good teachers. Public relations educators should be actively looking for prospective candidates, introducing the idea of teaching to them, and providing them with the support and counsel they will need to make their transition as easy as possible. "Half the battle is just telling people" (C. A. Lubbers, personal communication, September 5, 2006). And, telling people is something that every public relations educator can do individually to help lessen the faculty shortage and ensure a healthy future for the profession.

Additionally, universities should find the results of this study useful in their recruiting campaigns for qualified candidates or for persuading practitioners in their community to consider teaching and then "growing their own" qualified faculty by providing additional educational support and mentoring. Another type of "growing from within" was suggested by Lubbers who said current public relations faculty members should be encouraging their alumni to come back to their institutions with advanced degrees and consider teaching (personal communication, September 5, 2006).

Increasing the number of Ph.D. programs should also be a consideration. With too few Ph.D. programs in the nation, graduate students, on many occasions, have to pull up

roots and move to a university that offers a graduate program in communication or public relations.

Once new converts begin filling our graduate programs we should be guiding and counseling new faculty through formal mentoring programs instituted on all campuses. These mentors could serve as “culture counselors” who could advise and help Ph.D. students and newly hired faculty members acclimate to their new academic cultures. Additionally, graduate classes on teaching methods, class preparation strategies and curriculum design should also be required courses in the Ph.D. curriculum program. And, for those who may be attending Ph.D. programs that don’t offer this training, professional organizations should provide support through teaching seminars, like the ones being offered nationwide now by PRSA Educator’s Academy.

The recent push in doctoral programs to require a research focus, in addition to practical experience, for admittance, could create an even greater shortage. Consideration needs to be given to a mixture of tenure-track, research-focused faculty and those who are excellent teachers, allowing more practitioners to teach full-time without having to pursue their Ph.D. Or, as one university did in its school of business, offer a “Bridge Program” to put practitioners through a crash course in college teaching (Mangan, 2006). “Those who have successfully completed the course receive a certificate with the seals of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business [AACSB], which is a prestigious accreditor, as well as the two participating business schools that helped develop the program” (p. 29). This course was developed to meet the faculty shortage in business schools. “Around the world, business schools are facing a severe shortage of qualified professors with doctorates at a time when interest in M.B.A. programs is

booming" (p. 29). Obviously a "crash course" will be challenged by those who have spent years of blood, sweat and tears in a doctoral program, but it is certainly a first step toward facilitating a smoother journey for those who to choose to transition to the classroom. In addition to its APR (Accredited in Public Relations) certification, PRSA may want to consider offering an APRT (Accredited Public Relations Teacher) certification as a bridge between the master's and Ph.D. degrees.

Internships are not only a necessary prologue for undergraduate students pursuing a public relations career but are encouraged for full-time faculty so that they can stay current in the profession. Educational internships or visiting professor positions, which meet appropriate accreditation standards, should also be considered. We should be encouraging practitioners to team teach or act as visiting professors on our campuses. This experience would enhance the classroom experience for our students, begin the acclimation of practitioners to the classroom and hopefully encourage those participating practitioners to pursue future careers as full-time professors. Universities should be supporting such programs along with public relations professional organizations that could provide financially-supported fellowships. Practitioners and professors must work together to ensure that a healthy academic experience with highly qualified teachers is awaiting each new class of future practitioners. This is not just an education problem; it's a professional problem as well.

Since pay was a major concern mentioned by most of the participants in this study, university administrators should take a serious look at the pay structures at their institutions and consider increasing those salaries to entice more practitioners to make the transition to the academy. Business schools, which are also facing a faculty shortage,

increased their faculty salaries substantially. “The resulting faculty shortage has driven the average starting salary for new doctorates from $64,000 in 1997 to $93,780 in 2005” (Mangan, 2006, p. 29). This same shortage of public relations faculty should also be the impetus to increase their salaries nationwide.

Participant Recommendations

Comments from faculty participants in this study provided many recommendations for future transitioners to consider. Their wise counsel was obtained by asking the question, “What would you tell someone considering the transition from professional to professor?”

Their advice included validation to practitioners of their professional experiences and what that brings to the academy. Mona said, “Don’t forget what you bring to this just because it doesn’t seem to be valued in academe doesn’t mean it’s not valued. Don’t forget where you were and what you did before you got here.” Carrie encourages practitioners to start off slow and try teaching as an adjunct while being a practitioner. She says to “hold both in your hands for at least a semester, if not a year, and see how it meshes out and then make your decision. I felt like I was a better practitioner when I was a teacher and I’d like to think I’m a better teacher because I was a practitioner.” Albert says we need to tell practitioners, “We need you very badly; don’t ever worry about having a job. We are so short of public relations professors.” And for those who desire to do something that really has a lasting impact, Todd says, “I feel like I’m making a bigger difference in the world, one student at a time.”

Limitations

Probably the greatest constraint to this study was trying to place limits on what the research would reveal. The original purpose of this study was to determine what persuasion strategies, motivators and obstacles were involved in the transition from practitioner to professor. A better approach would have been to just look at the transitional experiences of the participants and allow the data to emerge instead of pigeon-holing them into these three areas.

Because the researcher was also a practitioner/professor transitioner, it was difficult at times to leave personal bias out of the analysis and be totally objective. This possible bias evolved in the coding of the transcripts when there were conflicting views between the researcher and other coders as to the definition of reward versus love of academe. On several occasions, outside coders described a love of academe and the classroom experiences as rewards that skewed the initial reliability scores below an acceptable level. That was corrected, however, and a second round of coding resulted in better agreement levels.

Additionally, instead of providing lay coders with a set of coding themes already determined by the researcher, it would have been better to use expert coders. These expert coders could have been asked to conduct open coding of several transcripts to see what themes emerged for them. The development of their themes could have been matched against the five themes developed by the researcher to measure the reliability of the coding.

In qualitative research, the location of the interview is important. Several of the interviews were conducted in Salt Lake City, Utah, at a PRSA Educator's Academy

conference. Four of the six participants interviewed at the conference talked about getting social support through groups like the Educator's Academy. These comments may not have transpired if the interviews had been conducted in the participants' natural campus settings or on the phone.

Future Research

This research is just an initial step in looking at the practitioner/professor transition. Although 20 in-depth interviews was a good number for qualitative research and revealed some rich data, it would be beneficial to extend these data to a larger national audience for comparison. This could be accomplished by taking the results of this data, using the model that was developed, and conduct a nationwide survey using a quantitative survey method or qualitatively conducting more interviews or focus groups. A re-test of the coding category themes on another group of practitioners turned professors should be conducted to see if the themes hold true with other participants.

Future research should pursue the mentoring theme and delve deeper to see how much impact social support had on the transition process. Additionally a look at mentoring as modeling could also be pursued. Several of the participants talked about observing and replicating the careers and teaching styles of other faculty members which means that some form of modeling could have been occurring. The results of this research may add additional information and more understanding to the mentoring literature and its role in job transitions or career changes, particularly in practitioner to professor transitions.

The rewards of teaching were fervent in new faculty. Future research could focus on interviewing older faculty who have been teaching for more than 10 years to see if

these rewards continued to sustain them and if they play a role in teacher retention at universities.

A look at the importance of ethical responsibility in the role of career transitions needs further consideration and study. How predominant is this theme in other transitions from practice to academe? Does it remain an important theme in other academic studies at both secondary and higher-education levels?

The role of self-efficacy and self-determination theory with the additional element of situation, in career transitions needs to be explored further. Can these theories be applied in other job change situations or are they more applicable to transitions from practice to the academy? Additionally, a quantitative survey applying self-efficacy and SDT combined with situation needs to be conducted to test the validity of the results from this study.

Suggestions from the participants in this study based on the question, “Today, what would you tell someone considering the transition from professional to professor?” could be presented as message points and quantified as to their validity and possible use in a persuasive recruitment campaign to enlist more practitioners to transition to the academy. These message points could be presented to public relations practitioners and conclusions made as to their potential effectiveness in recruiting future faculty.

Conclusion

Transitioning from the role of public relations practitioner to full-time faculty has its rewards and challenges. Those rewards included a better quality of life with more autonomy and freedom to be creative, the potential to make a difference in students’ lives and the profession, as well as the opportunity to focus on academic pursuits such as

teaching and research. Along the transitional journey there were also challenges and obstacles that emerged. These included pursuing a Ph.D., the assimilation to the academic culture, both as student and faculty, and a reduction in pay.

This study has provided one slice of the transitional experiences of practitioners turned professors and provides useful information for someone who may be considering a job transition. The information provided by the participants could also be used as messages in a national recruiting campaign, which is desperately needed to impact the national public relations faculty shortage. Their messages are encouraging and infectious as they talk about their lives now as full-time faculty.

Paul calls his job a dream career and says, “I just look at where I’m at and, gosh, I’ve got a great career. I can’t help but feel really satisfied with it because I’m doing the things intellectually, emotionally, physically that I really, really like doing. You know, about the only job I ever had that I liked more than this, or at least as much, was freelancing and consulting. I can still do that.” Kathy says, “I should be happier than anyone else and there should be nothing to bring me down and that’s how I feel.” Betty talks about the symbiotic relationship between practice, teaching and research and says, “How great that we get to do all three.”

Career transitions and the people who make those transitions include many variables in the mix. Self-determined, efficacious individuals who are looking for a better quality of life and the opportunity to make a bigger impact in the profession will be the future practitioner/professor transitioners. As evident from this study, telling them to transition will not have much effect. But, suggesting they consider the transition, giving them a taste of the classroom/research experience through graduate programs and as

adjuncts, could be what it takes to ignite and encourage their first step in the transition journey. We should then be making it easy for them to pursue the qualifications necessary by offering a wider range of Ph.D. programs, making them more accessible, increasing pay structures, and mentoring them through the process. We should also be making sure that they are prepared for the cultural disparity between the profession and the academy and then preparing them for this new classroom/research experience through effective training and on-going mentoring. Getting them plugged into professional academic organizations like PRSA Educator's Academy, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, National Communication Association and others, will ensure that they receive the support and encouragement they will need as the acclimate to this new career.

On a final note, the public relations faculty shortage is not a problem to be faced and overcome by those in the academic world alone. This faculty deficiency affects the academy, the students and the future of the profession. The participants in this study have given voice to the transitional experience. They have given us recommendations and they have given us insight into their journeys. It's now our job to heed them.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Newsletter Announcements for Solicitation of Research Participants

PR Update (The News Journal of the Public Relations Division of the Association for Education in Journalism & Mass Communication), Fall 2006, 41 (3), p. 5.

"Patty Silverman *(psilverman@leeuniversity.edu*), assistant professor at Lee University and Ph.D. candidate at the University of Tennessee, is working on a dissertation titled 'Persuasion Strategies, Motivational Factors and Obstacles That Influence the Evolutional Transition form Public Relations Practitioner to Professor.' People with at least five years of professional public relations experience and less than 10 years of teaching experience in public relations are urged to volunteer for interviews or focus group participation."

PR Educator (Newsletter of the Educators Academy of the Public Relations Society of America), Fall 2006, p. 4.

"Patty Silverman *(psilverman@leeuniversity.edu*), assistant professor at Lee University and Ph.D. candidate at the University of Tennessee, is working on a dissertation about public relations practitioners who have become educators. People with at least five years of professional public relations experience and less than 10 years of teaching experience in public relations are urged to volunteer for interviews or focus group participation."

Appendix B

Listserve Announcements for Solicitation of Research Participants

Aejmcprd@email.uncc.edu (listserve for Public Relations Division of Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication). Message sent October 2, 2006.

"This message is being forwarded to the PRD list for Patty Silverman. Please direct all questions to Professor Silverman at: psilverman@leeuniversity.edu. Thank you for considering her request. Her research should prove to be of great interest to all PR educators. Here is the request: 'Call for practitioners-turned-educators to participate in dissertation study. The topic will be looking at public relations practitioners who have become educators. If you have at least 5 years of professional public relations experience and less than 10 years of teaching experience in public relations would you be willing to volunteer for one-on-one interviews or participate in a focus group? Interested participants should contact Patty Silverman (psilverman@leeuniversity.edu), assistant professor at Lee University and Ph.D. candidate at University of Tennessee. Please contact her at the email provided. Thank you very much.'"

*NCAPR@LISTSERV.VT.EDU (*listserve for Public Relations Division of National Communication Association). Message sent October 12, 2006.

"I am seeking participants to be interviewed for a dissertation research project that is looking at the transition from public relations practitioner to professor. The two criteria for potential interviewees are below: (1) You are a full-time public relations professor with at least 5 years of professional experience and less than 10 years of teaching experience OR (2) You are considering a move from the public relations profession to teaching public relations full-time. If you fit one of these two criteria and would be willing to be interviewed by phone or in person, would you please contact me at psilverman@leeuniversity.edu or 423-715-7642 (cell). Important: Please do not respond to the entire list, only to my email above. Thanks."

Appendix C

Data Sheet for Qualitative Interviews

Ph.D. Dissertation Research – Patty Silverman

Date of Interview:_____ Interview Site:_____

Name of Participant:_____ Sex:_____ Age:_____

Title of Participant:_____

Name of Institution:_____Location:_____

Type Institution:_____

Years in PR Profession:_____ Type of Organization(s):_____

Years Teaching:_____ Part-time:_____ Full-time:_____

Date/Location Ph.D. awarded:_____

Phone: (wk)_____ (cell/home)_____

Email Address:_____

Membership in Professional Organizations: PRSA_____ NCA_____ AEJMC_____

ICA_____ IABC_____ Others_____

Appendix D

Informed Consent Form

Title of Project: The Transition from Public Relations Practitioner to Professor

You are invited to participate in a human research study as part of a dissertation Ph.D. project. The purpose of this study is to discuss your transition from a public relations practitioner to a public relations professor.

You will be asked several questions by the researcher and given time to respond to each of these questions. This interview should last approximately 45 minutes to one hour in length. All of your answers will be tape recorded and then transcribed into a written text at a later date by the researcher. The tape recordings of this interview will remain in the care of the researcher and will not be accessible to anyone else. The tapes will be destroyed once the research is completed.

There will be no reasonably foreseeable risks associated with your participation in this study. Instead, the information that you provide for this study will be of value to the public relations profession.

The information in the study records will be kept confidential. Data will be stored securely and will be made available only to the person conducting the study. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link participants to this

study. Informed consent forms will be kept in a secure location for at least 3 years on the campus of the University of Tennessee.

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Patty Silverman, at 423-479-5087. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, contact the UTK Office of Research Compliance Officer at (865) 974-3466.

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 and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be returned to you or destroyed.

CONSENT

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

Participant's signature _____Date _____

Investigator's signature _____Date _____

Appendix E

Coding Directions

Thank you so much for agreeing to be coders for my dissertation research project. This is a two-step process. In this envelope you will find two transcripts from my dissertation interviews. All of the identifying information has been removed from them to maintain their anonymity as well as protect the data's confidentiality. Before reading any further on these instructions, please take out the two transcripts and read them from start to finish for an idea of what I am researching and how the two respondents talked about their experiences. After you have finished reading both transcripts you may continue to step two of this process.

During step two of the process, I ask that you go back through the transcripts and search for themes that appear in the respondent's answers. Coding may be done in one of two ways: 1. choose a series of colors (one to represent each theme) and underline or highlight each place where a theme occurs; or 2. bracket each response that represents a theme and indicate in the margin the theme that is addressed. Please code sentence by sentence and only select one theme per sentence (as you find them). If you find themes that are not listed below in the transcripts, please add them to the list. Below is a list of the themes, their definitions and an example, to guide your coding.

1. ***Mentoring*** – an action involving someone who has encouraged, advised or counseled another person, by word or action, to become a member of the academy.

   Example: *"Back in my master's program, my thesis advisor suggested that I go into the profession, that I pursue a Ph.D. and go into teaching full-time."*

2. ***Love of Academe*** – a passion for teaching AND/OR for research prior to completing the transition.

   Example: *"I have always had a love affair with school."*

3. ***Rewards*** – These are tangible or intangible benefits about teaching/research that make people feel good about what they are doing or sustain/encourage them to continue what they are doing.

   Example: *"I got tenure actually a year earlier based on the research accomplishments so I felt good about that."*

4. ***Calling*** – Doing something because it is the right or moral thing to do. You feel personally obligated to do this.

   Example: *"What made it easier was that I felt a sort of a higher, noble calling to go into the classroom and do a better job than many of the teachers that I had."*

5. ***Challenges/Obstacles*** – those difficult times/situations that people go through in their journeys in life; they are overcome but pose some concerns during the process.

   Example: *"Physically I had reached a point where I was tired of international travel; I traveled 60% of the time around the globe constantly for 15 years and physically I was just worn down."*

If you have any questions about my directions please call me at home, 479-5087, or on my cell, 715-7642, anytime of the day or night. Thanks again so much!

Patty Silverman

University of Tennessee Ph.D. Candidate

Vita

Patricia R. Silverman received her bachelor's degree in education from Western Carolina University and her master's degree in journalism from Regent University. In spring of 2003, she attended the University of Tennessee to pursue a Doctorate of Philosophy from the College of Communication and Information. The doctoral degree was received May 2007.

Prior to her doctoral work, Silverman joined the Lee University communications faculty in the fall of 2000 as an Assistant Professor of Public Relations. Before joining Lee, Silverman was an adjunct instructor at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va., for one year. Silverman has 20 years of public relations experience including Public Relations Director and spokesperson for the founder and chairman of the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN). For seven years she served as the Public Relations Specialist for the Charlotte Police Department. Silverman also held a public relations position at a theme park in Orlando and in a number of corporate and nonprofit settings in three states. In two of those settings, she implemented and developed the first public relations department.

Professionally, she has served on boards for the Lookout Chapter of PRSA, Hampton Roads PRSA Chapter and Charlotte PRSA Chapter. She also served three years on the executive board of the Cleveland Media Association and board member for the Communications Committee of the Cleveland/Bradley County Chamber of Commerce. She holds membership in the Public Relations Society of America, National Communication Association and Association for Education in

Journalism and Mass Communication. In 1999 she received her accreditation in Public Relations (APR).

Silverman coordinates the public relations emphases for the Communication and the Arts Department at Lee University. She also serves as the internship coordinator for public relations, advertising and media writing students and is the founder and faculty advisor for the Lee Chapter of PRSSA (Public Relations Student Society of America). She has coached the Lee PRSSA Bateman team for three years and the 2005-2006 Bateman Team placed 4th nationally out of more than 60 teams. She has been selected for Who's Who Among American Teachers for two years and was nominated by the Lookout Chapter of PRSA for the Outstanding Educator of the Year. For three years she was selected as the Outstanding Faculty Advisor by the Lee University Communication and the Arts Department.

In order to pursue full-time research on her dissertation, Silverman applied for and received an Appalachian College Association (ACA) Fellowship to use for the completion of her dissertation.

Silverman and her husband Steve have one daughter, Bethany. They reside in Cleveland, Tennessee.